

Dedication Ceremony of The Church of God, Long Lane, Halesowen, England

The evening of Saturday 29th May 2010 saw the official opening of the new church building of the Church of God at Long Lane. This is the first church building to have been purchased by The Church of God in England since the re-organisation. We are thankful to God for his almighty hand in the acquisition of the new building.

Members, visitors and friends joined with ministers from the surrounding churches in the area, our dear friends from St Christopher's Church in Northfield (our previous rented accommodation) and a number of dignitaries from the new area to help us celebrate the dedication of our new church building.

Our pastor and National Overseer Brother Philip C. Bennett opened the ceremony and welcomed the congregation. The evening proceeded with songs of reverence to God and thanksgiving including '*We are Standing on Holy Ground*' and '*How Great Thou Art*'. Sister Claudine Brown, our national VLB Co-ordinator shared a scripture reading from 2 Chronicles 7 verses 11 – 16.

For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

Members of the Church at Long Lane blessed the congregation with a rendition of the song '*The Church's One Foundation*' prior to an address by Mr I Williams from the former congregation that owned the building. Mr Williams gave an informative history of the United Reformed Church that was built 100 years ago providing a church home to the then 64 members. God faithfully answered the prayers of a local lady who had prayed earnestly for a church to be established in the area. Who would have known that this would 100 years later become the premises for worship and thanksgiving of the great Church of God in England!

Pastor Beverley Anderson of the Handsworth Church sang the song '*Because he lives*' and this was followed by an address from Reverend Richard Tebbs from St Christopher's Church in Northfield. Reverend Tebbs referred to good times shared during our time in Northfield and told of how the members had blessed him through their singing in thanksgiving to God. He talked of the "more mature voices" and was surely blessed one more time when Sister Wilhelmina Brown gave a moving rendition of the song '*I'm still here*'. Thanks be to God that we can *all* proclaim this wonderful truth. It is God and God alone that is keeping each and every one of us.

The Druids Heath Church sang the song '*I'll say "yes Lord, yes"*' and were joined by additional singers from the Churches in the England to form the National Choir, blessing the congregation with the songs '*A blessing from the Lord is here*' and '*Total Praise*'.

The Deputy Mayor Elect for the borough of Dudley addressed the congregation to welcome The Church to the area. He began with a brief history of The Church which he had gleaned from the internet – later elaborated on by Sister Angela Clarke. We heard of how The Church had met at Frogmill school, moving on to meetings in the homes of Church members, then on to various venues throughout Rubery and Frankly, a church building on the Bristol Road and now our Church Home in Long Lane, Halesowen. *‘He has done great things, bless his holy name’*.

The sermon was delivered by Pastor Francis Prince of the Druids Heath Church who read from 2 Chronicles 5 and exhorted on the blessing of the temple. As the people gave thanks to God for his wonderful blessings his glory came down in the place.

It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.
2 Chronicles 5 v 13 – 14

The evening concluded with an Act of Dedication by the National Overseer and a prayer of dedication by the Ministers followed by a time of wonderful fellowship together in the annex building.

Jenetta Hurst – Reporter



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