

DISCOVERY CONVERSATION #1: STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES (looking internally)

This is the first conversation of the planning process which will identify the priorities and action plans for our congregation to focus on for the next few years. This plan will serve to pull together elements of congregational life here and help to identify how best to move forward to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead.

This first discovery conversation is intended to allow everyone to reflect on and share their experiences as input into identifying the strengths and weaknesses of our congregation. A second discovery conversation will be externally focused, helping to identify our opportunities and challenges for ministry with our neighbours. Together this SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges) assessment will identify how St Helen's has best supported its congregation in living and growing in faith as well as seeing new ways to expand our ministry for God's mission in our world. The intention is to build a plan that leverages and grows the strengths and meets the challenges.

Preparing for the discussion: Some questions for reflection and prayer before the session

Theological/scriptural reflection: Acts 2. 41-47

So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

- What word or phrase stands out to you or catches your attention?
- What is being said about the Church?
- What might God be saying to St Helen's through this passage today?

Reflection Questions

Thinking about the past 2 years recollect a memorable time when you were able to engage with the church in something you really love to do, and which left you with a feeling of deep satisfaction.

Recollect a time when you felt you were hearing God /connecting with God, when you experienced God's presence through your ministry.

Now think about the 2 or 3 years before the pandemic recollect a memorable time when you were able to engage with the church (whichever church you were part of) in something you really love to do, and which left you with a feeling of deep satisfaction.

What have you learned over the past 3 years that you feel St Helen's needs to know, remember, build on, or keep?

As you look ahead, what would you identify as some exemplars of our church at its best?

Is there something we could be doing to better to build up or extend our strengths as a congregation so that we might be a Christian community that is a more robust reflection and model of God's mission?