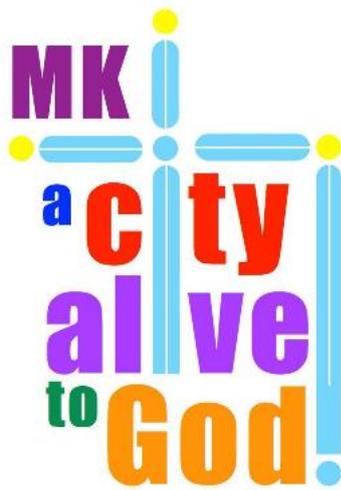




Mission Partnership Newsletter
November 2018

Dear Friends,

At prayer this morning, the Bible reading for the day was the opening few verses of Paul's letter to the Philippians. In reading it, I was struck by the depth of passion that Paul expresses for that fledgling church. He talks of "holding you all in my heart" and "yearning for you all with the affection of Christ", sentiments that keep recurring in different ways throughout the letter. This contrasts with a kind of distance that I note at times in the way we (and I include myself in this) speak about the church: it can feel like it is merely an institution



to be critiqued, an object to be manipulated or a management structure in need of organisation. As we find ourselves in a phase in which we are wrestling with the future of the church, developing strategies and making plans, we undoubtedly need something of a critical distance to do so effectively. However, too much distance can have the detrimental effect of dampening the essential warmth that Paul shows towards the Philippians. I wonder, do we need to relearn how to love the church? By that I don't mean indulging in some form of protectionism towards our particular corner of the church, nor finding a sudden delight in rotas, but of rediscovering passion for the well being of the church as a whole, passion for it as the body of Christ, passion for the mission which God is engaged in through the church,

passion that the people who make it up now and into the future may flourish and grow in their discipleship and love of God. Ultimately it is the depth of our passion which will make or break all our strategies and plans.

At our November Assembly, we will continue to wrestle with the key themes for the church in MK at this critical period in the life of the city and the church. Questions of sustainability, church planting, resourcing, capacity building, community engagement and ecumenism loom large. As we get to grips with these questions and attempt to find ways forward, let's make sure that we bring our passion for the church as our motivation so that we can embrace change and shape the future.

Every Blessing,
John

Mission Partnership Assembly:
7.30pm Wednesday 28th November, Venue Holy Cross, Two Mile Ash