



March 2009

Colchester Foodbank

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Many of us have been praying about the Church's response to the current economic situation. Several people feel that God has been speaking to them about how we serve those most affected by the unstable economic climate. A small group of us have met and the ideas below reflect our prayer response to this call.

Foodbank

A Food bank is a place where anyone can receive food; 3 days of balanced meals for 4 people. Referrals can be made by GPs, social workers and so on, and the food can tide people over until statutory benefits kick in.

The Salvation Army runs a Foodbank here in Colchester and we would like to work with them to help expand the number of people they can currently help. Please pray for their work.

A Foodbank can enable people to gain experience as volunteers. Foodbanks in other towns have volunteers who themselves are vulnerable adults, and this provides them with a rewarding outlet for service.

A Bit of space

Many people have said they need some "space" to think things through, and so we would like to create somewhere people can quietly sit, reflect and perhaps pray.

Debt advice

Free, impartial debt advice is one key to managing in difficult times. There is currently no coordinated Christian response to this in Colchester. Those

involved in developing Foodbank support are wanting to provide a debt advice service too.

Existing support

Those working with the homeless are reporting an increase in their work load so please continue to pray for:

- Beacon House, Open Door, Korban, the Soup Run, social services, Borough Council and all service providers
- Out for Good and other organisations that work with people who live in difficult situations
- The Boiler Room Community as they plan more feasts for the homeless and other vulnerable people

You are invited to come to the meeting to find out more about our hopes and dreams for this project: on Thursday 26th March 2009, at 7:45pm in St Botolph's Church Hall.

Steering group: Brian Ford, Andrew Fordyce, Hilary Le Seve, Marie Morris.

Contact: Marie Morris on 752798 or email: mariemorris@tiscali.co.uk
www.trusseltrust.org

The Lord is my Shepherd; I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake.

Prayer Breakfast
Date: **Saturday 7th March 2009**
Venue: Wivenhoe Methodist Church
Time: 8.30 am - 10 am

Hope in Colchester

"Last year many congregations in the town came together for a variety of events under the 'Hope 08' banner. We were so encouraged by this we decided to continue to work together. A meeting was held in January to discuss future plans.

Hope 08 was a national event and we had a letter from head office thanking us for the work we put in. An event called Hope on the Streets followed and then Christmas Wrapping went really well. Thanks to everyone who helped. We now have a united network of churches called Hope in Colchester which is something that can keep going.

Here are comments and feedback on the last year: 'It's very important for the churches to work together'

'The prayer room Christmas feast went well and demonstrated that working together we can do more, not just bigger but also sustainable'.

'The vision is to have every church in Colchester involved, with one 'champion' from every church'.

'Everyone in their Hope t-shirts was a very moving sight, It showed the world we were united, not divided. We have ideas about what we can do as Hope in Colchester working together as one for Jesus'

Moving forward – plans for Easter Event on Good Friday.

- Music, both from the Salvation Army and worship bands
- Cream egg give away
- Surveys
- Flyers – Come to Lion Walk for 5 min preaching.

- **The Good Friday March Starts 12:00 outside St Nicholas House.**

Other ideas for events included:

- Joint Church meeting in the open air
- Litter sweep (to serve community)
- Kids make Easter cards
- Jesus Deck and Healing tents

- Food bank

The overriding values:

- What ever we do, we should go to people, not make them come to us.
- Having a servant heart
- If we want to know how to bless people we need to ask them what they need".

James Collitt

For more information contact James at:

hopeincolchester@hotmail.co.uk

Other news

'**Work Dynamics** is a group of men and women who work in Colchester Town Centre. The group was started about 8 years ago by Revd Terry Tennens. We meet in the foyer of Colchester Baptist Church in Eld Lane, to talk about issues from a Christian point of view, and to pray and encourage one another. We meet Tuesdays (except fifth) 1.10pm - 1.50 pm (come and leave as you need to - bring your sandwiches). Occasionally we have a meal out together. Feel welcome to look in'.

Revd Fred Woods
St Peter's Vicarage, Balmerne Close, Colchester, Essex CO1 1NZ tel 01206 572641

Vision for China incorporates Caring for China's Children, Teachers for China and Health for China. The vision for the work was given in 1973 on the Garrison and the prayer meeting which is for the work in China has continued from that time. We meet every 3rd Tuesday of the month 2pm in various venues. We have had several teachers from Colchester over the years and we are interested in their stories etc: We are also available to speak on the work to any interested group or fellowship. With love *Aubrey and Sheila*.

Colchester Boiler Room Community will again be leading a week of 24/7 prayer in Turkey, 29th March - 5th April 2009

Check out our new website at www.colchesterprayernet.co.uk

Apologies that it may have been tricky emailing us recently. We are working hard to eliminate problems. To contact Teresa Lasky:
admin@colchesterprayernet.co.uk

Phone: 01206 242235

For Marie Morris:

marie@colchesterprayernet.co.uk

The contributors' views are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.



