



DEANERY & CIRCUIT



SERVICE SUNDAY 23rd OCTOBER



Sunday 23rd October saw St Faiths host the first ever joint service between the North Hertfordshire Methodist Circuit and the Hitchin Deanery. The Bishop of Hertford, Paul Bayes, the Superintendent Minister of the North Hertfordshire Circuit Andrew Maguire, and the Chair of Churches together in Hitchin Andrew Henton Pusey were our special guests.

The church was full of visitors from different churches in the area and the theme of the service was a Songs of Praise. Popular and rousing music from both Methodist and Anglican tradition were sung and this proved to be very successful with everyone joining in most heartily with wonderful singing.

The St Faiths Choir sang the anthem 'Blessed be the God and Father' by Samuel Sebastian Wesley, with solo parts being sung by Chrissy Russell and Rose Norris. The choice of this anthem was much appreciated by all and many in the congregation, including Bishop Paul were able to reminisce of times that they had spent in choirs in earlier years. The choir and soloists sang exceptionally well and in his address Bishop Paul complemented them very favourably. Many other comments were received about their singing after the service and this was reiterated by Andres Maguire later in the service.

In his address Bishop Paul talked about his early days as a priest and gave a graphic example when he stayed overnight in the house of another priest in Scotland. This was a place that was open to all to stay, but there was only one large room to sleep in which was shared by everyone, this included passing travellers of the road. Apparently everything was shared with each other, food of course and company but also some of the more unpleasant things that live on people who walk the streets were shared! The experience certainly seems to have made an impression on the Bishop though and he went on to talk about the Anglican and Methodist churches working together in faith.

Andrew Maguire led the prayers but also gave a short address. His main purpose was to welcome Charmaine as the first joint Anglican and Methodist Minister in the area. The system of clergy appointment in both denominations is quite different and this formal welcome marked the end of that process. Andrew and Bishop Paul had both made special mention of the Ecumenical partnership approach that has been the St Faith's way for over 30 years. This joint minister approach is the latest development in that process.

The service ended with that rousing hymn 'O for a Thousand Tongues' and afterwards refreshments made by the Fellowship Committee were served by younger members of the church in the now traditional St Faiths way, the food being brought to the guests so that they can chat and mingle together in fellowship. All in all a very successful day for St Faiths Church and thanks to everyone who played a part and worked so hard to make it all happen .

