

## **SARK METHODIST CHURCH – Report September 2009**

It has been a year now since my appointment, and the witnessing to Christ here on Sark continues to manifest itself into a variety of different expressions. As the Pastor, I continue to encourage the ministry of all as the one ministry of Christ, with our vision for the coming year being one of living in the understanding of faith being love believing, and mission being love acting.

### **Worshipping life.**

We have enjoyed a summer of a variety of Sunday morning Services at 10.30 am, including a Sankey Service as part of a celebration of songs old and new. We have developed our worship over the last twelve months into a style that embraces the more traditional elements and explores more contemporary patterns with equal value. As always, we worship in the true spirit of the doctrine of salvation for all by faith. We continue to include the creative arts in worship, opportunities for extemporary prayer and storytelling and a use of the technical age is an advantage. Whilst our numbers depend as always upon the time of year, our core membership is in a state of steady growth. Since our last membership Service in December, three more new members were welcomed in May with a Service for two further new members planned for October.

### **Church groups.**

We continue to hold our weekly prayer meeting on a Tuesday at the home of the Chapel senior steward, and I am pleased to report that this remains a strong ecumenical group. In addition, the Christian praise group held on a Tuesday night has resumed after its summer break with a good number of locals and visitors attending throughout the year. We continue with our first Sunday in the month 'Lunch Fellowship', where a cooked lunch is shared and discussions had in light of the fact that our Service of Holy Communion usually precedes the sharing of the meal. We also have bible study on most Friday evenings, which incorporates how we can develop worship as reflecting the scriptures as serving the present age.

### **Youth and family ministry.**

We have a good and developing working relationship with Sark's new head teacher, and I continue to lead assemblies on a regular basis. We have now centred our youth and children's work on the Friday night club and the Saturday morning art and craft club. All the elements mentioned in my previous report, have been built into these two sessions. This has freed up more time to visit families at home to offer a more private support for any learning difficulties a particular child might be subject to. This September also sees the beginning of a new initiative between School and Chapel to bring parenting courses to Sark through a Guernsey agency.

### **Community**

We continue to offer a high level of pastoral care and visiting to the community as a whole, and there has been a high demand for our involvement in the alcohol dependency problems currently facing Sark. This in turn weaves itself into more family outreach as more children become affected by the damage done by this problem. We are working well with the Doctor on Sark in supporting those who go through the detox programme that is available. We are currently

providing care and support in a variety of ways to five families who are seriously affected by alcohol related difficulties.

We are well established in the virtual world of cyberspace. As I reported last time, we have a Sark Methodist virtual church on the social networking site Facebook. There are now over 250 members worldwide, including two Christian sisters from Iraq. Also [www.sarkmethodists.com](http://www.sarkmethodists.com) is in the process of being updated to reflect our expectations for next year. Up to now, there has been over a 1000 visits to the site. Our retreats for this year will have seen 100 plus people come and share the love of Jesus with us here on Sark, with several wishing to spend protracted periods of time working alongside us in witnessing to the wider Sark community. We are looking at how this might develop into the establishing of a settled Christian community in the Ionic sense.

### **Fresh Expressions**

The Jeremiah Project is well and truly established, with an average of twenty different people attending every week. The aim remains as an offer to be inspired by Jeremiah 18:1-4. The purpose is to worship by prayer, sharing scripture and creative pottery. We are now producing items such as patterns and chalices as imperfect vessels for sharing communion. A recent development is that the finished pieces are to be shared between the participants of the Jeremiah Project and members of the virtual church who may never have the opportunity to visit Sark. We also began our Sunday Carriage Services (A 2.00 pm prayer Service which visits different locations on Sark by means of horse and carriage rides.) on Trinity Sunday, and they have proved to be a very popular event.

Finally, William the church cat remains on the lookout.

Yours in Christ.

David Hollingsworth