



Second CTW newsletter of 2011!

Welcome to the July 2011 edition of the Churches Together in Wokingham Newsletter! In this edition there are updates on the inspirational CTW Easter events and the programme for 2011/12. Also included is a welcome from our new Chairman, an article on St. Sebastian's Church and much, much, more! The newsletter concept only works with enthusiastic

participation from the Steering Group, Churches and Satellites – and will succeed only with regular informative articles about the Churches, CTW events and wonderful work from our various Satellites and affiliated organizations, so a big thank you for all your contributions so far, and can I please encourage you to continue to respond fruitfully to requests for further

updates! If anyone knows of a volunteer from the Churches who is able to perform the editor function for future editions, please let us know. This could be a sole or joint role, and might provide a useful opportunity for some youngsters from our Churches to gain some journalistic experience! The next newsletter will be published in Oct/ Nov.

Report from the Chair : David McLeod

Let me introduce myself.....

I feel both excited and honoured to be introducing myself as the next Chair of Churches Together in Wokingham (CTW). Since my wife Sue, and I, moved to Wokingham in October 2010, this friendly and welcoming town has become the place we think of as home. My experience as a Church Minister and Chaplaincy Co-ordinator for a University and College in Suffolk helped prepare me for my new role as Associate Minister at St Sebastian's Church.

"Make the most of every opportunity"

Colossians 4.5
When was the last time you felt inspired? Encouraged? Thankful? It could have been

seeing the love of a young child with their parent, experiencing the beauty of nature or hearing how God has blessed someone with an answer to prayer.

When I left the Annual Meeting of CTW, I felt encouraged and uplifted by hearing about the many and varied projects and activities local Christians have committed their time and energy to over the past year. I found it inspiring to hear about how the churches of Wokingham have served local people through acts of love, kindness, witness and creativity. I felt this is a time of opportunities.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on your behalf, David Hodgson, Richard Hughes and

everyone who has shared the love and light of Christ through the activities of CTW and the satellite projects it supports. Secondly, this is an opportunity for us to take a fresh look at what is currently happening across our Town and Borough and to see how these projects could enhance the life and ministry of our churches as well as our community. Thirdly, I feel that together we have an opportunity to seek fresh and creative ways to express our love for God and our neighbours.

I hope over the coming months we can share more of what God is doing here and I look forward to working with you and your churches.

Revd David McLeod

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- ◆ Report from the Chair
- ◆ Updates on recent events

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◆ Updates on recent events

Good Friday walk behind the cross

Tea, coffee and hot cross buns were served in St. Paul's Parish Rooms, then everyone met for a short service in the church led by Dr Stefan Fafinski from 11:20 –11:35.

There was then a silent walk together, behind the cross, on the way to Wokingham Market Place, where the Community Passion Play took place, starting at 12 noon.

Once the play finished at 1pm, there was a silent walk behind the cross on the way to the Methodist Church in Rose Street, where there was a celebration of Christ's passion and death, giving thanks for all that Jesus has done for us and its effect in our lives. About 80 people from many of our churches attended this short reflective act of worship.

There was a strong feeling of unity on this most profound of days and we left with a real sense of encouragement and deepened faith.

Many thanks to Rose Street Methodist Church for taking the CTW cross this year, and to St. Paul's for organising the handover so effectively at very short notice!

Community Passion Play

The Good Friday Passion Play has become an annual event in Wokingham's Market Square. Its purpose is to celebrate the festival of Good Friday in a public space and in a way that engages all people – not just Christians. In this, it's third year, the theme and title of the play was 'Water of Life'. So we followed the story of water, from the creation of the world, all the way through history until John the Baptist meets his cousin, Jesus, who describes himself as 'the Water of Life'. Jesus words and actions upset so many people that he was put to death. But the story doesn't end there – the Water of Life never runs dry.

The Market Square was full of people, including our Mayor and John Redwood MP. A community choir and a band had rehearsed music especially for the day. Refreshments were spontaneously provided for the crowd of all ages by a local cafe. The water for the play itself was supplied by a first floor office on the square.

Lots of passers-by stopped to watch. One local resident said, "The 'Water of Life' presentation at the market on Good Friday was so moving. I was very impressed by the scene where Peter walked on the water to Jesus - brilliant! Thank you for such a spiritual experience."

