

Churches Together in Shirley and District News from 2014

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2014

Churches Together in Shirley and District United Service

Sunday January 19th 2014



To celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity CTiS held a United Service in St James Church at 3 pm on Sunday January 19th.

The service was attended by around 150 people. It was led by Rev Dan Clark, the vicar at St James and also the deputy chairperson of CTiS. The tone for the meeting, focusing on our unity as churches together, was set by the opening prayer.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you have called us to live in unity with each other and with our brothers and sisters around the world. When we sense things pulling us apart, may our common love for Jesus bind us together even more strongly. May our worship today be a witness to the kind of unity that comes only through Christ our Lord. Amen.

We sang both traditional and modern songs led either by the organ or by the Bridge Band with Alun Leppitt. The programme also included a video summary of events run by CTiS over the year and an excellent talk from Fr David Sillince from St Boniface Church. However, perhaps the highlight of the

afternoon was when Linda Hayes from Freemantle Baptist led the church leaders in praying for each other. They lined up at the front of the church and each one in turn shared briefly their aims for the year ahead. The person next to them in the line then prayed for them and the aims they had just shared. It was interesting to hear the different visions for the year ahead and very encouraging to see the leaders praying heartfelt prayers for the success of each others churches.

The meeting concluded with tea and cakes provided and served by the Shirley Parish 'Sunday at 3' team who had also kindly allowed their own meeting to be expanded to accommodate our united meeting. While we enjoyed the refreshments we were able to visit a number of displays of several of the projects with which CTiS are involved: Southampton City Mission, SCRATCH, Communicare, Firgrove, Southampton Sunday Lunch Project, Christian Aid and a new initiative for twenties and thirties called WeUnite.

It was also the opportunity for us to launch the new booklet listing all the different activities of our churches: 'The church in Shirley and Freemantle serving the community'. This can be found here on the website in the What's on page.

Good Friday Service in Shirley Precinct 2014

Around 200 of us gathered in Shirley Precinct on a sunny April 18th for the annual Good Friday service of Churches Together in Shirley and District. The service was led by Rev Dr Sarah Hall, the minister of Freemantle United Reformed Church. The Salvation Army band led the singing, as we focused on remembering the suffering of Christ on the cross.



The relevance of this for today was considered in two testimonies from people who had gone through difficult times in their lives and who had found encouragement from walking with Christ through their suffering. Linda Hayes from Freemantle Baptist Church then gave a talk on the significance of the cross, which included a demonstration of the tearing down of the curtain in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, which happened as Jesus was being crucified. She explained how this was a picture of what the cross had achieved in breaking down the barrier between us and God, enabling us to know his presence in our lives day by day.



People were then given the opportunity to write prayer requests on to tear shaped pieces of paper and post them on to the model of the cross that had been brought to the precinct. Many took the opportunity to do this and the cross was covered with the requests.

During the meeting we enjoyed hot cross buns which were very kindly supplied by Sainsbury's and served by with a smile by their staff. Also, while the adult meeting was going on, the children had their own activities prepared by Jo Snape from Shirley Baptist and supervised by Brian and Becky Purchase of St James Road Methodist.



It was good again to be together as churches united in worshipping Jesus together, having the chance to meet up with folk from other churches, and sharing the good news about Jesus with our community.

Many thanks to all who helped organise and run the meeting.

Photographs were provided by Victor Humphrey from Shirley Parish Church.

The Community Games in St James Park

Saturday and Sunday July 5-6th 2014

For the past two years Churches Together in Shirley and District have hosted a summer community event in St James Park. However, when we heard that this year that Friends of St James Park were organizing the Community

Games we felt that it would be appropriate to support this event rather than run one of our own. Inspired by the London 2012 Olympic Games, the Community Games aimed to bring the local community together to take part in sporting and cultural activities in the Park.

A great variety of activities were enjoyed by those attending, including arts and crafts, athletics, a climbing wall, cycling ramps & agility, face painting, football challenges, a minithon, rugby skills, and a street art workshop. The aim was to have something suitable for everyone in the community.

Visitors were entertained by various bands and choirs and refreshed by the Parklife Cafe, food stalls from different countries, and a Tea Tent. There were also many stalls representing local organisations. The weather was good for both days. Full details and pictures of the games can be found at the [Friends of St James Park website](#)

Our own part in the event was to run the Tea Tent which was well used throughout the weekend and also the Prayer Tent, where we were able to offer to chat and pray with people at their request. Several people were prayed for over the two days.



