

## Looking Forward - a few things for your diary

### Charities

On the **last 3 Sundays** in January (15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>), we have invited speakers to come from the three main charities we support regularly as a church. So that we all have the opportunity to hear from them, we are going to gather together for **one service at 10am** on those Sundays.

### ALPHA

On the Church Day Away, most of the small groups expressed a desire for us to be running Alpha or something similar. We are preparing to trial the new Alpha Course starting in February. We have been inviting people at our Christmas Services and invitations are available. Please be praying and asking God to show you who to invite. If you've never done the Alpha Course yourself and would like to find out more about the Christian faith, you are very welcome to come. If you're interested in helping run the course, please talk to John or Marian.

#### *Alpha Supper*

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm in the Church

#### *Alpha Course*

Monday evenings from 27<sup>th</sup> February until 3<sup>rd</sup> April (or 10<sup>th</sup> April, if needed)

#### *Alpha Day Away*

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April at Morley Retreat Conference Centre



### 'Thy Kingdom Come' - 25<sup>th</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> June

Our Archbishops are calling us to prayer in the time between Ascension and Pentecost. Their invitation is 'to join with the family of God the Father to pray 'Come, Holy Spirit', that we may be effective witnesses to Jesus Christ'. We are eager to be part of this. More details nearer the time.

Rev'd Rachel Wigram - January 2017



## SAINTS ON THE MOVE

### Christmas & Beyond!

As we look back on 2016, we are so thankful to God for all he has been doing in our lives as individuals and as a church, and for the signs of his transforming love reaching into our town.

Thank you for taking courage with us in responding to God's word to '**Stretch out your hand**' and becoming *Saints on the Move*. September was particularly significant as we reached out for healing and freedom, culminating in the Service of Reconciliation which brought spiritual freedom from the past for us as a whole church. This led to the declaration that 'We're no longer a church of fear, we are a church of God!' The first weekend in October was a real highlight as many of us came together for our Church Day Away on the Saturday and then our big Harvest Thanksgiving and Freedom Celebration on the Sunday.

This Christmas we have been beginning to see some of the fruit of the process God has been leading us through. We thought you might enjoy reading some highlights and seeing some photos inside this leaflet. Then you can find a few things for your diary on the back page.

Now we invite you to journey on together with us as *Saints on the Move* through 2017 as we focus more and more on '**stretching out our hand to be a people of blessing**' in our town and communities.

# CHRISTMAS EVENTS

## Welcoming In



There have been a huge number of opportunities to show generous hospitality to hundreds of people of all ages and to share the love of God with them.



*Praise God for all the ways he has been at work - seen and unseen, and thank you to all of you for your love, faith, time and energy!*

## Christmas Lights Switch on

Building on enthusiasm from the Day Away, a large team put on a wonderful variety of craft activities, games, refreshments and prayer opportunities for families. Hundreds of people came and it was very encouraging, leading many of us to be thinking positively about what we could do next to engage with families and children.



## Civic & Town Services

With the Ripley Town Civic Service and then the Amber Valley Carol Service, we welcomed and blessed many people who have a role in the life of this area. Lunch-break Carols forged stronger links with Ellis-Fermor & Negus and other local businesses and townspeople.



## Many Other Events & Services

Infants, Juniors and Secondary Schools, Amber Gold Carol Service, Brownies' Carols, Mothers' Union Vigil, Squeals' Christmas Party, Open Door Christmas Lunch, Carols by Candlelight, Crib Service, Midnight Service. Alleluia!



## Reaching Out



## Oxford Street Carols

This was our 'one new thing before Christmas' from the Day Away and was a great thing to do - good contacts with people through singing, conversation, invitation

and prayer, lots of fun and a positive spiritual impact. It was also a real blessing to unite with people from other churches in Ripley.

## Salvation Army Food & Gifts

We contributed towards, and a number of us helped pack, the Salvation Army's Christmas Food and Toys Bags. These were then distributed to those in need in our community identified by Social Services and other organisations.



## Carols in the Red Lion

An unexpected 'second new thing before Christmas' by invitation from the manager! Joyful atmosphere and some good connections resulting in a number of people coming to Christmas services.



## Lunchbreak Carols Invites

A small team went into local businesses with invitations to Lunchbreak Carols. They were well received and had some good conversations and opportunities to offer prayer. Something to be built on in the future.



*'Yea, Lord, we greet thee!'*  
**Christmas Day!**

