

**Church Council Update** – The following update reports on the March Church Council meeting and the Church meeting held at the end of February. If you have any questions regarding this, please speak to Peter or any member of the Church Council.

**Church meeting** – A number of items such as the Building Tithe and LEP review were discussed. These are summarised below. Peter reminded us about the need to be welcoming to visitors and newcomers, particularly that we arrive in sufficient time to ensure that visitors do not find an empty Church at five to ten. Pamela spoke about outreach and different types of growth. She provided us with a questionnaire to take away to help us think about our contacts and the outreach challenges we face. Please let us know if you would like a copy.

We also had a time of open discussion. One of the issues raised again was that of the service times (whether 10:00 was too early for a Sunday Morning or even if Sunday morning was the right time anyway). We will consider this further but like many issues there is no obvious right answer that suits everyone. Messy Church was highlighted as an opportunity to do something at different times and it was noted how successful the first one was.

Another issue discussed was that of our profile and whether we should make ourselves more clearly visible as a church. Plans to put a notice board facing the shops and one facing the path from the park are progressing. I would just like to dispel one myth, which is that because we don't have Church in our name you can't find us on the web. If you type 'Peachcroft' and 'Church' into Google then our web site will normally come out number one on the list. If you search for 'Abingdon Churches' we will normally come out on the first couple of pages. There is clearly more we can do in making ourselves visible and recognised at the local church but as pointed out at the meeting, the key part of this is us and our contact with people.

**LEP Review** – John reported on the headlines at the church meeting. The full report will be circulated after the Joint Council has reviewed it. Overall the report was supportive and encouraging. The key recommendations identified were:

- a. To ensure that we invite ministers from a parent tradition to lead and preach.
- b. To review the constitutional documents looking towards greater self-governance.
- c. To form an Outreach and Mission Group.
- d. To conduct a thorough stewardship campaign of time, talents and money.
- e. To pursue eco-congregation status.

Clearly we are already progressing some of these and will review the others at Church or Joint Council meetings.

**Building Tithe** – Iain Carvel presented an update on the building fund and confirmed that the building loans have now all been paid off. This is fantastic news and years ahead of where we expected to be. It was suggested that we should organise a celebration to mark this, which is being planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> of July. The challenge now is that we, as a church, committed to continue fund raising after we had paid for the building to secure another 10% tithe to give to other projects. This equates to £60,000. We have already started collecting funds towards this and now feel that it would be appropriate to identify some key projects that we would like to support to give the fund raising some focus. These projects may not necessarily be about brick and mortar but about building up the church in a broader sense. There was some discussion about whether we should support a local, national or international projects and it will probably be some combination. It is up to the congregation to propose suitable projects, if there are any charities that you would like to suggest please pass a brief proposal to Peter or any member of the CC. These will all be reviewed and the CC and recommendations presented to a future church meeting.

**Youth Work** – From September we will need at least two more Sunday Club leaders. If this is an area of ministry that you would like to be involved in or if you would just like to find out more about, please speak to Peter Bennett or Marion Haynes in the first instance. We are also considering the need to set up a discipleship group for Immerse members and if anyone would be interested in being involved or leading this, please speak to Peter Bennett or Lawrance Shama. It was good to hear that Deb Thompson and Hazel Beaver had been put forward for a Vale unsung hero award for their fantastic dedication and commitment to Compass Café. I think that everyone would agree that they deserve this. Lawrance will be away in India for a month, from the later part of March, to oversee the opening of the Orphanage and Hospital project that he has been so involved with and our support and prayer goes with him and his family.

**Church Weekend** – Noreen has been looking at alternative venues and it is difficult to find anywhere better than the Frontier Centre near Northampton at a reasonable price. We will need to make a decision very soon about whether to have a Church Weekend this year or possibly just to have an away day somewhere more local and plan a full weekend for next year. The input received to date indicates support for this alternative but any further input or suggestions would be welcome.

**Haiti fund raising concert** – Ben Neilsen's band is hoping to put together a concert in support of this appeal after Easter and we would encourage everyone to support this.