



photo by Ian Britton

Praise God for Prom Praise!

What a thrill it was to witness the main auditorium at *The Sage Gateshead* packed to capacity twice over for the performances of *Prom Praise* on Saturday 25th November. The event exceeded our wildest expectations in terms of both the attendance and the quality of the programme. It was superb!

Who will ever forget soloist Joanne Lunn's rendition of Jimmy Owen's *Behold the Man!* At the afternoon performance, the audience broke into spontaneous applause before the orchestra had reached the end of the piece! And at night, her rendition of Graham Kendrick's *White Horse* song (from his Christmas musical, *Rumours of Angels*) was equally moving.

The musical programme contained a good variety of styles, from the energetic opening (*March from Jazz Suite No 2*, by Shostakovich), through quieter, more contemplative songs (such as the hymn, *Like a mighty river flowing*), to the rousing climax (with 1,500+ voices singing *How Great Thou Art* and *You Shall Go Out With Joy*).

The choir, drawn from 40 different churches throughout the Northeast, performed magnificently (amazingly, they had had only three rehearsals); and the audience joined in the 'congregational' numbers with typical Northeast enthusiasm!

On Sunday 26th November, we were delighted to welcome 14 members of the All Souls Orchestra (plus three roadies and a child!) to our morning **Guest Service**. It was an inspiration to have so many additional musical instruments providing a lead for our singing – which was even better than our normal high standard of excellence! We were blessed by the testimony given by one of the orchestra members, and truly touched by the kindness and friendliness of our visitors. Altogether, 90 people attended the service, including 16 first-timers (not counting the 18 from the orchestra).

So let me say a very big 'Thank you' to all of who played your part in giving us such a memorable weekend

- by hosting our guests;
- by providing food for lunch (for 60 people);
- by helping with transport;
- by attending the concerts and Sunday service;
- and most of all, by faithfully remembering the event in your prayers over so many months since the idea was first floated two years ago.

***Not to us, O LORD, not to us
but to your name be the glory,
because of your love and faithfulness.***

[Psalm 115.1]

News from our Members' Meeting

Here is a quick update on some of the decisions taken and items discussed at our recent Half-Yearly Church Members' Meeting.

• Budget for 2007 and estimate for 2008.

Projections for the current financial year indicate that we expect our income to exceed our expenditure by around £4,500 (excluding the £10,000 transfer we made from our General Fund to our Building Refurbishment Fund). This compares to an anticipated deficit of just over £3,000. We praise God for moving people's hearts to give so generously to his work at DRBC.

We have set a *weekly offering target of £420 for 2007* (we anticipate this year's figure will be around £400, against a budget figure of £355). Our Thank Offering target has been set at £4,500 and we are grateful to have been pledged a Home Mission grant of £4,000 for 2007. We plan to transfer a further £10,000 to our Building Refurbishment Fund during 2007.

We have set a *weekly offering target of £460 for 2008* and a Thank Offering target of £5,000. We have also taken the bold step of applying for a 'nil' Home Mission grant for 2008. This will leave us with an anticipated shortfall of £1,845 for that year, which we hope will be covered by donations and/or increased rental income and/or offerings. No provision has been made for the transfer of any money to our Building Refurbishment Fund during 2008 – but this doesn't mean the work will stop!

• Building Refurbishment Work.

The structural work to the front pediment of the main church building and the re-roofing of our Small Meeting Hall has been completed within our budget figures, without having to draw heavily on our built-in contingency for the work. The re-roofing of the annexe should be completed by the end of the year. We anticipate being able to carry a positive balance forward into the new financial year in our Building Refurbishment Fund.

Estimates are being obtained for renewing/replacing the heating system for our church halls and ancillary rooms. This will be our major refurbishment project for 2007. We will be applying for grants to cover the cost of the work as soon as we know how much it is likely to be.

Approval was given for the purchase of new external notice boards.

• American Interim Youth Workers.

A draft Job Description document was made available for prayer and consideration. Further discussion will take place at our next Church Members' Meeting.

Christmas is Coming!

Please make good use of all the special Christmas activities we have lined up over the next few weeks, to invite friends and contacts to hear about the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of God's Saviour for humankind, Christ the Lord! Here is a list of them.

- **Christmas Coffee Shop/Lunchtime Drop-in, 10.30am-2.00pm, Saturday 2nd December.**
- **Carol singing: Mon 4th, Tues 5th, Thurs 7th Dec** around the streets; and **Sat 9th Dec** in Gateshead Town Centre. See Val Hill for details.
- **Christmas Special, 7.00-8.30pm, Tuesday 12th December** – a seasonal 'Fun and Food for all the Family' night, with quizzes, musical items, a showing of the Christmas DVD "It's a Boy!" – and plenty of mince pies!
- **Christmas Carol Service, 6.30pm Sunday 17th December**, followed by coffee and mince pies! See Val or Ray Hill if you would like to join their singing group for the service.
- **Christmas All-age Service, 11.00am Sunday 24th December.** No evening service is planned for Christmas Eve.
- **Christmas Day All-age Service, 11.00am 25th December.** A great opportunity to come together to celebrate the birth of God's Saviour for humankind!



Follow the real star of Christmas this year!

David Hunt