

BEN

Birmingham Ecumenical News

Events and news from across the Christian community
for Birmingham & Solihull

December 2011 to February 2012



Celebrating Christmas in the heart of the City

Saturday 10th December from 2pm onwards

**Live nativity, storytelling, live music, giveaways, gift wrapping,
tree of hope, inflatables attractions... everything's free!**

Come dressed as a character from the Christmas story (optional)

**Take part in Birmingham's biggest open air nativity
and**

Carol service at 4.30 pm in the square of St Philip's Cathedral.

Contributions from the Lord Mayor and the Bishop of Birmingham

Further information on page 3 & follow on facebook: 'Carols in the city Birmingham'

Invites you to Birmingham's Big Nativity

Published by Birmingham Churches Together: Many Voices - One in Christ



Celebrating Workplace Chaplaincy

Each year CIGB holds an ecumenical service of commissioning. New chaplains are commissioned and existing chaplains have an opportunity to dedicate themselves afresh to their chaplaincy work. We meet in a church of one denomination, with a preacher from another.

This year the service will take place at St John's Church, Longbridge, and we are delighted to be able to welcome the Right Reverend William Kenney CP, Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, who will be our guest preacher.

The service will be followed by light refreshments.

Commissioning Service

Sunday November 20th at 3.00pm

St John's Church, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 4JN

We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend the service and look forward to meeting you on the day.

Star award in Solihull

The Touchwood Centre in Solihull celebrated its 10th anniversary this year and as part of the celebrations an award ceremony was held.

Beryl Moppet Leader of the Solihull Town Centre Chaplaincy Team was invited to attend – but had no idea that she would be the recipient of one of ten very special 'Star' awards until she was invited to receive the award from Anthony Brown, the Managing Director of Lend Lease.

The wording on the award was ***'In recognition of your outstanding contribution to Touchwood'***. CIGB was delighted to hear about this award and to know that the work of Beryl and her team is not only appreciated on a day to day basis but publicly recognised as being a valuable part of the Touchwood Centre.

We are sure that Beryl and her team will continue to inspire and encourage the staff and visitors to Touchwood and the town centre.

Young, Gifted & Unemployed

The latest unemployment figures are the worst in 17 years and among the increase the majority by far are people under 25 years old. Perhaps you saw 'Up For Hire' on the BBC when young adults spoke about their experience of unemployment and 4 brave people were put through various challenging work experiences.

What can local churches do in the face of such a challenge?

Back in the 1980's many churches were involved in projects to support or train unemployed people with funding from government and other sources. It was hard work but in an era of cuts it's even harder to see what we can do. Yet, at the recent URC West Midlands Synod, the Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Assembly and Thrive's Tackling Poverty event workshops looked at some possibilities and locally churches are finding ways to respond.

The Job Club in Solihull has been active for 2 years, based in Christ Church URC and supported by members of several churches it initially grew from the concerns of the Solihull Town Centre Chaplaincy team, led by Beryl Moppett. They saw people being made redundant in the private sector and recognised a growing need. From just opening the door and providing a welcoming space the Club now includes opportunities to work on CVs, job search, interview skills and more.

If a Job Club isn't for you, what about thinking how the volunteering opportunities in your church might be sharpened up to offer development opportunities, a reference and help with a CV. Maybe there's a small business in your area that needs a base, or people working from home who might appreciate an opportunity to get together and share experience. So, as well as supporting unemployed people, the church can contribute to sustaining or even creating jobs which is the long term solution to unemployment.

Look on the CIGB website (www.cigb.co.uk) for some information sheets that can help. A person facing redundancy commented - *'I've been through this before and the best thing anyone can do for you is surround you with love. family, friends, colleagues. You need to know that they really do care – it makes all the difference.'*

The challenge to all of us is to find ways to show that Love.

Support Us - To make it easier for people to support the work of CIGB financially we have set up a Just Text Giving account. To give text CIGB11 and the amount you want to donate to 70070. Texts are charged at your mobile phone operator's normal rate. The charity will receive 100% of your donation. You must be 16 or over and please ask the bill payers permission. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CIGB to CIGB, 175, Harborne Park Rd., Birmingham B17 0BH

Join a massed Choir for Carols in the City

Let's worship Emmanuel – God with us in Birmingham City Centre.

Sing traditional carols with descant and some with a contemporary twist!

Isaiah 12: 4 to 5 says, "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world." Building on the success of previous years, this year Carols in the City is changing. A shorter carol service of 45 minutes is planned alongside other exciting events in the heart of the city centre around the Cathedral Square. As part of this, a massed choir is being formed which will lead the worship. Our vision is that Christians from churches across Birmingham and of all ages will come together to form this choir as an expression of our unity and love for our Lord and this city.

Join a massed Choir for Carols in the City

Join a massed all age choir drawn from churches across Birmingham for the carol service at 16.30 in the square of St Philip's Cathedral.

You're invited to join the choir by emailing choir@riverside-church.org.uk.

James Tomlinson is co-ordinating the Choir this year and two rehearsal dates have been set.

Sunday 20th November and Sunday 4th December

from 3.00pm - 5.00pm at Birmingham Christian Centre, the Parade, Birmingham B1 3QQ.

Contact choir@riverside-church.org.uk to register interest for questions or queries

and for more information including links to music and MP3s of parts. Parking available at the church and surrounding streets.

Call 0121 622 1230 for more information and follow on facebook: 'Carols in the city Birmingham'.

