

Website Development

Eltham Park and Sunfields Methodist Churches



Led by Daniel Gibbins
The Church Website Design Project
Saturday 28th February 2009

Church Website Development Day

What was it all about?

On Saturday 28th February members of Eltham Park and Sunfields Methodist churches joined forces in attending an evangelistic website development day hosted at Eltham Park, with Daniel Gibbins from the Church Website Design Project. The day started at 10am and ended just after 3pm and over forty three people attended.

Throughout the day a series of interactive, creative exercises enabled participants to explore their views about important questions to do with faith and Christian religion. A selection of the responses are included here below for you to see.

What did you say about

| | What does church mean to you? | Problems people face in society today |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Peace, Purpose | Bereavement, Loneliness |
| | Barrier, Unwinding | Finance, Mistrust |
| | Fellowship, Shelter | Greed, Materialism |
| | Trust, Gathering | Prejudice, Mistrust |
| | Friendship, Worship | Mental Health, Addictions |
| | God | Poverty, Alienation |
| | Love | Criticism |
| | Warmth | Peer pressure |
| | Unity | Lack of structure |
| | Shelter | Search for answers |
| | Welcome | Sickness |
| | Journey | Relevance |
| | Community | Depression |

Development

The work on the day enabled participants to also explore and answer the types of questions that would provide important and essential informational content for the new Eltham Park and Sunfields websites. The exercises throughout the day provided insightful ways of approaching the writing of content for a website, which can then be disseminated by the participants who attended and then utilised (shared) by other members and groups of the church.

Some of the following questions were considered

In what ways have you experienced people becoming Christians and why?

- 1) Communion / Influence – prayer, being with God's creation
- 2) The wonder of creation: sunsets, mountains, nature
- 3) Miracles: e.g. birth, recovering from illness
- 4) Inspiration e.g. Billy Graham / evangelism / preaching
- 5) Inherited (inertia or nurture?)
- 6) Personal discovery – courses such as Alpha
- 7) Personal experience

Whose job is it to communicate the Gospel?

- 1) The minister
- 2) The congregation
- 3) Myself / individuals
- 4) The organist
- 5) The website
- 6) God

What is evangelism?

- 1) Spreading the Good News
- 2) Healing the sick through prayer
- 3) Breaking barriers and bringing people together
- 4) Welcoming new people
- 5) The church changing to meet the needs of today's people

In the 21st century, how can we do as Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19-20?

- 1) Witness with our behaviour
- 2) In London we don't have to go far because all nations come here
- 3) Trying to act as Jesus did – being humble, sharing love
- 4) Speaking about God without shame everywhere e.g. streets, markets
- 5) Using the internet and such sites as Facebook

How can the internet be used to help the church?

- 1) Advertise the church : service times, contact details, baptism etc
- 2) Contemplative texts – “thought for the day”
- 3) Link for those unable to attend: sermons online, photos of events
- 4) Ways of accessing the younger generation: Facebook etc
- 5) Groups: communicating links and information

What is communication?

- 1) Conveying of thoughts from person (scripture) to another
- 2) A channel of information between people
- 3) A means of establishing relationships
- 4) Sharing
- 5) Two way process / multi-way process



Reflective questions and answers

There were two very special questions which people were asked to reflect upon and to answer individually, giving the responses that felt most meaningful to them. Slithers of paper were distributed for writing down their answers anonymously.

A - What does the Holy Spirit mean to you?

1. The Holy Spirit is the light of God
2. Holy Spirit makes miracles happen
3. It makes the work of God be understood
4. It makes me believe in the Kingdom of God
5. God acting in my life
6. Shared humanity of God – likes sharing the air we breathe
7. Holy spirit means faith
8. Friendship, prayerful, a peaceful sense of being
9. Holy Spirit: an inner divine guiding force
10. To cleanse my life
11. Can I find real love?
12. Do I know if I have made any positive contributions?
13. Jesus, how can you use me for your work? Help me to minister to your people
14. What am I here for?
15. Why are so many people in the world suffering and going hungry and dying needlessly?
16. I'm so happy to see you! Can I join you for a while?
17. Why, when I believe, is it so difficult to spread the word?
18. What is the church for?
19. What did you really mean when you said "no man comes to the Father but by me"?
20. Jesus, when are you coming back to us?
21. Why is faith so difficult to hold onto in a constant way?
22. Has my life been good enough?
23. How does free will fit with your knowledge of all that will ever happen?
24. Thank you for my whole being!
25. Why did you not help me to follow you?
26. Why won't people listen to God?
27. How to I find peace and grace?
28. Why are some people suffering whilst others are enjoying?
29. Jesus, how can I have support through life's difficulties?
30. I don't know what to ask you.
31. Can you explain the miracles?
32. Can I be forgiven for all the bad things I have done?

B - What does the Holy Spirit mean to you?

