

The potential at StJohns is immense. Already a school academy hires half of the property during term time days for KS4 young people, and then in the evenings and weekends we have a drama and dance school, a karate class, and a line-dancing group, all of whom hire the facilities. We have our own coffee & craft group, a youth club, and a prayer evening.



As the SEBA Church Project of the Year 2019 we would value your prayers that we will continue to stay close to Jesus as we represent Him in the various networks of people, and we would invite you to share with us the financial challenge of repaying the mortgage.

If you would like to know more, please do get in touch, to Michael Ensor at mensor57@gmail.com, or have a look at our website www.stjohnsbexhill.org

StJohns Bulletin September 2019.



SEBA Church Project of the Year 2019.

St John's Baptist Church,

Victoria Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex. TN39 3PD

What a journey we have been on!

To be awarded the SEBA Church Project of the Year has been a huge boost, and being recognised as a "pioneer church plant" has introduced us to an amazing network of other Baptist endeavours.

But in many ways the journey of the baby St John's Baptist Church in Bexhill has been unique.

St John's BC was formed only three years ago and was born out of the need to step up the Christian outreach in a youth and community centre here in Bexhill.

The amazing thing is that St John's BC meets within a 120 year old redundant URC building of St John's Church.

The property has become St John's Centre as a place for many community organisations to use the extensive facilities, such that St John's Centre is being used virtually every day of the week and sees hundreds of people coming into the building.

The significance of being the SEBA Church Project of the Year 2019 is that the current tenancy of St John's Centre comes to an end in September 2019 and now the URC Synod have agreed to sell the whole property to us.

With the support and encouragement of SEBA and our small congregation, the property is being purchased through the Baptist Union Corporation on behalf of the members of St John's BC, Bexhill.

This is a huge encouragement, but it is also a huge commitment. The scale of the mortgage with BUC and SEBA is challenging.

However, the construction of a business plan where the revenue income from the hiring out of the facilities to community organisations should cover the repayment of the loan, the ongoing running costs, and the significant maintenance costs of a 120 year old building.

This means that the pioneer church plant of St John's BC can focus on the mission outreach to the amazing network of organisations we are already involved in.

Although we are St John's Baptist Church, and we uphold the BUGB Principles of Faith, nevertheless we are very contemporary in practice. The focal point is our Sunday morning "Café Church" which is held in the Hall (not the Sanctuary) and we always start with breakfast (yes, a full English!) where we have a great time of sharing and getting to know each other. When we have had our last slice of toast and marmalade we get our Bibles out, one of us leads the thoughts, and we have a great discussion, leading to a time of prayer. Many times we will view a video clip on a large TV screen, or read a scripture displayed on the screen, or even sing along to a YouTube clip of a gospel song.

Because breakfast is free of charge (and no collection is taken or asked for) and because the Bexhill Street Pastors, based at StJohns, have spread the word about the free breakfast, we welcome many homeless people. It is our experience that some of the homeless just stay for the breakfast and immediately leave for some other urgent appointment, but in time they become used to us and stay, which opens up some amazing conversations.

At StJohns we do not employ any staff, but Rev Kathy Lee is our minister and we value her pastoral support and encouragement. The gathering of all the churches in Bexhill for the Good Friday united service of worship, and the Easter Sunday baptism of four new believers in a rented "hot tub" were two highlights of this year.



An aspect that we are trying to apply is to reverse the usual approach to membership, along the lines of Belong - Believe - Behave. We are being led to respect people with all their troubles, burdens, and demons, and enable each person to feel they belong to our family. We have seen amazing transformations that as a person comes to faith that the Holy Spirit enables them to deal with their pressures and addictions. Our journey continues, and it is thrilling to see what Jesus is doing day by day.