

JANUARY-APRIL 2011



1  
LENT COURSE  
STARTS WITH  
THINKING ABOUT  
'HOPE'.

HAND-HELD  
MULTI-MEDIA  
PLAYERS AT  
ST PAULS  
CATHEDRAL 2



# Chaplaincy



2  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR SCHOOL-  
VISITS ARE FEW  
AND FAR  
BETWEEN!  
HARVEST 2010

AN UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE  
CHAPLAIN AMONG  
DEAF & DEAFBLIND PEOPLE

## focus

*The Chaplaincy exists to enable people who are Deaf or Deafblind to play a full part in the life of the Church, at every level.*

## Deaf Church: Challenges?

The way the Deaf Church exists and works can be difficult to explain. We don't own a building, we don't meet weekly, we don't have many of the features of other churches. We exist as one Church, yet we meet in three different locations regularly. Additionally we work in partnership with some Parishes and other Deaf groups. We're like a network, providing opportunities for worship and fellowship wherever Deaf people may want to get together. This presents challenges in addition to many opportunities. Challenges include turning up at one of our regular venues to find we need to clean or re-arrange everything after the last user, or sitting close together in the outer hall huddled around plug-in radiators because the heating has broken. Being flexible also brings opportunities. For example, a Deaf club has recently been re-opened near the Manor House tube station. We haven't been able to offer any opportunities for Deaf Christian worship in that area, but through this refurbished building, we may be able to offer something in the coming months.

There may be a possibility further north in the Diocese too. Please pray for open doors (literally!) for new groups to meet.

For Deaf people who want to join with their local hearing congregation for regular worship, the lack of British Sign Language interpreters means very little choice. There are a few parishes with regular signers and I thank God for their dedication, faithfulness and willingness to do this. This year, I have been able to work with St Mary Magdalene, Holloway Road, to re-start a monthly interpreted service, which will soon hopefully go to twice a month. It's not much when you compare it with the access that hearing people enjoy in the church, but it is a start. In the future, I would like to see more links being built with the local Deaf community in the area.

Another challenge is that church members live far apart from one another and it has been difficult to have a regular fellowship group for some time. Whenever we meet we have time for discussion but this Lent, we have decided to have an afternoon fellowship and hope this may encourage people to make regular fellowship, including time to listen and support one another, a priority. I would love to make more use of websites and web-cams for this too, but my enthusiasm outweighs my technological skills at present. Another challenge to look forward to!



Discussion is always important in the Deaf Church



Deaf & hearing people work together to decide how to sign a hymn in the Kings Cross group.



“...a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”  
Winston Churchill



Deaf Pastor Bob McFarland visiting us from Leicester for our Advent Celebration.

# Looking Back: Highlights of 2010

The Vision Statement is a useful reminder for me on those days when I'm feeling very tired and wonder if it's all worth it! It's good to keep it in the centre.

In 2010, I had the opportunity to take some study leave. My aim was to

visit other Deaf churches and groups to see how they did things differently-- to find out what worked in their situations and what didn't. I saw groups that were struggling and groups that were thriving, and I am even more convinced that I/we cannot give up. Strong Deaf leaders are the key for thriving groups in addition to good

**"A vibrant Deaf Church empowered and equipped to reach out in mission and ministry to the wider Deaf community across the Diocese."**

VISION STATEMENT: MAP

relationships with a hearing church that shares a vision for Deaf ministry. I feel we are on the right track in London. It was a brilliant experience to meet colleagues around the UK and realize that we share similar pressures. This role

can be quite isolating so a group of us are meeting a little more regularly from now on to have time to discuss issues and support each other.

Having study leave also gave me the time to finish the website. It's such a vital communication method and is well worth the hard work it took. There are still things that need tweaking-but at least it's up and running now!

Please have a look at it!

**MISSION ACTION PLAN:**  
Slow but sure!

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither will our vision statement become reality in such a speedy way.

However, progress is being made in 3 of the 4 areas we identified in 2009. Deaf Christians are involved in all areas of Church life. We work in partnership with at least one Parish in each Area to develop skills and awareness. (The first level 2 BSL group will finish in July and we hope to begin another level 1 later this year.) Prayers and plans are being started for a new Deaf Church group in the Edmonton Area. So- WATCH THIS SPACE!



Over 70 people gathered for the Memorial Service 2010, at Hayes Deaf Club. It was a moving, beautiful service.



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I was glad of the opportunity at Harvest to go into Frank Barnes school to lead an assembly. It would be superb to have more contacts with schools and children, but I have no time to be able to develop this at present. This is the fourth key component for the MAP-the only one, as yet, without much progress.

It was a privilege to be involved in the



multi-media tour of St Paul's Cathedral. The Cathedral were keen to ensure that British Sign Language was included on their list of languages. I was asked to help by being filmed for a short 'stop' on the tour, assuring Deaf people of their welcome to the Cathedral. Apart from this one difference, the tour in BSL matches the full tour in other languages, giving Deaf people full access. Some Deaf Church members 'road-tested' the tour. Their feedback was invaluable.



I have been organising a regular signing group "Thank God it's Friday" for over 3 years. I thank God for the Deaf tutors who give their time and skills to lead and teach!