Uniting Birmingham Churches in prayer

Come together for an evening of prayer and progress and hear from leaders of the national HOPE team

Praying for 'Carols in the City'

and an inspiring look at some opportunities for significant spiritual impact in 2012 (with the HOPE team)

23rd November 2011 at 7.30pm

Birmingham Christian Centre, BCC, 65 Parade, Birmingham B1 3QQ

Guest speakers: **Mike Pilavachi and Roy Crowne (HOPEtogether)**

Bringing Hope to the City



Join others from all denominations across Birmingham: admin@birminghamcc.co.uk or 0121 236 2997

Wanted! Games Pastors for the Olympics

What will Games Pastors do?

Games Pastors will be wherever people gather in large numbers at transport terminals and event areas.

They will be trained, equipped and supported to assist travellers,
sightseers and spectators with practical advice and help.

And all the while they will have an eye open for those who may be in special need.

If you feel called to serve God in this way during the Olympics go to
<http://www.morethangold.org.uk/service/games-pastors.html>

www.morethangold.org.uk telephone: 0845 475 2012 email: info@morethangold.org.uk

Building a mission legacy

The Baptist Union supports More than Gold and HOPE

One challenge facing local churches is demonstrating their relevance to the wider community. Ahead are large-scale opportunities for community involvement, the 2012 Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee celebrations being just two. Churches have a chance to join together and utilise moment after moment, building their outward focus. The Baptist Union is in full support of national initiatives More than Gold and HOPE, which encourage the UK to do local mission.

A group of pensioners expanding their knitting circle or hosting a drop-in; youth clearing gardens or daring to get involved in street evangelism; a group of churches holding a fun day or sports-themed kids club, creating friendships on an estate or developing partnerships with the council. All these things, whatever scale or variation, are the local Church living out its mission and responding to the call to know God and make him known.

Roy Crowne, Executive Director of HOPE, is encouraged by the current appetite for mission. "All that has gone before, big missions, Street Pastors, Soul in the City and HOPE 08 have paved the way and inspired the Church to demonstrate God's love in their communities with a new passion. We caught a glimpse of what is possible. Whole areas can be changed, people come to faith and very different Christians find one another. Now we must go for it together and use every single opportunity open to us to share the life-changing message of the Gospel with our villages, towns and cities."

David Wilson, More Than Gold's CEO, agrees: "HOPE and More Than Gold are wonderfully complementary. More Than Gold builds on the legacy of HOPE '08 and will deliver a legacy as HOPE goes into the future. We are delighted that HOPE are contributing to our festivals programme in 2012 by highlighting opportunities to make the most of the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations".

Being part of, marking or celebrating events which grip the public can be effective ways for Christians to be visible and relevant. The Royal Wedding in April saw hundreds of churches host screenings, join street parties and find creative ways of involving God in celebrations e.g. marriage vow-renewal services.

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics provide churches with an even greater opportunity to reach beyond their walls. More Than Gold helps churches respond to the Games through programmes of outreach, hospitality and service. They offer support with everything: from running big-screen community festivals marking the opening ceremony, to sports quizzes and kids clubs.

HOPE is also about churches working together for the purpose of mission. What may impact a town may not suit a village or city, so listening to God is key. HOPE will highlight mission ideas for calendar moments, such as Easter, Harvest, Summer fun, and Christmas, building towards a big year of mission in 2014. The Queen's Jubilee celebrations and Big Lunch in June 2012 is another chance for Christians to be visible, share hope and build community.

David Pile, London Baptist Association's Olympic and Paralympic Church Engagement Co-ordinator, said: "We are helping Baptist churches, make the most of the discipleship and mission opportunities that surround the Olympics and Paralympics coming to the UK. My co-ordinating role goes beyond 2012 and we are encouraging the people of God to consider what sort of legacy God might be calling them to create."

More than Gold and HOPE both have local Church and community at their heart and support comes from a wide span of denominations, organisations and Church streams. They share one same vision: to see the Church living its mission and being visible, relevant and engaged in community.

Rev Ian Bunce, Head of Mission Department, Baptist Union said: "There is a danger that some church leaders could feel initiative overload but once they see that it is all part of the same purpose to let the Church be the Church, then it makes sense. These mission movements are not in competition but part of a bigger thing that God is doing. I believe the UK Church could look different in four years time – with a clearer purpose and outreach even more central."

To see local churches move forward and become more mission-minded requires prayer and action from the ground - ordinary people who live extra-ordinarily in the place they are committed to. Let's build to a whole year of mission in 2014 and be part of a Church that does more together, through words and action, seeing lives changed and communities transformed.

www.morethangold.org.uk & www.hopetogether.org.uk

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: we will all be changed

“We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15.51-58)

18-25 January 2012

Change is at the heart of our Christian faith. Saint Paul said that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, and we are called to live as children in the light.

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2012 comes to us from the churches in Poland, who have reflected upon their own experience as a nation, and in particular how, as a nation, they have been changed and transformed by the many upheavals of their history, and sustained by their faith.

Change is also at the heart of the ecumenical movement.

When we pray for the unity of the church we are praying that the churches that we know and which are so familiar to us will change as they conform more closely to Christ.

This is an exciting vision, but also a challenging one.

Furthermore, when we pray for this transforming unity we are also praying for change in the world.

Resources are available to download from the website of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland:

<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/570>

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CENTRAL SUTTON COLDFIELD



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

United Service at Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church
(1 Brassington Avenue, B73 6AA)

Sunday 22nd January 2012 at 6.30pm. All are welcome to attend.



