



Luton Town Centre Chaplaincy

Providing pastoral and spiritual support to those who work in or visit Luton Town Centre

March 2015 - Issue number 17

Welcome to our newsletter. Please feel free to copy or print out further copies, or email the electronic version to share with your friends and church members.

Our thanks also go to Marion who has been one of our volunteer Chaplains since the beginning but, due to pressure of work, has had to step down. Marion has been a very valuable member of our Street Team and we wish her every blessing for the future.

Bibles in the Courts

Our Chaplains in the Crown Courts were approached to see if the Chaplaincy would be able to provide some Bibles for the Court users—of course we were delighted and at a lunch at the end of February some of our Court Chaplains presented 10 new bibles to His Honour Judge Foster, Sandra Harrington (one of the Ushers) and Mandy Ryder (Delivery Manager).

A word from Mike Jones



It's been great to see Luton Town Centre Chaplaincy at work in the six months since I have become Chair. From the ministries in the courts, council, shops and supermarkets and out on the streets to the work at the EDL march and training people from all over town in recognising and understanding 'extremism', the Chaplaincy is a great asset to the town. As we sit with, listen to, encourage and speak to so many from all over town please pray that God brings fruit from what we do. Every blessing!

Mike Jones, Chair

And what about you?

Our team of Chaplains continues to grow—but we are always looking for others who have a heart for people to join us. If you are a member of a local church, why not come and have an informal chat with Michael to see where you might fit in?



During 2014 our Chaplains had over 1750 'significant conversations' with people in the Town

Healing on the Streets

Every Saturday afternoon—whatever the weather—there is a team out on Market Hill offering to pray for people as they visit the Town Centre. This is a visible sign that we care, and many people have encountered God as they come and talk to the HOTS team and receive prayer. We have now extended the Leadership team—Ulrike heads up a great group of people—and she, Shirley, Anthony, Geoff, Hilary and Brian have been joined by Heather, Sam, Karl, Rod and Eileen. We are always happy to train more team members so if you are willing to serve one Saturday afternoon a month, please get in touch.

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome two new Volunteer Chaplains to the team Lecia will be joining Catherine and Steve at ASDA and Luke will be working on the streets with the poor, homeless and those caught up in addiction and will also be the Chaplain to the clients at NOAH and Hope Church drop in centre.



Lecia

Luke

Money matters

We were delighted to learn that the Church and Community Fund have awarded the Chaplaincy a grant of £20 000 to help towards maintaining and developing the project over the next three years. We are also grateful to a number of churches which continue to make a significant financial contribution towards our work, and to those individuals who make one off, and (especially important) regular payments to LTCC. We also receive donations through Just Text Giving but these are anonymous so we don't know who to thank. You know who you are, so a big 'Thank you' to you—we really appreciate your support.

"There was a palpable sense of God's presence there which a number of us felt - and so did a number of visitors to us. I felt a peace there I've not felt anywhere else!"

HOTS Team

LTCC recognised

At a ceremony in December the Chaplaincy was presented with an Award by Bedfordshire Police Chief Constable, Colette Paul, "in recognition of your continuous support for the communities of Bedfordshire and Bedfordshire Police throughout 2014".



As well as our work in the Town Centre, this was especially to recognise the support given through Community Mediation during times of tension. There have been a number of occasions recently where our Chaplains have been 'on the ground' to support the Police and other community leaders—the last opportunity to serve in this way was in November when there was another EDL demonstration in the town. A number of our Volunteer Chaplains helped out on the day and were able to talk to protestors and reassure members of the public.

Training

Our next Core Training programme for our Chaplains will take place in the Autumn over three Saturdays.

If you are thinking about becoming a Volunteer Chaplain with us it would be great to chat to you before the summer so that you can join the training programme which covers issues such as bereavement, dealing with stress, listening skills, listening to God, understanding the culture, and drug and alcohol abuse.

We also have ad hoc training sessions throughout the year—the latest of these was in February when Dave Allport from 'Rewind', came along to help us understand about 'Extremism from a right wing perspective' - looking at how it developed, the current 'scene' and how it affects communities and individuals.



'Extremism' training in February

Serving the nation

The Alliance of Town and City Chaplaincies (ATCC) will be holding a national conference in Luton on Thursday 16th April to draw together those from across the UK who are already involved in chaplaincy, or are considering establishing a project in their town or city. LTCC are at the forefront of this initiative— and it's very exciting to see what God is doing across the UK! The conference will aim to inspire and encourage those present, as well as providing some practical support and an opportunity for those present to 'network'. For more information about this, visit the 'News' section of our web-site.

*Friday evening - One of The Mall security guards asked us to speak to a homeless guy who had recently arrived from Peterborough after a family break up. He shared his story and we took him along to NOAH for a hot meal. NOAH then began a support process and he is now regularly attending the Day Centre. We saw him recently and he looks a different person.
Street Chaplain*

Michael's diary

As well as his regular visits to the LBC Depot to support the staff there, Michael has also attended a Cinnamon Network conference and a Theos Think Tank conference (along with the Chair, Administrator and 2 Chaplains) looking at the growing relevancy of Chaplaincy in all its forms across the UK.

Christmas was a busy time with over 800 people visiting the Prayer Tree in The Mall, the switch on of the Christmas lights and a thoroughly enjoyable Christmas meal with the Trustees, staff and Volunteer Chaplains.

He has also led further training sessions for Healing on the Streets and a retreat for LTCC is being planned for June this year.

He also visits churches to speak about the work of LTCC—if you would like Michael to come and talk to your congregation or fellowship group, please get in touch.

If you would like to make a donation to the Chaplaincy—perhaps £10 to cover the cost of a Bible for the Court - then you can do this by sending us a cheque made payable to 'Luton Town Centre Chaplaincy', or by making a bank transfer using the following details:

Sort Code: 403032

Account Number: 12307375

Account name: Luton Town Centre Chaplaincy

You can also donate on-line at www.localgiving.com/ltcc, or by texting LTCC11(+ the amount—£2/£5/£10) to 70070.

We are especially grateful for regular donations (however modest) as these help us to plan.