

2007

Dreaming dreams!

I am writing this News Letter in the middle of our annual Week of Prayer, in which we are seeking to 'dream the dreams' that God has for us as a fellowship concerning the future.

So far, 27 people have managed along to one or more of our early morning and lunchtime drop-ins for prayer, which is very encouraging.

This month's News Letter gives me an opportunity to highlight some of the exciting features of our autumn programme as a Church.

Be Sure

Our Sunday morning sermons will take us through John's first letter. He wrote his Gospel so that *you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name* (John 20.31). Its purpose is clearly evangelistic.

But John wrote his first letter to help us be sure about the faith we have embraced, and the life and destiny God wants us to enjoy.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. [1 John 5.13]

One of the most precious features of our Christian faith is the assurance it brings us. Most of the other religions of the world operate on a 'try your hardest and hope for the best' approach. But God doesn't want *anyone* to be uncertain about the most important issues of life and death – and what lies beyond our time on planet earth.

- He wants us to be sure that he exists.
- He wants us to be sure what he is like.
- He wants us to be sure about who Jesus is.
- He wants us to be sure about what Jesus has done for us and how we can benefit from it.
- He wants us to be sure how we should be living and relating to each other and to the world.
- And he wants us to be sure about our eternal destiny.

Eight times in his short first letter, we find John saying to us, "I am writing to you because" And 24 times, he uses phrases like "we know", "you know" and "you have known". He clearly

wants us to be sure of our faith.

My prayer is that, as we study this important letter together, established Christians will gain greater confidence in their faith and those who are seeking after God will discover the assurance he longs us all to enjoy.

Become an Explorer

The major part of our midweek programme this autumn will be taken up with the *Christianity Explored* course, in small groups. To a certain extent, the number of groups we run – and where and when and led by whom – is up to you!

Last 'term', a total of 46 people attended the four groups we ran, with an average attendance of 28 per week. For the autumn, we are looking at the possibility of running five groups, or possibly six – including the option of a later one on Wednesday nights (for people who arrive home late from work and who struggle to manage a 7.30pm start) and/or a daytime one, for people who prefer not to come out at night.

One reason for running additional groups is that *Christianity Explored* has been designed as an introductory course for the Christian faith, and so it provides a great opportunity for us to invite interested friends along to it. We should pray that our All-age Harvest and Baptism Services at the end of the month will be instrumental in recruiting interested enquirers to the course. At the same time, the course will provide plenty of 'food for thought' for established Christians, as it is based on a series of studies in Mark's Gospel.

Each participant will be issued with a Study Guide for the course, cost £3 (a real bargain for a 10-week course!). If you are inviting a friend to one of our groups, you might like to buy the Study Guide for him/her. They will also be available, of course, for those who would like to follow the course, but who are unable to attend one of our Small Groups.

We have planned a special **Launch Night** for the course, at **7.30pm on Wednesday 3rd October** at the Church. Plan to be there to watch extracts from the video/DVD presentations and learn about the thinking that lies behind the course.

Be involved

Our autumn programme is full of special events to enjoy. Here is a quick overview of some of them.

- **7.00pm Tues 11th Sept: *Mezzanine*** – the new name for our *Fun and Food for all the Family* evenings. This month's will take the form of a café style quiz and food night. Please support Gareth and Mandy Williams as they take over responsibility for these outreach evenings.
- **7.30pm Wed 12th Sept:** Launch of this year's ***BMS World Mission Appeal. Higher Ground*** is a project about helping victims of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami.
- **7.30pm Wed, 19th Sept: *Quarterly Church Members' Meeting.*** Several important matters will be shared for discussion and decision.
- **Sun 30th Sept: *All-age Harvest Thanksgiving Service, 11.00am* and *Baptism Service, 6.30pm***



- **Mon 1st Oct: *Harvest Supper and Annual Thank Offering***
- **Week beginning 8th Oct: *Christianity Explored* Small Groups begin.**
- **Fri 9th Nov: *Outreach concert with Gospel singer, Gillian Gartree.***
- **Sun 25th Nov: *International Fellowship Tea and Evening Service with Tony and Judith Sykes,* our BMS World Mission link missionaries.**
- **Sun 2nd Dec: *All-Age Advent Service, 11.00am.*** This will be a new venture for us, designed to encourage young and old alike to look forward to Christmas and Christ's return as King.
- **Sun 23rd Dec: *All-Age Christmas Service, 11.00am* and *Christmas Carol Service, 6.30pm***

Plan to be involved in these special events and use them to introduce friends and visitors to the life of the Church, and to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Be Amazed

Our Sunday evening sermon series this autumn

will look at some of the ways in which God orders unexpected events in our lives to achieve his long-term purposes. We will be looking at the fascinating stories of two great Old Testament women: Ruth and Esther.

Whilst attendance at our Sunday morning services has increased over the past five years, our Sunday evening services have *not* shown a similar increase. In fact, in recent years, they have declined. So if you have got out of the habit of coming out to church twice on a Sunday – or if you have never adopted the habit – make a fresh start this autumn.

Be Praying

Our annual Week of Prayer is a time of concentrated praying in which we lay ourselves, and everything we would seek to do for the Lord, before him in prayer. But we need to keep on praying long after our Week of Prayer is over. Use the special Prayer Cards we produced to prompt you to pray for ongoing needs during the autumn months.

- In particular, pray for extra helpers for our **Rock Solid Club**, an urgent need.
- Pray too for the selection and funding of the **American Youth Interims** who will be joining us in January 2008, God willing.
- Pray too for the funding required to pay for a **new heating system** for our church halls and ancillary rooms, for extra ladies toilets, and for a general refurbishment of our halls and ancillary rooms.
- Pray about the **refurbishment** of the room over the kitchen, so that it can be brought into use for our Sunday School, to accommodate increased numbers. If you are able to help practically with plastering, painting and junk removal, let us know!
- Pray that we will reach our new **attendance targets** by the end of the year – an average of 60+ on Sunday mornings, 25+ on Sunday evenings, and 75+ in total per Sunday.

David Hunt