

NEWSLETTER No5

Autumn 2015

CHURCHES TOGETHER
IN CHESHIRE



Welcome!

Welcome to this, the latest of the newsletters from Churches Together in Cheshire. As before I seek to include both news items and notices of ecumenical activities and events that are taking place within Cheshire, and also information relating more widely to the ecumenical scene across the country. .

In this newsletter we note some of the events of recent months and look ahead to significant events of the next three months. Please see the items in this newsletter relating to these matters.

You will find my contact details at the end of this Newsletter, and if you wish any future edition to include reports of what has been happening in your neck of the woods, or to advertise any forthcoming event I would be pleased to hear from you

Andrew Taylor

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The theme for the 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which runs from 18th – 25th January, has been chosen by the churches of Latvia and is:

‘Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord’ (*1 Peter 2.9*)

Resources for the week are now available from the World Council of Churches website: www.oikemene.org, and going into

their Resources pages. Further information will become available from CTBI in the coming weeks.



The service arranged by Churches Together in Cheshire will be held in Chester Cathedral on 24th January, 2016 at 4.00 pm when the preacher will be the Revd. Lord Leslie Griffiths. Further details of this service, to which all are welcome, will be circulated later in the autumn.

South Korean Prayer Mission

Churches and Christian groups in Northwich and across Mid-Cheshire hosted part of this Prayer Mission, held at the end of June. Caroline Bishop of St Wilfrid’s Church, Davenham, who co-ordinated the mission alongside local church leaders, reports:

‘It was an enormous honour and privilege to host a team of South Korean Prayer Missionaries for a second time as part of a national Prayer Mission in which a total of 350 South Koreans, in small teams, visited 30 locations across the UK. Travelling at their own expense, and in gratitude for those British missionaries who had first taken the gospel to Korea, these South Koreans sought to partner with us in

praying that God would rekindle the flame of Christianity in our nation. The joy and passion of this servant-hearted team was inspirational, with their Lead Pastor, Lee Kwang Jin, eager to encourage us to fulfil those things God had placed in our hearts.

A number of partner churches hosted a variety of prayer times and events including prayer walks, prayer drives, visits to local schools, prayer and praise evenings, prayers for church leaders, sanctuary prayers, all-night prayer vigils and prayers on Old Pale in Delamere Forest, which overlooks Cheshire, its neighbouring counties and nearby cities, towns and villages. Looking out from Old Pale there were heartfelt cries of personal repentance, for a restoration of family relationships, for the wells of salvation to be opened, and for the message of the cross to be faithfully preached throughout our communities, culminating in prayers of blessing being said by church and prayer leaders from across the area.



The Prayer team came with the vision imparted by their church leader of them as logs, ready to re-ignite the fires of faith that in this country had been reduced to smouldering ashes. They were therefore surprised and encouraged that in the

Moulton vicarage they should find a real campfire of substantial size, the product of clearance work pursued by Gordon Kegg, Vicar of Moulton, prepared and ready to burn – a sign of God's promise to us all.

The mission concluded with celebrations in London, involving all the teams, when preachers from the UK urged Christians to awaken the church from its slumbers and for an army of committed believers to be raised up. Finally the visiting South Koreans committed themselves to continue their prayers for the UK, and asked in return for prayers for their country, and in particular for North Korea.

Like last year's prayer mission, this visit was only made possible by the generous contributions of many people, giving financially, providing meals and accommodation, allowing the use of church buildings or simply giving of their time and gifts; an enormous thank you to everyone who prayed or supported in any way, and especially for God's gift of the Koreans.'

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sins and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

The Uniting Church in Garden Lane, Chester

On 5th July a service of Thanksgiving and Dedication was held at the Uniting Church in Garden Lane, Chester to mark the signing of the constitution of their Local Ecumenical Partnership. The Uniting

Church is comprised of the former Garden Lane Methodist Church and the Sealand Road URC.

The preacher at the service was Revd Jacky Embrey, the Moderator of the URC Mersey Synod, and prayers were led by Revd. Peter Barber, the Chairman of the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District of the Methodist Church. Greetings were brought to the church by representatives of the civic community and of Churches Together in Chester.