The cast included local actors, Primary School children, teenagers and an over-50s group, all directed by Stage-Fright theatre group, who run theatre clubs and community events all over Wokingham, though rarely in conventional theatres. The event was sponsored by Faith in the Community.

The following day, an elderly couple sitting on one of the benches said, "We just wanted to come back here and think about what we saw yesterday." A three-year-old, with his mother in the square, said, "This is where Jesus died, isn't it?" A historical event had been brought to life for a new generation.

The Play was commissioned by the ministers on behalf of the churches- it wouldn't happen if just left to the churches. Faith in the Community supports it financially and provided £2,500 and Stagefright give staff and resources. So it is precarious, does CTW want it to happen again? and what will we do to make sure it happens?

The CTW Steering Group is meeting in July to discuss this further and make proposals for financing next year's Play.

Good Friday Shop 2011

It is hard to know how to quantify a week of ministry and presence in the heart of the High Street. I think it is safe to say that many lives were impacted by this act of ecumenical outreach and the body of Christ was very visible in Wokingham throughout Holy Week leading to our large CTW event in the Market Square. People constantly ask, "Was it a success?" to which I think we can all safely say a resounding "yes!" Are there ways to learn, grow, and improve this sort of mission and outreach? Absolutely.

Next pages: Set Up, Opening, The Week / A Summary, Costs and the future!

◆ Updates on recent events (2)

Good Friday Shop 2011 (cont.)

Set Up

The shop was set up with a two day blitz which transformed it from an ugly, unfinished, concrete pigeon pooh covered shell, into a vibrant, carpeted, clean, and colourful shop filled with over 25 original canvas pieces of religious art, a six shelf trolley full of books, a wonderful prayer corner, displays from various ministries, a performance area with sound system for live music, and two kids arts & craft tables ready to greet everyone. A large 12 foot x 8 foot mural was painted by two primary school teachers and a local garden centre donated a lovely water feature which served to anchor our entrance. An electrician made safe the hanging wires and insured we had power to two sockets and the shop window was transformed into a welcoming and engaging image complete with printed banners over and under and a large poster to advertise the Good Friday "Water of Life" event. It truly was a transformation!

Opening

The shop opened with a bit of fan fare on Saturday morning at 10am. The bell choir of St. Mary's Winnersh played on the pavement and created a warm and welcoming environment. David Atkinson of All Saints Church, who had worked so tirelessly the previous two days, was invited to cut the red ribbon on the shop and declare it open. The hospitality committee of St. Paul's Wokingham provided refreshments and in fact had enough for us to share through Sunday. The Wokingham Times photographer attended the opening and took some photos.

The Week / A Summary

The shop was open a total of 41 hours between Saturday the 16th of April and Friday the 22nd of April. We estimate that 500-600 people came through the shop during the week and almost 100 of these were children who spent time at our Arts & Crafts tables doing activities. Everyone who came into the shop left with a wonderful colour brochure which detailed the plans for Good Friday as well as offering them information about the Easter service times of all CTW churches. There were a total of about 15 volunteers who worked during the week to make the various activities of the shop come together and many of these folks worked every day for multiple hours. There were blessings that took the shape of colourful butterflies, gentle conversation, newly discovered books to read and share, and music to sing amongst so many other things. Reading the prayer leaves on the tree in the back of the shop, and seeing the streets and names which had been prayed for on the map, I began to realise that this was indeed a good thing. The model was far from perfect and the weight of the work far too centralized on a few shoulders, but the idea of the CTW coming together in the heart of the town to bear witness to Christ's love was a good one and perhaps is only a foretaste of what is truly possible when everyone works together.

Costs

We managed to keep our costs down with our primary expenditure being the paying of rates and sundry costs to the council and the purchase of large banners for the front of the shop (which can serve a wider purpose for future events of the CTW). At this time we are estimating to have spent under £1000 and that figure might drop even further when the numbers are finally in. Hundreds of hours of voluntary support and the donation of supplies, paint, nails, etc. have kept our costs to a minimum. I am filled with a grateful heart for all those who made considerable sacrifice of time and resources to make the Good Friday Shop a success this year. For all those who mucked in, got dirty and occasionally covered in a bit of paint and glue, thank you. For those who walked in the market inviting folks to visit the shop, well done. For the wonderful smiling faces standing outside the door greeting passersby with a bit of Easter Joy, amazing! Too many names to list, but thank you to all. May the true hope of resurrection fill all of your hearts.

