

Exciting News to report!

➤ **Baptisms and new members**

We are delighted to be able to report that at our recent Church Meeting six new people were commended for baptism and church membership. As some of those requesting baptism come from countries currently closed to the Gospel, we felt it best not to publish their names in this letter for reasons of personal security and sensitivity. *Brian and Helen Sharp* were also accepted for church membership, having already been baptised as believers. We are planning to hold a **Baptismal Service on Sunday Evening, 29th June**, following our monthly *International Tea*. This will be the first baptismal service to have been held in the church for eight years! So we hope you will support it well with your prayers and presence. We trust and pray that this first baptismal service for eight years will also be the first of many more to come in the near future. We have already had a further enquiry about baptism, and in addition two people have spoken to me about their desire to become members of the Church. So we are planning to run another series of Baptism and Church Membership Classes in the autumn.

➤ **International Liaison Group**

We are in the process of forming a group to oversee and develop our expanding work amongst people from overseas. The following have agreed to serve on the group initially; others may be added later: **James Appiah** (*International Drop-in facility*); **Brian and Helen Sharp** (*International Outings*); **Ruth Wilson** (*International Teas and hospitality*); **Xu Ji (Sarah)** (*English Language students*); **a further member** (*representing refugee/asylum seekers*); and the **Pastor** (*International Bible Studies*). Please feed your ideas into this group and we will keep you posted on plans as they develop.

➤ **Gateshead International Ministries (GIM)**

Our recent Church Meeting agreed to support the setting up of a Charitable Trust to oversee our 'non-core' activities, in particular our work amongst those from overseas. GIM will be in a good position to make grant applications for the kind of work we envisage DRBC developing in the future. GIM will also serve as an interface between DRBC and the various users of our premises. We envisage this increasing once our building alterations are completed. The following have agreed to serve as Trustees initially, along with the Pastor: **Paul Harris** (*deacon*), **Elaine Willmore** (*church member*), **Ruth**

Wilson (*church member*), **Dr Gabriel Okugbeni** (*Overseas Fellowship of Nigerian Christians, representing our users*), and the **Revd Roy Merrin** (*minister of Grange Road Baptist Church, Jarrow, and Moderator of the Northern Baptist Association. Roy has a lot of experience and expertise in Social Action projects and grant applications*).

➤ **Grants and Gifts**

We are delighted to be able to report that we have recently received two substantial grants and a gift of £1000 for the Lord's work at DRBC.

- *The Gateshead Community Chest* has given us £1,140 to cover the cost of our monthly *International Outings* for those from overseas.
- *The Local Network Fund* has awarded us £2,289 to cover some of the costs associated with our monthly *Fun and Food for all the Family* evenings and also our under-14 team's participation in the Northeast Churches' Five-a-Side Indoor Football League.

We give God all the thanks and glory for supplying our needs in these ways!

➤ **"Safe to Grow" Child Protection Policy**

Helen Sharp has kindly agreed to act as administrator/co-ordinator for our Child Protection Policy. She will be approaching those working with our children and young people to explain the procedure for obtaining CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) clearance. **Ruth Wilson** has kindly agreed to serve as our Children's Advocate.

125 Not Out +1!

Last year we celebrated our 125th anniversary as a Church with ten days of special outreach events. The response was so positive that we felt it would be good to build on the experience with another special outreach emphasis in the early autumn. Plans are beginning to take shape, thanks to the hard work and creative thinking of our steering group: **Ann Maughan, Gordon Reid, Elaine Willmore, Lewis Wilson, Xu Ji (Sarah), a refugee/asylum seeker, and the Pastor**. Please let us have your thoughts on the plans so far. Our next meeting is scheduled for 18th June.

(a) Week of Prayer, 31st August - 7th September

Every successful mission begins with God's people taking time out to seek the Lord's face in prayer (see 2 Chronicles 14.11; Nehemiah 1; Luke 9.28-31; Acts 13.2-3). We will always want to be sure that we are

following the Lord's agenda, and not simply pursuing our own pipe dreams. So we will want to come before God humbly, to acknowledge that without him we can do nothing (John 15.4-5) – but that with him, anything is possible (Ephesians 3.20-21)!

