



February 2010

St Luke's Church

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When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace ... to make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman
(1899-1981)

“Since the mid-nineties, we have wondered about the possibility of taking on the lease of Unit 4, Highwoods Square – just across the square from Highwoods Community Centre, where we gather for worship each Sunday - with a view to it becoming a permanent presence for us in the community. Over that time period, the unit has been an estate agent’s office three times. Each time the estate agent has closed down, we have prayed and asked “is this the time?” – but on each occasion the answer has appeared to be “no.” Until now!

The unit became vacant again in September 2008, and we enquired at that time if Tesco would be willing to consider an offer from us, with a view to us opening a community coffee house. The answer back then was “no”, as Tesco had interest in exploring offers from other parties.

We heard nothing for several months, until early May 2009, when we received a phone call from the agents managing the letting for Tesco, to ask “are you still interested?” Our answer was a definite “yes”, and so formal discussions with Tesco began in earnest for the first time.

Things have moved on a great deal since then. We’ve decided on a name: ‘The Oak Tree Coffee House’ – fitting in with the leafy character of Highwoods, but also with our sense of identity as a church – when we were planted by St John’s a key

scripture was Isaiah 61:3 “They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.” We have clarified our vision for the coffee house – for it to primarily be a good quality ‘Community Coffee House’ (think Starbucks, Costa Coffee etc!) – a pleasant place for people to come for good coffee and other drinks, hot and cold snacks, cakes and so on, but also selling local crafts and Traidcraft goods, and with ‘Wi-Fi’ internet access available. But more than that, for it to be:

- A place of welcome - during the day, in normal opening hours, but potentially at other times too – perhaps in the evenings for special events. It will be a permanent presence for us in the community.
- A place of worship – we have thoughts of ‘piping’ our Sunday worship over from the Community Centre on Sunday mornings via an audio-visual feed, so those hesitant about coming to a service can ‘dip their toe in the water’ from the safety of the coffee house. But we’d also love to experiment with ‘café-style’ worship in the coffee house itself in due course.
- A place of healing – the unit is very near to where we offer ‘Healing on the Streets’ ministry (in partnership with St John’s Church) every Saturday morning.

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- Some who come for prayer would clearly benefit from being able to talk further about issues they are facing. The coffee house will be a great place to which such people could be invited to spend a little more time talking things through.
- A place where we can build community amongst the 'café culture' people of our community.

In 2010 St Luke's is transitioning to become a church of 'missional communities' – mid-size groups meeting in community venues, 'doing life together and with God' but each also with a particular vision for outreach into a section of the community. The coffee house ties in perfectly with this and will be a great venue for missional communities to gather. It will also make a great venue for Alpha courses, parenting courses and the like.

We have seen God's hand on the project in many ways. Tesco have agreed to favourable terms and we are now negotiating the finer details of the lease. We have applied for and been granted planning permission for the alterations we need to make, with no problems at all. We had a really encouraging response from a church gift day as we seek to raise £70,000 to get the coffee house established.

We'd now really value your prayers as the project enters a key stage:

- For lease negotiations with Tesco to continue to go well, and to be concluded soon
- For the Lord to lead us to the right person to become the paid manager of the coffee house, and for volunteers to help in staffing
- For the remaining money needed for building altera-

tions, equipping of the coffee house and other start-up costs, and for the Lord to lead us to the right builders, suppliers of furniture, equipment etc

- That through this initiative we would extend God's kingdom in our community and see many come to know Him in time.

We'd also be interested in hearing from anyone potentially interested in a volunteer or paid role in the coffee house, and from anyone who would like to know more about sowing financially into the initiative; a 'Community Interest Company' has been established to be the legal entity on the lease, meaning shares can be bought in this by anyone wanting to 'take a stake' in this kingdom project".

Jeremy Noles, Minister, St Luke's, Highwoods

E: jeremynoles@ntlworld.com

T: 01206 532252

Marriage Week

Marriage Week UK celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of marriage as the basis for family life in the UK. It is timed to include Valentine's Day (8th –14th Feb 2010) and has been held every year since 1997.

Marriage remains incredibly popular – over 90% of young people in the UK aspire to be married at some point in the future, and the large majority will achieve this. Although the popular view is that marriages don't last, two out of every three first marriages will last until one partner dies, and one in two second

or subsequent marriages will also last a lifetime. The Divorce rate (the number of divorces per 1000 married couples) has remained virtually static since the early 1980's.

Current research suggests that the enduring stability of marriage results from the commitment that two people make to each other, embodied in their vows, and supported by family, friends, and society at large. Many couples today however come to marriage to celebrate the stability of their relationships rather than to initiate them, so we see couples marrying later

in life, often after living together for a period, and often after buying their home and starting a family.

Please take time to pray for marriages this month. We praise God for faithful, loving marriages and we pray for all those marriages under pressure, for whatever reason.

