

## Rev. Cait writes

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I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

2021, much like its predecessor, was a strange and strained year but it has also seen many interesting opportunities for the church and left many further opportunities for the future. We have experienced church services, marriage preparation, discipleship studies and meetings over Zoom, journeyed with wedding couples as they held their breath at the thought of another lockdown hampering their plans, outdoor services at Easter, a pet service and a chance to watch England's men's football team in a final of a major tournament whilst sitting in our church building.

Changes to the way we meet together, worship and how we use our building offer a chance to evaluate what church means to us. For some, Mottram Church is a beacon; a focal point geographically, to others, the building is simply a convenient space to congregate as worshippers of Christ. I would imagine that most sit somewhere between those two points of view and move continuously closer to one or the other opinion. The church holds local and personal history and that is something I would like to assure everyone that we will try our very best to be mindful of when making changes to the building itself.

Similarly, when making changes to the way services are produced, we need to realise the sensitivities of all participants and know that not all will be happy, all of the time, with what is offered. Yet we have pulled together in our exploration of what it means to be Church in a world tackling the stresses of Covid in its many forms. In many ways, Covid has offered us the gift of such rapid change in ways the church has never really experienced before.

So, what does the church mean to you? Perhaps you have family history spanning many generations who have worshipped here, or perhaps you are new to the area and were welcomed into the community by members. Many people tell me about how they were baptized or went to the school here. They remember specific services, or group activities.

*(continued overleaf)*

## Rev. Cait writes (continued)

I recently visited a family to prepare for their loved one's funeral and just as I was leaving, the lady I was talking to showed me her tattoo. It was a picture of Mottram Church.



She told me that both her granddad and dad had their funerals in the church and are buried in Mottram cemetery. The image of the church was her link to them.

There is no right or wrong answer to the question 'what does the church mean to you?'. God engages with us in different ways. We are all individually and uniquely created and the way we engage with our maker is as unique as the beings we are, but I invite you, this new year to sit with that question for a little while.

What is it that Mottram Church and the wider church community mean to you? How do you engage with it? Would you like to know more about how to engage with it? If so, my door is always open for a chat as is God's, if ever you wish to chat to him (or her).

Once again, Happy New Year.

*Cait*