I am yours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rev. B. Kris Kramer

Next page: Good Friday Shop 2012 ?

◆ Updates on recent events (3)

Good Friday Shop 2012 ?

Many people are asking if this is something we can/should do again in the coming years. I think my quick answer might be, "why not?" If we do it again we must ensure that the artwork from the local schools is a feature within the shop. It was originally part of our plan but did not materialize for this year and we had to resort to a plan B which was art that was not directly connected to our local schools. Engaging the art departments in the local schools and assigning them space to display Easter-themed work by students will be great for increasing foot traffic in the shop. So, will it be an art gallery or a children's activity centre, or a cafe with books and live music? It could truly be whatever we want it to be. But as I stood there many afternoons and mornings watching the traffic go by, I found myself longing to be in the middle of the market square and not having to attract people off the street to the shop. I found myself walking through the market and imagining a large tent with children being creative at tables...face painting, balloons, live music and stories. It is another model and could be equally successful. Perhaps when we think of the future, both of these ideas can find a way to fruition as well as the many other ones that the Holy Spirit is planting in our hearts.

Stop Press: at the AGM there was a unanimous vote in favour of running the GFS again in 2012. We need more volunteers and co-coordinators to make it happen next year. Please consider how you can best help with this exciting project!

CTW AGM highlights

- new Steering Group elected
- new Chairman (Revd. David McLeod, St. Sebastian's Church)
- draft programme for 2011/12:

Existing events:

- Remembrance Day planning
- Winter Carnival (review CTW participation)
- Christmas Outreach (co-ordinate activities)
- January Unity Service (Contacts meeting)
- Lent Courses (advance planning)
- May Fair (review CTW participation)
- Good Friday/Easter planning

New events:

- Christian Arts festival planning
- Ecumenical Prayer Groups
- Pentecost event planning

Possible new initiatives:

- Healing On The Streets (HOTS)
- Street Angels

Ecumenical Prayer and Worship evening

Around 30 people from many Wokingham Churches joined an Ecumenical Prayer and Worship evening at Corpus Christi Church on Tuesday 22nd March. The prayer evening is a monthly event which started at Corpus Christi after a "Life in the Spirit" course was run in 2010 and has continued since.

It was a really amazing experience, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Kris Kramer and his son played percussion with the music group who provided a mixture of traditional and modern worship hymns; It really was lovely to gather with local churches and Christians in God's name, especially in Lent. We felt that we all shared some wonderful testimonies and experiences and prayers, and were certainly able to relate to each other in warmth and expectations of the work of the Holy Spirit. We will be arranging further Ecumenical events at Corpus Christi later this year.

Julie Hughes

IMPROVING
COMMUNICATION
WITHIN CTW

◆ Improving communication within CTW

Dear Contacts (Reps), please continue to act as a conduit for information flowing from other Churches in Wokingham and from CTW itself – into your Churches. Without you passing information to your congregations, advertising, promoting[] – our Christian events in Wokingham would suffer for lack of support.

However, there is more work to do!!!!

Every single-Church initiative, joint-Church mission and CTW event is an opportunity for all Wokingham Christians to come together within Churches and in public to serve God and to promote Christian Unity to the good people of Wokingham. By publicising and demonstrating the wonderful fellowship we can and do have together in common cause, we dispel negative thoughts about Church dis-harmony and encourage new Christians to seek the Good News. I am convinced that if we can reach every parishioner with every outreach project and acts of common worship and service; and give them the clear message that they are welcome and needed – we will have much greater participation in these events which will increase the body of Christ in Wokingham.

Let's make it our personal mission for the coming CTW year to use every means possible to inform, promote and encourage awareness and fellowship in CTW. We hope in future to provide more information about how to publicise and promote CTW events and activities. Suggestions - (things Contacts can use to publicise events and outreach work include):

Use of Church notice boards

Posters (ask for flyers/posters if they are not supplied!)

Web sites

Church Newsletter

Asking Ministers to mention/promote in services

Give a talk at a prayer group, or other meetings

Invite the Satellite Champions to give a short talk at a service or to display promotional material after a service at your Church.

etc etc

Please use all of these as not everyone will see any one thing, try to be creative.