1. The Holy Spirit is the light of God
2. Holy Spirit makes miracles happen
3. It makes the work of God be understood
4. It makes me believe in the Kingdom of God
5. God acting in my life
6. Shared humanity of God – likes sharing the air we breathe
7. Holy spirit means faith
8. Friendship, prayerful, a peaceful sense of being
9. Holy Spirit: an inner divine guiding force
10. To cleanse my life
11. Holy Spirit is a poetic term conveying the love of God and fellowship: the light of God
12. Holy Spirit is the presence of God within me – conscience, prompter, comforter and wisdom of God
13. Holy Spirit is the guidance to the good inner man that I know I can be – telling me to go from bad
14. I found love in church, love from Jesus – a family with trust. The Holy Spirit helps bring me those things
15. Life beyond this one on earth – an enveloping love
16. It means the being that works inside me to make me a better person
17. Real presence of God in my life – comforter with a big stick
18. Comfort in time of illness and bereavement. Hope of a new life and life after death
19. To me the Holy Spirit means contemplation, tranquillity, prayer and hope
20. The Holy Spirit is my carer, showing a pathway to God
21. The activity of God in me and in the world
22. The invisible presence of God ever present to guide and support me
23. An indefinable guidance that is constant and quite different from any other “earthly” guidance
24. It is my link with God
25. The Holy Spirit is my link to God. It is God and Jesus with me
26. The Holy Spirit refreshes my inner being
27. God, the Father, over all. Feelings inside of me, at peace
28. Something entering your life that makes you a better person and able to help others
29. Holy Spirit is support through all life’s difficulties

30. Expression of faith, link to what has been and what is to come
31. The Holy Spirit is my guide, my shining light on the path before me
32. The Holy Spirit enables me to be bolder in my faith, talking through me

There were other group exercise's - this is one example...

What is Prayer?

Prayer is the means to communicate with God; a direct and sincere line with God. But prayer is also a dialogue because God also talks to us. Through prayer we feel comforted and protected. Jesus is constantly present with us in prayer, which is in itself a thanksgiving moment for all that we have and are to be thankful for.

Prayer is something that Jesus did; he taught us how to pray through what we now know as 'The Lord's Prayer'. Although God knows our needs; he encourages us to talk to him about them and will guide us through the act of prayer and in being still and peaceful.

Prayer is not a wish and a want list. Prayer is having a relationship with God. You can build this at any time in any place, where ever you are, whoever you are.

We also find that prayer is a way of thanking God for his generosity and asking him for his guidance and help. Our prayers are not always answered, but it is comforting to know that God is listening. It is always a personal invitation to be with God, many Christians feel it is a personal conversation.

We have a relationship with God and prayer is a dialogue. It can have words or be in silence, it is not a wish list for us to 'go shopping'. We look for comfort, protection and peace – prayer offers a chance for us to give our thanks for all that we have.



Shared Moments



Fellowship

It was a great opportunity for groups to connect and explore the meaning of faith together as Christians.



Sharing

Tasks allowed groups to join together in imparting, exchanging and expanding their ideas.



Participation

Individuals from both Churches were able to engage with a creative learning process based on achieving shared goals.



Expression

People were able to create and share great stories, using writing after conversing, as the medium of documentation.

And finally

Following a day of full-on, intensive creativity, we began an initial process of looking at what contributions people could make to the website content. If you would like to contribute to the website, please Anita, or other people on the list below know as soon as possible.

| Name | Area | Church |
|---------------------|---|--------|
| Ruth Munro | Organisations support; Church groups; Community | EPMC |
| Emma Allen | Organisations support; Church groups; Community | EPMC |
| Jackie Ingram | Flower Club; Coffee Shop | EPMC |
| Garry Young | Personal reflections; Thought for the week | EPMC |
| Valerie Shaw | How the Church Can help | EPMC |
| Debbie Smith | Any/All | EPMC |
| J. Rawling | How the Church Can help | EPMC |
| Laurel Hadleigh | Young peoples page | EPMC |
| Wendy Young | Co-ordinate contributions to website | EPMC |
| Marion Thompson | Co-ordinate contributions to website; Brownies; History of EP | EPMC |
| Emma Allen | Co-ordinate contributions to website | EPMC |
| Ethel Wymer | History of Eltham Park | EPMC |
| Adel Hadleigh | Children's community; Young peoples pages; News & events | EPMC |
| Eileen Carter | Second Tuesday @ EP | EPMC |
| Dave Hodgkiss | Boys Brigade | EPMC |
| | | |
| Rachel Ackah | Young peoples page | SFMC |
| Andrew Gibbs | ? | SFMC |
| Sheila Ackah | ? | SFMC |
| Milton Paddy Boothe | Personal reflection - My Faith Journey | SFMC |
| J. A Ogunlade | Worship materials | SFMC |

Last and not forgotten

A special thank you to all who were able to attend the day, for your hard work and commitment to staying with the process on the day. Also to Marion for organising lunches and to Marion (EP) and Juliet (SF) for support with planning. Thank you to Robert Riddell for guidance and foresight.

Many thanks to Daniel Gibbins for preparing and leading us through a day of great insight, participation and creativity.

Your feedback:

Please send your thoughts about the day to Anita.