

## Dates for your diary

### Friends of the West London Mission Annual Service at Hinde St Church, London W1U

Sunday 23rd October 2011  
11.00am Worship

**Preacher: Revd James Tebbutt**

*James attended Hinde Street between 1986-1999, before training for the Methodist Ministry and holding appointments in Kent, London and Sheffield. He is presently studying in Manchester*

following the service there will be a buffet lunch

2pm Rachel Lampard will be introducing the Conference Report from the Public Issues Team on the Big Society.

All welcome

### Christmas Services at Hinde Street Church

**18th December**  
6.30pm Carol Service

**24th December**  
11.30pm  
Christmas Eve Communion

**25th December**  
10.30am  
Christmas Day Service

**31st December**  
New Year's Eve  
11pm-12midnight Watchnight Service

### The Annual Soper Sermon at Hinde Street Church

**Sunday 29th January, 2012**  
11.00 am Worship

**Preacher: Chris Roles**

*Chief Executive of Y Care International  
and long term member and friend  
to many at Hinde Street*

*following the service there  
is church lunch*

All welcome

## NEWSLETTER

October, 2011

of the

## FRIENDS OF THE WEST LONDON MISSION

*Superintendent Minister: Revd. Sue Keegan von Allmen*

Dear friends,

In December 2010 and June 2011, WLM staff and the Social Work Committee, gathered for staff conferences at Hinde Street Church. The first focused on transformation and was followed up as "Transforming Social Work" in the Annual Report. The second was entitled "*That Was Then and This Is Now.*" We heard updates on the new developments from Ronnie Stockton, and Zoe from Big House, Jackie from KPH, Anastasiya from Highbury Counselling Centre, Jono from the West London Day Centre and Diane from the Haven shared something of their work, their journey into social work or the WLM, and the people who inspired them to continue. One of the most successful sessions was Alan Brook's history of the WLM. The staff were surprised how familiar the work sounded and how many of the issues that arise in their daily work were present in the past. These are some of things that people said about the day:

*"Inspiration and motivation - A great energy of excitement for future developments - Great appreciation of the history of the Mission and the breadth and value of our work and hopefulness for growth and success in the future - A*



WLM Staff Conference at Hinde St Church, June 2011

West London  
Mission



Transforming lives  
since 1887

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*more solid sense of connection to the Mission and its projects (and congregation) - I am proud of feeling part of WLM - The history of WLM - To remember where we come from as individuals - The inspirational stories shared today - Meeting people and not just talking on the phone!!! - I learned much more about WLM as a whole and not just where I work"*

My sense of the day is best captured in the phrase "a cloud of witnesses" used by the writer to the letter of the Hebrews, and even "though this would not have been an obvious choice for many of those present, recent developments have made it easier to speak about the faith which energises and inspires us. For a number of reasons, the social work environment has not been an easy one in which to talk about faith commitments in recent years, and even though several housing and homeless charities began life as part of churches, many have lost touch with their roots. We in the West London Mission haven't been immune to these controversies, but one of the things we asked of Jon Kuhrt, when he was appointed as Executive Director of Social Work in July 2010 was to work towards the appointment of a chaplain to the social work services. Jon has embraced this part of our strategy wholeheartedly, and although we are not yet able to fulfil this dream, we are preparing for it so this was another aspect of June's Staff Conference.

The work had already begun. In the strategic plan for social work we said "We are committed to an inclusive Christian ethos and offer our services to all people regardless of their belief. We cherish the fact that WLM is a mixed community made up of people with a wide range of beliefs. All the staff and volunteers at the West London Mission respect the Christian ethos in which our work and values are rooted." At the conference we talked together about the ways that faith – and Christianity in particular – can impact positively and negatively on society, services and the individuals with whom we work. It is an important discussion for us to have, because as we continue to develop plans to employ a chaplain, we need to take the concerns and suspicions of staff members' seriously in order that his or her work can make an effective contribution to the lives of those with whom we work. The secular environment in which we live shapes the views of those who do not have an explicit faith quite profoundly and some of these are reinforced as staff listen to the experiences of the vulnerable people we work with. We know this isn't the whole story, so at the same time as listening to people's anxiety, we are speaking confidently about how the faith our work expresses also contributes to the transformation of individuals and society in positive ways. So the session began with Tom McDonald from the West London Day Centre speaking about his work with homeless people



Tom McDonald

as an aspect of his discipleship. He was inspiring, and his personal experience and practice, allayed many fears. Tom will also speak at the Friends of the WLM Service on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2011 so come and meet him then!

As well as this internal conversation, Jon Kuhrt has been working with the Christian Homeless Forum in association with Housing Justice and Faithworks, to create a Charter for Christian Homeless Agencies. Its aim is "to articulate the integration between excellence in terms of the support offered to homeless people and a confident practical expression of Christian spirituality." It is pulling together the discussions agencies and churches have been engaged in, but within, and with others, about how to integrate "authentic Christian faith with a high standard of support." We hope that this will answer some of the questions that funders and purchasers of Christian services have about the ways our faith affects the services we offer. This is an important piece of work, because for all the Government's emphasis on the role of churches and faith communities in the Big Society, there is still suspicion about our intentions and practices! The charter is still under discussion so if you wish to see a copy please ask.

As we draw closer to the cold weather, Kings Cross and Hinde Street Churches are making plans for sharing in the Cold Weather Shelters, in Westminster and Camden. These are significant undertakings, which will challenge the capacity of church members, so if you live close enough and would like to volunteer please contact us. Val Reid, my new colleague Hinde Street will coordinate the team at Hinde Street, and Paul Wayne our Deacon, does so at Kings Cross. One new development this year, is that after visiting the professional social work services, Kong Ching Hii the new minister for the Chinese congregations at Kings Cross, has challenged them to provide the volunteers for the night shelter in November. The Westminster Shelter involves cooperation between the West London Day Centre and this means that the WLM plays a significant role in the scheme!

Please ask if you'd like to receive a copy of our Annual Report and the charter. Contact us if you'd like to support the work of the Night Shelters. And pray for all of our work using the enclosed Prayer Diary.

With thanks for all your support and witness to our work

*Sue Keegan von Allmen*

Revd Sue Keegan von Allmen

