

Friends

Over summer we have been prompted to think about what it means to be a community where Everybody Counts. I posed the question one Sunday morning:

‘Who does church belong to...?’

‘Us’, ‘the diocese’, ‘the community’, ‘the village’ the suggestions came.

Then ‘God’.

Exactly. The church belongs to Christ. It is not mine, nor yours, nor theirs. It is His.

What difference does that make to how we understand why St John’s is here and who St John’s is here for?

We are Christ’s church in Menston in 2025 and it is our calling to be his hands and feet on earth – he has none but us. And He longs to call and heal all people.

That includes those who differ from us in age, politics, orientation, identity, home life and culture. Whilst Menston might not appear to be very diverse compared to other places, within a population of 6,000+, there will be plenty of difference, and plenty of people who do not know that Jesus loves them.

That is our mission field.

We can only live up to our calling of being Christ’s church if we are open to connecting with others and drawing them in to hear and experience God’s love for themselves.

What can we do to extend God’s love to all in Menston?

Are all people able to join us in worship and fellowship?

How can we make sure they know we want them to?

These are the questions we need to be reflecting on and asking ourselves.

We are not here for our own benefit. We are here to love God and each other, and in doing so will find our own true and deepest needs are met – hope, peace and joy will be ours and theirs.

It doesn’t mean it won’t be uncomfortable. Anyone who has been part of a group knows that it is not possible for everyone to get everything their own way all the time. Being welcoming and inclusive is radical - but for the love of God might we challenge ourselves to be ever more generous and ever more willing to think of others first.

May you be challenged and comforted by the love of Christ,

The call and challenge of loving others:

