

## Worship for All?

Have you ever looked at worship from a child's perspective?

At Mersey Street, we have a large children's playpit in the middle of the sanctuary. It is a fascinating experience to sit, at knee level, with the children, and join in Sunday worship from their perspective.

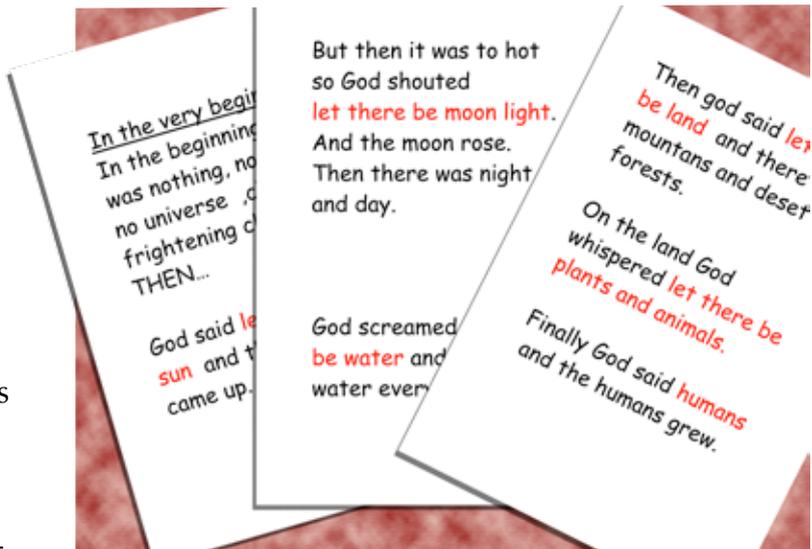
In a small congregation, we want to spend as much time together as possible. But how do you organise worship that will include everyone? It is not just a question of age. Some folk are very happy with books and learning, while others have not opened a book for

fifty years.

Instead of using the weekly Bible readings this year, our young people are constructing a Bible 'timeline.' The whole church is then deciding which of the stories from the timeline we are going to look at.

Then, for example, when we came to God creating animals, we organised a church trip to Knowsley Safari Park. (You can see some pictures on our website).

We have created creation collages and kaleidoscopes of light. Abraham and Sarah ejected Hagar and Ishmael from their Plasticine camp.



The day after we saw Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, the whole church joined in creating tie-dye T-shirts. The fol-

lowing week we attempted to paint our dreams!

It is then our weekly Eucharist which brings all our thoughts together as we

reflect on the body and blood of Christ through whatever activities we have engaged in as the Body of Christ.

## Thank You

With the last edition of Openshaw Connection, we included a Gift Aid form and invited you to contribute towards the cost of our newsletter.

While some people were offended, many of

you responded generously. We are grateful for this very tangible support for our work.

Openshaw Connection is sent out free of charge. We do not expect anyone to send us anything, but we are always grate-

ful to anyone who wants to support our work.

We are not including a Gift Aid form this time, but you can download one from our website - or if you send us an email, we will be happy to send one out.



# Stuck in Limbo

One of the first pronouncements Pope Benedict made was to announce that the Catholic Church no longer believes in the concept of "Limbo," the place where souls which cannot go to heaven, but don't deserve hell get stuck. He obviously hadn't visited Openshaw.

You might be wondering why we haven't sent out an Openshaw Connection for so long. Well, this piece of medieval mumbo jumbo might well explain.

It is now two and a half years since the first planning application for the Toxteth Street area was submitted to Manchester City Council. It is eighteen months since the City Council's executive committee approved

the idea of a Compulsory Purchase Order on the whole estate - including the church. We had been hoping that the City Council would buy the former GP surgery to enable us to move into it. For bureaucratic reasons they failed to do so. For even more bureaucratic reasons, they failed to tell us that this was the case until we dragged the information out of them almost 6 weeks later. That was back in June last year.

We have not been served with a Compulsory Purchase Order, so we cannot put in a formal objection. On the other hand, we have not been told that they have decided to build around us, so we cannot get on with the much needed

I write  
You read  
I write  
You read  
You read  
You receive  
The Wisdom  
of my words  
of my Word

I write  
You read  
You read  
You respond  
You write  
I read  
I read  
I respond  
I write

Together  
We grow  
Together

We become  
  
I write  
You read  
You respond  
You write  
I read  
I respond  
I write

We dance  
Round  
and round

a wild  
circle  
of life  
of love  
of Life  
of Love  
Together  
we dance  
into the Unkown  
and unknowable  
  
God

Crumbs of Hope - Prayers from the City [ISBN: 1-85852-310-9] was published by Inspire at the end of 2006. Available from all good bookshops, you can also order a copy direct from the Methodist Publishing House at [https://secure.cyberware.co.uk/~cb537/acatalog/Resourcing Worship and Ministry.html](https://secure.cyberware.co.uk/~cb537/acatalog/Resourcing_Worship_and_Ministry.html)

repairs to the building. Nor can we begin planning for a new building.

Last month we were finally invited to a meeting at which the city council began the entire process of considering the options available to the church again - some 8 years after we first had those same discussions!

Meanwhile, our work with the local community

is stretching our present building to bursting point. The Gentle Exercise class has blossomed and grown into a full blown 'club' for older people, even meeting when we have no instructor. We are in the process of expanding this to meet on a second day - which we would like to accompany with a full range of therapies as we do on Thursdays. Similarly, we do not have enough 'slots' available for everyone who wants a complimentary therapy to receive one. We would like to advertise the therapies more

widely among the community. The need is clearly there, but we daren't advertise because we would not be able to meet the demand at present.

Until we have some certainty about the building, we are unable to move forward. More than ever, it does feel as though we are stuck in Limbo, waiting for forces beyond our control. Yet we believe more strongly than ever that it is crucial that we remain here as a visible sign of God's love for this community.

## 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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