Many thanks to the organisers for putting on a great community event and also to all those who helped CTiS make our contribution to it.

Showstoppers Club for Children July 2014

Four churches in Shirley put on the Showstoppers Club for children at St James Road Methodist church every morning during the week July 28th – Aug 1st. The club was aimed at children aged 3 – 11 years old. Around 84 children attended over the course of the week to join in the club that focused on the theme of the theatre. Through the course of the week children took part in craft activities, team games, songs, competitions and challenges. Each day there was time to look at one of God's 'showstopping stories' to share God's amazing plan for the world. This included creation,

David and Goliath, Daniel in the lion's den, the birth of Jesus and Jesus' death and resurrection. There was a lot to pack in each morning! On the last day of the club, the children's families were invited to come to watch a film that had been made over the week showing the children in their groups and being involved with the various activities. Families then had the chance to hear an overview of the stories, to hear some of the songs that had been learnt during the week and to watch some of the children perform a dance they had put together. Following on from this everyone was invited to a hotdog lunch, which was a great way to end the week.

The success of the event resulted from having a good number of helpers (of all ages; ranging from teenagers to people in their 70's!) from across the churches whose enthusiasm created a great atmosphere for the children to have fun and to hear something of the good news about Jesus.

Click [here](#) to see a video record of the Showstoppers



Gas Explosion in Shirley

On Tuesday November 18th 2014 a gas explosion left a house in Shirley in ruins and the Sabanal family, who lived there, homeless.



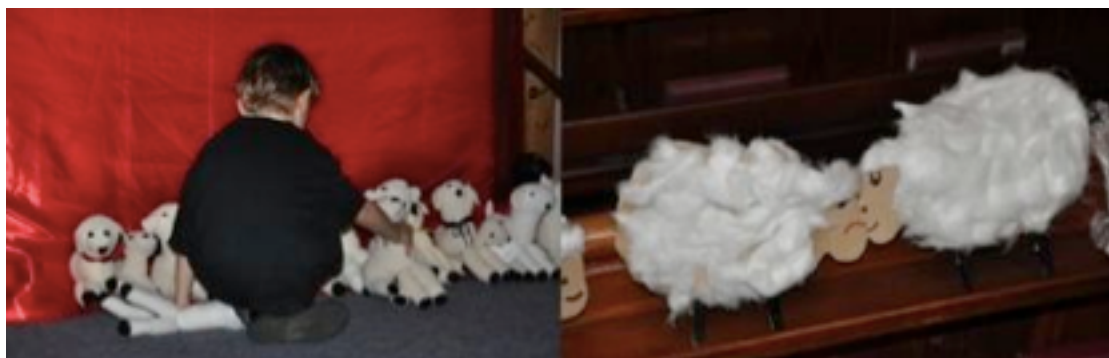
Help came from the local community, including the Salvation Army, who are part of Churches Together in Shirley and District. They were quickly on the scene offering support and practical help.

The thoughts and prayers of CTiS were with the Sabanal family at this difficult time, and we also set up a justgiving page to raise money to support them.

CTiS Christmas Event 2014

All I want for Christmas is Ewe!! December 8th – 20th

This year, Churches Together in Shirley and District had a Christmas event with a difference, which had a variety of activities for all the family. The main events were on Saturday December 20th but in the previous week, children had the opportunity to take part in a sheep hunt. Twenty-one sheep toys had been placed in different shops in Shirley – each one having a name. The task was to find the names of the sheep.



This was great fun for the children and also appreciated by the shopkeepers who liked getting extra customers in their shops. There was also a colouring competition with prizes for different age groups. The prizes were presented at the Festive Fun Event held at 3.30 pm on Dec 20th at Shirley Baptist Church where about 150 children and parents came to enjoy taking part in various craft activities.



At about 5 pm the children were given lanterns and a lantern parade proceeded along Shirley High Street to the Precinct where they joined other folk from the Shirley churches in carol singing by candlelight led by the Salvation Army Band.



Finally everyone was welcomed back to the Salvation Army Hall for refreshments, which were very welcome on a cold but fine evening.

It was an excellent event enjoyed by all who attended. It was great to see churches working together in organising it, and then enjoying both the fun activities and the opportunity to celebrate the coming of Christ to the world to be God with us.