Calendar of Special Dates

20 - 26 November	Interfaith Week	www.interfaithweek.org.uk
1 December	World Aids Day	www.worldaidsday.org
2012		
16 January	World religion Day	www.worldreligionday.org
18th - 25th January	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	www.ctbi.org.uk/569
27 January	Holocaust memorial Day	www.hmd.org.uk
29 January - 6 February	Poverty & Homelessness Action Week	www.church-poverty.org.uk
30 January	World Leprosy Day	www.leprosymission.org.uk
6 February	Education Sunday	www.educationsunday.org.uk
27 February - 11 March	Fairtrade Fortnight	www.fairtrade.org.uk

Birmingham Pub Bombing Wreath laying

Every year the Lord Mayor comes to lay a wreath at the memorial to those killed in the pub bombings on the anniversary day.

This year this will be at **9.30am on Monday 21st November**

in the churchyard of Birmingham Cathedral (St. Philip's), Colmore Row. The wreath-laying lasts about 10 minutes.

Members of churches and of the public are most welcome to attend. Contact details: 0121 262 1843

Near Neighbours Programme

FIRST BIRMINGHAM NEAR NEIGHBOURS GRANT AWARDED TO SALTLEY PROJECT

An inter-faith project in Saltley is the first project in the city to be awarded funds by a new Government grants programme which aims to strengthen communities by building bridges between people of different faiths and cultures.

The Hub in Saltley has received £5,000 pounds from the Near Neighbours programme. The award was given to help fund the start-up costs of the £1.5 million project to open a new interfaith centre in Saltley Methodist Church. The Near Neighbours cash will also fund four community days to give local residents a chance to get to grips with the plans and talk about their vision for the centre. Residents will be invited to 'The BIG Game', 'The BIG Feast', 'The BIG show' and 'The BIG laugh', each of which will give people of different faiths a chance to get involved.

Chair of the Hub Board, Methodist Minister Andrew Smith said: "The battle of our time is to nurture those spaces in which people of different faith traditions might mix, share and build real community. This battle is what drives the HUB vision. Over the coming year the HUB will host a variety of days which celebrate our differences while delighting in our unity. Funding from the Near Neighbours scheme is invaluable and for it we are deeply grateful. Every penny will be spent enabling a new and refreshing conversation."

Near Neighbours development worker, Jessica Foster, said: "This sounds like a fantastic project and we are really glad we can support the team in Saltley as they begin work on the Hub. Shared spaces and centres of welcome and hospitality are vital to this city to ensure communities are connected and neighbourhoods strengthened." The Hub is due to open in 2013 and will have a particular emphasis on Christian-Muslim relationships.

Near Neighbours grants are available to fund projects or activities which bring people of different faiths or ethnicities together to meet each other and work together to improve their neighbourhood. Community and faith groups based in 13 wards in central Birmingham are eligible for funding.

For more details visit www.near-neighbours.com.

Are you interested in setting up a Job Club?

What is a Job Club?

A job club is a group of people who meet together regularly to support each other through the highs and lows of the job seeking process.

Who is it for?

Anyone who is unemployed and looking for work, it is voluntary and free.

Why a Job Club?

The West Midlands has the highest unemployment rate in the UK (source: www.bbc.co.uk/news/10604117). A job club is an excellent way for churches to engage with their local community and help tackle issues of unemployment.

About Us:

The Jericho Foundation is a registered charity that helps individuals overcome barriers and get back into work. We will be working in partnership with GB Job Clubs and churches across Birmingham to develop and support a network of job clubs. We will provide support and guidance on all aspects of running a job club. No contract is needed and there is no charge.

A starter pack will be provided for each job club and some of the resources available include: resource manual, flyers, volunteer handbooks, laptops (loaned if required)

If you are interested, please get in touch for further information:

telephone: 0121 440 7919 or email: joanne.rose@jericho.org.uk

or write to: The Jericho Foundation, 196-198 Edward Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9LX

and visit: www.jericho.org.uk



Helping refugees into work

Restore has been supporting refugees and asylum seekers since 1999. Up to five years ago the majority of people with whom we worked were asylum seekers waiting for decisions on their asylum claim from the Home Office. Now about 50% of the people we know have refugee status or Indefinite Leave to Remain. With permission to stay comes permission to work. Yet in the current economic climate refugee unemployment is over 50% and services, which previously gave support to refugees seeking employment, have been cut. If there are to be specialist services for refugees then it seems it is necessary for the voluntary sector and church to step up to the mark.

As part of a re-envisioning process, Restore has been looking at how we can help our refugee friends at this crucial stage of transition and integration, but we do not want to duplicate what others, like JobCentre Plus, are already doing. From our experience we feel well placed to support the specific needs of refugees and recognise that some of our volunteers have moved from a befriending to a mentoring role as they help with job applications and CVs.

At a pilot event we held a meeting in early November entitled 'Helping refugees into work – interview skills training', there was a great buzz as refugees and volunteers worked together. The overwhelming feedback was for 'more please!' Over the next year we will be developing this new strand of work. If you know of refugees who could benefit, please put them in touch with us. If you are interested in offering support to them, please join us for our next training course in the New Year.

If you would like to support the work financially, then please send Restore a donation, in the knowledge that when a refugee gains employment it has a huge impact on their well-being and the process of integrating into UK society.

Restore website: www.restore-uk.org, tel: 0121-236 0069, email: info@restore-uk.org

Who is fleeing persecution & seeking sanctuary?'

