

# S.O.F.T.

## Sharing Our Faith Together Team

Supporting the East Solent and Downs Methodist Circuit

### Coming Soon...

Looking into three initiatives:

- First: we hope to invite a keynote speaker, with knowledge and experience in the field of evangelism, to come and share their wisdom with us. Such an event would be an unmissable opportunity and we would hope to attract a large number of people from all around the Circuit. Indeed it is probable that an invitation would be extended to neighbouring Circuits in the hope that others would join us and we might learn from one another as well.

We don't have a date for this event yet – although it's likely to be in **April**.

- Second: many of the churches in the Circuit hold coffee mornings, have Pastoral Centres or provide other facilities that mean that they interact with the public on a regular basis. Some may have people who are specifically tasked with the role of 'mingling' or being a listening ear, others many not; and even those that do may struggle to provide training for those who take on this important role.

The SOFT Team hopes to provide some workshops, taking place across the Circuit, to enable those involved with this kind of pastoral work to **grow in confidence** to spot appropriate opportunities to share their faith.

- Finally: a **summer workshop** is being planned along the same lines as those that took place in October and January – looking at festivals such as MHA Sunday, Father's Day, Action for Children Sunday and others.

These workshops are a brilliant chance to meet together, share ideas, and go away inspired. All are welcome!

# Watch this space!

# ***Spotlight on... The January Mission Day***

At the first SOFT Team workshop in October those attending were encouraged to think about using the festivals that occur in the autumn and winter months to share their faith with their local community. At the beginning of the January workshop we reflected on some of the things that have been happening, and it was exciting to discover how imaginative some of the Circuit churches had been in planning activities – particularly for Advent and Christingle.

We then moved on to focus on how we might make Christian festivals such as Mothering Sunday and Easter more appealing in a society that has largely lost sight of their original meaning. We were also reminded that other, more secular, festivals (for example Valentine's Day, Father's Day, Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night) may mirror the Christian values of light and love, commitment and sacrifice, thanksgiving and remembering, in a manner that is more familiar to those who do not attend church. This sense of familiarity may make it easier for them to 'come and see'.

**How might your church build an activity around one of these festivals? Is there anything the SOFT Team can do to help?**

We then spent time examining our individual 'front lines' – those places where we are in contact with non-Christian friends, colleagues and strangers – and how we might speak of God there and feel empowered to invite them to church events. Those who became nervous at the very idea (and that was most of us!) were reassured by Paul's words to the people of Corinth:

***'I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, but God gave growth'. (1 Corinthians 3: 6)***

It is up to us to offer the invitation. The rest is in God's hands. If a person says 'No' a seed may still be planted.

***Could you provide the next 'Spotlight on...' article?***

*It might be about a one-off event that's already happened or is about to happen. It might be about something your church does on a regular basis. Whatever the topic it would be great to hear from you so that we can share ideas and good news stories as widely as possible.*

*Please email Deacon Laura on [lauraevans@me.com](mailto:lauraevans@me.com) by **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March**.*

## **Remember :**

**The members of the SOFT Team are:**

Garry Bagshaw

Laura Evans

David Musket

Janet Baker

Jill Groom

Jean Plummer

Richard Baker

John Mills

Bob Temple

**We hope churches will contact us to request a session with members of the SOFT Team.**

**There is FUNDING AVAILABLE to assist with evangelism/outreach projects. Contact Richard Baker for more details.**