

Newsletter No 4 14th April 2013

You don't get a Newsletter for over two years and suddenly two of them appear within a month; sounds like the buses but it is actually the development process for our new meeting house getting off the launch pad.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter there will be an **Information Evening in the church on Wednesday 17th April at 8:15pm.**

We have been working hard to ensure this evening will be informative, interesting and most of all, an encouragement to start our journey of faith towards a new church building which will be a hub for the community in Antrim and a place where they can meet Jesus in an individual way.

We are pleased to confirm the following people will be coming to encourage us and share with us their experiences on their journey of faith:-

Ø Fred Nunce; Belfast South Methodist

Ø Dr Glen Jordan; East Belfast Mission

Ø George Newell; Willowfield Parish Church

Ø Sally Irvine; Orangefield Presbyterian

In acknowledgement of these people giving their time to come and share with us, the majority of the evening will be allocated to them and there will also be an opportunity for our congregation to ask them questions. Therefore, due to time restraints, we will be unable to have a time for the Development Team members to answer questions. However, you are encouraged to hand in written questions or e-mail them to robin.kirkpatrick@btinternet.com and we will answer them all in a Newsletter after the Information Evening. Please note the identity of the person asking the question will not be disclosed.

There is also a rumour that tea will be available at some point during the evening and small folders containing some information on our journey so far will be available to take away with you. This folder can then be used to record future events along the way.

As with the previous Newsletter, the reminder is a short story of part of the journey for the folk in Willowfield Parish church.

PLEASE COME ALONG ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT 8:15PM

Willowfield Parish Church

It took some considerable time for the Rev McClay to persuade the members of his parish that they could trust in God to provide the funding needed to refurbish their church. He hosted the entire congregation, small group by small group, giving them a meal and sharing his vision to encourage them to be bold and join him in this venture of faith. The refurbishment was going to cost £400,000. This was to remove the pews and purchase suitable seating, rewire, deal with damp, provide disability access and repaint. In due course the congregation caught the vision and realised that if they wanted to be salt and light in the community they needed to modify their building.

Only once the builders had begun their work did they discover that the entire wooded structure supporting the roof was unsafe and would have to be replaced. The cost jumped from £400,000 to £1 million! Rev McClay was at a loss as to what to do. It had taken so long and so much work to get the congregation to believe God could provide £400,000, how was he ever going to persuade them that God could provide £1 million? He would have to face the Vestry that evening and tell them the news. He turned to God in prayer and placed the matter in His hands.

That afternoon Rev McClay received a phone call from a stranger: would he have time to meet him today, he was passing through Belfast and wished to speak with him. Arrangements were made and the two men met for coffee. The stranger had heard that the congregation were about to embark on a building project and he wanted to contribute to it. The stranger handed Rev McClay a cheque for £70,000!

Rev McClay saw this as a first instalment towards the payment of the new building and with renewed faith and confidence approached the Vestry. This unexpected donation was enough to remind the Vestry, and the congregation, that God was able to provide from sources unexpected for unanticipated expense and that they could trust him for the rest to provide the rest of the funding.

It took five more years before the building was completed. They added a café and drop in centre and have a multipurpose building to welcome those from the surrounding community. That building is now used every day and they now have six services on a Sunday!