

CHURCH ON THE BUS



September 2019

Church on the Bus – to - Church from the Bus



14 years ago Alan Parks had the vision and commitment to start taking the good news of the gospel and the love of Jesus to the homeless and isolated people of our town. He wanted to take the church into the community and Church on the Bus was founded. In recent years the management of the project has changed but the work of sharing the Love of God with all continues. At present the Bus continues to be the focal point for this project. It arrives in Chesterfield Town centre 2 evenings per week and 1 afternoon per week in Matlock.

A typical evening involves the provision of food, the opportunity for personal contact to enable the sharing of issues and “signposting” individuals to appropriate services to help them manage their difficult and besetting issues. Clothing, sleeping bags and toiletries are also available, many of which are donated by supporters and individuals who wish to be involved in the provision and care provided.

Many who attend the “Bus” have long term problems ranging from drug or alcohol dependence, needing support to manage mental health issues as well as those who remain on the edge of main stream society and live lonely and isolated lives.

The “Bus” is entirely staffed by volunteers who give up their time to prepare food, drive the bus and be “on board” and talk with the guests. Behind the scenes, some volunteers maintain the bus, raise funds and complete the day to day management tasks. The common theme is that of awareness and a commitment to “get involved” in providing this level of “hands on care.” At the end of each session time is set aside for prayer where the guests and their situation are brought to God, their lives and futures placed into His hands. As you can imagine the Volunteers are tired but positive at the end of each session.



Recently the numbers attending the “Bus” have increased. This may have resulted from the changes in social policy, the increase and availability of some drugs and the financial constraints placed on other agencies that restrict their opportunities to intervene. In Chesterfield the current pattern is for there to be between 30 and 40 attending the “Bus” on any one evening. The record attendance stands at 47 for one night. The management of these numbers clearly presents difficulties as space and resources available on

the bus are limited. Volunteers are just managing the situation rather than having the opportunity to get alongside the Guests. Consideration also has to be given to the safety aspects of managing such numbers in a confined space.



So what to do about these developments? After prayer and reflection the trustees have felt led by God to consider finding a permanent base for the continuation of the work. At this time John Phillips, the Chair of the Trustees of Church on the Bus, called into Grace Chapel in the Market Place, Chesterfield. Not only did he receive a warm welcome he was offered the use of the facilities of the Chapel to be the meeting point.

Taking up this offer and following God's prompting will change the work from **Church on the Bus** into **Church From The Bus**. Facilities available at Grace Chapel include a kitchen, dining area, toilets, showers & space to be able to have quiet conversations and pray with Guests about issues they face. It will be a positive place for the work of service to the needy, a safer environment for the volunteers and part of a coordinated pattern of provision by linking in with others providing support for those who need it.

In Matlock, provision has been made by using the room above the Christian Bookshop in the town centre. Here again God has provided a suitable base for the work of extending His kingdom and for his church to serve Him by bringing light to those who may be living in a "dark place."

Yes, God does answer prayer, He also blesses work that brings honour to his name by providing good facilities and resources to enable the continued care of those in need.

We should give thanks to God for His provision, we should be humble in accepting the job of being His servants and we should grasp opportunities to care and share with the Guests of Church on the Bus.

**GIVE THANKS
TO THE LORD
FOR HE IS GOOD**
HIS LOVE endures FOREVER!!!

Church on the Bus would like to thank you for all the support you have given over the years. Your prayers, interest, donations and giving have been recognised and valued. We would like to hope that you will continue with your support and involvement so that by sharing in this work we can continue to serve God and share His love and care for members of our community.

Please continue to pray for the vision of this work, for all who volunteer and the guests using the provision of **Church From The Bus**.

For further information;

- You can follow Church on the Bus on Facebook
- By telephoning our chairman, John Phillips 07585 153369