**Please join Restore, a project of Birmingham Churches Together
supporting refugees and those seeking sanctuary,
for 3 information sessions on asylum issues and training on befriending**

EVENING COURSE

Thursdays, 26 January and 2 & 9 February 2012 from 7.30 - 9.30pm

at the Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre,

10/12 Court Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11 4LX

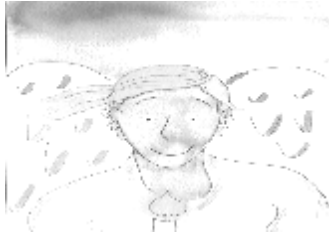
Further details are available from Jeremy Thompson (Restore Befriending Co-ordinator)

Tel 0121-236 0069 or befriend@restore-uk.org

Advent and preparing for Christmas

Albert the Forgetful Angel

The following is the beginning of the children's story 'Albert the Forgetful Angel' by Stewart Jones and illustrated by Kip Crooks.



What do you mean, you have forgotten?' 'Have you any idea how important this is?' Albert was in trouble. Again. Obadiah his overseer was standing over him, his face pressed right into his and he was building up to one of his big shouts. The kind of shout that you could probably hear on the other side of the world or even at the other end of the universe. Not that Albert had ever been to the other end of the universe. He knew Obadiah had been, he told him often enough. But not Albert.

As an angel without his A-levels he would never be allowed to go until he passed. And that's why Obadiah was shouting. He had forgotten his calculator and his pen and his pencil and his ruler and his rubber and.....He had in fact forgotten that today was the exam! He had forgotten everything he needed and that's why Obadiah was shouting: 'YOU ARE A TOTAL DISGRACE. YOU ARE NOT FIT TO EVER HAVE WINGS NEVER MIND GET TO USE THEM.'

The challenge for Albert is how to remember the details of the Christian story so that he can become an angel who is allowed to fly. With Obadiah and others convinced he will fail and an epic encounter with God, the story unfolds to reveal a most endearing tale.

Copies of the book are available from St Martin's in the Bullring. They make an ideal gift for any child aged 5 to 10 years old. The book costs £6 per copy but if order 10 or more you can have them for £4 each. (P& P will be extra and will depend on the number of books you order.) You can sell them for £6 thus making £2 per book for your own chosen charity! A great way to make some money. For churches organising a Christingle Service there will be a powerpoint presentation and script of the story to act out available for £5. Use this in your service and then sell the books afterwards! A download of the story narrated by the author will soon be available from www.stmartinthebullring.com priced £2..

To order or for more information contact office@bullring.org or Tel: 0121 600 6020.

Lozells Bookshop



Now open Saturdays,
Began on Saturday 8 October 2011
for a 12 week trial period open

Each Saturday morning 10am – 2pm.

New Opening times:
Mon – Fri: 10am–4.30pm;
Wednesday: 10am–1pm
& Saturday: 10am–2pm

92 Lozells Road, Lozells Birmingham B19 2TB

Tel: 0121 554 6471

For all your Christian Books

Christmas Toylink Birmingham City Mission

New and nearly-new toys, books, games, puzzles needed
(must be complete and unmarked) for children aged 0-16.

**Please bring to the Birmingham City Mission Head
office at**

75 Watery Lane Middleway, Birmingham B9 4HN
Monday to Friday 9am - 4pm.

Volunteers to help sort toys and
wrap parcels are very welcome from the
start of November.



For more details visit the website:
www.birminghamcitymission.co.uk/
or contact Pat at head Office
on 0121 766 6603.

Carols Services

University Carol Service 2011

Monday 5th December at 6:15 pm.

in the Great Hall (Aston Webb) of the University of Birmingham

This annual event, organised by the University Chaplains and the Department of Music, is a joyful Christmas celebration for staff, students and families.

All are welcome: no booking or ticket required.

For further information please contact Fr Nicholas at n.lopolito@bham.ac.uk Tel. (0121) 414 8151.



Chaplaincy Plus invites you to

'Evening Carols for the Business Community'

Tuesday 13th December, 5.45-6.45pm

or

'Lunchtime Carols for the Business Community'

Wednesday 14th December, 1.05-1.55 pm

both services in Birmingham St Philip's Cathedral, Colmore Row.

Carol services for those working in the city centre with a talk by author and speaker Nick Cuthbert.

Mince pies and mulled mora juice will be served afterwards.

For further information contact Chris Dinsdale 0121 236 9742. chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk

The Lozells Project invites you and your Church to the **United Christmas Celebration**

Friday 16 December 2011, 7.30pm

For all ages and Churches in North Birmingham - Carols - Gospel music - Worship - Readings - Drama - Choirs

New Testament Church of God, 244 Lozells Rd, Birmingham B19 1NP

Organised by the Lozells Project in partnership with Churches in Lozells, Aston, Handsworth and Newtown.

Further details: 0121 523 8726 or visit www.lozells.org.uk



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CENTRAL SUTTON COLDFIELD

Carol Singing in The Mall Sutton Coldfield (near Costa's and BHS)

Saturday 17th December from 12.00 noon

There will be carol-singing in The Mall (near Costa's and BHS) under the auspice of the local Churches Together.

All are welcome to come along and sing. Please help to remind people of the true meaning of Christmas.

Amnesty International UK & Together with Freedom from Torture

Christmas Concert for Human Rights

Saturday 17 December, 11.00am

Birmingham St Philip's Cathedral, Colmore Row

Performances by Academy of Gospel Music Children's Choir,
Quinborne Choir, Laura Collins, Sarah Knight

Speaker: Director of Amnesty International, Kate Allen

Tickets £5, accompanied children free,

Cheques to 'Freedom from Torture' or 'Amnesty International'
to Derek Bennett, 38 Westfield Road, Edgbaston, B15 3QG.

