

***Church
Development
Project Update
December 2008***



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It has been a while since there has been a more formal update about the Church Development project. So I write this on behalf of the project team and church leadership to keep you informed of the progress made since the summer and the decisions and actions that are imminently before us.

Although it may appear there has not been a lot going on, as in the time leading up to applying for and receiving planning permission, work behind the scenes has been steadily happening to move the project forward. The plans have been progressing quietly in the background, but so too has there been a seed change in our activities. People have been coming forward to organise events for the project, notably the Everything Handmade Sale and the Music Concert. These events have involved the church family and local community coming together and have been vibrant and well supported. The opportunities to build relationship between church members or between church and our local community have excited people and had their own motivating effect for the project. That is good! The new hall premises will allow much greater interaction between the church and community and is very much part of our vision. What better way of expressing it than in our strap line statement 'experiencing and expressing the presence and love of God at the heart of the community.'

So, exactly where are we with the project? Do please read on to find out about the funds raised to date; the development of the plans and the future project milestones; progress with the business plan, community leaflet and applications to grant making trusts and importantly how you can continue to support the project.

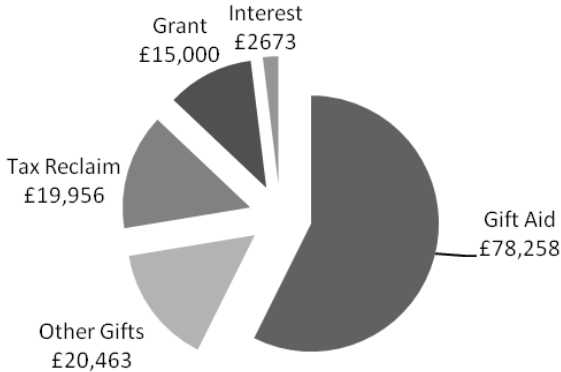
On behalf of the project team, thank you for your support and encouragement. May I take this opportunity to challenge you all to be as involved and supportive as possible. After all, there can be no more exciting and rewarding place to be than a part of what God is doing among us and through us at St John's.

Yours in His service

John Saxon

Finance

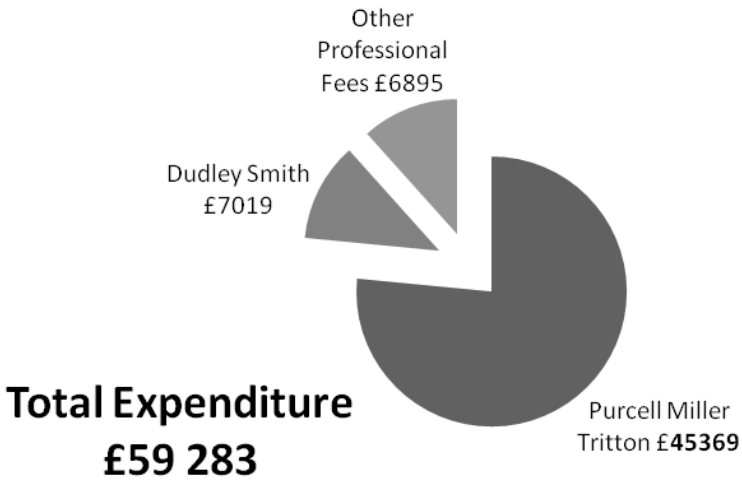
Income since Gift Day November 2007 £136 350



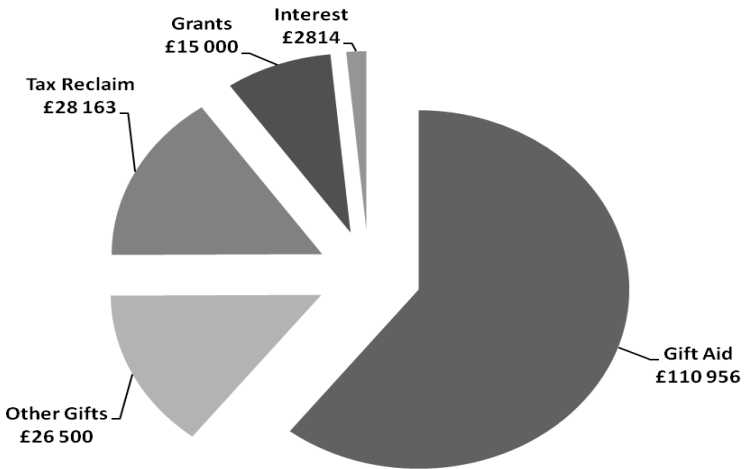
It has been a year since our first major gift day for the Church Project. We thank the Lord for the wonderful response last November that gave or promised £110,000 by the end of this year. Along with monies raised from various activities for the project, this has been surpassed and a staggering £136,000 has been given for the fund. This does include the £15,000 Essex County Council Grant but significantly nearly £20,000 in reclaimed tax through Gift Aid. Overall, there has been £183,434 given for the project with a total expenditure of £59,283, (correct at end of October 2008). Rounded figures have been used to produce pie charts to visually represent this. *Last minute news—we have just been awarded a further £9,950 from Essex County Council, PTL!*

Dudley Smith are our Quantity Surveyors and Purcell Miiler Tritton our architects. Other professional fees include such things as site surveys, ground testing for foundations and local authority planning fees.

