

This Life, Live It



The Anglican and Baptist churches of Long Sutton in Lincolnshire, have been working together for several years and have held focused times of mission during the last 18 months to promote social cohesion.



As a result of a week of events in June 2015, there was a tangible sense of having been touched by God, with those involved feeling that they had all taken steps of faith. Further events were planned including music concerts, a panel discussion, film nights and 30 people attended a Pilgrim course. We have deepened the involvement of church and community with all three local primary schools and involved local teenagers in the deanery drama group. There has also been a noticeable increase in weddings, baptisms and confirmations.

This all led into an intensive Mini Mission over a long weekend in July 2016, exploring different aspects of faith. Prayer was very important in the preparation and many individual Christians were asked to pray regularly as were Crowhurst Healing Centre, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Events included:

- A concert by the Leicester De Montfort Gospel Choir.
- On the Saturday night, Steve Price an internationally renowned Christian Illusionist and member of the Magic Circle took the stage in the church hall. He included talks about the Christian Faith and was very happy to stay afterwards to talk to anyone exploring their faith.
- After church on Sunday there was a BBQ, with fun activities, followed by a concert by the Boston Salvation Army Band.

The budget for the Mission was £2,000, supported by fundraising events across the year. Our intention was to offer the weekend as a series of free events, but we left a bucket for voluntary contributions and each event nearly broke even.

The planning went well, but there were some things which did not go to plan. Although 3,000 advertising leaflets were delivered, a specific event for young people did not happen, but many young people, children and families were still involved. Overall 600 adults and children were involved in the activities. We have been a witness to the Holy Spirit with Christians offering their testimony of exploring faith and follow up has been important.

We have reviewed the achievements, understood the growth that has taken place and then started to plan a series of events over the next 12 months, using the church and seasonal calendar as well as special events.

But one particular success story is the new sense of life that's emerging at Christ Church Dawsmere. Situated in a village of 500, the small congregation has struggled to engage with community life in an isolated area. Growing relationships with the local primary school, and the decision of the British Legion

to base their local branch in the church has created new opportunities for partnership. New facilities have been put into the church: running water, kitchenette and toilet. The church is now used for Quiet Days and as an environmental study centre for local primary schools. This has invigorated the once-struggling congregation.

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