For more information contact

Derek Bennett: db@hayfinance, Tel 0121 454 4423

BBC WM and Birmingham Cathedral (St Philip's)

combine for the annual festive Carol Concert

St Philip's Cathedral

Monday December 19th at 1pm

The concert features

Readings from your favourite BBC WM presenters
and Carols from the Cathedral Choir.

Admission £6, concessions £5. Not to be missed!

Tickets are available on the door only.

For information, Canon Janet Chapman 0121 262 1840

Autumn events

Quaker Quest in Birmingham

Find out more about a spiritual path for our time that leads to peace and social justice.

Join us for two informal presentations, discussions and questionings, with time to meet new people, experience Quaker worship, browse literature and hear about:

- * Quakers & Worship
- * Quakers & peace
- * Quakers and their Christian roots
- * Quakers, simplicity and sustainability

Where and when?

The first session will deal with the first two topics and will be on **Thursday evening 24 November**.

The second session will deal with topics three and four and will be on **Saturday morning, 3 December** at the Quaker Meeting House in Bull Street (at the upper end of Bull Street between the civil law courts and Johnson's dry cleaners).

You are welcome to come to either or both sessions. The Thursday will start at 6.00pm with a light supper (6.30 start of the session) ending with tea/coffee at 8.30pm. The Saturday will start at 10.00 with welcome drinks (10.30 start of the session) ending with a light lunch at 12.30. For more information visit www.quakerquest.org



Corrymeela Friends Conference

Reconciliation : The Economics and Theology of Hope.

Saturday November 26th 2011

10.30am for 11.00am- 4.30pm.

The conference will be held at The Priory Rooms Conference Centre,
Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham. B4 6AF.

Eligibility: We invite to this conference all those with an interest in issues of reconciliation and who seek to accommodate difference.

Friends of Corrymeela are, of course, particularly welcome.

Conference Fee - £25.00 per person to cover fee, tea and coffee throughout the day and soup and sandwich lunch at mid-day.

Registration: Please contact Maureen Foxall at m.w.foxall@btinternet.com or telephone 01527 544875

for an application form. This promises to be a really rewarding day.



Young Strings Project in Concert

Director: Lucy Akehurst

Friday 9 December 7pm

St Luke's Church Centre, Great Colmore St, Lee Bank, Birmingham B15 2AT (nr. city centre)

A concert by this talented young orchestra, to raise funds for Christian Aid.

With special guests One Voice Community Choir and the The Blue Coat Chapel Choir.

Adults: £7 in advance, £10 on the night. Children: £5 in advance, £7 on the night.

Christmas Appeal

This Christmas, we're sharing the inspiring story of 129 children who, in 2008, were successfully reunited with their families after they were separated when rebels attacked their villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Download our exciting free resources, including an all-age talk, sermon notes and a Christmas reflective film, and share this amazing story with your church this Christmas. You can also place an order for free printed resources, including a Christmas poster and giving envelopes for everyone in your church. www.christianaid.org.uk/joy

For further information on the above contact 0121 200 2283 or birmingham@christianaid.org.uk

Christian Aid, Room 403B, The Big Peg, 120 Vyse Street, Birmingham B18 6NE

Events in Date Order



Birmingham CMS Association

7pm Friday 2 December 2011

Egypt - what next? Hopes and Expectations

Join us at St John's Church Sparkhill St John's Road, Birmingham, B11 4RG for an evening with

Revd Emad Azmi Mikhail & Bishop Maurice Sinclair

CMS Members and Friends are invited to join us for an update on the situation in Egypt and to hear about an initiative of the Alexandria School of Theology, in co-operation with other training centres, to support young Middle Eastern theological teachers in their studies in their teaching ministry and in their publication of new teaching materials in Arabic.

Emad Azmi Mikhail is the Principal of the Alexandria School of Theology

Maurice Sinclair is a faculty member of the Alexandria School of Theology.

Entry is free, but it would help us with setting up, to know if you are intending to join us:

Please contact Ann Bower, Chairman or Birmingham CMS Association on 01564 775790 or email ann@bower.me.uk; www.cms-uk.org



Disabled Christians Fellowship

You are invited to the meetings of the Disabled Christians Fellowship, Hay Mills/Yardley. All ages and abilities are welcome

10.30am. Saturday 26th November 2011
and Saturday 28th January 2012

at Hay Mills Congregational Church, Waterloo Road B25 8LD
(Opposite Boots Optician Car Park)

We would love you to join us. For further information please ring 0121 444 2213 or www.throughtheroof.org for more information about Disabled Christians Fellowship



DCF is a venture of Waterloo Road Chapel
& Hay Mills Congregational Church

DCF is part of Through the Roof.
Tel:01372 749955 Registered Charity 1087788



Sponsored Swim

Sunday 8 January 2012
Birmingham

Venue: The Munrow Sports Centre,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

For £20 and a commitment to raise £100 sponsorship per team, please register at christianaid.org.uk/swim



Poverty & homelessness action week

28 January - 5 February 2012

Rich | Poor - Housed | Homeless
Rural | Urban - Migrant | Settled
Homeowner | Tenant - Employed | Unemployed
Private sector | Public sector -
Employer | Employee
Bankers | The rest

Our world is filled with barriers between people. Barriers that prevent us from understanding one another. They are created by unfair benefits rules and inadequate wages. By the stigma attached to being poor or homeless. And by the growing gap between the richest and poorest people in our society. Churches and community projects can break these barriers. They can challenge prejudice, enable excluded people to live full lives, and build a fairer world.

