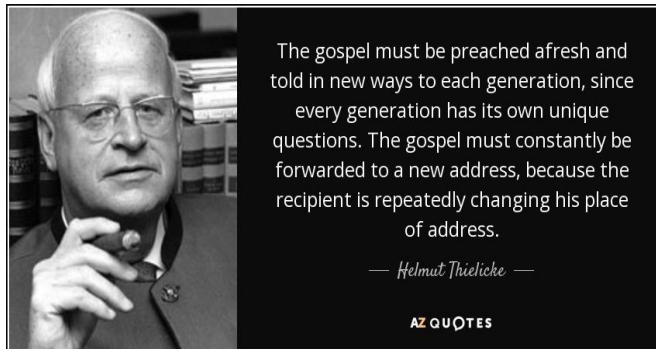


Pioneering - Exploring new ways of showing love and being church

At the heart of the Church of England's missional vision is a little phrase that poses a challenge for each generation. The Church "professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and sets forth in the catholic creeds ... **which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation**"



As Christians, we are called by God to proclaim the Gospel **afresh** in our generation.

- How do you do that with your children, grandchildren (maybe great grandchildren!) or the children you are in contact with through work, voluntary work or your family situation?
- How do you do that with friends, colleagues or neighbours who have no connection with church or the Christian faith?

Read Isaiah 49. 16-21

Isaiah receives a vision of hope for the future. God will change the ruins and the desolation of the past (due to their disobedience) and bring new life and a new future. For many Christians, the decline of the Christian faith and the growth of unrest, violence and confusion, feels very much like experiencing "ruins and desolation." Yet we are people of hope, called to reflect the character and intentions of God in our generation.

Isaiah encourages his reader to "lift up our [your] eyes and look around"

- What signs of God's new life do you perceive at St James, in the town and across the world?

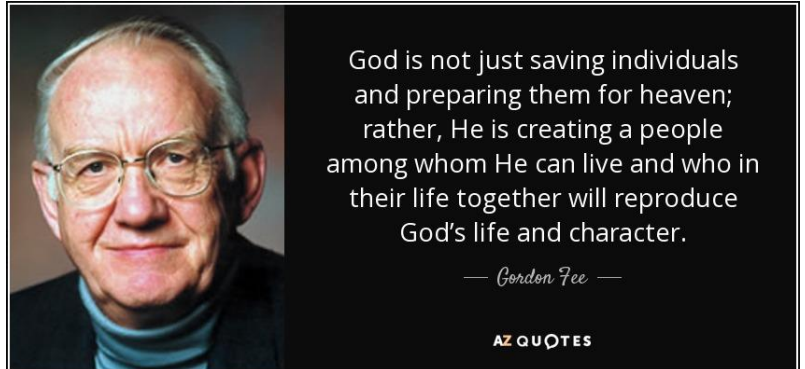
The value we are currently exploring is Pioneering and the Church of England has produced a useful definition of what pioneers are:

"Pioneers are people called by God, who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit's initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish a new contextual Christian community." So, pioneers receive an insight and a sense of calling to do something for those who can't or won't connect with the life of the church in its current form. Pioneers are not just dreamers, they are 'dreamers who do', willing to take the risk to try to make a difference. Pioneers are leaders capable of gathering

Pioneering - Exploring new ways of showing love and being church

people round a vision for a new missional venture and facilitating the ministry of that team to bring something new to birth.”

While there might be one or a few people in our congregation called to be pioneers in the sense described here above, as a faith community, we should be open to explore new ways of showing love and being church.



Read Acts 2. 37-47

- According to Acts 2. 42-47 what are some foundational elements for “being church” and “showing love”?
- At St James and/or in our Life Groups, what are we missing from this list?
- In what way does your reflection change how you will be praying for the life of the church, the life of St James and the life of your Life Group?

To do

Last week we committed ourselves to be more present/connected to those around us. You were encouraged to take a moment of silence and write down what came into mind. Have you been aware of a “God event” or “God coincidence” as a result? Share.

Continue to offer yourselves to be more present/connected with those around you and let us be expectant.

Prayer

Holy Spirit come, fill our hearts and minds with the desires and plans of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.