Human Trafficking

The group from the Frodsham Churches that is pursuing concerns in relation to Human Trafficking and modern day slavery has remained active in seeking to promote awareness of these issues, and to that end have linked up with the Rhema Theatre Company to bring their production 'Its not Fair!' to Frodsham Methodist Church on Friday, 16th October. Additionally, as Churches Together Against Human Trafficking, they have produced a newsletter to highlight the plight of individuals whose lives are destroyed by Human Trafficking.



RHEMA THEATRE COMPANY: 'IT'S NOT FAIR'

Present an inspiring and moving new piece of theatre telling stories around the world of human trafficking - and those who fight against it. Chester Diocese and Churches Against Trafficking have invited Rhema to include FRODSHAM as a venue on their national tour this autumn. www.theitsnotfair.co.uk/tour-dates
AT: FRODSHAM METHODIST CHURCH, Kingsley Road, Frodsham, WA6 6BA Friday 16th October 2015 Starting at 7.30 pm. For tickets contact www.eventbrite.co.uk or frodshamforuminfo@gmail.com. Tickets are free, a donation collection is requested for victims of Human Trafficking.

Further details of 'It's not Fair' or copies of the newsletter can be obtained from: Stephen Pickett:

frodshamforuminfo@gmail.com; or will appear on

www.frodshammethodistchurch.org

where there is a header bar, please go to 'Community' click here and scroll down to 'Churches Against Trafficking Newsletter'. From about the third week in Sept the newsletter will be as another item in that list.

Christian Aid

A Service of Thanksgiving for Christian Aid's 70th Anniversary

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Christian Aid and to mark the occasion there will be a service of thanksgiving on Sunday 6th September 6:30pm at Chester Cathedral. It will be an ecumenical service of thanksgiving for the incredible contribution of the churches and congregations of the area to the eradication of poverty. We shall hear stories from the decades of work our supporters, partners and staff have committed to the global movement for justice.

Riding Lights Theatre Tour

Looking towards 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference Christian Aid, with Riding Lights, Diocese of Lichfield and Operation Noah, have created BAKED ALASKA...

From the four corners of the earth inter-connecting stories of humanity living with unpredictable effects of climate change. In the power struggle some sound warming bells while others make a pudding of the planet. In this high-energy, 'seriously funny' show *BAKED ALASKA* is something we can all look forward to ... unless we do something about it. This amazing production, written by Paul Burbridge and Jonathan Bidgood is touring across the North West throughout October and November.

It will be performed in Alderley Edge on Monday October 19th at Alderley Edge Methodist Church, Chapel Road, SK9 7DU. Tickets from Box Office 01904 613000 or

<http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>

If you would like your local church to have a voice for climate justice and you are unsure where to start, Christian Aid's regional coordinators can come and run a workshop to engage your church and help identify ways that we can all work together to tackle climate change. Please contact Helen Howe on 01925 582820 or email hhowe@christian-aid.org for further details.

Faith Action Audit, Halton

Faith groups in Halton were amongst those from 57 communities that took part in the Faith Action Audit co-ordinated by Cinnamon Network, and the results of that were presented to church and civic

representatives at Runcorn Town Hall on 14th July.

The audit identified 215 projects, 53,290 beneficiaries, 1,423 volunteers and about £2 million of financial value being provided by faith groups in Halton. The summary concluded that "local churches and other faith groups work with families, provide debt advice, coach people back into work, offer emergency food parcels and provide a safe place to belong and build friendships".

John Cavanagh of Together for the Harvest and Jeremy Duff, the Faith Communities Representative in Halton as local sponsors of the audit wrote: "Faith groups from halton are passionate about the Cinnamon Faith Action Audit because it will document the amazing contribution that people of faith make in the community. It will help us build stronger relationships with the Borough Council and other community authorities, and to develop a better partnership in serving the people of the borough."

The report of the full national audit can be accessed at: www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk

Connecting Church-Based Social Action and Church Growth

A report on church-based social action and church growth has recently been released by Jubilee+.

