

## Chislehurst Methodist Church Refurbishment Scheme **Stepping Stones**

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[www.chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk)



### Report from the Refurbishment team

The architect's plan is now on display in the church. Do have a look! The exciting development that has taken place over the last few months is the plan for the back of the church. It is proposed that the beautiful glass and wooden back wall of the church will be moved forward to be inline with the bottom edge of the balcony. Behind this area an accessible toilet, small kitchen, flower arranging area, storage and quiet meeting room (in the existing porch) will be installed. With a church fully refurbished and equipped we will have a beautiful worship space but also a wonderful venue for all sorts of events such as concerts, art exhibitions, workshops and day conferences. With this new, expanded vision of developing the church as a centre for spirituality and the creative arts the refurbishment Team will propose to the Church Council that the Plans for part C—that is extending above the hall be abandoned. The Chislehurst Society are very excited and supportive of our plans which they will believe will provide a wonderful new venue for the benefit of the whole community.

The side entrance into the church and glass roofed entrance foyer is much as before. The hall lobby will be demolished and new toilets and 'waiting area' will be built to fit in with the new entrance foyer. This will greatly enhance the appearance of the hall and entrance from the road.

Any minor alterations will be fed back to the architect over the next 2 weeks. The Refurbishment Team will then present the final plans to the Church Council on 7th October. With the endorsement of the Church Council planning permission will be sought from Bromley.

**Kitchen and Toilets** After an enormous amount of work from the 'kitchen team' and the 'toilet team' the redesign, and fittings has now all been prepared and agreed. Work is expected to begin on these later in the autumn with the aim being that they will be finished by Christmas.

**FUN**draising...news from Sue Cope...a lot has been going on over the summer.

In April and June **Monday Focus** gave me the opportunity to make them 2 three course lunches, which raised £147 in total.

Over the summer people have been using their **talents** and so far have done extremely well. I shall be able to tell you what £150 gained us in the next stepping stones.

Some people have been industrious without any talent money; **the lent breakfast; Fair-trade wine tasting; and a talk & slide show** all brought in a lot of money.

The **plant sale and the stall on the common** in June were very successful. The former brought in £750 which is the record to date. Well done to all who organised that one.

**Tea towels** to sell. These have our new logo on them. 100% cotton tea towels are a snip at £4 each. If each person sells one and buys one we will not have enough and that is a good position to be in.

The picture shows another activity. The property team headed by Lynton has been taking out **pews**. These are in great demand and anyone wanting one should sign up on the clip board in the concourse. This one (see below) is now installed in the Cope's house and has rubbed down very well.

We are planning to hold more events after the new kitchen is installed. Ideas for the next 6 months are: children's second hand clothes and toy stall during the week; a barn dance; and a quiz night.

The big news is that **Café Imperial** will be open every Saturday morning during term time. April Alabi is running it and would enjoy any company to help out.

**Personal Giving:** If you haven't yet made a personal donation please consider giving by Direct debit. £25.00 each month for 3 years adds up to £900 which with Gift Aid added on would be £1000+If this is something you could consider it would be very much appreciated and move us closer towards our personal giving target. Please see Sue Attwood for the forms.



# Resourcing Renewal: towards a mission shaped congregation

The final session of the series of talks was on 'The Church in Society today: towards a mission shaped congregation'.

The gospel message stays alive when it is in a conversation with the culture of its own day. A key question has always been when to reflect and when to challenge contemporary culture, the issue addressed through Christian apologetics. On the one hand, it is easy to condemn 'modern' culture; yet if the gospel holds aloof from its culture, it is not heard. On the other hand, the church must speak and act prophetically, always challenging contemporary culture. Our role is to affirm and to challenge the shape of society's agenda.

Four examples were outlined:

An order of nuns, seeking a new role in a much changed society, have decided to become part of a movement to combat female trafficking.

Paisley Methodist Central Hall, no longer a church for cotton mill workers, or a recreation centre for post war men, opened a Fair Trade shop.

Many rural chapels have closed, not out of failure, but because of radical changes in society. Walsingham chapel, once the largest and liveliest church in the village, until the 20<sup>th</sup> revival of pilgrimage, is still open, seeking to play its part in this much changed village culture.

At Crediton, the minister and a small group went on a 'fresh expressions' course and as a consequence started a Saturday afternoon gathering, 'Noah's Ark', for young families.

Yet it is difficult to describe modern culture, as there is no longer any common culture in the UK. Faith (of whatever sort) has itself become counter-cultural: for example, one of clearest marks of our culture is an obsessive individualism, with its denial of community values. Faith struggles to assert that life is to be lived for the common good.

Two questions:

What is distinctive about our Christian life today? For each individual, this is a life-style issue.

And what is distinctive about 'Church life'?

Churches adopt a variety of expressions – some express high church ritualism; others an individualistic evangelicalism; many simply a rather wishy-washy liberalism.

Yet there are other ways. For example, a biblically based theology can start with the essential goodness of God's creation, affirm both liberation theology and a feminist perspective, and seek to express its mission alongside all people, without discrimination. This approach seeks to express God's dream and to work towards the common good. For it is grounded in Jesus Christ, a Jew who broke most but not all of the conventions of his religion and society, for the sake of the kingdom of God.

As we seek to be God's instruments in the renewal of the world, the church needs to change also the culture of church life: to move from despair to hope, from a purposeless/goalless existence towards the kingdom of God.

***In Advent, the journey continues with a four week series on Advent Praying, from 27<sup>th</sup> November to 18<sup>th</sup> December; Friday nights at 8.00pm. Why not come along and share in this exploration of the faith of the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?***

*David Calvert*

*A prayer*

*Open my eyes that I may see*

*The presence that is all about me.*

*Open my eyes that I may hear*

*The voice that is quiet yet ever near.*

*Open my heart that I may feel*

*The love of my God close and real.*

*Open each sense, make me aware*

*Of the power and peace always there.*

