

Autumn Newsletter – November 2009

As Christmas and a new year hurtles towards us, we wanted to let you know of some of the things happening over the next few weeks and months.

All change... again!

As you will know, it is a time of considerable change at the moment at St John's, as Mel leaves us this month to start up her new role as Director of the Youth and Children's programme at Oak Hill (more later). Along with Phil Highton's departure to Cheadle in the summer, this will leave us with a considerable reduction in full time staff for the time being.

Do please pray for the staff team and wardens at both churches, that what we choose to do will be to glorify God and keep His message at the heart of our activity over this period.

For both church families, these times can unearth God's goodness to us in the gifts He has given to His people, as they step up to take on roles previously carried out by others. There are so many opportunities for ministry and mission in and around Knutsford, some of which we are involved in already, many of which we are not. We would love to continue with those things we are currently doing, whilst keeping a prayerful watch for those things we could wisely take on. However, all these things will require God's people to "labour" together.

Inevitably some "traditions" might have to be sacrificed and new "ways of doing things" tried.

Please pray for wisdom for those making decisions and graciousness for any who might feel disappointed by them. Above all pray that we would show our love and gratitude for Jesus by our fellowship and generosity of spirit and that we would be excited afresh by the power of the gospel to save and strengthen.

Thanksgiving

We are grateful to God for the service and fellowship of Kevin and Pat Yates over all their years with us at St John's. Latterly Kevin has served us superbly as Treasurer and both Kevin and Pat have played leading roles in our Social Fellowship and Take a Break. We will miss them both as they move to be near family around Sheffield, but know they will be back to visit often!

We are also very thankful that Barry Chidlow has agreed to be our new Treasurer. This is a major role in the life of our church and it's a great blessing when someone who knows and loves the Lord is willing to use his gifts for us in this way. Please do what you can to help Barry settle in to the job – particularly as year end approaches!

Mel's move

Mel's last Sunday with us will be 15th November, which will give Mel some time to prepare herself to take up her teaching role at Oak Hill Theological College in January. We will be praying for Mel at each of the services on 15th, but at the 6.30 service we will have an opportunity to hear more from Mel about the encouragements and challenges she leaves us with here at St John's and of those she will face at Oak Hill as she leads up this important work and strengthens the staff team there. Do join us for a celebration and thanksgiving at 6.30 and to pray for Mel as she moves to London and starts her work there in the new year.

In the meantime the task of finding a new youth minister, along with our intention to employ someone to work with our children and young families, continues. We have some encouraging applications in. Please pray for this process, that our ministry in this area might continue and grow. We might have to be patient with start dates, so please do all you can to help out whilst we wait.

Alec

We are grateful to God to have Alec with us. Alec has thrown himself in well and truly in our work with Eureka and with Pathfinders. Again please do what you can to support and encourage Alec over the next few weeks and months.

Re-ordering

Earlier this summer 4 architectural practices were approached to submit proposals to enable the PCC to select the architect they would work with on the re-ordering project. All 4 practices visited the church and responded to the brief given. 2 strong contenders emerged from that process. A sub committee of the PCC comprising the vicar, wardens, Dave Broadbent as Buildings Officer and John Roberts as logistics co-ordinator met with those 2 architects as they presented further on their submitted proposals. Again both were excellent and the group was grateful to God for His provision for us. After reporting to the PCC, PCC decided at an Extraordinary Meeting on 18th October to appoint our inspecting architect Graham Holland to be the architect on our re-ordering project.

Graham will soon be meeting with a group to clarify further our thoughts and plans, before holding an early site visit with the Diocesan planners to get early impressions of their views.

Church family members will then have an opportunity to consider the proposals and plans as we move forward on this project to open up our building to allow an unchanging message to reach a contemporary culture.

Please continue to pray for all involved in this important project which will take time to develop. If you have any questions or comments, please do speak to Nigel, the wardens, Dave, John or any PCC members.

Christmas and New Year services

Along with our traditional Carol service, Christmas Eve crib service and midnight communion (at 11pm!!), we will be holding a BCP communion service at 8am at Toft on Christmas Day with a Family Service at 10.15 at Knutsford, with Communion following. There will be the usual morning services on Sunday 27th December. On 3rd January there will be a BCP service of morning prayer at 8.45 and the monthly Family Service at 10.15, which will take place in the church this time, for all of us to enjoy.

Next term

The evening service will start up again on 10th January where, next term we will look forward to welcoming a number of old and new friends from around the region, working within our universities and working with brothers and sisters overseas as we take a look at how the same gospel has to be preached in different contexts - Christ and culture.

In the mornings we are going to understand that gospel further as we review our homegroup work in Luke. Nigel and others will be preaching through this gospel, bringing out issues we've grappled with in our homegroups. Each month there will be a focus slot where we will have an opportunity to put questions to Nigel that have challenged us as we've studied together. So, as you continue in Luke in homegroups,

collect those questions together as we seek to understand the Christian gospel for our own nourishment and comfort and to share with those around us.

We pray that the Lord will use this programme to build us up and challenge us to reach out.

Confirmation service

There will be a confirmation service at Knutsford at 10.15 on 31st January 2010. This is a service where, in the Anglican church, adults publicly become "members" of the church as they make for themselves the Christian vows made on their behalf by their parents at baptism. (For those not yet baptised, don't worry, that can be arranged as part of this service.) If you are interested in being confirmed, please speak initially to Nigel or Mel.

As ever, if you have any questions or comments about any of our plans, please do speak to Nigel, Andy or Debbie.

In His service.