Would I Lie to You? – The Truth Will Set You Free - From The Rector

Dear Friends,

One of the greatest challenges many of us face is the pressure to appear "normal" – to fit in, to meet expectations, to cover up our struggles and just get on with life. We tell ourselves little lies about who we are and what we can do, hoping that, eventually, we might actually become the people we pretend to be. But the truth is, real freedom comes when we stop pretending and embrace who we truly are. As Jesus said in John 8:32, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

For me, this journey towards truth has come through the recent discovery that I have ADHD. I spent years wondering why I struggled with certain aspects of my role as a priest. Remembering people's names is nearly impossible for me, no matter how much I try, and paperwork and detailed administrative tasks feel overwhelming. These are not small things for a rector, but finally understanding why I struggle has been incredibly freeing. I no longer beat myself up over my limitations; instead, I lean on the wonderful team around me, who help ensure that these vital aspects of ministry are covered.

And I am not alone. Tracey, our curate, has dyslexia and dyspraxia. Natalie, our Associate Vicar, has recently discovered she is autistic. Each of us has tried to hide our difficulties, to compensate in ways that often exhausted us. But, in recent months, we have begun to share more honestly with one another and with the church about how our minds work. It is not that we are giving up on the things we find hard, but rather we are learning to be kind to ourselves, whilst striving to be most fully the person God made us to be.

Neurodiversity can be a real challenge, particularly in roles that require a wide range of skills. For clergy working alone, it can feel like an impossible burden. But when we work together as a team, our differences become strengths. I may struggle with remembering names, but I have gifts in other areas. Tracey may find written communication difficult, but she brings creativity and warmth that enrich our ministry. Natalie may find some social interactions exhausting, but her deep insight and pastoral care are invaluable. Each of us has something to bring, and each of us has things we need help with. It is in recognising this that we find true freedom.

This isn't just a lesson for our clergy team, it is a lesson for all of us. No one person can do everything. No one person should have to. When we pretend we can do it all, we set ourselves up for failure. When we acknowledge our need for one another, we allow God to work through us in ways we never imagined.

Just as our clergy team is learning to rely on one another's strengths, our churches must learn to do the same, both with each other and with our communities. Our work with the Minchinhampton Community Hub and the Amberley Shop on the Common show how much stronger we are when we collaborate between church and community.

The truth about ourselves can sometimes be difficult to face. But in doing so, we become more free to let go of the guilt and frustration over the things we find difficult. We are free to support one another, knowing that, together, we can accomplish far more than we ever could alone. So, let us stop pretending we can be perfect, let us embrace the truth, then the truth will set us free.

With every blessing,
The Rector