Marie

Town news

Fairtrade Fortnight 2010

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight is from **February 22nd to March 7th**.

It is now over 15 years since the first Fairtrade range of products – chocolate, coffee and tea - appeared in the UK. Since then the movement has expanded rapidly both in terms of quantity; sales in the UK rose by 43% in 2008, and in range; you can now buy clothes, beauty products, footballs and duvets as well and food and drink. Towards the end of 2009 the government announced that it would be providing £12 million funding to Fair Trade over the next four years.

The theme of this years Fairtrade fortnight is the Big Swap, encouraging us to swap some of our usual purchases for Fairtrade ones. For two whole weeks Fairtrade are asking us to swap our usual stuff for Fairtrade stuff. Our usual bananas for Fairtrade bananas, our usual cotton socks for Fairtrade cotton socks, and our usual cuppa for a Fairtrade cuppa. This means that every time we go shopping, we can use our wallets to make a stand. Actually the emphasis is particularly on tea, next time you enjoy a cuppa, at home or at church try to make sure it is Fairtrade tea you are drinking. We are also being asked to go online, visit the Fairtrade website www.fairtrade.org.uk and register our swaps.

It costs a small amount of time and money but it does help to show our Christian concern for the poor of the poor and help them in a fair and practical way.

Brian Ford

Friends International (F.I.)

Praise God for:

- Zandra, a volunteer helper for

Michael and Caroline White. Zandra comes from Peru. She will be with F.I for a year and has already helped with Bible studies at the university. Pray for her please as she settles down to the work here.

- The Christian couple that will accommodate Zandra near the university!
- The 6th January outing., that 12 students came to, saw a good film, had a meal together and enjoyed a snowball fight!
- A Japanese student has accepted Christ as Saviour. Please pray for her as she is disciplined here in Colchester

Pray for:

- The CU Mission week at the University from **8th - 12th February**.
- All Christian groups involved that they will continue to work well together and the gospel will be well presented and students will come to know the Lord as their Saviour.
- For good health for all the team members.

Many thanks for praying!

Love Joan Davies

Colchester Institute

2010 brings about change for the Colchester Institute Christian Unions (well from my perspective anyway) as I will be going on maternity leave at the end of February, leaving Jacqui to take on responsibility for the leadership of the Staff CU and Nathan to take on responsibility for the leadership of the Student CU. Please remember them in your prayers as I pass the baton on.

Not a lot has happened so far this year but the Student CU has con-

tinued to meet on a Wednesday lunch time, although attendance hasn't been quite so good due to ill health and course work deadlines. Please pray for Nathan, Karis, T and Subi as they continue to meet throughout this year, that they would be challenged and inspired and that they would make the most of every opportunity.

I am pleased to be able to advise that we have again been invited to take part in "Diversity Week" and have already started to form plans for a stall on Wednesday 24th February. Please pray for wisdom as we put ideas into practice and that we would have the opportunity to have God-inspired conversations on the day.

That's about it for now but I intend to stay in touch with the CU whilst I'm off and will keep you updated as and when I can. Thanks for all your support. Natasha

Prayer breakfast

Saturday 6th February

Abbeyfield Community Church,
Abbeygate Street

8.30 am - 10 am

To contact Teresa Lasky:
teresa@lasky.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.

Journey into Wholeness

Mind Body Soul Exhibitions

Currently there are no large local Exhibitions planned for Colchester but there are a number of smaller ones that regularly take place. It is a great opportunity to be able to present the gospel at these events where there are so many seeking for answers in their lives.

In particular give thanks to God for a successful stall at the MBS event in Harwich on November 21st. A Training Evening was held there on Monday 16th November and it was a great time: we introduced friends there to the Jesus Deck, and generally trained them in how to be good hosts for visitors to the stall.

The committee recently met with someone who has been to some of these in Clacton. He shared his vision and gave a lot of information to us. Please pray that we may be led to a right decision about our involvement in these, in particular that we might have good support from friends in churches local to the MBS Exhibition. This does not, of course, exclude any friends from the Colchester area from coming over to help us. The JIW group at Cambridge has lapsed so we may spend some time there – but only if we have the resources and personnel to do so.

We are delighted to work with Penny Horseman in presenting the Jesus Deck, which is a very culturally-relevant way of communicating the Gospel. If you would like to know more please contact us.

Prayer Points

- Continue to pray for the Committee supported by the JIW advisory team and the

Trustees

- Chris Locke as he continue to work on the website to update it and introduce new additions.
- Pray for continued opportunities to share the vision of JIW both at a local level and nationally.
- Continue to pray for the Brentwood group as it prepares for the next MBS Exhibition there in March 2010.
- Give thanks for the continued support of the Boiler Room Community and the Colchester PrayerNet.

Our Trustees

The Trustees have met and we are thankful not only for their interest but valuable insight and ideas. Continue to pray for Sally Coleman, the JIW National Co-ordinator, and the needs of her family.

