

WILLESDEN SDA

Community Newsletter

No. 1

First Edition

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Willesden Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Final Events of Bible Prophecy

England – Are You Ready?

1st – 8th July 2023, 7:00 – 8:30pm



Welcome to this edition of our newsletter

By Mario Phillip, Pastor at Willesden SDA church

The Willesden Seventh-day Adventist Church serves as a citadel of hope to its community. We don't just exist in a particular locality, we exist to make a difference in the lives of others. While we have a message of eternal significance to share, we do so by emphasising a macrocosmic holistic approach to all facets of human development, including, but not limited to, the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of humanity.

When you walk through our doors, we are committed to ensuring you leave different than you came in. There is something happening at Willesden that can either impact you, or that you can volunteer, get involved with and make a difference for the glory of God. We believe that your work with and for people is worth it even if only one life is transformed.

According to Isaiah 61:3 there is a world waiting for someone “to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”

At Willesden, we want to be that one, why not join us as together we make it happen.



Love in Action | Touching Lives Changing Communities

On Valentine's Day, 14 February 2023, Willesden Seventh-Day Adventist Church hosted a unique community outreach programme entitled *Love In Action – Touching Lives, Changing Communities, and the World*. With Love as the theme for the day, it was the perfect opportunity to express our affection for the local people while introducing our church's various programmes designed to help the Willesden Community.

Scores of visitors attended the afternoon exhibition where community exhibitors from different cultural backgrounds, religions and ages showcased the diverse expressions of God's love in practical terms that touch and change lives through the practical act of services and love in the community. Service users and volunteers, church leaders, council officials and other dignitaries were made very welcome by the church's Centre of Help and Hope (CHH) and Community Kitchen who ensured that all the attendees were looked after with care and professionalism. Each welcome visitor received a gift of love, a beautiful red rose and a booklet on God's love distributed by BUC Departmental Secretary, Shirley Harper, in addition to food and essential household items.

The event was supported by the British Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists (BUC), Pastor Sam Davies and Kofi Osei-Owusu from the Communication and Media team together with Sharon Platt- McDonald, BUC Director for Health, Women's Ministries, Adventist Community.

Our church's commitment to building partnership and gaining support from other local agencies had leaders from mental wellbeing organisations, campaigning organisations, counselling agencies and advisory services attending the event.



Since Pastor Mario Phillip arrived at Willesden Seventh-day Adventist Church from the island of Grenada, he has made working and building relationships within the community a priority. He said that as Christians, we owe it to others to reflect the love of Jesus. We also see the community as our family, and serving them brings us joy.

Willesden SDA Church now sees working with the community as part of its members' DNA, as it is God's will that the church cares for the needy in the community, feed the poor, and helps the most vulnerable amongst us. To better respond to these needs, our church has established a daily schedule:



- ◆ On Sundays, the **United Drop-in Centre** provides meals, showers and medical check-ups while **Community Kitchen** serves hot meals.
- ◆ On Mondays, the Community Kitchen provides hot meals.
- ◆ On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the **Centre of Help and Hope** manages the food and clothing bank, run entirely by volunteers, opens its doors to no fewer than three hundred registered service users. CHH is supplied twice a week by food distribution charities such as Felix Project, and City Harvest. CHH also receives groceries from various supermarkets like Tesco and Marks and Spencer, and financial donations by church members and other supporters.
- ◆ On Wednesdays, the education and empowerment arm of CHH gets into action with Steps Up Empowerment and Skills training in collaboration with the **Soup Kitchen**.
- ◆ Thursday is the second day of food and clothing distribution but it has been temporarily postponed to Friday for logistical reasons.
- ◆ The soup kitchen is open on Fridays and reopens on Sundays.

Our next edition will explore other services delivered by our church.

WILLEDEN SDA CHURCH MOURNS the passing of sister Penelope Thompson

Scores of family members, church members, colleagues and people from the community gathered at Willesden SDA Church on Monday June 12th. As the body of Sister Penny Thompson was laid to rest, many tributes of appreciation were poured out. The passing of Sister Thompson came as a shock to everyone, as she was much loved not only by church members but equally by the community. She was remembered for her grace, her high-quality management practices, her friendliness and liveliness, as well as her diary full of commitments that made it difficult for anyone to keep up with her.



