

Mike's message

Our Church's Future Story

All of you will know that this year is the 30th Anniversary of the congregation moving back into this building after extension and alterations. In a very real sense it's the 30th Anniversary of The Cotteridge Church itself. Earlier this year we had a weekend focussing on the past. There were displays of old photographs, records and registers. But an anniversary is about much more than the past. It's about the future too.



An excellent resource has recently come to my attention. Called 'Our Church's Future Story' it's a set of cards produced by The Methodist Church. The pack does exactly as it says by providing a toolkit for congregations to review where they are, where they want to be, and how to get there. It focusses on the natural life cycle of churches which, like any other living entity, show times of growth, times of thriving, times when the church wanes and the need for change and new life and new beginnings. There are a variety of activities and exercises and some probing questions. There are best and worst case scenarios to explore. There are steps to consider in building a new story for the church. Have a think about these:

Why do we exist? (*Mission: eg a sign of God's love in the community*)
 How do we live and behave? (*Bold, welcoming, relevant?*)
 What makes us distinctive? (*Vision, ecumenical, inclusiveity?*)
 How will we engage with the future journey? (*worship, discipleship, giving*)
 What will we do to move forward? (*strategy, new worship, community links*)
 Who will do what? And how?
 What's the most important now? (*in next 3 months, 6, 12?*)

Over the last weekend in September (28th and 29th) we'll be starting to consider a few of these things. Make a date in your diaries now and come along and be part of the start of the vision process.

The future isn't going to be the same as the past. In many ways it's futile and vanity to want us to return to being "like we used to be". Do we do that with our own lives? However the future life and discipleship of The Cotteridge Church can, with a little planning, be much better than ever if we all pray, think and contribute to that vision and are prepared to contribute to it.