

# Greater London Presence & Engagement Network



Equipping the Church for mission and Ministry in Multi Faith Contexts

News from the Network November 2009

## Exploring Areas of Christian Discipleship

**PEN** has been on the road this Autumn with a series of seminars looking at different aspects of Christian Discipleship. We managed to reach three out of our four sponsoring Dioceses with the choice of venues and all four were represented in the speakers and participants.

Working for Social Justice was the first of our five headings to be tackled at, the home of Just Share, St Mary-le-Bone, Cheapside. Revd Angus Ritchie, Director of the Contextual Theology Centre, gave some theology pointers as to why Working for Social Justice is a key Christian activity.

We heard from Jayde Bradley about some of Christian Aid's recent campaigns working across faith boundaries globally and locally.



Ghazal Tipu and Revd Adam Atkinson dialogued about their work for Citizen Organising in Shadwell and we heard about Springfield Community Flat, a parish project in Southwark Diocese from Revd Sue Peake. There was also time to learn about resources available. Fr Sean Connolly shared his perspective as a leader on the "Living with other faiths" course (which is downloadable from the **PEN** website [www.londonpen.org](http://www.londonpen.org)) and Kailean Khongsai, Faith-based Communities Officer enthused about the work of A Rocha.

We ventured to Tooting (Southwark Diocese) to consider Caring for One Another. It was another small but lively gathering. Contributions ranged from stories of parish ministry and community projects in Stepney, through chaplaincy in mental health contexts, to the ministry of friendship. Revd Peter McGeary gave the theological backdrop on this occasion. The group were generous in sharing personal stories which illustrate how God moves us in our thinking over time. Indeed the morning underlined how engagement takes time and is built on friendships and trust which cannot be created instantly to fit political expediency.

Sharing Our Faith proved the biggest crowd draw to date. Emmanuel Forest Gate, the home of the 'Faithful Friends' project gave a warm welcome. Revd Mark Poulson who ministers in Southall and is on the national Presence and Engagement task group gave a lively theological introduction based on the vision in Revelation 7:9. The Christian Muslim Forum, represented by Director Julian Bond and Peace Worker, Daniel Edge, spoke to the forum's Ethical Guidelines for Christian and Muslim Witness in Britain. Revd John Root, St James's Alperton, offered six qualities for churches in multi cultural parishes; conviction, prayer, zest, self scrutiny, understanding and initiative. We hope to have John's guidelines for starting ethno-linguistics congregations on the website soon.

The session on Learning and Growing has been postponed until early 2010 but there is still chance to take part in the last of the seminars on **Saturday 14th November**. See over the page for details.

## Up and Coming .....

### Saturday 14th November Praying and Worshipping

London Inter Faith Centre,  
125 Salusbury Road,  
London NW6 6RG  
10.00am until 1.00pm  
(coffee from 9.30am)

The last in the series of Autumn seminars. In addition to hearing the story of the centre itself, Helen Sanderson of Quiet room Designs will talk about creating shared space for mediation and prayer in work places. Reflections on services for civic occasions will come from Chelmsford Southwark and Rochester. Revd Dr Anders Bergquist will offer the theological backdrop.

### Putting the faith into fundraising

A series of four, free, evening seminars specifically aimed at the faith sector run by Midas Charity Appeals, and Enlighten Next at The Window, 13 Windsor Street Islington N1 8QG 7.30—8.45 pm

### Making applications to charitable trusts and foundations

#### Thursday 12th November

This session will examine how best faith groups can make successful applications to trusts and foundations even though many of the larger grant-making trusts cite religion or promoting a particular faith amongst their list of exclusions. There will be a brief look at the structure of these trusts, where to find out about them, and how best to approach them. For more information please contact [martishaw@midasappeals.org.uk](mailto:martishaw@midasappeals.org.uk) or download the booking form at <http://www.midasappeals.org.uk/bookingfaith.htm> or phone 020 3271 0036 The other three sessions will follow in 2010.

**Put these dates in your diary.**

## A busy week .....The 15th—21st November 2009 is Inter Faith Week

The Week is being facilitated by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the Department for Communities and Local Government but will be community-led, with local people and groups of different backgrounds holding their own events and to highlight work going on to promote understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs. Details are at [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)

However, it is also Prisons Week 2009. Prisons week was established on an ecumenical basis in 1975 to pray for and raise awareness of the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prison staff and all who care. This theme this year is "Hold Fast to Hope" based on Hebrews 10.23. Information and prayer and story resources are available at [www.prisonsworld.org](http://www.prisonsworld.org)

Prisons in urban centres have a diversity of faiths represented amongst prisoners and staff. The legal requirement placed on prisons is to provide a minimum of one hour's worship appropriate to a prisoner's faith each week. Chaplaincy work is principally about providing pastoral care to those of all faiths and none to prisoners and staff alike. Chaplains seek to model the moral code of their own faith and explore themes of transformation and restorative justice found within their scriptures. (However, the needs of prison life are often very immediate and acute.) Christian chaplains provide a confident witness to the gospel and seek to engage local churches with the care and resettlement of offenders. (There is a very recently formed Muslim Chaplains Association [www.mca-hmps.co.uk](http://www.mca-hmps.co.uk).) Whilst recognising that not all prisoners will change, the use of the sycamore tree programme, which uses the story of Zacchaeus, is gaining in popularity [www.prisonfellowship.org.uk/sycamore-tree.html](http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk/sycamore-tree.html). Please pray for the Prison Service during Prisons Week.

If you are not busy with your own local events in Inter Faith Week you might like to follow the **Sea of Stories** around a variety of places of worship in London. For details see the St Ethelburga's website [www.stethelburgas.org](http://www.stethelburgas.org)

So the Autumn programme has come and nearly gone. Reviewing the series the main disappointment has been the lack of take up. Clearly we need to do something about publicity. Saturday mornings were chosen as a time when those in paid employment; SSMs, Readers, Pastoral Auxiliaries and other lay people could be available. However, it seems word is not getting out broadly enough. PEN is a network so if you are a stipendiary clergy person reading this can I please encourage you to pass it on to others in your ministerial team and congregation. When the resource CDs hit the parishes (once post is restored after Christmas!) they need sharing. I recognise that our five headings are rather broad and perhaps folk just weren't sure what they were coming to. It is entirely possible that many people have yet to learn what Presence & Engagement is all about. I am happy to speak to Deanery or other groups.

We have introduced a blog to the website. Not as yet for discussion forums but to as quick change notice board.

If the session on Learning and Growing is to be better attended in 2010 it would help to know what are the issues about growing a confident Christian identity that you would like to explore. Christianity is a way of life, it is something taken in to the work place. How can churches support individuals Monday through Saturday as they engage with colleagues or clients of other faiths and none?

Thanks to all who have hosted, publicised, contributed to and attended this year's events and wishing you blessings for the forthcoming seasons of preparation and festival.

**Susanne Mitchell**

## Greater London Presence & Engagement Network (PEN)

A project of the Contextual Theology Centre for the Anglican Dioceses of Chelmsford, London, Rochester & Southwark  
The Royal Foundation of St Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, London E14 8DS

Telephone: 020 7780 1600 Email: [pen@theology-centre.org](mailto:pen@theology-centre.org) Website: [www.londonpen.org](http://www.londonpen.org)