Sister Penny held several offices in the church over the years, and at the time of her passing she was the leader of Personnel Ministries department, a member of the Church Board and the Golden Age Club.

Sister Penny remained a dedicated member of Community Services where she devoted much time and energy to the senior citizens, running the Golden Age Club with real devotion and compassion.

Members of the church including CHH, the Golden Age Club and the community lined up to pay tribute to the one affectionately nicknamed sister Penny.

"I am so glad that I had the opportunity to know and work with such a delightful and spiritually gifted individual such as sister Penny. R.I.P." Dennis

"I can't believe that I am writing a tribute to one of my most precious sisters, sister Penelope (Penny) whom I loved and appreciated. She was very supportive, caring and loving. In all our conversations she would always mention being there for others. Her thoughts were always on how to help others. Sister Penny's life was truly a blessing and the caring and professional work she did will always be remembered by all." Juliet

"Sister Penny will surely be missed by all. However, her shared knowledge, wisdom and humour will live on, she was truly a remarkable individual." B J



fostering LOCAL partnership



As long as Willesden SDA Church remains on its current site, it will continue to reach out. Recognising that the work is far beyond what any one church can manage, our church has partnered with a number of agencies in the local community to carry out its activities for the benefit of the multicultural make-up of the community it serves.

Through the work undertaken by CHH, the community arm of the church, Brent Council has provided funding and technical support for its various initiatives, in addition to clinical professionals and links with local GPs for service users. Brent Health Matters provides mental health advice. The Brent Volunteer Sector provides funding and training for a range of initiatives, while Catalyst Housing provides resource and office support where needed.

The Learie Constantine centre, which is currently being rebuilt, has proved useful on all fronts and it is hoped that the partnership can be extended once the centre is reopened.

Brent's multi-faith forum has provided an excellent platform for collaboration with other religious communities, while Brahma Kumari and Hindu temples have provided food and other supplies, particularly during natural disasters, as has Conway, which has provided human resources during natural disasters in St Vincent, Haiti and the recent disasters in Syria and Turkey.

Volunteers, who number around fifty people working under the various initiatives, are often drastically increased.

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Between March and June 2023, CHH has given aid to over

**1,598 people,
that is, on average,**



**CHH has no less than 15
enthusiastic
volunteers**



399.50 individuals per



months and has handled



2,249 crates of foods.

Blessing Ceremony for A New Kitchen

Willesden SDA's Community Services Department celebrated the opening of its newly refurbished community kitchen on Sunday 18th June at a blessing ceremony attended by the Mayor of Brent, Orleen Hylton, the President of the South of England Conference, Pastor Emmanuel Osei, and other dignitaries.

Pastor Osei spoke of the importance of working closely with the local community and commended the members of the Willesden church for responding to the conference's call to "Make disciples, Build communities", which is clearly reflected in the many community initiatives undertaken by the church since the arrival of Pastor Mario Phillip. In her speech, the Mayor, Orleen Hylton, congratulated the church leaders on their wonderful work and commitment to helping the local community, and then pledged Brent City Council's continued commitment to the partnership.

The council has been instrumental in supporting a number of initiatives undertaken by the church's community services department, including funding the refurbishment of the kitchen

and the purchase of a small van which will be used to deliver food to the needy in the community as it looks to expand its feeding programme to reach more people in the local area from next month.

During the ceremony awards were presented to current and past managers of the CHH including the first manager, Sister Elsie Staple, the current manager Bee Jackson who was CHH manager before, the assistant manager Brother Murray as well as the former manager Sister Norma Whyte.

Guest and members were invited to the cutting of the ribbon to mark the official reopening of the new kitchen. Desmond Taylor was commended for his hard work and dedication in supervising the installation of the kitchen, as was the present head of Community services Rohan Burton. The van was not available for viewing in time for the opening ceremony but Pastor Mario Phillip assured those present that it would be delivered during the coming week, and

indeed it was received within a few days of the ceremony.

