

## ECC Food for thought - part 4

### Mealtime conversations at the Vicarage

During February 2014 we hosted some mealtime conversations at the Vicarage, asking those present to discuss several questions under the broad theme of discipleship; so we offered questions of encouraging engagement with the life of the Church, prayer etc.

The tables below show a summary of the responses recorded at the time, and add to the earlier collection of documents for the new ECC to read, pray over and discern what God might be saying to us as a Church family at this time.

<p><b>In what ways does St Chad's nourish you and your friends?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• friendly</li> <li>• approachable</li> <li>• opportunity to share</li> <li>• usually someone available to help</li> <li>• haven in community</li> <li>• church for community, in the community</li> <li>• not a clique</li> <li>• youngsters are active</li> <li>• Home Groups and other groups</li> <li>• building used widely</li> <li>• welcoming feel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very caring congregation</li> <li>• encouragement and prayer</li> <li>• warmth</li> <li>• prayer chain</li> <li>• community groups being involved</li> <li>• opportunity to try gifts</li> <li>• everyone treated with respect</li> <li>• on the whole a loving family (although some miss out)</li> <li>• mix of old and new songs</li> <li>• jobs get done</li> <li>• good humour</li> <li>• all age breakfasts/car wash</li> <li>• understanding and sensitivity to each other</li> <li>• getting to know each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housegroups</li> <li>• extended worship</li> <li>• teaching on Sundays</li> <li>• Holy Communion</li> <li>• prayer ministry</li> <li>• pastoral visits</li> <li>• Tuesday Fellowship</li> <li>• modern hymns</li> <li>• welcomers</li> <li>• caring Church</li> <li>• mini bus</li> <li>• car lifts</li> <li>• friendship extending outside Church</li> <li>• emails</li> <li>• baptism visits</li> <li>• coffee time</li> <li>• flags</li> </ul>
---	--	---	--

<p><b>What are the major issues that we will face in the next few years?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pews - in or out? cushions?</li> <li>• steps can be dangerous</li> <li>• knock down hall and rebuild with 2 storey flats above?</li> <li>• how can we better use the space?</li> <li>• ageing congregation</li> <li>• change front office layout to allow for coffee at door</li> <li>• bar area with vending machine?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• youth team workers - bring a new generation through</li> <li>• new younger leaders</li> <li>• missing middle ages</li> <li>• finance</li> <li>• 2 denominations = 2 payments</li> <li>• building maintenance</li> <li>• future needs for building - making it fit for purpose</li> <li>• team structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ageing congregation</li> <li>• encouraging young people</li> <li>• less people to carry responsibility</li> <li>• less money/income</li> <li>• effects of recession</li> <li>• Charlton Hayes outreach</li> <li>• property maintenance</li> <li>• more paid staff for community?</li> <li>• worship for all ages</li> <li>• transport for older people</li> <li>• use of drums</li> <li>• adapting to change</li> </ul>
<p><b>A sense of belonging and working together are crucial in a Church. How do we develop these further?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• events</li> <li>• talking with people</li> <li>• website and texting information</li> <li>• posters (up to date info)</li> <li>• inviting others into our homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect and valuing everyone for what they offer</li> <li>• communication</li> <li>• we need to be gracious enough to allow give and take</li> <li>• people need to be able to express a view without it being seen as a criticism</li> <li>• encourage dialogue about what people don't like</li> <li>• encourage people to talk sooner if they have a concern</li> <li>• social events</li> <li>• opportunities to get to know through mentoring</li> <li>• people need to be given room to do things</li> <li>• let people take a break - show them we love them</li> <li>• openness to one another</li> </ul>	<p><b>belonging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wonderful fellowship (although sometimes can be friction)</li> <li>• welcoming is important - esp. strangers - perhaps a "budd" system?</li> <li>• communication is key to keeping people in the loop</li> <li>• don't jump on people - give them a small task to start with</li> </ul> <p><b>working together</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enlisting others - ask them to be involved</li> <li>• appreciate and value what they have done</li> <li>• meet up and thank them</li> <li>• define clear roles within teams</li> <li>• don't hold on to roles indefinitely</li> </ul>

<p><b>How might we make it easier for you to feel you are part of a praying community?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prayer events</li> <li>• prayer board</li> <li>• prayer garden</li> <li>• Church as refuge/sanctuary</li> <li>• sharing answers to prayer</li> <li>• prayer chain</li> <li>• post-it notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monthly prayer cards</li> <li>• prayer emails</li> <li>• invitation for prayer requests</li> <li>• advertise Monday evening more</li> <li>• encourage more in prayer chain</li> <li>• not every detail needed</li> <li>• prayer chain messages to be brief</li> <li>• is Monday pm the right time?</li> <li>• prayer at other times</li> <li>• do we need to change the structure of Monday evenings?</li> <li>• prayer cells using phone then prayer at home</li> <li>• conference call prayers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What are the big questions on people's minds that we need to address in our teaching (or some other way)?</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what happens when you die?</li> <li>• how do you talk to other people about their faith?</li> <li>• what do all faiths have in common?</li> <li>• how does the Church stand on same-sex marriage?</li> <li>• how do we all play a part in Church life?</li> <li>• what can we all bring to our Church?</li> <li>• how to help/mentor people into new roles</li> <li>• show the young people whose families don't come to Church that they are loved and can get help from us</li> <li>• course for everyday people</li> <li>• chance to ask questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feedback from Housegroups to inspire sermons</li> <li>• Christian persecution "Open Doors"</li> <li>• how close is the end time?</li> <li>• Christianity in today's society</li> <li>• same-sex marriage</li> <li>• new Baptism service</li> <li>• Church's view on human rights</li> <li>• how far does the Church go in dealing with current views? e.g. homosexuality, abortion, divorce etc</li> <li>• recession, lack of employment, politics, rapidly changing world</li> </ul>

<p><b>How could St Chad's encourage you to go deeper in your faith?</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talks on the internet so you can listen again</li> <li>• newer music has made a difference</li> <li>• being asked how your week has been spiritually</li> <li>• challenging sermons - not always spiritually deep</li> <li>• Home groups going deeper</li> <li>• how can we allow those who are working in Church to receive?</li> <li>• Wardens and Stewards need regular meetings with ministers</li> <li>• mentoring each other</li> <li>• preparing the Alpha Course helped the leaders grow in their understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enjoy the sermons</li> <li>• Housegroups</li> <li>• interaction</li> <li>• free worship</li> <li>• sermons on the internet</li> <li>• small group discussion</li> <li>• re-order service and more varied e.g. coffee first? meals? cafe style?</li> <li>• quiet day</li> <li>• weekend away</li> <li>• visiting Churches with "famous" speakers/musicians</li> </ul>
---	--	---	---