

LINK

supporting the workplace, caring for people

Welcome to the July edition of 'LINK'. The summer holidays are almost upon us with all the promise of rest, relaxation and re-charging of batteries. Whether yours is a vacation or a 'staycation' I hope the sun shines on you! Alongside holidays, summer is often a time to start planning for new things—perhaps you might consider CIGB chaplaincy training course ... details below

God has surprised me yet again!

Peggy Baker writes of her new experience of becoming a retail chaplain after participating in CIGB's Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy course.

Until March 2011 I'd not heard of retail chaplaincy, which is well established in Solihull, Kings Heath and Birmingham city centre. After a meeting at St Stephen's, Rednal, I took a five week Churches and Industry Group Birmingham course last autumn to explore workplace chaplaincy, possibly to become involved in Longbridge town centre, currently under construction.

Those on the course had a wide variety of life experiences. Some people were ordained; some were already active as chaplains to the NHS, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham Airport, Fire Service and to city centre retail staff. It was good meeting Christians from different denominations.

Workplace chaplaincy aims to provide an impartial Christian presence, building relationships with all levels of staff. Listening is far more important than speaking; people need to know that anything discussed will not be disclosed to anyone else.

More meetings followed, at Church House, Harborne, and with Birmingham city centre Retail Chaplaincy Team Leader, Elaine. I was invited to shadow Elaine and another chaplain in different locations. They were amazing experiences, as retail staff in small shops were so pleased to see her, and one person spoke appreciatively of help she had received.

Before the second shadowing occasion, Elaine discussed the possibility of my taking over the chaplaincy of that particular area, as the present

chaplain was due to leave Birmingham quite soon. I felt this was something I should try, and was introduced to shop staff whilst shadowing this chaplain on her last day. In mid-April our supportive minister, Revd Stephen Harris, arranged for me to be prayed for during morning service, and other members encouraged me over the Bring and Share Lunch.

The big day of my solo visiting arrived. After putting on my badge near the shops I was to visit, a Big Issue seller greeted me with a smile and said "God bless you, miss." What an antidote to the butterflies! I went into all the shops previously visited. The staff remembered me and were welcoming.

My first solo chaplaincy experience was very humbling, and made me so thankful for all the blessings my family and I have, especially after listening to people who had experienced great difficulties earlier in their lives, but who now relied on God's help. The following week I managed to greet retail staff by name, and we chatted about work, interests and hobbies. I became aware of some more very needy people and offered to pray for them.

Please keep praying for everyone involved in chaplaincy, their contacts and opportunities to share God's love.



An opportunity to share God's love

**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

Consider the following: We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others. *Dalai Lama*

Chaplaincy training course

If Peggy's article has interested, challenged or encouraged you, you may like to consider taking part in the next CIGB training course ...



**Introduction to
Workplace Chaplaincy**

Why is work important?

Pastoral issues in a work context.

Talking ethics.

How does chaplaincy work in practice?

The chaplaincy training course will take place in the Autumn on five consecutive Thursday afternoons at 15 Colmore Row B3 2BH. Sessions will run from 2pm until 4 pm starting on September 13th and ending on October 11th. The course is for anyone interested in workplace chaplaincy for themselves or as they develop the ministry of others.

For more information please email cigbadmin@birmingham.anglican.org before 19th July or stephen.willey@necgroup.co.uk after 19th July

Participants are invited to make a donation of £10 towards costs. Those booking a place but not attending will be invoiced for £10.



Farewell

The Venerable Hayward Osborne, Chair of CIGB, writes:

After seven years of spearheading the work of CIGB, Barbara Hayes stepped down from this role on May 31.

In her time as Team Leader she has extended the network of workplace chaplains throughout Birmingham and Solihull, and ensured that the Christian voice is heard and spiritual values upheld in discussion and debate about economic issues. She has overseen the ecumenical work of signposting resources and advice to people who have become unemployed. Alongside others she has worked to heighten the awareness of local congregations regarding the world of work, and organised the training of chaplaincy volunteers.

Barbara's understanding of the economic scene and its impact on businesses and employees has been remarkable. Many of us have benefited from her shrewd appreciation of how different issues connected and affected one another. While with us she promoted reports on issues such as the nature of work, human trafficking, and new industry possibilities for the Midlands, and alongside the Bishop of Birmingham has facilitated discussions with senior personnel in the banking sector.

Barbara was warmly thanked at the CIGB AGM in May. We wish her well in her retirement, and are grateful that until a successor is appointed she is continuing to give us one day a week for chaplaincy with City Council employees, and to complete a few other projects.



DON'T FORGET ...

Send us your news, your stories, your pictures, your quotable quotes and your jokes and stay in touch:

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LAST WORD

Don't knock the weather; nine out of ten people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while!