

Café Church report April 2023

Background

Café Church is an all-age, informal church gathering with some structure, but no set rules, providing the space for anyone to come along and enjoy refreshments, company, activities, and Christian worship together. Easter 2023 sees Café Church's first birthday.

Location

Church Hall, Smallfield

Time

3pm, every second Sunday in the month, excluding August. The second Sunday in December accommodates the usual Smallfield carol service.

Format

Tables are set up café style towards the kitchen end of the hall and refreshments are served. Craft and activity tables are set up at the other end of the hall.

As people arrive, they are welcomed, encouraged to take a seat, have a chat, share some refreshment, and do some activities.

Somewhere between 3.30-3.45pm, everyone gathers to sing some songs and listen to a short bible message.

Café Church meetings

Since the launch on Good Friday 2022, Café Church has met every month except August (summer holiday) and December (carol service). Broadly speaking Café Church meetings have mirrored themes and bible readings used in other church services on the same day. Themes and activities were as follows:

| Date | Theme | Activities | Songs |
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| Launch – Good Friday, 15 April 2022 | Easter | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easter gardens• Egg decorating• Origami blossom• Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosanna• When I survey• Thine be the glory |
| Sunday 8 May 2022 | Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish (John 21) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'He is risen' bookmarks• Bead fish• Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosanna• Celebrate Jesus celebrate |
| Sunday 12 June 2022 (Trinity Sunday) | The trinity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celtic knot paintings• Friendship bracelets• Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trinity song• Father we adore you |
| Sunday 10 July 2022 | The Good Samaritan (Luke 10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping hands• Wire hearts• Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love the Lord your God• A new commandment |
| Sunday 11 September 2022 | Harvest (Matthew 6 – do not worry) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corn collage• Cake case flowers• Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek ye first• Love the Lord your God |
| Sunday 9 October 2022 | Jesus heals the 10 men with leprosy (Luke 17) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What I'm thankful for spinner• Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give thanks• If I were a butterfly |

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| Sunday 13 November (Remembrance Sunday) | Remembrance (John 15: 9-17 – love one another) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt poppies • Prayers for peace maps • Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where have all the flowers gone? • Peace is flowing like a river |
| Sunday 8 January 2023 | Epiphany (Matthew 2 – the wise men visit Jesus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wise men stained glass collages • Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We three kings • Love the Lord your God |
| Sunday 12 February 2023 | Love (1 Corinthians 13) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origami hearts • Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus' love is very wonderful • Love is his word |
| Sunday 12 March 2023 | Living water (John 4 – Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman at the well) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marble painting • Themed colouring and activity sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water of life • I am feeding on the living bread |
| Good Friday, 7 April 2023 | Easter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easter gardens • Pastel cross/heart pictures • Bead crosses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosanna • When I survey • Thine be the glory |

Key observations and learning

- Café Church provides a relaxed, friendly atmosphere for informal worship.
- A core of around 25-30 Café Church regulars has emerged, who attend every month. In addition, there are a range of others who have attended several times during the year, meaning the attendee numbers have been good each month. Both Good Friday Café Church meetings have seen bumper numbers.
- It is noticeable that Café Church brings together people who would perhaps not normally meet.
- Feedback has been positive. Many enjoy the art and craft activities. Some Café Church attendees have said they appreciate the opportunity to meet socially and for worship on a Sunday afternoon, as it breaks up the weekend when they would normally be on their own.
- Less is more – we don't require lots of planned activities, just a few suggestions. Colouring appears to be a popular activity with all ages. Placing colouring sheets and pens/pencils on the café tables has gone down well. It has also been good to have other activities that can be brought easily to people sitting at the café tables, such as making bead crosses and fish, origami and collage.
- Volunteers are essential to enable Café Church to run smoothly and huge thanks go to all involved. There has been great support from a team of volunteers in the kitchen helping with refreshments, setting up and tidying away, playing music to accompany the songs and the planning team.
- An important aspect of the Café Church planning originally was to ensure the format was easily replicable every month, so that it doesn't necessarily rely on just one or two people. While this has broadly been achieved, new volunteers are always welcome.

Future dates 2023

- 14 May
- 11 June
- 9 July
- 10 September
- 8 October
- 12 November
- 10 December (carol service)

Please continue to pray for Café Church,

Liz Copeland.