Personal contacts are essential in spreading this information – your role is crucial in raising awareness and encouraging support!

If anyone has other ideas about how to distribute information by other means, please share with CTW

Richard Hughes

Eustace Crescent

The Community Association going from strength to strength. The skills and enthusiasm of those involved is growing all the time, helped along by the mentoring from FCDL.

Karl Relton, as you know, is due to leave soon, so it looks as though the Association will be self-running, with a bit of support from myself.

Their recently held a 'Party in the Park' - on Sun 17th July - report will be in the

next Newsletter - with a view to widening the level of interest to the whole of Norreys ward.

All the community bids for projects requiring funding were successful, so plans are underway for the summer trips, health support club, first aid equipment, etc.

Everyone was very sad to say goodbye to Candice (Community Development Worker) who has moved on to another job after several

years priming many of the initiatives that are now flowering. We wish her well in her new role in Basingstoke. We understand that someone has been appointed to fill her role, although no details available yet.

The church volunteers have been continuing to support the various projects, and still meet for prayer from time to time.

Helen Charlton

SATELLITE GROUP UPDATES

- Eustace Crescent
- Green Care Farm

Green Care Farm

The news is that The Gardening Scheme has a new owner now. This was one of our prayer requests in January. It has been commissioned by Wokingham Borough Council to the Wokingham Volunteer Centre. I think they still need to respond to having been chosen as the successful bid, but trust they have done so.

Our present planning application for the land opportunity with a local developer is about to be withdrawn, and a revised plan put in. This is after lengthy discussions with the planners and councillors! I think we now have

something that we are all more or less happy with, which is real progress. If this is the case then planning could go through relatively easily and speedily, which would be good.

The intention is that the Wokingham Green Care Farm Initiative will constitute as a community network group. This will mean that existing charities and community groups can pursue and manage their own 'green' initiatives, but then network together with other green projects for support, encouragement and development. The proposed constitution is now in the final stages of drafting.

Needs at the moment are for our planning application for the farm land, to go through smoothly now we have revised plans in place which seem to have the agreement of all parties.

For the proposed Wokingham Green Care constitution to soon be agreed and 'signed' into being.

Thank you for your interest. We will keep you informed as our plans progress

Iain Bisset Chair of Core Group



Wokingham Area School's Christian Worker Trust (update on GSUS Live)



SATELLITE GROUP UPDATES

- WASCWT
(GSUS:Live)

Gsus Live had a great start with an evening of prayer and praise on 5th June at Norreys Church. The evening was a real encouragement to us, with 65 people attending. It was very uplifting and gave us the confidence to go out knowing that God's hands would be all over this event. It's been brilliant to see so many churches involved, God works through us all.

St Crispin's was a fantastic week with a good buzz around the school with both staff and pupils being very impressed. We had many opportunities to chat to teachers whilst lessons took place. The Head of R.E. told us that the school Librarian had spoken to her to find out what GSUSlive was all about because so many of the pupils had been going into the library talking about it. It was very encouraging to hear that pupils were telling other pupils about it after their lessons.

The packing down of the unit went pretty smoothly at St.Crispin's. Stobarts arrived on time and manoeuvred the bus into its space at the Holt with precision. It was quite tricky setting up again because the bus is on a slight slope. A leak in the roof became a consistent problem at the Holt School due to heavy rain. During the packing up at the end of the week, one of the set-up team went up on a lady and unblocked the drain which caused a mass of water to pour out for a good 20mins. We have had no

further problems with leakage since then. From a technical point of view all seems to be going quite smoothly, with just a few monitors playing up now and again. There is a fault in the system, which is very random and unpredictable. If the fault occurs the pupils lose all their work.

Counties are aware of this problem and have had computer specialists, in the past, to look into this but have been told there is nothing that can be done. Please do pray against this happening.

We had another positive week at the Holt School. There's been some great feedback from the students, particularly liking the Christian music used in the presentations and wanting to download it when they got home. The Head teacher and others welcomed the realistic scenarios used in the material, following the stories of 3 teenagers and the relevance of Jesus' teachings today. We also had some Year 10's doing it during lunchtime, so it was great to be using the bus to its full potential. The Holt have asked for a follow-up session, to 'Grill a Christian' with Y7s. Every pupil was invited to the Warehouse Event on the 9th July—report will be in the next Newsletter.