The 2014, 2012 and 2010 National Church and Social Action Survey Reports show that churches in the UK have responded significantly to the social challenges in their communities. In 2014, it is estimated that 1.1 -1.4 million volunteers participated in church-based social action in the UK, touching millions of people through various initiatives. The number of

volunteer hours on social action increased to 114.8m per annum. This is an increase of 16.8% compared with 2012 and 59.4% compared with 2010. Funds given by UK Church members that were spent on social action initiatives increased to £393m in 2014. This is an increase of 14.9% in two years and 36.5% in four years. The average number of social action initiatives undertaken by individual churches has risen to 8.9. This represents an increase of 20.3% compared with 2012 and 81.6% compared with 2014.

However, is all this effort helping to grow the Church or is this just social work?

The leading two encouragements in the 2014 and 2012 Surveys were 'Community Involvement' and 'Attendance at Events/Growth'. This is exciting news for the Church as it shows that social action is helping it connect to local communities and has resulted in Church growth. Social action seems to enable connection to people who are not at a place where they would be interested in Alpha or equivalent courses.

All social action initiatives have an effect on church growth

Looking at responses to the question in the 2014 and 2012 surveys, *"Thinking of organised activities of your church in the local community in the last 12 months, how do you rate their effectiveness in seeing people added to the church?"*. Answers to the question could be; Poor, OK, Good, Excellent. If we look at the responses to 'Ok', 'Good' and 'Excellent', ALL initiatives have some effect on church growth, some a lot more than others.

Some initiatives seem to consistently result in church growth; Parents and toddlers, Caring for elderly (apart from church members), Special needs adults, Cafe open to public, Children's club - up to age 11

(apart from church children's ministry), Bereavement counselling (apart from church members), Youthwork - 12-18 (apart from church youth ministry). Others seem to be sample dependent.

One might be tempted then as a church leader to just pick the most fruitful on average, but is that the whole story? No: some churches running the same social initiative respond with 'Poor'; some respond with 'Good' and 'Excellent'. What could be the reasons for this?

Relationships, prayer and invitations are important

To help answer this, in the 2014 survey, we asked the additional question, "What made the difference between activities rated as 'good' or 'excellent' in seeing people added to the church versus those rated 'poor' or 'OK?'". We listed some factors that could be reasons and asked respondents to tick all that applied as well as giving a text box for other reasons. The leading factors mentioned by 50% or more of the sample are:

- We were able to build a long-term relationship with people
- We were able to spend time with individuals
- The initiative is regularly prayed for
- The volunteers are welcoming
- We invited people to other events

This is very encouraging as these behaviours point to building good relationships – 'evangelistic gifting' was well down the list of factors.

[Click here for more details and to download the summary report](#)

Forthcoming events

Salt of the Earth



To Frack or not to Frack?

A well-attended meeting at the Lion Saltworks on 5th July heard geologist and theologian, John Weaver address issues relating to oil and gas extraction by “Fracking”, proposed as the short to medium term solution to our nation’s energy needs. These included the environmental risks of the process and what are the environmental costs to ourselves and our neighbours of relying more on carbon-based energy supplies. A fuller report of the meeting can be found in past events on the Salt of the Earth website: www.saltoftheearthnetwork.net

The Salt of the Earth network has the following event planned:

7th November
“From Particle Accelerator to Accelerated Economic Impact”

Venue: Daresbury Innovation Centre
10.00 am - 1.00 pm
for more details contact Henry Ratter - ratterh@aol.com

Germinate Leadership programme



Janet Bryer writes in June 2015: 'Germinate Leadership is an exciting programme on creative leadership in the rural church run by the Arthur Rank Centre. The programme aims to develop creative and entrepreneurial skills in lay and ordained leaders from the rural church. It is a subsidised 18 month programme which includes 360 degree appraisal, a residential event, input and peer days, mentoring and work shadowing.

A cohort of around 15-20 people both lay and ordained from a mixed denominational background take part in the programme. Each participant will have a mentor to support them through the programme and will also become part of small self-supporting peer groups. The programme starts on Wednesday 30th September 2015. The costs of the programme is £1,150 including a three day residential. There are a limited number of bursaries available where this will help participation'.

Next Edition

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in December. If you have any items you would like to be included please send them in by 25th November, 2015.

Revd. Andrew Taylor
County Ecumenical Development Officer,
11 Broadacres, Broomhall,
Nantwich. CW5 8BH

Tel: 01270 780529
e-mail: ceo.ctic@gmail.com