Work with in Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2012

to break the barriers that trap people in poverty
and homelessness.

Free resources will be available to download from
<http://www.actionweek.org.uk/html/home.html>

Father, we thank you that Jesus came to break down barriers. He did not see the migrant or the settled, the housed or the homeless, the employed or the unemployed; He saw and loved the person. Forgive us when we put up barriers between ourselves and others; help us show love to all without constraint. Help us, your church, to build communities without barriers, where all are valued because all are made in your image. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Growing with God

Empowering children's leaders spiritually & practically

9.30am – 4.00pm, Saturday 3rd March 2012

at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham B4 7SX

Guest speaker: Rt. Rev Andrew Watson, Bishop of Aston

Growing with God is for people of all ages and abilities who nurture the faith and spirituality of children. It is for people who work with, or help with, children in church and in midweek groups.

Workshop topics include:

Using Puppets, Ideas for Creative Prayer, Working with children on the autistic spectrum, Using seasonal celebrations to reach families, Outgrowing 'Sunday school?', Quiet times with children, Helping children walk with God, Using games, Staying close to God yourself.

Go to the relevant event page on BCT's website

(www.birminghamchurches.org.uk) for a booklet with more details

Places cost £12 for those from within Anglican Birmingham Diocese and £22 for those from other Dioceses. People from all denominations are welcome. Bookings made before 31st December 2011 receive a £2 discount per person. Booking deadline – 11th February 2012.

Cost includes home-made cake and all refreshments. Please bring your own lunch. To book contact Jelena Cammack:

Tel: 0121 426 0435 e: jelena@birmingham.anglican.org

Advance notice: Romero Mass, 16 March 2012

The third annual Mass to celebrate the life and legacy of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador
Friday 16th March 2012 St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham at 7pm.
There will be a reception to follow hosted by CAFOD with refreshments
and a short talk by Sarah Smith-Pearse from CAFOD's Latin America team, ending by 9.30pm.
For any more details do contact the CAFOD office on 01922 722 944 or Birmingham@cafod.org.uk.
All welcome, with a special invitation to groups from secondary schools.

CBLC launches 365 prayer



A year of monthly prayer for the city and nation
An evening of dynamic and strategic prayer:
7pm to 9pm on the last Friday of each month October 2011 to September 2012

Be a part of this united initiative to cover our city and nation in prayer.

For more details contact CBLC on 236 3001 or admin@cblcuk.com
CBLC is a strategic agency serving the church and wider communities for transformation



Faith on Sunday mornings



Faith on Sunday mornings BBC WM 95.6fm/ DAB/ online

Join Siôr Coleman from 6.0am and Richard Wilford from 7.00am until 9.00am every Sunday morning, for a mixture of inspirational music, stories and news from the religious communities of the West Midlands.

And if you've got a good story, a life enhancing project or a challenging ethical dilemma to air, then get in touch with Siôr or Richard and be a good news maker!

sior.coleman@bbc.co.uk; richard.wilford@bbc.co.uk On air phone line 08453 009956

Text 81333 and start your message with WM (normal text charges apply)

BBC WM The MailBox Birmingham B1 1AY

Presenter Profiles

Richard has been part of the BBC WM sports team for 17 years, covering a wide variety of sports from football to indoor rowing! In addition to sports commentaries and analysis, he has recently joined the faith team on Sundays. Richard attends St Francis Bournville with his family, and describes himself as a "curious journalist with an open mind". For him, the opportunity to work with the faith programmes of BBC WM means the chance to enjoy real stories from real people.

Sior has been with BBC WM for nearly as long as Richard, originally working with the eminent Michael Blood. Sior is a Baptist Minister and, when he's away from the microphone, School Chaplain in a large comprehensive school in south Birmingham. For Sior, the opportunity to offer inspiration through words and music is the key. Like good preaching, good broadcasting should make an impact. (Though, at 6 o'clock in the morning, he tries to offer a gentle start to a Sunday!)

Birmingham Healing Rooms & Prayer



Are you sick, in pain, troubled or anxious?

Receive prayer in Jesus' name

No appointment needed, No charge - everyone is welcome

1st Wednesday in month 7-30pm to 9-00pm, 2nd Monday in month 2-00pm to 3-30pm

at **St Luke's Church Centre, Great Colmore St, Lee Bank, Birmingham, B15 2AT**

tel: 0121 622 2435, we are Christians from local churches.

We believe that God loves & can heal you.

www.birminghamhealingrooms.org.uk



Christian Music Ministries

The Christian Music Ministries' Choir is going to be performing the musical Simeon by Roger Jones around the West Midlands. The dates of their performances are:

Sunday 4th December, 6pm - Christ Church, Burney Lane, Ward End, B8 2AS

Sunday 11th December, 6.30pm – St Thomas Church, Aldridge, WS9 8SL

Sunday 29th January, 6pm – Lickey Parish Church, B45 8GG

Sunday 5th February, 6.30pm – Holy Trinity Church, West Bromwich, B70 6LF

Saturday 11th February, 7.30pm – George Road Baptist Church, Erdington, B23 7RZ

Sunday 12th February, 6.30pm – St. Germain's Church, Edgbaston, B16 9TD

For further details visit www.cmm.org.uk or email events@cmm.org.uk

Please note our new telephone number: 01527 576 440

And our new address: 24 Spadesbourne Road, Lickey End, Bromsgrove B60 1JP

"Sing to the Lord" – Saturday 25th February

Christian Music Ministries are holding a vocal coaching and choral singing day led by Katie Leaver and Steve Davis.

