

Gravesend Methodist Church & Community Centre

Question – What happens when we swim out into the centre of the river like Ezekiel and trust the Spirit!!

Answer – Well if you are in Gravesend sometime come and find out.

If you are unable to come and see us here are some words about it:-

After talking about our **C21st Project** for ten years, including many years fund raising, our Phase 1 building improvements started at Gravesend Methodist Church (GrMC) last March. By the Autumn we had metamorphosed into Gravesend Methodist Church & Community Centre (GMCCC).



Halls etc. before works -February 2015with an uninspiring old rear entrance for Monday – Saturday use



During works - March 2015

By October the builders had moved out but we continued doing DIY works for a while. So what did we deliver? We provided a new community centre entrance as our face to the community with access for people with disabilities; a staffed reception; a wash room with shower, washing machine and tumble drier; a counselling room; storage rooms; an internal layout enhancing safeguarding and a lounge to be completed later this year.

We say a BIG THANKYOU to our members, local people, the local Council, the Circuit and District for providing the ££££'s (well £165,000 of them to be precise).

Our plans to use the improvements with a “slow start” didn’t materialise and we found ourselves “in at the deep end.” Immediately the works were finished the local community became intrigued by our new “street cred” and we haven’t looked back. **Community use has blossomed**, to the extent that we are in use for at least 116 hours per week with one single stretch of 32.5 hrs. Amongst other activities, we have always been the base for Street Pastors, a hub for Foodbank, provided coffee and meals for vulnerable people and have for many a year provided clothes for London Homeless charities such as the Whitechapel Mission. **Since completion of these works we can now add to that list:-**

“Sanctuary” Winter Night Shelter for local Homeless People three nights a week, (plus an extra emergency night if the mercury drops too low), in association with City Praise Centre and Churches Together; “Wash off the City Colours” for street people to shower and clean up; a Laundry Service for street people; CXK College 5 days a week helping young people to develop their skills, raise their aspirations and maximise their potential; a Learning Disability Group (mainly wheelchair bound); a Good Life (MIND type) Group and Junior Football. In addition, local groups who use our premises are finding a growing interest in their activities such as Tai Chi, “babyballet”, the local dance school and children’s parties; plus interest from the Local Elderly Forum, a potential community choir and other community groups. Nearly every day someone will pop in asking what we do or how we can help in some situation. Donations of



October 2015 - New Community Centre entrance

clothes, food and help continue to flood in, to the extent that we have had to temporarily stop taking in clothes and excess food is now donated to a local refuge.

Does this come with challenges? Of course; one of which was how to “staff” our increasing community work. Well, our members and friends have stepped up to the challenge with over fifty of our members now involved in regular volunteering for the church. One hundred and forty people are now volunteering for the Winter Night Shelter from many churches in the area. Not only are we now able to provide better help to vulnerable and marginalised people, but we now have people working alongside each other who would not normally meet; i.e. people from different churches, different faiths or no faith. **God is good!**

So where do we go from here? Sit back and watch the new initiatives happen? Is that what God is asking of us? We believe that we are being asked “to swim even deeper,” trusting in the Holy Spirit. So..... having improved one face onto the world, we believe it is time to improve our face onto Milton Road, (the main one way system of our town). Our Church Council has recently agreed to proceed with **C21st Project - Phase 2**; but when we will deliver is ££££’s dependent. At £481,000 we are not talking about a small target. If our work can improve so much with the improvements to our rear elevation, think what is possible once we have a “new face on an old lady”!

So what’s involved in our C21st Project Phase 2?



GMCCC – a Town Centre Church built in 1906..... but not inviting to 2016 eyes



C21st Project Phase 2 new Glazed Porch and ramps etc. inside the new Community Café/Meeting Venue

A new Community Café/Meeting Venue separated from the worship area by folding glazed doors; a toilet in the foyer which is accessible for people with disabilities, (crossing ones legs or walking the whole length of the worship area during services is a tad embarrassing); a kitchen to serve the community café etc.; an inviting glazed porch with new ramped access; a counselling room at first floor; emergency access changes to the church balcony and new chair stores etc.

What initiatives these improvements will lead to are yet to be determined, but experience has shown us that we will again react to the challenges that God gives us in the years to come.

So please accompany us on this journey through your prayers, popping in to see us if straying our way (bundles of ££££’s are welcome too); please trust in the Holy Spirit. Thank you

Gravesend Methodist Church & Community Centre , Milton Road, Gravesend. Kent. DA12 2RE Charity no. 1132238 Tel 01474 328249 www.gravesendmethodistchurch.org.uk Your local town centre church bringing God’s love to the heart of the community”.