

WINTER 2007/8

faithworks
Northampton

A blessed and happy New Year from all those involved in Faithworks Northampton. We pray that the coming year, which will feature quite an emphasis on mission through Hope 08, will be significant for your work of service to God and the community of which you are part.

Both the major events that we had planned for October went really well and we are encouraged as plans develop for another Christian leadership Lunch and our next Network Meeting.

What makes 1 Northampton?

A report on this event initiated by Faithworks Northampton and held on October 24th.

Leonie McCarthy, a member of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, met with around 30 people who came from a wide cross-section of Churches, as well as officers from the Borough and County Council and members of other faith communities. Her experience on the Commission and her work with New Links in Peterborough means she has insights in how to bring communities together. She shared how the Home Office funded project in Peterborough had bridged existing and new communities through education and shared initiatives. This ensured that Peterborough residents appreciate the contribution that new communities bring to their area.

Members of the Sikh and Hindu communities gave presentations on how they understood community cohesion and Revd Peter Stapleton, Faithworks Northampton member with the Miracle Church of God in Christ, called for Councils to be more proactive in their dealings with faith groups. Lewis Houston spoke of how prayer was essential to Christians seeking to bring about change for the common good.

The evening, which has already instigated further discussion with Borough Council officers, followed up the 2006 consultation on "What makes a good Northampton?". Discussion with the Council included whether the Faithworks Charter might provide a model for good practice in the Council's relations with faith groups.

A consultation is planned for 2008 on "What makes a green Northampton?"

News

DEVELOPMENT WORKER: Last issue we wrote about our decision to step out in faith and seek support from churches and Christian organisations to fund this part-time role which will provide the energy needed to achieve our vision [see back page]. Thank you for response received and we would encourage any others considering this matter to contact our Treasurer, Peter Storey at the YMCA.

FAITH COMMUNITY AUDIT: we are working on how this can be carried out in terms of both manpower and methodology to give results that are both accurate, comprehensive and creditable. We believe the results of this audit will surprise and encourage the Church and provide impetus for greater partnership with the community and the Local Authorities.

Unity =
Diversity +
Common Purpose

Christian Leadership Lunch 8th Feb 2008

Our first Faithworks Northampton lunch at Kings Park with Malcolm Duncan was very well attended and received. There was encouragement and challenge to us as the local Body of Christ and it provided an excellent opportunity for fellowship and networking amongst leaders.

Thanks to John Whittaker and his staff at Kings Park without whose generosity these lunches would not be possible.

Invitations will be sent out in the New year.

www.faithworksnorthampton.org.uk



Crime to Christ (C2C) provides practical and pastoral support to offenders, regardless of their faith or lack of it, and has testimony magazines in Police cells in Northamptonshire and

Leicestershire. A new ministry within C2C is called Diamond Doves, a service specifically for prostitutes. C2C has 2 full-time workers plus a team of volunteers, some of whom are ex-offenders themselves.

Founder Julie Parsons, a Northants Police Sergeant, says, "We joined Faithworks Northampton to develop relationships with like-minded people and support for our ministry. It has been a real encouragement to meet others with a similar desire to serve God by working in unity across the Christian community.

We joined just before the Leadership lunch at Kings Park for the visit by Malcolm Duncan. We were delighted to have a stand at the lunch and really appreciated the chance to meet you all. It was great to listen to Malcolm Duncan who invited us to go to the Faithworks Conference, where we were blessed and inspired!

This is a small ministry and it's mostly hard going, but the satisfaction we get from seeing a life transformed is indescribable. Recently we helped a woman who was a prostitute and Class A drug addict, who had lost contact with her family, including 8 children. She cried out to God, is now clean from drugs, off the streets and was miraculously reunited with her family. All glory to God!

We really appreciate the ongoing support and encouragement of the FN team. Thank you so much."

National Conference

There were many keynote speakers plus seminars and workshops, all proving of great value. Rev Joel Edwards [EA] and Bishop James Jones (Bishop of Liverpool) spoke about sustaining our spirituality in the midst of community involvement, while Fran Becket

"The church is facing a challenge. We are failing to tackle the real and often desperate needs of our neighbours with strategic, sustainable solutions. It's not that we are under resourced – although in some local churches it may often feel like that. Christians are not short on innovation, passion and commitment. The barrier hindering us from really making a difference is our reluctance to work together for the sake of our communities and towns and cities and our nation."

OBE spoke about the importance of continued consultation and partnership with other groups and agencies within the communities we serve.

The Rt. Hon Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Competitiveness and a practicing Christian, addressed the conference as did the Rt. Hon Hazel Blears MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The latter spoke about what makes a healthy community and emphasised the increasing need for government to work with faith groups and praised the Faithworks Charter as an initiative that made the partnering more possible.

FN was well represented with three of the FN executive and delegates from two FN member organisations, Crime to Christ and Northants YMCA, attending.

Welcoming New Communities

7.30pm

Monday 25th February 2008

Northampton Jesus Centre
Abington Square



2008

in our villages, towns & cities

Christian leadership prayer walk.
Saturday 5th January from 11.00am - noon.
Northampton town centre focussing on key aspects of community life.

Details: Teresa Brown 01832 293535
www.devinemusic.org.uk/hope08.htm

fresh impetus to Christian churches and organisations working together as they develop their role in serving the community through, and because of, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Northampton

Annual Membership: £35.
[£15 to FN; £20 for your affiliation to Faithworks].
Gifts over the £35 membership fee will help develop Faithworks Northampton.

contact: Gwyn Pritchard 01604 412012

facilitating the building of bridges between the wider Christian community and other faith groups, community groups and local authorities.

Executive Chair: Rev David Wiseman Christchurch Vicarage 01604 633254

A network of Churches and Christian organisations exploring better ways of working with local communities and agencies to build God's kingdom. Churches involved include Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical, Methodist, New Churches, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, United Reformed Church; organisations include Northamptonshire YMCA, NAYC and the Manna House.