

Vicar's letter – March 2019 'Enlarging the tent'

Dear friends

Today marks a significant day in the life of our church. In answer to our prayers, God has provided us with a facility which can be used to further the mission of our church.

The strap line which is now clearly visible on the signs outside our church communicate what we are about: Meet God-Find Life-Make Friends.

Meet God: God has given us these facilities in order to enable us to gather together and in so doing find Him in our midst. *Encounter God* is one of our core values. We do that in one another, as we, the body of Christ on earth worship together, pray together, learn more about God together and support one another through the challenges of life.

The Old Mission Hall which we are commissioning today and dedicating to God for service in mission is, we trust, a place where people can meet God. This may be meeting with God in private prayer or in coming together with others. It is a place where our young people can come together and learn of God's love for them and his purpose for their lives.

Find Life: The Bible tells us that Jesus is the source of Life. 'In Him was Life' (John 1:4), 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14:6). We discover life in Jesus and experience the life of His Spirit as He lives in all who believe. This is the life of God's Kingdom, his righteous rule and reign that we experience now as a foretaste of a greater more vibrant reality yet to come. It is this fullness of life that we can experience in community with one another and which we hold out to others to experience for themselves. It is always such joy to hear stories of LIFE that members of our church family experience in and through being connected with one another and sharing Life together, hence the value of Life Groups.

Make Friends. In a society that suggests there is an epidemic of loneliness, the need to make friends and feel a sense of belonging is badly needed. The first of our core values: '*All involved*' suggests that by serving on teams with other people we can share together in common tasks that build identity and purpose.

Over the last few months many people have come together to paint the Old Mission Hall. Side by side we have stood, paint brush (or roller) in hand, chatting, meeting new people, working together, serving a common purpose. In that way relationships are formed, friendships grow.

Creating Community is another one of our values. Our hope is that the OMH will encourage the young people to grow in friendship and community life by having a space where they can meet and find a sense of belonging and familiarity.

Many people love our church weekend away and have booked to join us again this year (5-7th July). This is because they have a chance to get to know other people's names (we all wear our name badges) and share meals together (fabulous food) and feel a strong sense of being part of our community life in which friendships can grow and flourish. If you would still like to join us and haven't yet booked, have a word with Jo Davies.

'Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.' Isaiah 54:2

Today as we commission the Old Mission Hall and dedicate it to be used to the glory of God in mission, we are 'enlarging the place of our tent'.

We pray that it will be used to grow strong disciples amongst our young people, future leaders (of church, industry, healthcare, education, media and culture etc.) who will be those who follow Jesus and submit to God's rule and reign over their lives.

We pray it might be a centre for prayer right at the heart of our town; a sacred space where the cries of the saints rise before the throne of God day and night; 'Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

So today let's celebrate all that God has done and all that He will do for generations to come through the ministry of the Old Mission Hall.

'To God be the glory, great things he has done'.

Stephen