

CHURCH ON THE BUS

Do not forget to show hospitality
to strangers, for by so doing some
people have shown hospitality to
angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13 v 2



October 2022

Rejoice in the Lord...do not be anxious about anything...

With all of the difficult news and issues which bombard us every day via the media, it is easy to think that now is the time for taking shelter, being careful and concentrating on looking after our own. Resources are few, expenses are high, and risks seem great. These things are true, but they are not the whole story.

Our God has promised to provide all of our needs, according to his riches, and He sends us out to serve in His name and with His power. We know that if we are finding things to be difficult then our guests will be finding it even more difficult; our guests, people with no homes, some living on the street, with no resources to fall back on, no relationships to support them, unsure of who they are and with little or no sense of self-worth.

CotB committed itself, at the AGM in July, to continue to work for our guests. This newsletter will try to let you know how this work has been going; it will give you a perspective on the challenges we are facing and the changes that we feel we need to make. It will also ask for your continued prayer, support and help, and suggest ways that you can provide this. Without your support and help the work of CotB will not get done, and remember: We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2 v10).

CotB at Matlock - Tuesdays

Matlock meetings continue to attract between 3 and 8 guests in the Upper Room at Cornerstone Christian Bookshop. There is a lot of camaraderie amongst the guests, who often support each other, and conversation always flows naturally!

Matlock has a rota of 5 sandwich providers, and guests also receive biscuits, fruit, occasionally cake (as for the Platinum Jubilee), and a selection of toiletries. At the conclusion of each session guests are asked if they have things they would like us to pray for and these things are included in the final blessing and prayers at the end of the meetings.



Lent week 5 - God Heals us.

The Bible tells us of God and His Son Jesus healing people and making them whole. The healing was sometimes by curing their physical problems and sometimes by healing their minds and spirits. The Bible tells us that God heals the broken spirit. Christians believe that God continues to heal people today, this can include physical healing but more often it is by making us emotionally and spiritually strong. Jesus wants to walk with us and help us to grow and have a positive life. He surrounds us with His love and provides reassurance of His forgiveness for the wrong we have done. He provides us with an inner peace even when our lives seem to be in turmoil. Jesus often greeted his disciples by say "Peace be with you." He still says today "Come to me.... and I will give you rest."

Reflection; Some times I do not know which way to turn and worry that whatever I choose will be the wrong decision. How can God help me to make the right decision?

Prayer; Father God help me to turn to you for help when I need it and not us you as a last resort. Amen

At key times of the Christian Calendar John Small has provided guests in Matlock and Chesterfield with cards to help them think about how the Christian faith might help their lives.

Chesterfield - Mondays

Since the closing of Winter provision, the Monday teams have found a steady increase in guest attendees; numbers have ranged between 15-22, with 26 being the highest attendance on the July 4th.

Greggs have altered their opening times, and this means that when we need to provide something to eat for our guests before 7 pm volunteer teams take it in turn to create a hot meal: curry, pasta, hot dogs and cottage pie have all been tasty dishes that have been really appreciated by the guests.

This has all been very positive but there have been some evenings, over the last few months, when volunteer numbers have been lower than we would feel comfortable, and we would ask for your prayers that volunteers will come forward to be part of our teams.

Chesterfield – Thursdays

Again, numbers have varied since the end of the winter provision, from 8 to over 20. Prayer is our way of starting and ending each session and usually calm and friendly evenings have followed. Many thanks go to our loyal volunteers, including new recruits; each person on the team is invaluable. Our cooks, Diane, and Donna have alternated between providing

bacon and sausage baps and cheeseburgers, all of which go down well. The Greggs donations also have been hugely appreciated and none of our guests have ever needed to go hungry. We thank God for His provision for us in so many ways.

Chesterfield – extra

Since writing the above, Greggs have changed their closing times again to 8pm; this presents us with a challenge to work through, whether to put our times back an hour, with all the difficulties that gives on accessibility, or stick where we are and provide all the food ourselves. Please pray for the right decision to be made.

News from the AGM

The AGM was held on July 5th at St Thomas Centre, Brampton, Chesterfield, and there were real people there although it was also available online via Teams.

Thankyous, farewells, and welcomes

There were some goodbyes and some hellos among the Trustees. Archdeacon Carol Coslett stood down due to moving to become Archdeacon of Peak and Dales. We are grateful to Carol for her service as a trustee and her continued support of CotB's ministry. We are blessed, however, by the appointment of Archdeacon Karen Hamblin as a new trustee and extend a warm welcome to her.

We also had to thank and say farewell to Phil Morten who has given significant support to CotB, especially in helping with the Winter Provision process. Phil has left Derby City Mission and taken up some new challenges, including additional fostering.

Mark North, CEO of Freedom, who we got to know through his work with us on the Winter provision has agreed to join CotB as a trustee. Again, we are grateful to Mark, and to God, for his willingness to do this.

A change of role, but not a goodbye, occurred for John Phillips. John has been a faithful chair for the last few years. He has now stood down from that role but continues to serve as a trustee and as a leader of the Matlock provision. Samantha Abel and Hilary Moore are now sharing the role of chair of trustees, and we pray for God's guidance and blessing as they do this.