The day will take place in Birmingham, but the venue is to be confirmed. Contact events@cmm.org.uk for more information.

"CMM Youth and Young Adult Day" – Saturday 17th March

A chance for those under 35 to show their stuff – Instrumentalists, singers, dancers, actors all welcome, with the aim to perform at the end of the day.

Birmingham venue to be confirmed. Please contact events@cmm.org.uk for more information.

Courses at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

A selection of course available at the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. All begin on Friday.

December Sing: a choral singing weekend	2 to Sunday 4 December	£188 ensuite, £178 standard
The Bible in Art, Music and Literature	16 to Sunday 18 December	£192 ensuite, £182 standard
Give Peace a Dance: a New Year retreat	30 December to Monday 2 January	£239 ensuite, £226 standard
Yearning for Wholeness: finding our path in a divided world	30 December to Monday 2 January	£244 ensuite, £231 standard
Love Has No Hands but Ours: facing the challenges of spiritual action	13 to Sunday 15 January	£190 ensuite, £180 standard
Greening your Meeting: using the QPSW and Living Witness toolkit	20 to Sunday 22 January	£190 ensuite, £180 standard



For details of all of the above courses go to <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/courses-learning.html>
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ Telephone No. 0121 415 6794
Registered Charity Number: 313816

From the internet

www.christianity.org – now available on smartphones

www.eauk.org/confidence - looking at Confidence in the Gospel: video record of Evangelical Alliance day conference

www.prayerforum.org/gdop-uk - Global Day of Prayer events around the UK, reports

<http://web.me.com/saamvisual/jesuscomic/index.html> - The Jesus Comic: a cartoon resource for mission

www.freshexpressions.org.uk/newwine - Fresh Expressions & New Wine network mission Conference 28/29 November 2011

www.counselling-directory.org.uk

Counselling Link: A website that aims to provide a counselling support network, enabling those in distress to find a counsellor close to them and appropriate for their needs. The service is free and confidential.

Divorce Recovery Workshop: the story

'...you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings'

David and Helen Bennett talk about the history of the Divorce Recovery Workshop

"Our work began shortly after we were married in 1993 when we found that people, knowing that we have divorce as part of our history, were coming to us seeking help for relationship difficulties. We were given a prophetic word from *Isaiah 58* '...you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings'. Since then we have sought to follow this prophecy which has led us to Marriage Ministry in all its facets - Enrichment, Preparation, Support and Promotion.

The charity Foundations West Midlands was formed 6 years ago and the dedicated team use the excellent resources from Holy Trinity Brompton and Care for the Family along with Relational Inventories from FOCCUS and Prepare-Enrich.

The work with divorce started some 7 years ago when our minister, once again because of our experience with divorce, asked us to research a divorce recovery program. We chose '*Divorce Recovery Workshop*' because of its accessibility and ease of delivery. It is a program firmly based on Christian principles but which never seeks to preach or convert and, like most of the resources we use, DVDs play an important role in delivering the message. The team involved with DRW have all been divorced or separated and have all done the workshop themselves. There are no 'experts' or counsellors simply empathetic people reaching out to those who are hurting. Over 160 people have now been helped by this amazing workshop."

Do you have people struggling with the effects of divorce or separation in your church.
Why not suggest they attend this workshop. It could turn their lives around !!



The next workshop starts in
Sutton Coldfield
February 21st 2012

RECENTLY DIVORCED OR SEPARATED FROM A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP?

Suffering shock, disbelief, rejection, guilt, anger or bitterness?

Alone with these issues or receiving misguided advice?

DIVORCED OR SEPARATED FOR SOME TIME?

Feel you've got it together? What about bitterness & resentment?

New relationships - are familiar problems recurring?

WHATEVER STAGE

This workshop helps people have a better understanding of what they are going through.

It also provides support from others in the same situation.

After the workshop is over it can also provide a new circle of close friends.

National Contact: website: www.drw.org.uk, tel: 07000 781889, email: drw@drw.org.uk

Local Contact: David & Helen Bennett, tel: 0121 308 0739, email: suttonc@drw.org.uk

The workshop is offered unconditionally to anyone regardless of age, at any stage of separation or divorce or any time afterwards.

foundations

marriage and relationship support

The Marriage Course

This excellent course with recently updated DVDs will be starting at **Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church** on **January 9th 2012**.

There are eight sessions each starting at 7-30pm. Subjects covered are: Building strong foundations; art of communication; resolving conflict; power of forgiveness; impact of family; good sex; love in action; what makes a marriage work

The cost of the course including course material, refreshments and a meal on the last session is £65 per couple.

For more details please contact **David & Helen Bennett 0121 308 0739** or email

office@foundations-westmidlands.org.uk or write to: foundations, PO Box 13088 Sutton Coldfield B73 9FE

New Church centres open for all

New look Harborne Baptists play host to Anglican Conference

A newly renovated and refurbished building has enabled the Baptists in Harborne to offer a welcome to over fifty Anglicans. Coming together for their: "Growing Church Leaders' Day", organised by the Diocese, lay and clerical leaders from Edgbaston and Harborne held their conference in the recently revamped facilities which is home to Harborne Baptist Church, in Harborne Park Road.



