

Alpha Report for Aldridge Parish Church

Church Annual Meeting 2024

Alpha is a well-established part of the life of APC. We ran Alpha in the Spring of 2023 with 13 guests and then in the autumn with 12 guests. In every Alpha some guests are church members refreshing their discipleship, and some are people who are hungry to know more about God. Many guests speak of enjoying the course, finding it genuinely interesting and helpful in their personal relationship with Jesus. At the end of the autumn course 4 of the guests immediately signed up for the Spring 2024 course – ‘now that we know Jesus, we want to go back and find out what we missed the first-time round’. Another said, ‘I wish I could do Alpha for ever – it is such a blessing’.

Many talk of Alpha as if Alpha ‘makes the difference’ – when actually it is Jesus. Alpha is a group of people who meet regularly to explore Christian faith, with a transparent desire to experience the Holy Spirit in their relationship with the Lord in the way which Jesus promised. So, we look at the New Testament teaching about how the Spirit breathes life into our friendship with Christ and makes it real as we pray along these New Testament lines. And the Lord answers – in unmistakable, tangible, and beautiful ways.

Alpha is an opportunity to explore life with Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit in a way that many people in church have not yet experienced. Gentle prayerful expectancy – informed by scripture, the willingness to ‘step out in faith’ and the time and space to make up our own mind. No pressure, but tailored support as much as is desired.

Here is one surprising fact which emerged through reflection upon recent Alpha courses. As a proportion of our congregations, very few members of APC show an interest in Alpha for themselves or mention inviting a friend along. It’s a bit of a puzzle, and there are probably a variety of reasons. Yet isn’t it a shame that some of us seem to have settled for less than what the Lord offers. Did not Jesus say that he has come that we might have life, and life in all its fullness.

Why not join the growing number of APC ‘regulars’ who have found Alpha personally refreshing, and possibly something our friends might consider as well?

David Lee

Hayley Bourne