Give thanks to God for all our volunteers. The volunteer presenters continue to be fantastic and enthusiastic for the project and it's brilliant for the young people to get a variety of Christians interacting with them. Give thanks also for

our dedicated setting up and down team especially for their great efforts in the pouring rain. Everyone ended up very wet!

We had a great welcome at Luckley-Oakfield, where they really looked after us, even providing us with a school dinner! Bearwood College students were in the Unit on the Monday and we had our first Year 6's engaging with the experience, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Later on in the week Whitehouse and Holme Grange brought in some students from their schools too. It was a lovely week with the Luckley girls engaging really well with it. We have been asked to run a 6th Form C.U. in September for some of the Christians in the school and we are very much looking forward to do this again.

Forest School has started well and we anticipate another good week. We have been able to film some of the lessons and interviewed staff and pupils. Pray for the editor Mike Goldberg as he produces a DVD for schools and churches especially arranging the content sympathetically for such a wide audience. Please do check out our website for weekly updates www.wascwt.org. Many thanks
Yvette Edwards

Link Visiting Scheme

The Link Visiting Scheme is a befriending scheme mainly for older people who feel socially isolated or lonely. We match up volunteers who are willing to give an hour or so once a week with an elderly person who really needs to see a friendly face. Ideally a friendship will develop over time. Currently we have nearly 150 volunteers. 120 volunteers regularly visit each week and make a huge impact on someone's life. Alongside our befriending scheme we also operate a One to One computer course whereby elderly people can learn the basics. The Link runs this in partnership with Rose St Methodist. Each week 10+ volunteers see around 16 people. We run excursions to the theatre, hold parties, have monthly meals out and run a weekly coffee morning. Securing our future We were delighted to hear that Wokingham Borough Council has recognised the value of your work and agreed to continue funding us for another two years. That gives us a much needed breathing space to seek funding from other sources for expansion and our long term future. As with any charity, we need to fundraise. We are grateful to Waitrose, Nat West, Easthampstead Rotary, The Round Table, and to several individuals who have helped

us in recent months. Also to those groups who have pledged support in the coming year. Please contact us if you have a fundraising idea. Also we are now able to accept donations securely on-line at www.linkvisiting.org

Training opportunities
Wokingham STRIVE offer free half day training courses on Safeguarding Adults and also about Dementia. Dates are: 07-Nov, and 15-Nov. If interested please phone STRIVE on 0118 974 6746 and ask for details.

Resources on Dementia
Have you ever watched the BBC sitcom "Outnumbered"? It has me in stitches – but it also has a serious sub-plot... the grandfather with early dementia. In Wokingham, the official estimate is that 1709 people have dementia. So what is it, and what does it mean in practice for those who suffer from it, including their careers? We hope to run a workshop later in the year, but until then I highly recommend the vast set of resources at www.alzheimers.org.uk; medical terms explained; symptoms discussed; legal implications; strategies for extending independent living; coping with caring; and support networks. Alternatively, visit www.youtube.com and

search on "dementia" to find lots of moving stories – including many uploaded by the Alzheimer's Society.

New for Understanding Computers

For several years Edna Champion has been running a popular Understanding Computers course for Link Visiting, where older people receive one to one tuition on basic use of computers. Volunteer tutors have patiently helped many to open a new "window on the world".

Now we have started a Wednesday afternoon session where sixth form students do the tutoring. It is working well. Yes, people learn about computers. They also learn to bridge the generation gap.

Thank you to all our tutors – young and old!
Marjie Walker

SATELLITE GROUP UPDATES

- Link Visiting Scheme



Combating Social Isolation in
the Wokingham Borough

Seaford Court/Caritas

The JAC stables initiative in Arborfield is continuing to be a success, supported by volunteers from the wider church. We believe that activities such as this helps build confidence and commitment for those taking part which are attributes so vital for getting on in life. As the weather warms, raft building in the Seaford Court back garden has begun in earnest. The past few weeks has seen the residents help repair the old raft and turn it into 'The Black Pearl' which had its maiden voyage in the Guildford Raft Race on the 2nd July (in which the residents last year achieved second place) - report will be

in next Newsletter. Other Tuesday evenings have been spent cooking (Mexican fajitas), painting, quiz and games nights and having a bbq in the park. We also caught up with the ex Seaford residents in Shinfield over the May bank holiday. This gave us the opportunity to touch base with them and catch up with their news. This was followed by a round of golf with two of the ex residents, which they took to with enthusiasm! Continued prayers are asked for, for both the residents and ex residents, particularly in their commitment to

college courses, seeking employment or discovering and using in a constructive way their many talents in which, as we continue to discover, they are all individually blessed with. Simon Palmer