To date, therefore, we have raised 15% of our overall 1.2 million pound target! Praise the Lord! This will be a real encouragement as we approach grant making trusts, and give confidence to construction firms to enter into a contract with us. We must not be complacent, though and look to another Gift Day in the spring, towards the end of March. We hope to engage yet more support from the community following distribution of an information leaflet in the New Year. However, it would take nearly another 10 years at our current rate of raising funds to get the complete costs of the project. So our business plan will consider raising a loan for a portion of the costs.



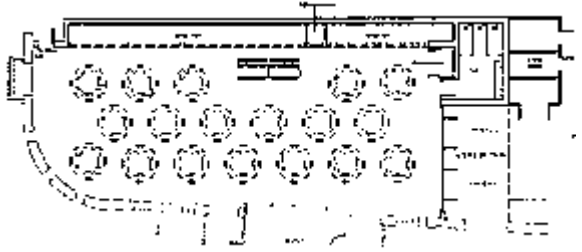
Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.



Total Income for Project **£183 434**

Plans

The architects are working up detailed design drawings in preparation to obtain competitive tenders from appropriate construction companies. This has included specifying construction and finishing materials, services to be made available in the



building, (eg plug sockets!) and *tweaking* internal features such as general storage or kitchen layout. This has involved meeting with particular people from the church family to ensure the best possible outcome is reached. Green issues have also influenced design decisions. Spending time at this stage will prevent problems further down the line and ensure tenders submitted to build the hall are as realistic as possible!

By the New Year, we should be in a position to get competitive quotes from builders. In the spring it will be conceivable that we will have negotiated a price and contract to start building in the summer of 2009! But to ensure we are all as informed as we can be, there is proposed to be an open meeting with the project team and architects where we can reflect on the progress made, give thanks for it and look to the future challenges before God. This will be in the context of a midweek come together early in the New Year. Watch this space for details and put

Business Plan

Work to draft a business plan should also be completed by the year end. Vital decisions will need to be made on how to finance the building phase of the project. Grant making trusts ask questions about the need for projects they support and details of how they can be financed and sustained into the future. A lot of work is therefore needed to bring information together to produce our business plan to illustrate how finance can be raised and how the new hall will be utilised and managed for use by the church and community.

As regards to finance waiting for all the monies to be realised through giving will mean a long delay and potentially wildly unpredictable costs due to inflation. Raising some capital through a loan, that can be paid through ongoing giving or by income generated through use of the new hall, may in the long run be more cost effective. All options need to be carefully considered and approved by the PCC and finally, included in the business plan.

This will be a vital document to give confidence to our builders to enter into a contract with us and also to provide a basis for our applications to grant making trusts. Supporting statements and evidence about the future hall's use will also need to be drafted. We are thankful that Steve Bennett and Keith Landen have agreed to help with this task. Please pray for the team in this endeavour.

Community leaflet

From the outset it has been recognised that community groups regularly use the hall and that this will continue to be a significant use of the new premises. Involving the community is vital and the success of recent activities to raise funds for the project has been encouraging. A final draft of a 'Connect' style leaflet to be distributed to every household in the Parish has now been produced. This has included general information about the plans and importantly about different ways to support the project. With the colder weather and darker nights upon us, this will be distributed early in 2009. It is envisaged the leaflet will be distributed by members of the church family directly to householders at the same time as asking a small questionnaire about the hall and its use. Can people remember the survey of St John's estate that led to Connect being published in the first place? It was a real opportunity to understand what the community perceived about the church. It is hoped a survey in this instance could engage the community with the project, gain some direct financial support but also yield information that would support our business plan about the need for and future use of the new building.

Your future support is needed for this, so please be prepared to rise to the challenge! Distributing a leaflet and surveying so many households is a huge undertaking. However, it should not become a drain on the resources of the church! It is hoped that many people will be involved so that the task can be accomplished quickly. With simple training to equip people to carry out the survey of just a few questions, we will go out in twos and call on our community households on a Saturday. Details of calling back if people are out are yet to be decided, but with many people involved, a mammoth task can be made manageable! If we had 50 couples from the church family willing to go out, they would have just less than 50 houses each to do! The job could be done on one Saturday morning!

Can you help distribute our 'Connect' style community leaflet?



Prayer

There is obviously a lot to do! Humanly speaking the task may seem impossible, but with God's intervention, *nothing is impossible!* Those who can remember the church building extension project may recall this was called Mission Impossible. But with God's gracious answer to prayer, the much smaller congregation were motivated to give sacrificially to cover the complete costs and still have some left to support a church building project in Moldova! The project is different this time: the community have and will be involved in project events and activities; they will also be invited to give directly too. But under-girding prayer is still a key element in releasing resources to fulfil the vision we believe God has set before us. So we encourage all to get on board with private and corporate prayer.

Remember in the New Year there is planned to be a further open meeting where representatives from the architects will explain some aspects of the detailed design. Options available to finance the project will also be shared.

Further times will be devoted to prayer for the project and of course, for the distribution of the community information leaflet and planned gift day. It is not too early to pray for these now so please rise to the challenge by falling on your knees!



Project Team

John Saxon (Chairman)
Andrew Tiffin (Design lead)
Clive Woodruff (Design Lead)
Nick Bell (Design Lead)
Bernard Johnson (Design Lead)
Ian Johnson (Finance and Events Co-ordinator)
Matt Rollings (Trust Applications)
Steve Bennett (Business Plan)
Keith Landen (Business Plan)
Bob Fuller (Vicar)