Finances

Good news was reported that the financial position is healthy. Our expenditure is broadly matched by our income which all comes from the regular generous donations from individuals and churches. The balance sheet also reflects the legacy of having disposed of the bus, which had variable and relatively high running costs. The Trustees, however, see

this as highlighting a challenge. The challenge is to develop a strategy which reflects the change that has happened in moving from bus to buildings and which makes good use of funds that we have to invest in new work.

The Way Ahead

See, I am doing a new thing... a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19

On the May 25th CotB Trustees hosted a significant partners' meeting; at this event they listened to Jon Kuhrt, the Specialist Rough Sleeping Adviser for Community & Faith Groups within the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Partners present, the local authorities, P3, Pathways, Freedom and Derby City Mission, affirmed and expressed appreciation for the work of CotB. It was acknowledged that partnership was essential in this work. CotB committed themselves to continue to lead in the evening aspects of Winter Provision in 2022/23 should it be needed.

Two areas of change and development were identified during the discussion. The first is something that has been considered for some time and work in this area has already begun. This work aims to reduce the gap with regard to furniture provision in the Chesterfield area for people who are coming away from rough sleeping to become "fresh start" tenants. CotB is keen to help with this but is aware that we need new volunteer teams to make this possible.

The second area is the familiar adage that it is better to teach a person how to fish than to give them fish to eat. In terms of CotB provision this means considering how we deliver hospitality; could we do this in a way that encourages guests to use, or discover, their own gifts, for instance teaching how to cook, with all the skills that planning meals, budgeting and shopping involves? Other aspects of this include ideas of specific social activities, such as walking groups, and more intentional befriending. We need to build up our volunteer base and review carefully what is possible, though all of this would be done with the aim of sharing with our guests what Jesus has for them and the hope and healing he can bring to their lives.

Prayer has to be at the heart of all this; prayer for wisdom and guidance, and prayer that God will bring people to help with this work. Please join us in this.

Please pray for the meeting due to take place on November 1st. The Trustees will be meeting at St John's Walton to pick up on strategy discussions following the May 25th meeting. Please pray for the Lord's leading on what He wants us to focus on.

- ✚ Thank God for our volunteers in Chesterfield and Matlock and the way they honour him through their efforts.
- ✚ Thank God for the donations of food, clothing and other resources which help to meet the needs of our guests.
- ✚ Thank God for our partners

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



We also thank God for Jane and Karen, from Tesco Extra in Chesterfield. Most months they contact Ian and kindly organise the donation of foodstuffs

such as powdered soups, biscuits, crisps, and drinks, these supplement the foods that we give out. It is a great help and adds variety and fun for our guests.



The North wind doth blow and...

During the winter months Church on the Bus in Chesterfield will continue to operate on Mondays and Thursdays, and in Matlock on Tuesday afternoons. But the winter does cause added problems for our guests and so Ian Macleod has been contacting last year's Chesterfield volunteers to check their availability to help with Winter Provision 2022/3.

As we go to press our understanding from the Derbyshire Local Authority teams is that they are hoping that they will have access to a 15-bed unit in Heanor (Amber Valley) which will serve as the focal point of the winter support activity for everywhere outside Derby City. The proposed property in Heanor consists of self-contained units, each with its own cooking facilities, so people who are accommodated there will be in a much better position regarding food than those in B&Bs last winter.

This plan follows on from the unique "Mount Cook" experience 2 years ago during lockdown which was very successful because it took people away from their situations and centralised support services. This strategy is dependent on the Local Authorities being granted funding and the application will be confirmed towards the end of October. If this provision in Heanor becomes possible then it is the best solution for our guests. If this provision is not available, then we will aim to repeat last year's provision where we supplemented the B&B experience with evening provision. Because we are unsure if this approach will be needed, we are keeping the option of Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and the weekend open, but we are not advertising generally with churches for volunteers yet.

Can You Help With?

Please consider if you could help with any of the following – or maybe you could encourage someone from your church to volunteer in one of these areas.

Gifts in Kind – we need: small items for personal hygiene (that can be easily carried), trainers, walking boots, jeans, and **new** underwear. Sleeping bags are also useful.

Sandwich Making - for Matlock and Chesterfield.

Welcoming Guests - at Matlock or Chesterfield.

Joining a “furniture” team in Chesterfield.

To help with any of these please email: churchonthebus@gmail.com or if your church, or community group, would appreciate a presentation of the work we do please let us know.

Please Pray

Homeless and Disadvantaged People in Derbyshire and Derby – that they will be remembered during these difficult times. Many have multiple and complex needs

Local Councils – for wisdom in the use of finances and other resources. That they may value all of the people in their area.

The Trustees - that God may grant them true vision, wisdom and compassion as they lead CotB.

Volunteers – give thanks for our volunteers, and ask for strength and safety. Please pray to for others to join our teams.

Partner Organisations – that we may see how we can best work together to serve the needs of the homeless and disadvantaged.

Different Ways You Can Give Financially

Regular or one-off donations – can be made to our Co-op Bank Account: The Church On the Bus. Sort Code 08 92 99 – Acc. 65923339

Just Giving Page - justgiving.com/church-onthebus

Amazon Smiles – if you use Amazon please login to your account through smile.amazon.com this allows you to purchase your goods in the same and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to your nominated charity, which could be CotB

Give As You Live – this website gives you access to many major retailers and high street stores. When you shop through this site a nominated charity receives a donation from the retailer – you can nominate CotB. giveasyoulive.com