

CHURCH ON THE BUS



December 2020

It's Goodbye to the Bus!



8th October 2020 was a memorable day for us. Two chaps motorcycled over from Belfast arriving in Chesterfield at 9:30am to collect and drive away “the Bus”. It had always been our hope that “the Bus” would continue its life in some form of charitable work. Much to our surprise this hope was fulfilled when we were told it was to be used as part of a community based Arts Project in Belfast working to bring people from different faiths and areas of the city together. Their work is done in various communities around the city and province and also at festivals.

Our hope and prayer is that “the Bus” will provide a positive experience for all and play a part in healing some of the long standing divides and in breaking down prejudice. We will continue to pray that “the Bus” will be used as a focus for reconciliation and an opportunity for learning to grow together by experiencing all the positive things that our God has for those who seek Him,



It's Hello to the Future!

Looking back over the past 9 months it has been a terrible year for all and especially for the work of Church on the Bus. Whatever plans we made to continue to provide some form of care and support for our guests have been thwarted. However, there has been a “silver lining” for a few guests who have been provided with accommodation under the “Everybody In” programme.



We are now planning to develop the way forward for Church on the Bus. Of course we will continue with our provision in Chesterfield and Matlock with drop in facilities, and continue to provide a warm welcome, some food and a chance to chat. We are also working to develop a support programme for those moving into accommodation. We plan to assist them with the provision of basic furniture, bedding and kitchen tools as well as support to help them to meet the many demands they will face. At present this is in the planning stage, we have been provided with some storage facilities but until Covid comes under control we will find it hard to put our plans into practice. In view of that we are not yet able to accept donations of furniture and other items. We will let you know as soon as we can and we have every confidence

that you will continue to be as generous as ever.

Volunteering

First of all a **Great Big Thank You** to all who share in the work of Church on the Bus by volunteering. All your care and compassion is recognised and very much appreciated. We know you care not just by the work you do but also by your commitment to love and service.



Working as a volunteer can be demanding as well as rewarding, it brings hope to the lives of others and a recognition to you of using your skills and abilities to serve others in the community.

Do you know of others who may want to be part of the team? If so, encourage them to look at our webpages and share your experiences of the demands and rewards of our work. We are always happy to talk with prospective volunteers.

We are also looking for people who have skills to help us with presenting the work of Church on the Bus to others. We are looking for those with skills in photography, writing and the technical side of using the internet.



Christmas 2020

We would like to wish you all a Very Happy and Blessed Christmas. Let's enjoy the "reason for the season" and set aside some time to reflect on the God's gift of salvation to mankind through the child born in a stable. We remember that the new holy family were isolated and far away from home, friends and family. They soon became outcasts in their land.



If we come across a homeless and isolated person on the streets of our towns remember God loves them as much as He loves you!



Perhaps He may want you to be His agent of care.

Some thoughts and Prayers for Christmas

The following are extracts from Prayers found on the internet. Please use them as part of a time of prayer and reflection as part of our care for our guests and the many homeless in this country over the festive period.



God of compassion, your love for humanity was revealed in Jesus, whose earthly life began in the poverty of a stable and ended in the pain and isolation of the cross:

We hold before you those who are homeless and isolated. Draw near and comfort them in spirit and protect them from harm.....

We pray that those of us with warm houses not be lulled into complacency and forgetfulness. Jesus, help us to see your face in the eyes of every person experiencing homelessness who we meet. So that we may be empowered through word and deed, and by your grace, to bring justice and peace to those who are homeless.



*We pray for those sleeping under bridges, on park benches, in doorways or bus stations.
For those who can only find shelter for the night but must wander in the daytime.
For families broken because they could not afford to pay the rent.
For those who have no relatives or friends who can take them in.
For those who have no place to keep possessions.
For those who are afraid and feel hopeless*