We want to soak all of our autumn activities in prayer before they begin. So a special *Week of Prayer* is being planned for early September. We want to provide several opportunities for us to learn more about prayer – and fasting. These will help us pray and fast all the more effectively, both on our own in private and with one another in our corporate times together.

Here are the proposals in outline:

- ❑ **Sunday 31st August** – *preaching on prayer and fasting* at the morning and evening services, and through our monthly *International Tea*.
- ❑ **Monday 1st – Friday 5th September:** *the Church will be open over the lunch period* from 12 noon to 2.00pm, for people to call in to pray at their convenience.
- ❑ **Saturday 6th September** – A *Prayer Breakfast* we be held from 8.30-10.00am.
- ❑ **Sunday 7th September** – *teaching on prayer and fasting* at the morning and evening (communion) services; and a *Half Night of Prayer* from 8.00-10.00pm, divided into four half-hour slots. We look forward to our friends from Nigeria, Ethiopia and Eritrea leading some of the sessions.
- ❑ **Prayer cards**, listing all our mission activities, will be produced as for last year.
- ❑ Once again, people will be encouraged to form **prayer triplets** to intercede for their friends, colleagues, and family members.

(b) **Week of Mission, 13th – 21st September**

We reviewed last year's programme to identify:

- events that worked well and we feel are worth repeating;
- activities that went less well, and are probably not worth repeating;
- new ideas, worth trying out for the first time.

Here are the proposals in outline:

- ❑ **Saturday 13th September** – *Coffee Shop and Open Day*, 10.30am-12 noon. This will be part of a national initiative for opening up listed buildings that are normally closed to the public.
- ❑ **Saturday 13th September** – An *Evening Rally* with our anniversary speaker, Barry Dunmire, and some musical input yet to be determined.
- ❑ **Sunday 14th September** – *Anniversary services* with Barry Dunmire and guest soloist Jane Kitson

at night.

- ❑ **Tuesday 15th September** – a '*Food and Fun for all the Family*' *Anniversary Quiz Night*.
- ❑ **Saturday 20th September** – An *International Evening*, with musical and other contributions from our friends from overseas, and a chance to try out different foods from around the world.
- ❑ **Sunday 21st September** – special services to conclude our week of outreach.
- ❑ We will also hope to man a Churches' stall at the **Gateshead College Freshers' Fair** again.

A special *Family Fun Day* is being considered for late October/early November as a special outreach event for the children and young people we have contact with through our Friday Club and Rock Solid Club, together with members of their families.

Fellowship Updates

- Our longstanding member **Joy Clark** was called to be with her Saviour earlier this month after several months bravely fighting a terminal illness. We give God thanks for her life and witness amongst us.
- Please remember in your prayers **Frank Heaton** who is recuperating at home following surgery at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle last month. **Christopher Hunt** is also making good progress after breaking his left arm playing in goal for his school football team four weeks ago.
- We all appreciate the *flowers* that are displayed in the church hall for our Sunday Services. If you would like to contribute funds or flowers for the displays, please see Margaret Vickers, to whom our thanks are due for the weekly arrangements.

Dates for the Diary

- **Summer Barbecues:** *Tuesdays 10th June and 8th July, 7.00-8.30pm.*
- **Rowley Visit:** Our annual visit to Rowley Baptist Church will take place on *Wednesday Evening 25th June*. The speaker will be the Revd John Singleton, Northern Baptist Association's Regional Minister with responsibility for Mission. Transport details will be given nearer the time.
- **International Outing:** *Saturday 28th June to Beamish Open Air Museum*. See Brian or Helen Sharp for further details.
- **Coffee Morning:** *Saturday 19th July, 10.30am - 12 noon* in aid of the *BMS 28.19 Action Teams*.
- **Quarterly Church Meeting:** *Wednesday 16th July, 7.30pm.*

David Hunt