Marriage

We thank God for the institution of marriage. We pray especially for marriages:

- under increased pressure and strain through sickness or disability
- weakened by economic pressure and debt
- those considering separation and divorce

Prayer for Marriage Relationships.

Pray that couples:

1. Will deeply love and experientially know the Lord. Luke 10:27, Philippians 3:8,9a
2. Will delight themselves in the Lord and in His Word. Psalm 37:4 Psalm 1:2
3. Will desire a deepening relationship with the Lord Psalm 63:1,8. 1 Peter 3:11. And with each other.
4. Will be strengthened in the promises they have made to each other.

Pray that:

1. There will be strong relationship in the home.
2. Couples will be loving, unselfish and respectful. Ephesians 5:25, 5:33
2. Couples will be understanding and honoring. 1 Peter 3:7
3. Couples will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21
4. There will be fun and laughter again in the relationship.
5. Good choices will be made

If there is righteousness in the heart

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

So let it be —Scottish Blessing

CYO Open Evening

Connecting . . . come and be part of a really big conversation.

Monday 16 March 7:45pm

St. John's Church

Ipswich Road, Colchester

You are invited to join us for a café style evening of information about our work, inspiration about future possibilities and conversation about four exciting challenges:

- Colchester - becoming a disciple making town.
- Connecting the whole Gospel with the whole school.
- Connecting people with the life and work of CYO.
- Connecting churches, young people and youth leaders.

All leading to a time of prayer and worship

Schools

Secondary Schools Consultation. This consultation is one of the most important to face Colchester Education for many years. Many of us have been praying into the decisions that need to be made .

Essex County Council is proposing to close the Thomas Lord Audley (TLA) School in Monkwick and Alderman Blaxill School (ABS) at Shrub End.

It has been proposed that TLA will be re-opened as a vocational college for 14-19 year olds to be potentially run by Colchester Institute. Sir Charles Lucas in Greenstead will also be changed into an Academy and a new school

would be built somewhere to replace it.

Year 7 intake at ABS and TLA would end from September 2010. All children from these schools will be sent to other schools (The Stanway School, Philip Morant, St Helena or Thurstable).

During the first round of consultation, Option 4, which was to keep ABS and TLA open and assign them to the leadership team at Stanway received 4,400 votes from parents. Option 1, favoured by Essex County Council, had 123 votes in favour by parents.

We pray for God's will to be done in the whole decision-making process. We pray for decisions to be made that are for the good of communities in Colchester.

There is a public meeting at the Weston Homes Community Stadium on March 4th from 7pm.

We pray for St Helena School, especially for:

- Ed Belben, Lewis Hayward and Alex Young who have recently been convicted of murder.
- Their friends and families
- For everyone who knew Gary Belbin and Helen Maughan
- For the staff, parents and pupils at St Helena school



Feedback and town news

Friends International (F.I.)

Thank you for praying for the Mission week at the university! It went well.

Praise for:

- The 4 free lunch cafe's with a short talk during which the gospel was clearly presented + the 'grill a Christian in the bar + pub quiz night.
- The students who signed up for the follow up groups that will be taking place on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Pray that they will have the courage to attend and ask more questions.
- All the Mark's gospels that were given out during the week. That they will be read and students will come to know Jesus as their Saviour.
- For the 3 Bible studies which Michael and Caroline are leading on campus.. For good attendance at the free international cafe' and free table tennis that F.I run.

Pray for:

- Students who were very challenged by the sudden unexplained death of a Christian Malaysian graduate of Essex who was well know to many students. The Chaplaincy was packed with students for a memorial service for him led well by Rev Thomas Yap.
- For continued unity of Christians on campus and for their continued effective witness.

God bless you all!! Joan Davies

Sharers and Dreamers

St Botolph's Church in Colchester was the venue for our major event of the year - two presentations of Richard Hubbard's Advent celebration *Sharers in the Promise*. It included a choir of over 50, an orchestra of around

30, children from **cre8** dancing, a drama team, two teams of Psalm-drummers in the balconies and a stunning light show.

There was a fantastic atmosphere amongst the team throughout the day, with everyone pulling together to make the production happen. As well as the performers, there were teams of people organising sound, lighting, front of house and food.

Our thanks to everyone (about 120 people) who helped make *Sharers* possible. The sense of unity amongst us all was tangible.

Less than two weeks after *Sharers in the Promise*, the Cantus Firmus Choir were in action once again, this time at Colchester's Charter Hall, providing backing to Graham Kendrick and his team as part of their nationwide tour of his new album *Dreaming of a Holy Night*.

Our thanks go to Adrian Lyons, organiser of the Colchester performance of *Dreaming*, for his willingness to work together with *Sharers* to make both events a success.

