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APRIL 2010

From Bishop Richard

As I write this we are moving towards our new look Forum on Wednesday 19th May 2010 which promises to be more attractive and full of interest – not least the food which will precede it! I do hope you will be there. We shall welcome most warmly our speaker, the Revd Dr Andrew Prasad, the Moderator of the North Thames Synod of the URC who will bring a unique perspective on working together from his roots in the Church of North India. There are full details about the Forum elsewhere in this newsletter.

At last we have a new slim-line Constitution to present to the Forum which will have been finally approved by BEC before that date. We believe it to be in line with current national thinking about lighter and more flexible ecumenical structures and that it will serve us well as we seek to work together wherever possible.

In addition, we hope to move ahead after the Forum on the appointment of a new County Ecumenical Development Officer. A job description is revised and ready, and we have an outline timetable for such an appointment. It will make a tremendous difference to have someone in post again.

May God bless you all richly and give you joy in our risen Lord.

+Richard

May Forum - With a Difference!

Wednesday 19 May 2010 at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church,
Pope Close, Flitwick.

The Revd Dr Andrew Prasad, Moderator of the Thames North Synod
of the United Reformed Church will speak on:

'An Ecumenical Journey from India to Britain'



The Buffet meal will be available from 6.30pm and there will be ample opportunity to meet informally, to share information and ideas with members of other CT Groups and LEPs. Do come along and share in this new experience - there will be a range of display resources to whet your appetite.

The speaker is scheduled to speak from 7.30pm to 8.00pm with time for questions.

The AGM will begin at 8.00pm ending at 8.30pm when there will be time for more refreshments, informal gathering and viewing the resources before we end at 9.00pm.

PLEASE make this known to others in your churches and encourage them to attend.

From the Secretary

Thank you to all who sent in material for this Newsletter.

I have tried to include details of future events rather than look back on those that have taken place.

I am looking forward to the 'new look' Forum and hope to meet many of you there this year.

Jocelyn Harper



FEEDBACK is welcomed

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Introducing ... Co-ordinating Chaplain Bedford campus Cassandra Howes

By the time you are reading this the new chaplaincy centre on the University of Bedfordshire's Bedford campus will have been officially opened by the Bishop of Bedford. It's called SeedBeds and is a welcoming place for all students and staff. As chaplain, my role is to be a part of the life of the campus - to be interested in all aspects of learning and teaching, social life and activities. More particularly it's about being a sign post to how God is at work on campus and how spirituality and faith impact on individuals and groups and how the university is run. It's also about being a pastor who is available to listen and advise on personal and spiritual issues.

I came to Bedford from Bristol and as a Methodist minister I have been a university chaplain for 23 years, serving in four other universities; prior to that I was an ecumenical youth chaplain and a nurse. My experience as a psychiatric nurse leads me to have a strong interest in students' mental and spiritual well being. In each institution I have worked in I have been involved with helping new international students settle in and I am exploring further how the local Bedford community can help in welcoming and supporting our international students. The role of a chaplain can be very diverse and is sometimes about filling in the gaps of support provision. At Bedford I am developing some work on sport and spirituality and am closely linked with many faith communities in Bedford through the Bedford Council of Faiths. Within the university I aim to work collaboratively with others and am involved in the Equality and Diversity Forums, and in putting together a programme for Refugee Week – highlighting the contribution refugees and asylum seekers make to our society. I am also involved with the Healthy Campus initiative – in promoting aspects of wellbeing in a holistic way. I work closely with other support services – counselling, mental health and disability support and with the Students Union who are responsible for social activities on campus.

Chaplaincy on the Bedford campus serves all students and staff regardless of religious affiliation and I hope that for the next academic year we may have volunteer chaplains from a range of different faiths. Hopefully, the new centre will be offering a range of activities including Bible study and prayer groups, discussion groups and presentations on spirituality, faith and social justice themes. It will be a place of welcome and hospitality – “a place in which to grow and change”.

Amphill & Flitwick Churches Together

Pentecost in the Park

From 12.30pm on Sunday 23 May 2010 the annual Amphill & Flitwick Churches Together 'Pentecost in the Park' service will be taking place near St Katherine's Cross in Amphill Park. This is a great family occasion that pulls together all the local churches to celebrate Pentecost with prayer, praise and preaching.

This year's guest speaker is Bishop Henry Richmond.

The Amphill Town Band will lead us in our worship.

There are activities for the younger ones and an opportunity to bring a picnic and spend time together after the service.

This year the collection will be in aid of the Air Ambulance service.

All are welcome - if you do not have your own Pentecost event do come along!

The Event

Redborne Upper School Sunday 13 June 2010 at 2.30pm

The Christian youth groups of all the churches in Flitwick and Amphill will be hosting their second 'EVENT' at Redborne Upper School drama studio.

The afternoon will include praise & worship led by Joe Lawton, teaching from a guest speaker and time to talk and meet with young Christians in the area.

Supported by St Peter & St Paul C of E Flitwick, St Andrew's C of E Amphill, Flitwick Baptist Church, Amphill Baptist Church, Flitwick Methodist Church, Amphill Methodist Church and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the 'EVENT' aims to provide an opportunity to gather together in worship.

