

THE BEACON NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2011

A JOINT NEWSLETTER FOR THE FOUR CONGREGATIONS
OF THE BEACON METHODIST CHURCH

Pastoral Letter

HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY TO THE BEACON!

Well here we are one year in! What have we seen in this first year? What kind of experience has it been for you? What have we learned from one another? From my perspective, it's certainly been an interesting year, though one I wouldn't readily agree to repeat!

We were told at the outset to expect a year of chaos while bringing the organisation of the individual congregations together as one. In reality this

has meant holding many more meetings in order to get where we are now. We are together now, organisationally speaking, and so hopefully we shall grow together as we seek the way forward.

Well that's the organisation side of The Beacon. What about the people side of it, of us as individuals within our individual congregations? Change is always a difficult process and change within

church is notoriously slow to achieve. A change of perspective and mindset is usually called for and that is true for us.

Do we yet feel that we belong to the One Body of which Paul speaks? [1 Cor 12: 12 - 26] Do we care for and show concern for one another? Do we build up one another in love?

As you know, I came to The Beacon at its inception and so my perspective, so to speak, is as an outsider. Though obviously very much a part of it now, I can see signs, glimpses of movement, conversations taking place and relationships starting to develop. This is good news and I encourage conversations to continue, let us build on what we have achieved so far, and let us together seek and follow the will of God.

From Jan - the Deacon at the Beacon!



Inside this issue:

Noodle Soup for the Soul

2

Rev Tim Bradshaw Tel: 0114 230 5676;

The Beacon Matters

3

Deacon Jan Miles Tel: 0114 230 1338

Congregational Noticeboards

3-4

Noodle Soup for the Soul

The Holy, and less so, ramblings of an errant in China

One of the aspects that I have especially picked up on this year is the contagious element of righteousness - that God is willing to extend his grace to others because of our own closeness and confidence with him. "He will deliver even one who is not innocent, who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands" (Job 22:30). That same element is what governs Abraham's negotiations for Sodom - that our heavenly Father looks upon us and smiles, and is pleased to give us our requests, that when we ask him for deliverance on behalf of friends and strangers, he will intervene because of our boldness and intimacy with him. I have been encouraged in this particularly when praying for certain university friends and beggars, as compassion has compelled me. So, keep praying - there are people whom God will safeguard and heal just because you ask.



My fabulous university class.

Summer camp was great. It was a Crazy English Intensive Training Camp, in fact, and involved ten very long days in furnace-city Wuhan. We had to smile a lot, but only actually take classes or clubs four to five hours a day. The kids and TAs (camp 'counsellors,' if you will) had it a lot tougher than the foreigners.

A fair proportion of my reason for working at a summer camp was curiosity. I specifically wanted experience with university students, somewhat assuming that I would be able to fall quite naturally back into teaching the younger groups, having had more exposure to them in the past. On the contrary, after 90 minutes with the youngest class - forty or so 8-10s - I came to the conclusion that primary school teachers are numbered amongst the poor chained wretches Dante and Virgil watch being led down to the first circle. My own daily class

was made up of 11-13 year olds, and I was good for them, but had to work to be so. I much preferred the uni class - every night I took an English corner with them, and it was a wonderful way to end the day. One morning I stepped in for their teacher at the last-minute, and with a pinch of prayer and a M L King quote rustled up out of a dusty corner of my mind, we had a fascinating discussion on power, love and leadership.

Of course, besides some serious moments, there were many opportunities for games, singing, performances and dancing competitions. By the time I left my students had given me origami roses, the semi-autistic boy in my class had given me two high-fives, and I had been given opportunities to especially encourage a certain few students. The foreigners were mostly fun - two of my Argentinian friends from church were there too, plus four others (UK was represented by three fairly unreliable, irresponsible lads, who were passed out drunk during the closing ceremony). Our bosses were great, and frankly, that ten days was a lot more rewarding than ten days' study!

I used to dread arriving back at the train station after travels - I hate that unresolvable feeling of fatigue, of wishing that somebody would come and take me home. Getting home after camp, however, I switched on the light and found the flat clean and homely, with tea, milk and homemade jam ready and waiting. Apparently I had mustered a little sense before I went away - sometimes I surprise myself!

