

Views from the Pews – Volunteering

When we joined this congregation about 13 years ago, it looked somewhat different to today's 10.00am attendance. There was a large core of folk who by and large came every Sunday without fail, and the vast majority of 10 o'clockers would attend say three out of four Sundays in an average month. This core supplied a large contingent of volunteers who enabled a high standard of traditional worship.

Things have changed, in many ways for the better. It seems likely that more people in say a typical year come for the Lord's Supper than was the case say before the pandemic. So in a sense our congregation has grown. There are frequent 'tasters' who often return, albeit on an infrequent basis, and another ring inside that who might come once a month, and may or may not be on the Roll. But the core from which our volunteers are recruited has shrunk. That trend began perhaps when the Greeters merged with the Sidespeople, who then had to take on the additional responsibility for outside security.

This trend has now led to doubling up, where folk are being asked to perform two duties simultaneously.

This is important not only for the more obvious reasons, but because our post-pandemic experience is that people are drawn to our style of worship precisely because of what it is and how it sounds and looks. That style is very labour-intensive, and involves some roles which are not wholly in the public eye. All those roles require sympathy for and an understanding of the 'St Peter's Style' as well as an understanding of Anglican worship generally as it has evolved in our lifetimes.

Even a small increase in our volunteer workforce – even if you can help once or twice a year – will make an enormous difference. If longer-serving volunteers can see a light at the end of the tunnel that will make their lives easier. Our 10.00am congregation appears to be growing both in numbers and in diversity. This is a cause for thanksgiving but it also presents an opportunity as well as a challenge. We all need to invest in what it is that draws us and our families to this particular church experience. Our choir carries an enormous workload and are an example to all of us in the pews. Please talk to a Warden or one of the Ministry Team today.

Richard Swarbrick