

REACHING OUT PROJECT: OPENING WEEKEND – 18th & 19th June

What an amazing weekend! Many people found it hard to believe that we had actually reached the end of the building project and were able to use the chapel once again. There was a great feeling of joy and euphoria throughout the two days.

A great deal of work had been carried out during the preceding week to ensure that everything was clean and tidy and the chapel and link were beautifully enhanced with flower displays.

Saturday Coffee Shop buzzed even more than usual and its' extended hours gave a huge number of people the opportunity to have a detailed look at all the work as well as to share the fellowship. How easy it is to forget what it was like before, but the display of photos gave a reminder of what we had as well as some insight as to what went on in the chapel whilst it was out-of-bounds to the church family.

The Sunday morning service was a brilliant mixture of happiness and joy, solemnity and spirituality. The Worship Group led pre-worship hymns and songs and many visitors, including the Mayor of Wetherby, Cllr Cindy Bentley, and the former mayor, Cllr Edna Hildich, our architect, Stephen Potts, directors of Manor House Developments and the site manager, Phil Carey attended the service. The Chairman of the York and Hull District, Rev Stephen Burgess, shared in the rededication of the chapel as well as preaching the sermon. A plaque was handed over to representatives of the church to remind us all of the purpose of our work; that is to provide:

A spiritual home for those who seek it:

A physical home for community and social needs groups of all types:

A base from which volunteers are resourced and energised.

Members of Steering Group, the circuit steward, Alan Bell, the recently retired senior steward, Donald Milne and a representative of the young people of the church, Hannah Wilson all shared in the service through the reading of the lessons, the psalm and the prayers. Heather and Steve ensured that the whole service flowed smoothly and was a fitting tribute to the whole congregation who had supported each other so well over the building period.

The evening service was a time of praise for the whole circuit and our ecumenical friends from other churches in the town. Rev Ray Coates and Rev Susan Greenhart supported Heather and Steve in leading the service as we shared the ups and downs of the last few months. Heather preached the sermon and Double Image provided a silly song about the project set to a well known Yorkshire tune!

Through the words of both services we were reminded that we have neither started something nor finished anything. We were likened to the runners who took the second and third leg of a relay race; we have started with the resources that have been left to us by previous generations and are using our gifts to continue the work of God within the community and to fulfil, as best we can, the aims set out on our plaque so that we can pass on a healthy church within the community to future generations. Our refurbished premises are merely giving us the resources to do that work.

Throughout the weekend, it was a delight to welcome former worshippers who came back to share the time with us. It was especially great to welcome our 3 former ministers and their wives; Derek and Diane Hancock, Grahame and Sue Hall and John and Judith Simms. A long-serving previous organist, Bryan Woof also joined us, with Kath on Saturday and on Sunday evening. Many former worshippers who could not be with us sent their good wishes and many have been very generous in supporting our fundraising.

It is hoped that we can make a dvd of photographs of the work, the launch weekend and the opening weekend available to anyone who would like one. Yes, you guessed it – it will be on sale as a fundraiser!

Throughout the summer we are busy checking everything that has been done so that a full snagging list is available when the architect comes back to do the final check of the work. There are clearly many things that we would also like to acquire to make every part of our premises as good as the chapel. Church Council will have to look at this list and prioritise things. But of course, we also have to raise the outstanding money to pay off the final bills. Fundraising events are still being advertised and will continue to provide fun and fellowship as well as funds. Please continue to support them.

And so the work moves on to the next phase. Steering group are gradually handing over the reins to the stewards and others who will be involved in the ensuring that we carry out our project aims and **Reach Out** to the town.

