

SNOWDROPS

Normally at this time of year a friend and I have the conversation that starts "When are we going to see the snowdrops?" We make sure that we have a day free and spend a relaxed day, chatting, having lunch and looking at the banks of snowdrops at Kingston Lacy. This year they will flower without our gaze, oblivious of our absence.



According to Countryfile.com, there are 2,500 different types, although I challenge most of us to recognise the minute differences. However, they do have certain aspects in common, which is what makes them snowdrops and not crocuses.

Apparently they have a slight, honey fragrance, although I have never tested that as I suspect I might get odd looks if I lie down on the wet grass, nose to the ground, to smell one. I did once lie flat on the ground, right on the cliff edge, at St Abbs Head in order to take photographs of Puffins. It was only as I got up that I realised a family were watching me, slightly bemused. However, back to snowdrops.

I think they are so popular because they show themselves when other flowers are still keeping in the warm ground and they are a clear sign that Spring is on the way, with all the plant excitement that brings.

As we begin to see signs that 'spring' is emerging in our society and churches, with the roll out of the vaccine and the hint of greater freedom, whilst still keeping safe, maybe it is time to think ahead to the churches and circuit that will emerge. Some are saying that this is a golden opportunity to make changes; after all we have had to make changes while in lockdown. Others suggest we should be cautious, people are longing to return to a greater element of what they knew before.

What is certain is that, like snowdrops, we have a lot in common, our faith. But, we also have our differences and I would suggest that it is the differences that make us special. So, as we begin to return to meeting together again, how do we balance the need to confirm what we have in common as well as being generous about our differences?

In other words, what sort of church do we want to rebuild and what sort of circuit do we want to rebuild?

I suggest that genuine and sincere listening is essential so that people feel they are able to express their opinions, desires, concerns without feeling that they might look silly (because they think 'others know better than them'??), or they feel that their opinion doesn't matter.

It is also about how we respond to what people are saying, as Paul says in Colossians 4 v 6 "Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out."

Maybe our continued time of being apart is giving us the time to consider what sort of church/circuit we want to build as we emerge from this.

So, why not try finishing these sentences and then sharing them with others (you are allowed more than one ending):

I want our church to be

I want our circuit to be

May God continue to bless you in these coming months until we can all be together again,

Liz

PS If you want to email me or talk about anything please feel free to do so, I'm not going anywhere for a while.