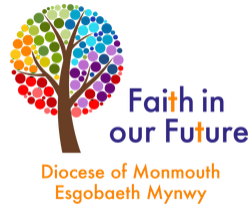


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VISION IN FOCUS



Wellbeing



Introduction

We are going slightly 'off piste' in this edition, as its focus isn't on any specific branch of our vision, but is something that is weaved into all of them.

'Wellbeing' is something many of us will be thinking more about this month, as some of us will be taking holidays, spending more time with friends and family or simply taking time off work to indulge in our hobbies!

August seems to be the time when lots of us think about 're-setting' - being more mindful about who we are and what we want to be.

In her introduction, Bishop Cherry reminds us how important it is to look after ourselves and others. Archdeacon Ian Rees helps us do this by introducing us to Kintsugi Hope, while Fr David Matthews talks about how healing, wholeness and reconciliation can also aid our wellbeing.

Head of Education Beccie Morteo shares her insights (and some useful tips) on how we, as churches and communities, help to support children and young people.

I hope you take time to sit down, grab a coffee and have a read through.

Have a restful August :)

Debra Goddard
Diocesan Communications Officer

Introduction from Bishop Cherry

Bishop Cherry introduces us to 'wellbeing', but reminding us how important it is to look after ourselves and others - "an integral part of stewardship."



Kintsugi Hope

In the video, Patrick Regan talks about the importance of caring for ourselves. He leads an organisation called Kintsugi Hope. Kintsugi Hope was founded by Patrick and his wife Diane after a series of operations and events that took them to the brink; physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. They faced illness and loss in their family and community.

They wrote a book and produced a DVD about their experiences. Through opening up about their struggles they realized how many people have felt alone in theirs, and the great need for each of us to be vulnerable, open and honest when life is hard.

Only when this happens, healing can start to truly take place.

Patrick described what led him to start Kintsugi Hope:

"Following a series of life-changing events including loss, illness and lots of surgery, life became increasingly overwhelming. This had a major impact on my emotional and mental health. My 'man up' self-talk didn't work, and I ended up suffering with anxiety and depression. I felt broken and filled with shame. However, when I opened up to share my brokenness, I found I wasn't alone."

"I learnt that being honest about my struggles not only helped me, but also helped open the door for many others to be honest too. It is so much easier facing difficult situations with others than on our own."

"I then discovered Kintsugi – the Japanese art of mending broken pots with golden glue. The gold makes a feature of the cracks instead of hiding them. All of us have broken pieces, but instead of hiding them, we can learn from them. We can discover treasure in our scars."

Kintsugi Hope now offer a number of different resources to help people to think about wellbeing, including groups which can be led locally offering a safe space for people to talk.

Take a look at their website for different resources, as well as details about the wellbeing groups.

<https://kintsugihope.com>

Bishop Cherry said recently that we can't care for others if we're not caring for ourselves properly. It's something we need to take seriously!

Archdeacon Ian Rees

Find out more about Kintsugi Hope with Patrick Regan.....



Healing, Wholeness and Reconciliation

Fr David Matthews, Bishop's adviser in Healing, Wholeness and Reconciliation talks about a God who heals, restores and forgives.



Wellbeing in our schools



Wellbeing is something that you will hear teachers talk about a lot. Covid and its continued impact, the cost-of-living crisis and a rapidly changing society has made this focus more important than ever.

People working with and supporting children will know that wellbeing is key to all areas of learning. Where there is a strong focus on promoting emotional health and wellbeing, you will see better engagement, higher levels of concentration and success, in many different forms. It can also have an impact on relationships, self-esteem and the way in which children and young people view themselves and the world.

So how can we as churches and communities help to support children and young people?

The five ways to wellbeing offers a helpful model, three of which are particularly relevant when we look at how churches and schools can work together.

Connection

One of the most important things we can do is focus on connection. Brene Brown, a Canadian professor and author, who is well known for her talks on human connection and vulnerability says:

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”

So how do we build relationships with others and make them feel like they belong? Is our welcome inclusive? Do we allow young people opportunities to take on responsibility? Do they feel like if they didn't turn up, they would be missed? The feeling of belonging and "I am meant to be here and be part of this" is powerful and small changes to approaches can make a big impact.

When we talk about connection we can also think about opportunities we offer that allow children to develop their relationship and connection with God. There are a myriad of opportunities to do this, through our schools and churches working together.

Finally, and key to the above being successful, developing connections between families and communities. How do we communicate with families? Do they feel welcome and included? Do we give people the opportunity to belong and connect with us?

Taking Notice

Another important aspect of wellbeing is taking notice. Paying attention to the present moment or the beauty and wonder of God's world. For some this might be found in nature or in meditation. For others this might be through prayer. Do we allow children and young people time to stop, reflect, give thanks and connect with God? In a world where everything is changing at such a fast pace, particularly regarding technology, how do we ensure time for children to be present? How do we develop prayerful approaches in school and churches that engage and resonate with children and young people. Do we prioritise space to pray? Do we think about how our spaces engage and invite children?

Give

Finally, we can look at how we encourage young people to Give or serve. Two key aspects of our diocesan vision are stewardship and social justice. By looking at both these areas we can focus on doing something to help others or contribute to the community. I never fail to be impressed by how eloquently young people are able to describe their want to serve and how passionately they express their views and feelings on injustice. How do we then allow young people to put this into action? How do we encourage them to discover the gifts they have been given and be generous with these gifts? How do we inspire them to challenge inequality and take action? Are we too quick to quiet them as it feels a bit uncomfortable? Encouraging children to reflect on why they feel the way they do about an issue can also be a powerful way to support their spiritual development. Have a conversation with a young person in your church or community and ask them what really matters to them, what makes them angry and why? Maybe that will lead to solutions and actions or a conversation about their faith?

As we look ahead to developing mission across the diocese, we can all ask ourselves how can we contribute to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our young people. As a starting point we might consider: listening, collaborating, being intentional in our offer and communicating well. Emotional and spiritual development

must remain a priority, we must have faith in the future for our children and young people.

*Beccie Morteo
Head of Education*

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