

OTLEY PRAYER NETWORK STORY – FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FUTURE

SELECTIONS FROM NOTES FROM THE EARLY DAYS

June 2015: Praying for the streets of Otley – an invitation to continue

[Selected and clipped notes from a meeting following the Easter – Pentecost praying for Otley streets and neighbourhoods when the Chevin Cross was up for those 7 weeks and about 100 people registered by invitation of OPC Rev Graham Buttanshaw.]

Here is a report of this meeting:

We felt we began to see Otley in a different way - through God's eyes, perhaps, not our own; a town with such amazing variety. Walking some of the streets highlighted that there are big variations in people's means, lifestyles and needs - an awareness that there are significant parts of the town untouched presently by the church, but not unknown to God. There was a sense that this season of prayer has seen the beginning of the growing presence of the Spirit of Christ in the 'atmosphere' of Otley - a new beginning with a need to take a long term view.

So, it was agreed that we should keep praying:

That people who prayed continue to do so for the sphere of Otley they 'took on'. That we pray for and encourage others to participate. For this we recognised the importance of 'Churches Together in Otley' (CTO) as a vehicle which can promote prayer by Christians in Otley, but also engage with town institutions to let them know we are praying. We agreed we need to challenge ourselves / each other to evaluate our priorities in making praying for the town high on the agenda.

As part of this to encourage 'gateway people' in our church communities (leaders and those who 'control' what is communicated to congregations) to adopt prayer for the town as part of future vision. Response is encouraged - an invitation, to PRAY FOR OTLEY.

Should you wish to be directly in touch, please make initial contact to -
Rev Graham Buttanshaw

John Simkins (I took interest in facilitating this having had experience of prayer networking in Devon [Pray4Exeter])

July 6th 2016: Prayer for Otley proposal made at Churches Together in Otley Committee

John Simkins proposals to this group are:

Try and get a steering group running built on already interested people from the Parish Church and some others that have expressed interest.

An encouragement that Otley Church Leaders group talk about prayer for the town.

August 18th 2016: Otley Prayer Networking Meeting

Suggested ongoing themes:

Identifying praying people in Otley / Encouraging prayerfulness in Otley / Prayer-taking [prayer and care taken out and about into the Town] / Prayer cards – 'Pray on Fridays' and other cards to pray for where we live / work / network / Prayer breakfasts – promote and encourage./ Special prayer seasons at Advent? Easter? Pentecost? / Otley Prayer Days / Prayer and Mission

SINCE THEN:

The name Otley Prayer Network was adopted and regarded informally as a subgroup of Churches Together whilst always recognising the active involvement of those who may belong to a church outside Otley or a church not directly part of Churches Together. The latest CTO mission statement contains these values.

Those who have chosen to get mailings may be actively involved or wish only to be informed. I took on facilitating monthly Prayer Breakfasts after the sad loss of Peter Wilkinson.

Various events and joint ventures have emerged – for example annual 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

It needs to be acknowledged that, for example, Prayer Breakfasts have faithfully continued for decades and who knows (God knows) where (?) and by whom (?) prayer has blessed Otley – we build on that?

SO, WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

JAN 2024 NOTES BY JOHN SIMKINS FOR CTO DISCUSSION RE THE WAY FORWARD