

Plenty to Report

Following two Church Members Meetings in September, there is plenty of news to report this month. Please accept my apologies for not producing newsletters in July and September. For various reasons, I felt it best to wait until now before producing our next edition of the *DRBC news*. We are pleased to be enjoying an excellent spirit in the Church once again after some recent difficulties.

Here now and fully at home

We are delighted that *Hannah and Travis Shelburne*, with their son Tristan, arrived safely in June (from the USA) and have settled well into their work amongst our young people. They are involved in running our two youth clubs on Friday evenings and will be now be looking for opportunities to visit a couple of local secondary schools to participate in RE classes and CU meetings. Please let them (or me) know if you are willing to do some babysitting for them, during the day or in the evenings, so that they can get out together to engage in the work to which the Lord has called them.

Preaching and Teaching

- On *Sunday mornings* currently, we are looking at our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew 5-7, under the overall theme of *Cultivating a Christian Character*.
- On *Sunday evenings*, we are looking at the life of Solomon under the overall title, *A Builder of Brilliance*.
- Our *Small Groups* this term will be looking at the Beatitudes, using Philip Jensen's study booklet, *The Good Living Guide* (available for £3). Let me encourage you to join one of our two groups, which will be meeting on Wednesdays at lunchtime and in the evening.

Special events

- Our *Harvest celebrations* this year are taking place on **Sunday 27th September**, with a children's feature in the morning service and an International Fellowship Tea in the evening at which Magda and Fibon Nyadu will be reporting on their recent visit to Ghana.
- On **Sunday 11th October**, we will be holding a special lunch to celebrate *Lewis and Ruth Wilson's Ruby wedding anniversary*. Lewis and Ruth have graciously indicated, "we just want to celebrate with our Church family and do not want any gifts. But if

anyone wished, they could donate to Durham Road via the Thank Offering."

- Our annual *Thank Offering Gift Day* will be that same **Sunday 11th October**. Envelopes will be made available for your gifts.
- *Dr Patrick Sookhdeo* will be speaking in the Church on **Saturday 7th November** on the subject of *Islam, the Church, and the future of Britain*.
- This year's *Week of Prayer* will be held in the week running up to Dr Sookhdeo's visit, Sunday 1st – Friday 6th November. *Restore to us the Joy of your Salvation* has been chosen as our theme. Details of the prayer times are as follows:

Sun 1 st	– evening prayer time, after service
Mon 2 nd	– evening prayer meeting, 8.00-9.00pm
Tues 3 rd	– morning prayer meeting, 7.00-7.30am
Wed 4 th	– lunchtime and evening Small Groups, 12noon-2.00pm & 7.30pm-9.00pm
Thurs 5 th	– morning prayer meeting, 7.00-7.30am
Fri 6 th	– lunchtime prayer, 12.00noon – 1.00pm

- Various *outreach ideas* have been suggested for the autumn. We hope to hold a film night in late October showing the remarkable story of William Wilberforce's abolition of slavery, *Amazing Grace*. The new Darwin film, *Creation* (if available), has been suggested for late November; and a Christmas event has been proposed for mid-December. Ideas for 2010 include a Macmillan Nurses coffee morning; a musical evening with Jane Kitson; a visit to the Keswick convention; and a favourite hymns night. Let us know what you think about these ideas.

A New Children's Club

It was agreed at our recent Church Members Meeting that a new Children's Club should be started on Tuesdays, 4.00-5.30pm, for school years 2-6. Margaret Vickers, Paul Harris, and Yvonne McGuinness have indicated their willingness to be involved in leading it and will be meeting with the Pastor soon to discuss further details. Please remember this new venture in your prayers.

Leadership Matters

Our recent Church Members' Meeting agreed to set up an *Interim Steering group* to work alongside the current Office Bearers (the Pastor and Secretary/Treasurer). Paul Harris, Ruth Wilson, and Elaine Willmore have been appointed to serve on this group. We would value your prayers for it in its early days.

We are pleased to have received *an offer of help* from Abel Rees and Ron Wilson of the Westgate Road Baptist Church in Newcastle. Both are men of vast

experience and deep spirituality. The Pastor and Secretary/Treasurer enjoyed a very constructive meeting with them recently, together with John Claydon and Paul Merton (the minister of WRBC), to explore possibilities. All who were present felt a strong sense of the Lord's guidance in this gracious offer of support for DRBC. It is envisaged that Abel and Ron will be invited to serve DRBC alongside the present leadership as 'external advisers', attending Steering Group meetings, Church Meetings (in a non-voting capacity), and Sunday services and mid-week meetings from time to time. They have been invited to join us for lunch at the Church on Sunday 11th October to give them an opportunity to mix and mingle with the congregation informally. They have also been invited to our Central Prayer Meeting on Wednesday 21st October, which will provide an opportunity for questions and discussion. If the membership so wishes, we will formally invite them, as from that meeting, to serve alongside the church leadership. The arrangement will be reviewed after 6 months. It has been suggested that the Pastor and Secretary/Treasurer visit WRBC to explain the situation and needs at DRBC, to foster a partnership in prayer.

Serving the wider church

The Pastor has been invited to serve the *Beacon Lough Baptist Church* as their moderator during their current time of vacancy.

The Pastor has also been invited to part of the *IREF(UK) team visiting India* from 29th Jan – 14th Feb 2010.

Building Matters

The Church Members Meeting heard an update on our current *refurbishment work*.

- The old minister's vestry and adjacent corridor have been repainted, as has the Gents toilet. The walls and woodwork in our Small Hall (Parlour) have been repainted; work still to be done in this room includes repairs to the floor, a re-laying of the carpet, and installation of a projection screen. If anyone is able to help with this work, please let me know.
- The Secretary has agreed to coordinate a working party to redecorate our Main Hall in time for Patrick Sookhdeo's visit on Saturday 7th November. Please speak to Lewis if you are able to help with this work.
- The Church Members Meeting agreed that we should ask Nelsons to go ahead with the roof repairs for which they had previously estimated. It is anticipated that the cost will be £4,300-£4,800. Available funds are approximately £6,800 once VAT from previous

work has been reclaimed and our Northumbria Historic Churches Trust grant of £500 has been released on completion of the work.

The present tenants in our *church manse* have been offered alternative accommodation. The Church Members Meeting agreed that the manse should be put on the market once it has been vacated and two smaller properties purchased with the proceeds, for letting, to provide additional income for the church.

Financial update

- Our *weekly offerings* for the first 8 months of the year averaged £388pw against a target figure of £420pw, so they are still a cause for concern. The shortfall amounts to £1,100 for the year to date.
- However, we have received unbudgeted donations amounting to £2,700 so far this year; and rental income from letting our church premises is about £1,100 above our budget figure. We are also in receipt of a Home Mission grant, which was not anticipated when our 2009 budget was drawn up. We are very grateful for the extra income these sources provide.
- Costs are well within budget so far, but overall we are anticipating *a shortfall of income against expenditure of around £7,000 by the end of this year* (this is better than our budgeted loss of £13,500, but still very serious).
- A full financial update will be provided at our *Half AGM* on **Wednesday 18th November**.
- At a helpful meeting of the leadership with John Claydon (NBA Regional Minister) and Martin James (former NBA Treasurer) in August, we were encouraged to apply for a '50% of stipend' Home Mission grant for 2010 (i.e. £9,675). Please pray for a favourable outcome to our request as it is considered by the BUGB's Grants Committee soon.

I am conscious that this newsletter travels far and wide around the globe to our many prayer partners. So let me say a big 'thank you' to all of you who have upheld us in your prayers in recent days.

David Hunt