SATELLITE GROUP UPDATES

- Seaford Court
- Hospital Gardening
- JAC

Hospital Gardening

Three teams have continued to work on the three areas, weeding, pruning, sweeping

leaves, restoring furniture, planting a few geraniums and refilling bird feeders.

We just want to bless the patients, visitors and staff.

Bridget Payne

Just Around the Corner (JAC)



Five churches are now involved on the streets and praying about the young people, they now reach out to Winnersh. Children remember the contact years later. JAC would like to talk to churches directly to get more volunteers and increase awareness of the need for help, for some young people it is the first time they have spoken to an adult positively, this may be the only bible they meet.

Action: Church contacts to invite Chris to come and talk at their Churches

JAC has joined Shop2fundraise!! This is a great way to support our charity without it costing you a penny! Please help by using this fundraising service whenever you shop online.

Future plans: We need prayer for more targeted work we are hoping to run in the Norreys area beginning with a summer football scheme on Elizabeth Park.

We also need guidance on the work we are doing in helping young people with anxieties into work.

Chris Pape

Christian Aid

The CA H2H collection went very well this year and the final total is only £49 down on 2010. This is amazing considering the economic downturn and a further reduction in collectors, so we

are thanking God for this result. We are now starting to make arrangements for the Carol singing at Tesco's at Christmas, details still to be arranged, but we still have no representatives for

Corpus Christi and Woosehill - so your prayers would be valued.

Every blessing

Maggie Vaughan

Suffolk Lodge

The Services continue to be well attended and appreciated by residents and well supported by staff. This is an important part of the outreach of all the churches who lead services here every

week at 5:30pm on Sundays. John Hoskins reported that Woosehill had taken services there 4 times a year and it has been suggested that Suffolk Lodge be part of the satellite group as people

from one of the Wokingham Churches attend there every week

Sue Lawton

Crossroads for Carers

We were pleased to accept a cheque from Wokingham Lions recently for £3,000 as our share of the proceeds from the May Fayre. All contributions are very welcome especially in these troubling times when every charity is competing for funds. We have had to tender for our grant from Wokingham Council and await the news whether or not we will have enough money to continue our work this year.

Some of our expenses are met by the generous support of local groups.

On Saturday 2nd July the South Berkshire Singers held a concert in St Paul's Church in aid of Crossroads—report will be in next Newsletter.

Our Scheme Manager, Steve Webb, has decided it is time for him to retire. We are very sorry to see Steve go as he has worked hard to maintain the success of Crossroads over the years.

In June, Bob Austin was appointed as Steve's replacement and is looking forward to ensuring that there will always be support in Wokingham for those who care for others.

Please pray that Steve had an enjoyable retirement and that Bob settles in well to his new role and receives all the support he needs in his work. God bless them both.

Maureen Meatcher

SATELLITE GROUP UPDATES

- Christian Aid
- Suffolk Lodge
- Crossroads for Carers

Churches Together in Berkshire (CTB)

English Baccalaureate update

We need you to act now and contact your MP to save Religious Education in schools!

The Secretary of State for Education has not yet acknowledged that RE should be included in the new English Baccalaureate. The solution is easy and workable. We need the Government to listen and respond. With over 135,000 people already signed up - the Rt Hon. Michael Gove still has not altered his position - we need to work together to make him reconsider his decision. Online petition site is: www.reactcampaign.co.uk/ CTB wrote a letter to our Berkshire MPs from our church leaders. Replies from our MPs have been circulated – please ensure they are available to all members of our congregations, so they can act appropriately!

