

BEDFORD STREET ANGELS

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Chair of the Management Group

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Dear friends,

Greetings in the name of the Lord! As Chair of the Bedford Street Angels Management Group, I am writing to encourage you to share afresh in the vision and work being done to support the vulnerable in the night time economy each Saturday evening through our project. Today, we begin the period of Advent when we prepare ourselves spiritually for welcoming the baby Jesus at Christmas. It naturally follows then if we acknowledge the power of Jesus seen in the baby at Bethlehem, we must also be prepared to have our commitment of our time, talents and gifting for his glory to be challenged. Often we have believed our partnership in the Gospel is simply financial, but our call as Christian is one of faithfulness to the Gospel in all areas of our life.

Whilst recognising there are many worthy mission opportunities, I draw your attention to the exciting times for Bedford Street Angels, with many new initiatives growing and developing to broaden our work. Bedford Street Angels has been in operation since its launch in February this year. The project is currently supported by fourteen churches from within the All Bedford Churches Together network. One of the key motivators for the project was the tragic death of Robert Gill who died as a result of an unprovoked attack on Boxing Day 2007 after drowning in the river. It was his parents, Fred and Fran who asked the churches of the town to explore the possibility of forming a Street Angels project to support the vulnerable who access the night time economy to ensure there is no similar tragedy.

In the summer of 2008, a working party was formed to explore the practical implications of forming such a project. Last autumn, there was a formal consultation

period with Richard Chewter, the Senior Chaplain of Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy and it was agreed this was a viable venture. However, it was initially agreed that the churches would seek to self-support this. In February 2009, there was a formal launch and celebration. There are currently 45 – 60 volunteers involved in supporting all aspects of the work. In September, the Management Group appointed Adam May to the post of the first Project Coordinator, to work on behalf of the Management Committee on the day to day responsibility. His role is to oversee its work, offer strategic planning and leadership to ensure the project continues.

On this Advent Sunday, I would like to invite churches in Bedford to commit afresh to our work. Please find attached information from our handbook which outlines the many varied opportunities you have to share with us in the vision of Bedford Street Angels. This project must always been at a local level, seeking to serve real people in our town. Our letter today has received full support from the Bishop of Bedford, the Right Reverend Richard Inwood who in a recent meeting with our Project Coordinator has offered to create public awareness of our work.

And so, as you ponder afresh your commitment to Bedford Street Angels, please be assured of our thoughts and prayers for your churches as you seek to serve Christ in word and deed. We are reminded in Colossians chapter three that 'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' May that be our prayer each and every day of our lives. There is no break between the sacred and the secular, so let us always give thanks to God for that which he is doing.

Many thanks for your continued support in the sharing of the practical love of the Gospel,

Every Blessing

Major Ian Loxley

Chair of the Bedford Street Angels Management Group