More than 50 people attended the first event in January and were blessed by the opportunity to come together in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to praise Him and to learn more about Him.

The team are looking forward to even more attending the next 'EVENT' on 13 June. This is aimed at young adults of upper school age (13 – 18).

For more information please contact: the_event@gmx.co.uk

Woburn and District Churches Together

We have been working hard on a joint Youth Initiative in our area. Six months ago we started talking with local youth in consultation to assess their needs and what we can do to assist in meeting them. To these ends we started a 'Youth Café Night' where we open the local café once a week for kids from 12 – 18, this is run by Churches Together volunteers with the money taken going to the café. So far this has attracted on average 30 – 40 kids who now have a place to hang out and chat.

Recently we recruited a youth worker and are now opening a Youth Club in its own building (where one had already existed over 5 years ago). This will open on 6 May and operate every Thursday after, with activities led by the youth worker. We will still keep the café open on Wednesdays as it seems popular and there is a demand for it. The vision is that we are able to make the Youth Club a 'hub' for all the activity for youth locally and a place where we can get to know local kids and start to include their voices more into the wider community.

This work is being funded by the local churches as well as the local councils, and we all share a vision of making the area 'a great place to grow up'. It's part of our aims 'responding to the needs of society'.

Central Bedford Churches Lent 2010

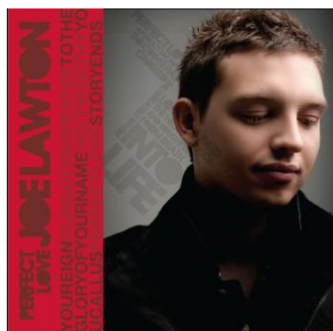
Christ in the Community

The series of five lunchtime services held in Bedford were well attended.

Projects included: The work done by BeCHaR (for the homeless in Bedford); Friends for Life (organised by the North Bedfordshire Churches seeking to care for residents in Care Homes); the work of the University Chaplain; Bedford Street Angels and the work at St John's Hospice, Moggerhanger.

Perfect Love

Contemporary Praise & Worship



Joe Lawton from Sacred Heart Church, Flitwick is one of the younger generation of worship leaders operating in the area.

He regularly leads and participates in praise and worship for services, prayer groups and Christian events in and around the Bedfordshire area and beyond, including; for NYMO, for the Celebrate Catholic Charismatic Family Conference, for the Diocesan Service Team, for the ecumenical youth 'EVENT' at Redborne Upper School, for Ignite youth prayer group and for various services both in our Catholic church and for Anglican and non-denominational Christian churches.

Joe is a prolific writer of contemporary praise and worship songs, and has been interviewed on BBC Three Counties Radio about being a contemporary worship leader in the Catholic Church. In his final year of a Music Technology degree, Joe's dissertation is 'An Examination of Production Techniques in Contemporary Christian Worship', a unique dissertation that the university were happy to accept!

The end product is a professional CD containing 7 fresh songs to inspire worship, and equip worship leaders, all written, performed and produced by Joe.

The CD is called PERFECT LOVE and is Joe's second CD of praise & worship songs and music. It is a Holy Spirit inspired and filled set of contemporary praise & worship songs that will lift you!

You can purchase the CD on line at www.joelawtonmusic.com .

Price is £8.50 including post & packing, or if you are local to Flitwick you can pick one up from Joe direct at £7.

For every CD sold £1 is being donated to either the Sacred Heart Church Facilities Fund, The Friends of NYMO initiative or to support the development of ecumenical youth work in the Flitwick and Ampthill area.

You can contact Joe via the contact link on the website www.joelawtonmusic.com
Amphill and District Churches Together Choir



Bunyan Meeting Church, Mill Street, Bedford on Sunday 9 May at 6.30pm.

Amphill Methodist Church on Sunday 16 May at 6.30pm.

Bedford Street Angels

This project has been running for just over one year and is now supported locally by 23 individual churches and 8 Christian organisations, including Churches Together groups. The second 'Christian Nightlife Initiatives Conference'

Community Transformation within the Night-time Economy is being held on Wednesday 7 July 2010 from 10.00am until 3.30pm. Venue: Salvation Army, Bedford

Speakers include:

Steve Clifford, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance

Andy Turner, Director of XChange from the Church Urban Fund

Rt Revd Richard Inwood, Bishop of Bedford

Further details from: Adam May (Project Co-ordinator)

Tel: 07532 371311 www.bedfordstreetangels.org.uk

Harmony in Difference
Celebrating Diversity of Christian heritage from within Europe
with performances from
LYRA
the Russian Vocal Ensemble of St. Petersburg
Tuesday 25th May
St Mary's Church
Church Street
Luton
LU1 3JF
Start Time 8 p.m.

Refreshments served.

In 2001 they were awarded the Montreux (Switzerland) international choral festival diploma, and then in 2005, they were also a winner of the Coleraine International Choral Festival (Northern Ireland)

For more details and bookings please contact David Jonathan (Johny)
01582 416946 / jgrassroots@btconnect.com

Donations will be collected for Chile Earthquake Relief Work

Organised by GRASSROOTS (a Christian Ecumenical Programme) in partnership with CTL – Churches Together in Luton (an umbrella organisation for Christians resident in Luton)

LOTTERY FUNDED