We are excited at the prospect of research she will be doing with Chris Hollingsworth (CA) into the church's ministry to spiritual seekers. Full details of her work can be found on her website: <http://www.white-fields.org.uk>

We are currently seeking an additional Trustee, and if you know of someone who could fulfil this role, please let us know. It involves attending two Trustees meeting a year, and reading about the plans and strategy of the Colchester committee.

Currently it is also involved in the Brentwood JIW group.

Website:
<http://www.journeyintowholeness.net/>
michael.e@journeyintowholeness.net

Street Pastors' Presentation Evening

Friday 19th February 2010
St Botolph's Church, Colchester
7.45 pm—10 pm
For more information contact
James Collitt, 07977510880

Hope in Colchester.

Thank you so much for those of you who supported the Christmas Event, through your presence or donations of mince pies –thank you!

Although we were few in numbers, we were still able to proceed with the event and it was a good success. The Salvation Army band were great and many surveys were carried out. (Results to be published soon).

I had the privilege of being able to gift wrap and talk to passers by, many of which were very pleased that we were out there and surprised that we just wanted to bless them. One lady I talked to even remembered the free summer BBQ that we did which is encouraging.

Our next event is Good Friday at the Mercury Theatre. We are looking mainly for people to come along and **bring a friend** as this will be an outreach centred event. We are having a committee meeting soon, so please feel free to pass any comments onto me and I will bring them up. Details of specific help needed for Easter will be emailed in the next few weeks, Once again, thank you,
Joelle
<http://www.hopeincolchester.org.uk/>

Colchester 2020

Colchester 2020 (Col2020) is taking a fresh approach to its annual Assembly event. To help reach a wider audience and involve more people, the Partnership is looking to broaden out the annual event to run over several days. It is hoped that it will take place in a town centre location with each day focusing on one or more of Col2020's priorities.

Chair Paul Zollinger-Read explained: "Last year, we held a series of mini assemblies throughout the year that helped us to gather ideas and views to develop our revised Sustainable Community Strategy. This culminated in the annual Assembly meeting in March, where Colchester people helped us to refine the information we had gathered and pinpoint the areas they felt we should focus on moving forward. We're now beginning to deliver our action plan and are keen to use the Assembly event to give people a better understanding of what our priorities are about and how they will help to make Colchester an even better place to live, work, study and visit."

Further information about the annual Assembly event will be available early 2010.

Col2020's priorities are:

- Promoting business, increasing employment opportunities and improving education and skills attainment
- Reducing congestion, changing travel behaviour and improving the transport infrastructure
- Making Colchester an outstanding visitor destination

and celebrating its heritage, culture and leisure activities

- Promoting healthy lifestyles, providing affordable housing and reducing homelessness
- Creating safer neighbourhoods and stronger, inclusive communities.

Each of these areas has a lead partner, and most have a sub group bringing together people from outside of the Partnership who have skills and experience to advise Col2020 on how to achieve the targets set out in its action plan.

Col 2020's Carbon Reduction goals continue to run throughout all of its priorities.

Safer Colchester

Col 2020 is supporting the Safer Colchester Project, which is working to reinvigorate neighbourhoods in our borough. The project brings together around 30 different organisations, giving people the help and support they need to make a difference to their community. The first area to benefit from the project was Monkwick, where a wide range of initiatives took place: from litter picks to drugs raids, and from health checks to the re-launch of a youth club. The project has already recorded some impressive results with crime in Monkwick falling by 18% in October compared to last year.

The next stop for the Safer Colchester Project is Tiptree, where a similar approach will be taken.

Col 2020 is working with others to bring festival fun to the borough. For the first time this year Colchester enjoyed GiFT – a month of events celebrating the borough's rich heritage and culture, with thousands of people

taking part in a wide range of arts activities. GiFT was organised by Colchester's arts venues and jointly sponsored by Col 2020 and Colchester Borough Council with support from the Colchester Gazette. It gave local people the opportunity to work alongside professional artists to create new and exciting experiences, and discover a bit more about this fantastic town. It also gave visitors a chance to enjoy Colchester in a different way.

Businesses

A group established to create a stronger business voice for the borough is going from strength to strength. The Colchester Business Group (CBG) is fully supported by Colchester Borough Council and brings together representatives from a range of business organisations. The CBG is playing an important part in Col2020's business, employment and education priority.

Mentor scheme under way

Col2020 is linking closely with Colchester's 14 to 19 Planning Group, which works to improve the quality of educational provision and attainment across the 14-19 age range.

Ewan Dodds said: "We're particularly keen to encourage more business people in the borough to become mentors. The programme is a fantastic way for businesses to give something back to the community by sharing their knowledge and experience with teenagers who are deciding which path to take when they leave school."

For more information about the mentor scheme contact Hilary Sellens, Employer Engagement Co-ordinator, at hiilary.sellens@essex.gov.uk