



Ephesians 2: 19

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household

It was a huge task and a big ask – the day before the Platinum Jubilee Prom at All Saints Daresbury church the volunteers gathered in the carpark and looked quizzically at the various pieces of several gazebos. The question? How do they all fit together?

All of our volunteers attend church, come to our community drop in and live locally, but some could be viewed as “foreign”.

Many of our willing volunteers, who are seeking asylum here, are housed temporarily in the Daresbury Park hotel. For them, English is not their first language. Communication and working together to solve the problem, was all the more impressive. This was a community of very different people, who struggled and laughed together as they built the staging, gazebos and stalls ready for the next day's celebration. Because of their common purpose, any differences were set

aside and as they built the physical structures, they also built up relationships which fed into a powerful feeling of community.

No one was considered a foreigner or stranger and all who took part were valued as equal members of God's household. The next day, as God's people we role-modelled community as we enjoyed welcoming all who came to our musical extravaganza to celebrate HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Who, to God, is foreign? Who are the “foreigners” in your life experience? How can you work to welcome and include them?

What barriers do we need to tear down in order to build up?

When the work of tearing down prejudice and hatred and ignorance is difficult and tiring, I use this prayer, discovered many years ago from time spent working with USPG.

Bridge builder God,

You have overcome all that separates us from you;
show us the way of that same reconciling love amid the hatred of our world.

The chasm of hurt is too wide for us,
the raging torrents of antagonism threaten to engulf us
and the steep gorges of fear paralyse us.

Come bridge builder God, show us how to build.

Amen

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