Since then, I seem to have been almost perpetually carrying a toothbrush and spare t-shirt in my satchel. Anna, an American lady from church, came out of hospital after leg surgery the day I got back from camp. She had ar-



The foreign teachers one hot day at summer camp.

ranged for another friend to stay with her and help, but was let down at the last moment. I was happy to move to her sofa for a while, and as her other friends have popped in to stay for weekends, I have also been spending evenings elsewhere, battling cockroaches and mould in Mathilde's flat whilst she is away, popping in to see other friends, and spending time at university.

I am just wrapping up two essays, one of which is quite delightful: how Baudelaire's prose not insignificantly influenced 20th century Chinese literature, written in Chinese with French citations. I am not sure what proportion of the world could read it or would care to, but trust me: it is pretty. As an international Masters student, I enjoy the freedom in choosing curious titles for superciliously exclusive papers!

Besides those, I have filled in a few slots on the Chinese church English study teaching rota, which is always fun. My own home group will return from summer break with the start of the university semester - for the sake of easing the burden later, this week I rough-drafted 3 months' studies and socials (my new policy: every fourth week is party-time).

FOR NEXT TIME...

- Next semester begins 29th August.
- Karlis and Cassie's wedding in northern Jiangsu province. I am very much looking forward to seeing 'old' friends!
- Christmas choirs. To allay some unpleasant nightmares I have had on the subject, we're having an early meeting this week to discuss what is both God-glorifying and feasible.

ROSIE RECOMMENDS:

- *Blue Like Jazz* (Donald Miller) - a quick-witted expression of the Christian life, with some quite creative passages. I especially appreciated the chapter on community.
- Donald Barthelme's short stories - highly original stories largely written in the 1970s, with enough elements of political satire to keep you guessing.

Beacon Matters (because The Beacon matters!)**Happy 1st Birthday**

Joint Beacon Praise Service
4th September
6.30pm - Crookes Valley at Broomhill



With Birthday Cake!!

There will be a **Mission Team Preach Planning Meeting** on Tuesday 6th September 7.30pm at Broomhill. Everyone is invited to come along - this is not just for preachers and worship leaders, but for anyone who would like to be involved in Mission preaching, at whatever level. The Mission Team Preach will happen on Sunday 16th October.

There will be a **praise service** on 27th Nov to round off the 'team preaching' on mission at Nether Green at 6.30pm

The next **Beacon Church Council meeting** is on the Wednesday 19 Oct 2011 at Broomhill

Membership classes

Short membership classes will soon be offered to the various congregations within the Beacon—anyone interested should contact Deacon Jan.

Congregational Notice Boards**BROOMHILL****Traidcraft**

Margaret Robinson is busy in September, so is only able to staff the Traidcraft Stall after the morning service on Sunday 25th September. Similarly, she feels it makes sense to hold the Traidcraft Stall after morning service on Sunday October 16th, during One World Week.

If you need anything she sells, she will be pleased to serve you at other times, but please, not when she is up to her eyeballs.

The **Monday Group** (19.30) subjects and venues are as follows:
 5th September (venue TBA): 'The Celtic Fringe'
 Contact Donald Smith, Tel:- 266 2491

Harvest Festival

This will be held on Sunday 2nd October and will be followed by a shared lunch. Since we hope there will be a number of students attending, and they will not know our funny ways and will be our guests, can you please allow for their presence in your catering.

CROOKES VALLEY

We are restarting the knitting group in September - 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 6.45

Congregational Notice Boards

STEPHEN HILL




Stephen Hill Sunday Services

-- Every Sunday --
Morning Worship – 11.00 am

1st and 3rd Sunday each Month
Holy Communion - 9.30am

-- Midweek Service --
Wednesday 12.00 noon


**The Church Invites Everyone
To Join With Them In Worship**



Ladies' Monday Club, 7.30pm

5 September – The Company of Cutlers by *Joan Unwin* Members and visitors welcome to the first meeting of the new programme.

19th September – About the Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind by *Sue Coggin*.



Harvest Supper - joint with St Columbas -Saturday October 8th - pie and peas at Stephen Hill at 6pm followed by the film "KJB" - the book that changed the world.

Tickets £6 each from Kath Smith ph2667089 or any of the stewards. Final numbers required by October 2nd please

Items for The Beacon newsletter to any member of the communications team:

Broomhill: Paul Freemont (in person),

Crookes Valley: Jen Sloan: jenmsloan@yahoo.co.uk or 2855626 (leave a message). Last minute items taken up to the Wednesday before the last Sunday of the month.

Nether Green: Steve Macbeth: sjmacbeth@gmail.com,

Stephen Hill: Kath Smith: kath@ksmith25.orangehome.co.uk