

AWAYDAY WEEKEND AT HOLY TRINITY, BLACON



22-23rd September 2018 at Holy Trinity, Blacon



Wow! What an incredible, inspiring and awesome weekend we've just had! Let me describe our church, the area it's in and why we needed to be inspired and awed!

Holy Trinity is the only Anglican Church in the area of Blacon, on the outskirts of Chester. Blacon is a large post-war housing estate (population 13,800) with areas of significant socioeconomic deprivation. Overall the parish is among the 10% most deprived in the Church of England. The local community suffers from the same problems that many urban areas have, with alcohol and drug dependency being prominent.

The church was built (replacing an old church in the city centre) 60 years ago, at the same time as the nearby housing. Like many churches, the congregation is quite a lot smaller than it was a generation ago, and we now have about 50 attending our Sunday morning worship and the church is popular for baptisms and funerals. With grants we have just altered the building to make it more open and useful as a community hub and it is well used during the week. We have a thriving Outreach Project which brings people in most days for cake, coffee and company in our community café, gardening club and Playtots. We also run incredibly popular food and activities for families in the school holidays which other churches in the area are now emulating, but it wasn't increasing numbers in the services. How do we do that?

As a PCC we were feeling slightly in the doldrums, with a newly refurbished church which we knew was a blessing to the local community but how do you get more people through the doors and to discover a living faith in Jesus for themselves?

Praise be God sent us, through ReSource, an inspiring man called David O'Brien to talk to us and some church members on the Saturday. The morning session he spoke of how God has already given us all we need and it is inside each one of us. We were looking for outward changes to happen in the church, when in fact it has to start from within every one of us. **IMAGE – It's Me And God Equips!**
So simple yet so profound.



God has given us all gifts; skills, love, time, talking - and if we give them over to Him he will really use them to build His Kingdom. And it has to begin with prayer where we offer ourselves to God, for if Christ is in us, we are taking Him out to the community and others will see that and want the experience for themselves.

After lunch David felt led to pray with us all and over each of us in turn. Some of us were really aware of the Holy Spirit filling us and we were encouraged to stand and pray for each other. It was an amazing feeling being fired up and filled with the Spirit and it has made us realise how very important prayer is, for each other and the church.

We now want to have regular prayer meetings and offer personal prayer to those who ask for it during or after services. This we believe is the new mission for our church here at Holy Trinity as we seek to increase God's Kingdom in Blacon, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lynn Wakefield