Behind the spacious, new glass frontage, is a freshly furnished auditorium and plenty of rooms for formal and informal meetings, including catering facilities and use of digital audio and video systems. All of which made it the venue of choice for diocesan convenor Rhiannon Jones for their guest speaker James Lawrence of the Church Pastoral Aid Society.

The Baptist Church at Harborne, which is committed to being used as a community building, is hopeful that it will be able to be a flexible resource to many other groups – both within and beyond the extended Christian Family.

If you think they can help you, please get in touch with Brenda Green at : secretary@harbornebaptistchurch.org.

Harborne Baptist Church, Harborne Park Road, Harborne Birmingham B17 0DH 0121 427 7141

All Saints Centre in the heart of Kings Heath

Newly opened, fully accessible, friendly and hospitable centre with a multi purpose hall & community rooms for hire at affordable prices.

Suitable for:

- Community/voluntary groups and clubs
- Small businesses
- Social and celebratory events including weddings
- children's and adult parties, and christenings
- Fundraising events including fairs
- Fetes and table top sales.
- Conferences and training events

All Saints Centre is on major bus routes including the number 50 and 11.

We are set in a prime location on the busy High Street fronted by a beautiful, new village square.

For further information or if you would like to look round the centre please contact Amy on 0793 256 8885 or email: ascenquiries@allsaintscentrehk.co.uk

All Saints Centre, 2 Vicarage Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7RA. www.allsaintscentrehk.co.uk

Vacancies

At Northfield Baptist Church we have a community restaurant serving the Community and especially the Residents at Ash Grove, a sheltered housing community.

We require a **Kitchen Supervisor/Cook** to be responsible for the food served in the restaurant, to be able to co-ordinate the ordering, preparation and serving of the meals. To plan menus in conjunction with the centre manager and to supervise and manage the paid kitchen staff.

NVQ level 3, Food preparation and cooking, or equivalent, and first aid certificates are required. A high standard of cooking skills is expected. Experience of working and supervising in a commercial catering environment would be required.

Hours required are 30 hrs per week, Monday to Friday, between 8.30am & 2.30 pm, though flexibility would be needed

Salary £10,000 -£11,000 per annum.

Closing date 19th November

Please send CV:'s with introductory letter to office@northfieldbaptist.org.uk or by post to
FAO Mrs C Acey Northfield Baptist Church 789 Bristol Road South, Northfield Birmingham B31 2NQ

Shalom Consultancy & Counselling Practice

V A C A N C Y for a Voluntary Counselling Receptionist (8 hrs per week)

A voluntary position is available to assist the work of this small Company with an aim to support the Counselling Practice which is a unique service in Birmingham. Expenses will be paid.
Tuesday & Thursday Evenings, Shalom Consultancy, 23 Coleshill Street, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1SD

Contact the CEO/Co-ordinator for further details: Mrs Pauline Anderson

Tel: 0121 354 9955 / 07951125908 Email: info@shalomconsultancy.com website: www.shalomconsultancy.com

Birmingham Ecumenical News (BEN)

The BEN database is being updated.

If you are listed on our database as a contact person for a church or organisation you will receive a letter with this edition of BEN asking you to confirm or amend your contact details.

Please reply to ensure your church/organisation continues to receive BEN
If you do not respond, you will only receive one more edition of BEN

Major demographic shift is under way in Christianity, say scholars

'Scholars claim the biggest change in the history of Christianity is underway amid the religion's move to Africa, Latin America and Asia. "The story of Christianity as a worldwide faith is being written before our eyes," declared Dr. Dana Robert of Boston University School of Theology, as she addressed a group of world church leaders at the Global Christian Forum (GCF) in Manado, Indonesia.

The gathering has brought together leaders from major church traditions, theological perspectives, and world communions, including the Anglican Communion, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

According to Peter Crossing of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, in 1910 about 66 percent of the world's Christians lived in Europe; a century later it was only 26 percent. Crossing, a researcher for the Atlas of Global Christianity, said the overall percentage of Christians had remained fairly constant over the last century, but there had been a "dramatic change in the center of gravity of global Christianity."

One hundred years ago this would have been near Madrid, but by 2010 it had shifted somewhere just south of Timbuktu in Mali, according to Crossing. He added that Christians in the northern hemisphere still dominate financially; 60 percent of the world's Christians live in the southern hemisphere, but they generate only 17 percent of Christian income.

Dr. Sang-Bok David Kim of the World Evangelical Alliance told the GCF that huge changes in the church internationally meant "Christianity is no longer a 'white man's' religion. Christians are now everywhere." The global reconfiguration raises critical questions for all churches, said Dr. Robert. "Contemporary Christians are focusing on mission for multiple purposes--both to recover tradition and to recover from tradition."

"Conversations about mission and witness have become an urgent agenda for declining mainline Christians...as they struggle to reframe their identity in a global marketplace. At the same time, adherents of new ministries often see their witness as a recovery of primitive Christianity that challenges the older denominations," he said.

From Ecumenical News International Daily News Service ENI-11-0539, 6 October 2011 By Kim Cain, Manado, Indonesia

BEN (Birmingham ecumenical news) is the quarterly publication of Birmingham Churches Together

The contents of BEN do not necessarily reflect the considered views of the BCT Trustees or its member churches.

BCT reserves the right to edit and format news articles/events/information for inclusion in BEN.

Deadline for March to May 2012 edition: 5pm Thursday 9 February 2012

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Archbishop Bernard Longley (Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham)
Major Samuel Edgar (Free Churches Moderator).

Birmingham Churches Together Charity No. 243931
BCT seeks to encourage greater cooperation between Christian churches across Birmingham and Solihull

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