From the latest



The Olympics will be a brilliant moment for our country, a chance to celebrate and - most of all - a real opportunity for churches to work together and do community mission. We would love to see engagement in the Olympics as a part of the bigger plans of church collaboration and mission in your area – sharing hope through words and actions. 2012 Olympics is another golden opportunity, among many, to be outward-looking and tap into public

consciousness and be what the Church is meant to be – visible and relevant. Let's go for it. Roy Crowne, Executive Director of HOPE

More than gold

A highlight in the build up to the 2012 Games is the official Torch Relay starting about three months before the opening ceremony. The relay sees the torch carried throughout many towns and cities across the UK – including Reading.

The places named are where evening events will take place to celebrate the Olympic Flame. The expectation of the Games organising committee is that there will be a spectacular welcome. This could involve entertainment, shows and concerts with a local flavour.

Helping churches get ready

To help churches get ready for this great opportunity, More Than Gold is creating a local task force in each town where the relay is to stop.

This group will help run community events that support the official celebrations. The aim is to have the churches and More Than Gold's partner agencies working to put the church at the centre of the plans and celebrations that take place.

Working with your Local Authority

What makes this especially important is that most Local Authorities are stretched so far as their budgets and resources are concerned.

Because of this they would welcome the help of the churches in their area. In some places it may even be possible for the local churches to be the prime organiser or main partner in a Community Festival.

The help churches could contribute includes:

Creative and performing arts – offering their own talent or bringing it in from elsewhere.
Hospitality – from free food to being part of the One Million Cups of Water programme.
Volunteers – everything from clearing the rubbish, crowd control, to specialist advice and help.

How you can play your part?

To be a part of this task force please email info@morethangold.org.uk with your name, church, town and contact details so that we can network with you and get you in touch with others in your area. The More than Gold website has lots of good info about how churches can get involved, and I know other CT groups have plans for 2012. CTB has some leaflets, posters & DVDs if anyone prefers something in hard copy - happy to deliver some to churches if they want to contact them.

Louise Cole

SATELLITE GROUP UPDATES

- CTB

CTW Events

- Next CTW Steering group meeting 26-July
- Next CTW Contacts meeting—TBA

CTW EVENTS

REQUEST FOR
SUPPORT

Requests for support—please promote these widely within your Churches!

Green Care Farm/Gardening Scheme

Prayers for planning application for the farm land, to go through smoothly now we have revised plans in place which seem to have the agreement of all parties, and for the proposed Wokingham Green Care constitution.

JAC

Church contacts - please invite Chris Pape to come and talk at your Churches. We need prayers for more targeted work we are hoping to run in the Norreys area beginning with a summer football scheme on Elizabeth Park, and for guidance on the work we are doing in helping young people with anxieties getting back into work

Seaford Court

Continued prayers are asked for, for both the residents and ex residents, particularly in their commitment to college courses, seeking employment or discovering and using in a constructive way their many talents in which, as we continue to discover, they are all individually blessed with.

The Link Visiting Scheme

Please contact them if you have a fundraising idea.

Crossroads for Carers

Please pray that Steve had an enjoyable retirement and that Bob settles in well to his new role and receives all the support he needs in his work

Schools workers

Pray for the editor Mike Goldberg as he produces a DVD for schools and churches especially arranging the content sympathetically for such a wide audience.

Christian Aid

We still have no representatives for Corpus Christi and Woosehill - so your prayers would be valued

CHURCH FOCUS:

• *St
Sebastian's
Church,
Wokingham
Without*

• *Church focus—St Sebastian's Church, Wokingham Without*

St. Sebastian's is a lively Anglican Church situated between Crowthorne and Wokingham, sharing a site with the School and Pre-school. We have three services each Sunday morning as well as plenty of things taking place midweek. The Church has many activities for children of all ages. We have groups for children and young people during the 9:30 am Sunday morning services and youth activities during the week. We have recently experienced growth in the number of children attending Sunday groups, and currently have 70 children registered, with between 35 and 40 attending activities each Sunday. Every month we have the 'Big breakfast', our youth service which is held in the School hall and includes a range of activities, worship, reflection and the 'Prayer Shack'. The 'Space Place' is our monthly children's service, which includes songs, crafts, prayer and games.

At St. Sebastian's we aim to give people the opportunity to experience the presence of God and the Holy Spirit in their lives and to come closer to God through prayer, worship, and learning from the Bible.

