

United We Stand



What are, perhaps, the two smallest churches in the Baptist Union united in



protest recently. The photos are of our church outing this year when we visited our friends at Hawkshead Hill Baptist Church in the Lake District.

For two tiny churches, both of which are acutely aware of the poverty within their

own communities, it was important for us to feel able to contribute in our own small way to the international Make Poverty History campaign.

We shared worship together, focussing on telling our stories, after which we all spilled out into the garden to wrap the chapel with a giant Make Poverty History ribbon. After sharing lunch together we enjoyed the afternoon sun while walking around Tarn Hows. For at least one of our congregation it was the first time he had ever seen a sheep. For others it was a chance to sit outside in the sun and enjoy the views.



Crumbs of Hope

It was with some trepidation that last spring Tim and Clare put together what is rather grandly termed a 'book proposal' and a sample chapter and sent it off in a big brown envelope to Inspire, the Methodist Publishing House. We waited, with only a 'crumb of hope' until one not so ordinary day, another big brown envelope arrived in the post offering us a contract to publish the book! Once the celebrations died down we realised we had a lot of work to do in editing the prayers, eucharists and poems we have written over the last couple of years for use among a hopefully wider audience.

Over the summer Clare was invited to write an article for *Crucible*, a theological journal reflecting on Urban Regeneration and mischievously managed to weave poetry into the reflection - we like to keep our editors on their toes!



Reflections on a Car Park?

Participants on our urban retreat, **God in the City?** must have wondered what



they had let themselves in for when

we led them on a walk through Ancoats. They were invited to reflect silently on what they experienced - which included walking through the car park of a shopping centre!

On the Friday, we had based ourselves at Luther King House. The aim was to provide a breathing space for tired urban practitioners.

Then, on the Saturday, we moved on to MERCI - The Manchester Environmental Resource Centre Initiative in Ancoats. From there we offered a taster of the joys of inner city life and ministry.

The retreat was pronounced a success by all who

participated. Many thanks must go to John

Rackley our retreat leader. We have already had a number of enquiries about a similar event next year. Watch this space!



A Thief in the Night

Following the discovery of dry rot, reported in the last **Openshaw Connection**, the last thing we wanted was to be called out at 9.30pm one Saturday evening to discover that someone had attempted to break into church through the fire door.

Unfortunately, with the school behind Mersey Street having been demolished, and many of the houses around being empty, the building is now very vulnerable to attack.

It does not seem a good use of resources to spend money - and energy - on anything more than the most essential repairs. We are still hoping to have a new site by next Easter! So Tim and David have boarded up the damaged door.

While we still have two functional doors into - and perhaps more importantly out of - the building, clearly we are now very limited as to what we can do in the building.

This is frustrating as the past year has seen a dramatic increase in a number of our projects. The credit union goes from strength to strength. Our Thursday morning therapy sessions are always over-subscribed and we have now added a gentle exercise class to our healing activities. This is promoted by the Manchester Falls Prevention Unit and regularly has a dozen participants. We could fill at least two other such classes were it not for the limitations of the building!

Currently, our negotiations with Manchester City Council focus on the current GP surgery. A new surgery is under construction and due to open next autumn. The current surgery would be almost ideal for our needs, but the huge question is still whether it is affordable.

Contact Details

The Openshaw Connection is a two-way process. Please get in touch with us to share your stories and reactions to our stories.

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