

e-Bulletin November 2011 (2)

Steve Midgley writes....

A short update in order to share some of the encouragements God has given us as a church

COMMITMENT SUNDAY / GIFT DAY

New morning service The number committed to this are now over 70 which means we are working toward getting this underway on January 8th. Do pray especially for the musicians and for Sunday club. Both those areas of ministry will come under extra pressure and we are keen to recruit new people to make sure the burden doesn't fall on a few shoulders.

Phase 2 appeal at the beginning of the week the appeal total was (wonderfully) £135,000, of which £85,000 has come in the form of one of gifts and the rest as money pledged over the next three years. For God to have enabled us to raise this amount in less than 3 weeks is hugely encouraging. Do give thanks that his 'inexpressible gift' to us has moved so many to generous giving. We are nearly at our target of £142,000 and can press on with planning permissions in order to try and start the work next June.

It may seem odd, but I do want to invite those who haven't yet given to do so soon. Especially I want to encourage those who can only give a small amount. I think it will be very good for us spiritually to sense that this final phase of building is something that we enter into together. Parents might want to encourage their children to give 50p from their pocket money; students with loans and adults on low incomes might still decide to give £5 so that when the work starts the majority of the church can enjoy knowing that God has enabled them to have a part in it. Of course money isn't the only way we can contribute but it is a good marker of our commitment to one another and to God and I'd love us to enjoy sharing in this together. The number of people who give is almost more encouraging than the total amount given.

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED

Those of us leading on Christianity Explored (we've just finished week 4) are really enjoying working through the materials with our groups. It's great to hear serious discussion and good questions being asked each week. We are delighted by the new format and very grateful to the Bickerstaffe's home group who have been helping cook and serve the meal each week.

CHRISTMAS

There probably isn't an easier time to invite people to church than at Christmas. Invitations and programme cards will be available this Sunday. We'll be looking for some volunteers to deliver cards to all the homes in the parish and we would also love you to take invitation cards for friends, work colleagues, family etc. We hope that the range of guest services means there is something to suit everyone.

The **Family Carols** (10.30am Sun 11th) is great for younger children and the First Steps toddler groups will, as usual, be performing a song for us.

Jazz Carols (7pm on Sun 11th) is a new experiment for us, leaning a little more toward a 'performance' – so, for example, we think we will have the congregation remaining seated but free to join in the carols. We hope this format will appeal to some guests who wouldn't otherwise come.

Candlelit carols (6.30pm on 18th Dec) is our traditional lessons and carols which has been so popular in recent years.

The **Christingle** (4pm on 24th Dec) is moving to a more traditional Christmas Eve slot this year. It draws in a number of families who don't come to church on Christmas Day, but appreciate getting their children to a service that tells them what Christmas is actually about. We'll try to make it mellow and meditative for children! The **Christmas Day** service is always larger than I expect and it is lovely to welcome relatives who are visiting over Christmas. We make time to take a look at this year's crop of presents which is always a good moment for me to display my ignorance of the latest gadgets, gismo's and fashion items!

Thank you to all those who kindly ask after our daughter Ellie. It's hard to believe she's been at her new school five months already. She's settled well and is working at some significant bits of developmental progress which we are thrilled about. We miss her and look forward to having her home for a longer patch over Christmas.

Love,
Steve

Steve Midgley
Christ Church Cambridge