



Good News Stories

Stepping out in Freshwater – Isle of Wight



BY MIKE
HACKLETON

‘From the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you’: Stepping into a Second Decade in Freshwater

20 September 2014, saw the doors of our newly built Freshwater Methodist Church open as we welcomed members, others from the surrounding area and across the Island Circuit as well as the Southampton District. It had been a long and, at times, difficult journey, but God is good, carrying and leading us forward.

A HEARTBEAT IN THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE

There has been a Methodist Church in Freshwater since 1824, but the old Wesley Hall erected in the 1950s needed to be replaced. The congregation was worshipping in Totland, but after a challenging quinquennial report, a wise decision was taken to sell the eroding building and focus on developing the central strategic site in Freshwater.

During our three years of homelessness, we were invited by

our Anglican friends to use their Rectory Chapel, a beautiful late 1800s building adjoining the Parish Hall for our Sunday services. We were so grateful for this sanctuary, full of God’s presence and peace, where we could worship together as a strong fellowship.

Ten years on, we thank God for his guidance, wisdom, encouragement and for the amazing ways he has, and is still, blessing us daily together with the help of all our local ecumenical partners and for the support of the local community. As the Local Lay Pastor for FMC (Freshwater Methodist Church), my role involves pastoral work, recognising, supporting, encouraging and developing the gifts and skills of lay people, while responding to local needs and working wherever possible ecumenically.

FMC is a modern building, used every day, open to all, warm and welcoming. We are a growing, prayerful, Bible based church, passionate about living out and sharing the gospel, working intergenerationally, serving and encouraging people to grow in faith, offering support and standing alongside those who are finding life tough, while always trying to be good stewards of God’s creation.

It is a privilege to host the West Wight Food Bank, pop into the busy Parent and Toddlers’ Groups, Messy Church or Holiday Club sessions, facilitate Blokes, Banter and Bacon Butties, work in the Church Office while being serenaded by the Dementia Friendly Choir or West Winds Band, Ukelele group and Music Playhouse!

It is also a privilege to be part of the Open the Book Team at the three local primary schools and engage in gentle exercises and parachute games with the Holiday at Home for Seniors. I am blessed having a wonderful, dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers who give selflessly to the life and mission of FMC.

Travelling on into our second decade, fully relying on God’s guidance, confident in that our Lord will lead us, we are reminded in Isaiah 41:10:

*‘Do not be afraid, for I am with you,
Do not be dismayed for I am your
God,
I will strengthen you and help you
I will uphold you with my righteous
right hand.’*

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