Richard Hubbard

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Email: info@cantusfirmus.org.uk

www.cantusfirmus.org.uk

Spiritual seekers

Natalie walked into the **Sanctum prayer room in Colchester Sixth Form College** with the quiet air of someone who believed confidently in the spiritual. After a welcome, and a brief explanation, she was away, quietly engaging with many of the different 'stations' or activities. Natalie made her way thoughtfully round the whole room, taking her time and adding her contributions to those of others.

After about 25 minutes she paused to chat briefly with some of the team, sharing some of her

Wiccan beliefs before recording her thoughts in the visitor's book: *"Very inspiring and a very good target audience. It's helped, I think, to open people up to spirituality at an age where religion is confusing and blocked behind dogma."*

Natalie came back on a couple more occasions, this time to sit and chat with some of the team over a creative half hour of decorating tiles for the mosaic activity. Damaged by a strict and unyielding Christian upbringing, she had retreated into a set of beliefs that seemed to her more accommodating. However, she was drawn back to Sanctum to chat with the team and, as it turned out, was, as Jesus might have put it, not far from the Kingdom of God.

It was a start - it would be great if we could continue the conversation.

Dan visited a couple of times too. Although he didn't feel he related well to the standard 'image and parties' life of many in the college, in Sanctum he found a welcome he'd not expected, and space to reflect. He also discovered that he was loved and appreciated by the team, with whom he shared much and laughed a lot; a reflection of the love and acceptance we believe God has for him.

We were able to pray with Dan; something he wasn't expecting, but really appreciated.

He wrote: *"Thank you for the experience and praying for me. The flexibility and kindness makes it what it is—extraordinary. I think the one thing to remember is not to overcomplicate religion but keep it short, simple but at the same time imaginative and interesting. Thanks."*

Please keep praying for the young people of Colchester.

CPn celebrates 7 years

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Isaiah 9:7

This month we celebrate 7 years of continuous united prayer through Colchester PrayerNet (CPn).

We are so very grateful for all that God has done within our town and acknowledge the long history of united prayer in Colchester. It is wonderful to play a small part in the great story that is unfolding before us as we unite together, pray and work together. There are far too many things, new and old, to thank our great God for individually, but perhaps we can take some time to pray now for those things that spring to mind as we consider God's faithfulness to this town.

As we enter into our 8th year I would like to say a huge thank you to each person who has been a friend to us. Friends that have prayed with us from day one, those that are new to us this month. Thank you to those who have given us their time and advice, and those who have been faithful to send in not only their prayer requests, but answered prayer and testimony too. Thank you to Marie who does much hidden admin to keep this thing ticking over! Thank you.

I have felt inspired by the prophetic words of Isaiah 9:7 and would like to suggest we use this to fuel our prayer as we continue to pray for every aspect of life and every sphere of influence within the life of our town.

We pray for the increase of Jesus' government and peace

within:

- **Education, schools, colleges, university.** Young people and those returning to education. Increased authority for those who work within this sphere, for teachers, head teachers, CYO etc

We pray for the increase of Jesus' government and peace within:

- **Business and retail.** We thank God for the wonderful opportunities opened to us within business and retail. Thank God for the ongoing work of Rev. Alison Finch, Rev. Fred Woods and others

We pray for the increase of Jesus' government and peace within:

- **Arts, media, leisure.** For those that report our news. For God to be seen increasingly through the arts. For those expressing church in new and creative ways, Café church, Boiler Room Community.

We pray for the increase of Jesus' government and peace within:

- **Family, marriages and the Church.** That we would be salt and light, serving people and desiring to see God's Kingdom come. Thank God for the many expressions of unity.

We pray for the increase of Jesus' government and peace within:

- **Government (local and national), the police, the Army.** For our MPs. For all decision makers and those with authority within these spheres. For Street Pastors as they offer support within the town centre.

We pray for the increase of Jesus' government and peace within:

- **Medicine, health, lifestyle.** We pray for the local NHS Trust. For the caring professions, service

providers. For those pioneering within the field of medicine. For hospitals, care homes, day centres. We pray for those working within the voluntary sector, with the homeless and vulnerable.

Thank you, *Teresa Lasky*

Christianity Explored

If you are from a church based in Colchester or surrounds it could be time to book your place at the Christianity Explored leaders / evangelism training conferences

Biblical Evangelism Strategy training conferences are aimed at anyone organising, or thinking about running, a Christianity Explored (CE) course in their local church.

Over the course of a day, delegates will explore:

- the essentials of a Biblical underpinning for evangelism
- how to develop an evangelism strategy for their local church
- CE course materials via a week 3 simulation an overview of the Gospel of Mark and be equipped to explain its message

Venue: All Saints Fordham Church, Essex
Saturday 21st March, 2009.
10am to 5pm.

Details: at
www.christianityexplored.org.uk
or www.fordhamchurch.org.uk