

Baptist Church Changes It's Name

Many of you will be aware that in recent years a number of Baptist churches in the area have closed – notably those in Shipton and Ascott. Since their closure, activities have centred on Milton Baptist Church. As a result the church now draws people from the wider Wychwoods area: Milton, Shipton, Ascott, Fifield – even Carterton. It seems appropriate for us now to recognise our broader responsibility by changing our name. Consequently, from October 2001 the church will be called Wychwood Baptist Church.

The change of name is not just cosmetic – it also gives us a chance to reaffirm the values the church has historically held. In the early part of the 19th century Milton Baptist Church was constituted as a Home Mission Station by the Baptist Home Mission, being seen as a strategic place from which to spread the good news about Jesus to the surrounding area. In the last year this vision has been renewed as we have appointed a full-time pastor with financial help from Rural Ministries – an organisation committed to helping maintain and support rural evangelical churches.

From the start the church has rooted all aspects of its belief and practice in the Bible – believing it to be God's chosen method of communicating to women and men. Our conviction is still that the Bible provides a way for individuals to get to know God for themselves. Consequently, our aim is to provide Bible-based activities, both Sunday and midweek, that help people know God better, grow in their faith and put it into practice in everyday, community life. We would like to encourage those who share these values and who are not committed elsewhere locally to join us as we renew our witness to the area.

You may also have noticed, in recent months, that considerable work has been going on in the church hall! Money from the sale of Shipton Chapel – held in trust by the Baptist Union – has been made available to enclose the somewhat dilapidated outside toilets within the building. This has given us opportunity to double the size of the kitchen and install new units and a new cooker. The building is currently being decorated throughout by church members. Whilst there is still some work to do, the hall is now a much more attractive and useful facility. The children have already enjoyed using it for their Holiday Club, and we plan to celebrate its reopening with a Harvest Supper in aid of TEAR fund on October 6th.

For further information contact Nick Gray, (Pastor), (831783) or Alan Pepper, (Acting Secretary), (830679).