

My Student Experience in Holy Trinity

Timothy Eldon

When I arrived in Aberystwyth in the first year, I set out with the intention of doing a tour of the churches of the town before settling on one which I would regularly attend. On my second Sunday in Aber I attended the morning service in Holy Trinity Church and went no further – this gem of a church quickly became my home from home.

I was brought up in an old-fashioned country parish in the Church of Ireland and connected immediately with the traditional liturgy of the services in Trinity, although going from communion once a month to three times a month was a bit of a change! It was not just the comforting familiarity of the old words of the prayers and creeds that persuaded me to go no further, but the incredibly warm welcome that I received there. On that first Sunday and every week thereafter I was greeted with smiling faces and kind greetings. After the service, in the south transept there is always plenty of chatter amongst the gathering of smiling faces over a cup of tea. The small and closely knit congregation of Trinity are always glad to welcome anyone into their midst – whether family visitor, student, or holidaymaker, everyone is immediately made to feel a part of the furniture. Indeed, it wasn't very long before I was roped into doing a reading or leading the intercessions. Indeed, it was always a great pleasure to join in the annual spring clean or the rather dubious job of clearing pigeon muck from the tower loft.

A highlight of the week was always the student meal and Bible study in the Vicarage. We would chat and discuss over a fine home-cooked meal before opening our Bibles with a cup of tea. Often, we would choose a book to go through during a term but every now and again someone might suggest a particular passage they wanted to discuss. Ian the vicar would give us a two or three minute talk on the background and context of our selected passage and then we'd discuss the interpretations. Ian's learned insights were very much missed after his retirement, but it was a testament to the nature of the people of Holy Trinity that we weren't by ourselves for long and our student group was soon adopted by some members of the congregation. Our little student group was always varied in background and opinion as faces changed every year, with all sorts from shiny new Christians to evangelicals to Roman Catholics and everything in between joining together on a Monday evening. Yet our weekly meetings were always full of laughter and jollity as we exchanged stories of our past week and expectations for the coming week. Even when essays due in for the next day were being frantically written, the Vicarage provided a welcome respite for an hour or two.

The regular congregation of Holy Trinity is just as varied in their theological outlook. Although my evangelical Protestant background in the Church of Ireland would seem to many a better fit with the Baptists or Presbyterians, I remained in Trinity as we all in our various theological shades, gathered together in sincere veneration of Christ Jesus to worship and to be fed by biblical teaching in the strong framework of the established liturgy.

It was an immense pleasure to worship at Holy Trinity during my time as a student in Aberystwyth and I will forever maintain a soft spot for the church on the Buarth. Whoever you might be and wherever you might come from, you are always guaranteed a warm welcome in Holy Trinity.