

## **A Brief History**

In the 1950's & 60's a group of Christians from Churches throughout Huntingdonshire were meeting informally every Friday evening in the town centre for Prayer and Bible study. They were concerned that the Greater London Council (GLC) plans for the new area of Huntingdon, the Oxmoor, did not include church buildings and that, in the early days, there were very few amenities. A committee was formed under the chairmanship of Ian Hall (senior partner in the veterinary practice in town) to explore the best way we could help. Their first decision was to employ David Coombs, an experienced inner city missionary, and the Council's Housing Department allowed us to rent a house in Thongsley for him and his family.

The GLC had begun building in the Barnard/Saunders Close area and David pioneered an informal Christian meeting, at the "scout hut" in Saunders Close, at 8pm each Sunday evening. He developed good links with the new (ex -London) residents and their families, often on wet days driving to and from town offering lifts to shoppers, etc, as buses and taxis were few and expensive! David became Chair of the new Residents' Association and represented residents in negotiations with the Town Council, lobbying for improvements in services and facilities on the developing estate. Many still affectionately remember his family days out to Wicksteed Park, using a fleet of double-decker Whippet buses. He also started a thriving Sunday morning service at the Technical College, as it was then known.

The need for a permanent base became obvious and in 1970 the Christian Centre in Nene Road was built with money given by members of many local Churches. In time the work grew and a Church was established with people from a number of denominations and free churches. Many people living on Oxmoor, who are themselves now parents, remember their days as teenagers in the 70's and 80's attending a youth club in the Christian Centre run by church members. Outings were arranged for the teenagers – for example punting on the river at Holywell - and weekends away on the Norfolk and Essex coast.

Pastor Coombs eventually moved on to a further ministry in Chester since when three other pastors or community workers have been employed.

When numbers increased, such that the church outgrew the limited facilities at the Christian Centre, we moved the Sunday morning service to the Huntingdon Medway Community Centre. The church is now identified with the new venue as The Medway Christian Fellowship. However, the Christian Centre is still used for a variety of activities including a Play Group, Drop-In centre, Youth club, half-term Holiday Clubs and other of the Church's midweek meetings. Weekly meetings such as Home/Cell Groups and a women's meeting are held in members' homes.

Pastor Peter Morris led the Church very ably for 8 years until retiring in 2007 and has now been succeeded by Len Winfield. Len, with his wife Sally, had been pastor of a small Baptist church in Polis, Cyprus for the previous 7 years.

The church is a member of FIEC and an active member of Churches Together in Huntingdon & Godmanchester participating in joint events with all the Churches of Huntingdon for special occasions such as Christmas and Easter. Monthly breakfasts with speakers are held at a local pub in Hartford, men's and ladies meetings alternating.