We offer prayer for healing at almost all our services, and have seen some significant answers to prayer. We also feel it is important to help and serve others around us in our community. Often it's just being able to discuss difficulties, and we have a number of special groups to meet some of these needs, including the Cancer Support Group and Surviving the Break-Up. Our Pastoral Life Team is also ready to help if someone needs to talk about things one to one, needs a lift somewhere, have their shopping done, or requires some practical help. We have various opportunities for people to learn more about Jesus and how He affects our lives.

people can meet, chat and ask questions. A recent high point has been 'Holy Space', a series of six evening sessions of teaching on Joshua 1-6 with prayer and worship. In these times, and in our Sunday services, we have begun to experience a significant move of the Holy Spirit, and we would love to share some of this blessing more widely. People from other churches often join us for our 'Praise and Healing' service at 7.00 pm on the 4th Sunday of each month (except August), and in the past we have taken teams to other churches to bring support and encouragement in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If you think we can help you in this or any other way, please let us know.
David McLeod

The Alpha Course, The Big Issue and Home Groups are just a few places where





CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WOKINGHAM

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Wokingham Town is a large affluent busy town located in the South East corner of Berkshire in the United Kingdom, East of Reading - [map](#).

CTW, as we usually call ourselves, is an association covering most of the Christian Churches in Wokingham, which includes Churches from all of the main denominations. Combined events are held during the year from Evangelical and Witness events as well as United Services, Prayer times to market stalls. Our site seeks to draw together information from all of the Churches allowing you to overview what is taking place in Wokingham.

All of Wokingham's Churches serve the local community in one way or another from the youngest to the oldest person. Some of the Wokingham Churches have their own web sites and links to these are made.

CTW WEBSITE: WWW.WOKINGHAMCHURCHES.ORG.UK

Contact email: admin@wokinghamchurches.ork.uk

• *Wokingham Word articles—Aug2011*

Welcome

Welkom, bun venit, boas-vindas, bienvenidos, nau mai, tervetuloa, croeso, bienvenue and vitajcie, these are all words of welcome in other languages. Can you recognise them? maybe you speak another language, but even if you don't a lot of these words are memorable. We have seen them at airports and bureau de changes and it is surprising how similar these words can be. What about welcoming gestures? a kiss, a handshake, high 5, namaste, bowing, even rubbing noses, all universal and yet so different.

If you have ever watched 'Love actually' there is an amazing scene of people all being welcomed at an airport, it is compelling, as if we all want to be those people being loved so much.

In John's gospel we read that Jesus gave his disciples a long set of instructions when he was about to leave them as to what they could expect as his followers going out in the world. He told them what to take and what not

to take, how to respond to negative reactions but also how the positive act of welcome would affect them, and the rewards it would bring. It must have been an amazing revelation for them to hear that if they were welcomed as disciples in mission, that God himself was also being welcomed. When we welcome someone into our homes, churches, clubs and schools, who knows who we could be greeting, a prophet or an angel, so we must be sure to offer the hand (or nose) of welcome and friendship. St Paul said 'we are ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.' To welcome the representative is to welcome the one represented. As at work when an agent or rep from a large company comes to call they are acting for the whole company.

We should welcome folk not just as individuals but also in our churches, are we welcoming enough? It's not just to give out the hymn books and make sure the newcomers doesn't sit in somebody's favourite seat but to show a Christ-like care and

concern. Welcoming implies hospitality symbolised by the gift of a cup of water - which can itself be life-giving - but not even the smallest gift goes unnoticed by God. It is so important to do the small things; we can all be a part of great movements by each taking a small part, we may not move mountains but each act of kindness is the building blocks of which a Holy life is made. Growth in discipleship does not come about always through those occasional encounters with prophets, but in those thousands of everyday acts of kindness that make up our lives. These acts often unseen usually unsung practised over a lifetime make our Christian character. Doing something for others as a selfless act is the best gift we can give God, as it is as if we are doing it for Him. God is not able to be here so we are His body on earth. So let us show the hand of friendship and welcome everyone we can.

from St Marys Winnersh on and behalf of Churches Together in Wokingham.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND:

THROUGHOUT ENGLAND, LOCAL ECUMENISM IS BEING FOSTERED THROUGH COUNTY OR LARGE CITY BODIES. CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WOKINGHAM IS PART OF THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BERKSHIRE GROUP, AFFILIATED TO CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND