

“Your people shall be my people”

Robert Cotton 6/10/11

The story of Ruth and Naomi is one of the most tender, beautiful and trusting stories in the Old Testament. Naomi invites Ruth to leave her, after her husband's death. But Ruth has found a soul-mate in Naomi and utters those moving words: “Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” (Ruth 1.16) They have confidence in each other. They become committed to journeying together, wherever that may lead them. That is an ideal that we aspire to, The Guildford Methodist Church and Holy Trinity St Mary's. We acknowledge that spiritually we have much in common, and that our Christian heritage is identical for all but the last 200+ years. When the Church of England could not find room for the Wesleys, it was diminished by their departure. Something of God's truth has been embodied in the Methodist Church that still does not find much space in the Church of England... and vice versa. We rejoice that there are national moves towards healing the past; we are keen to play our part, by advancing God's mission in imaginative new ways, here in Guildford. Our challenge is to find straightforward steps that can be readily taken now so that a relationship may grow, which may in the end allow us to say with complete conviction “Your people shall be my people”.

Straightforward steps

1. Worship and pray together
 - a. GMC to pray with SM at SM on 30/10/11 with GMC organist playing and Jane Vlach preaching
 - b. GMC invited to the traditional Advent Carol service at HT on 27/11/11 at 1830, with GMC members reading and praying
 - c. GMC to be invited to the proposed celebration marking the end of the recent restoration of SM at 1000 on 5/2/12
 - d. members of HTSM are invited to the GMC Covenant service on 8/1/12
2. Study together
 - a. GMC to be invited to join in the annual Lent Course, called New Start 2012, held in the Trinity Centre
 - b. GMC have a Tuesday afternoon fellowship; some HTSM people are invited to visit
3. Understand how each other's church operates
 - a. Some GMC people to attend a Parochial Church Council meeting (28/11/11, 24/1/12)
 - b. Some HTSM people to be invited to attend a GMC church meeting (not sure what this is called)?
 - c. GMC to call together HTSM church wardens and Circuit Stewards (?right title?) for an informal discussion
 - d. HTSM to arrange an equivalent meeting of ministers
 - e. Parish Secretary and GMC admin person to meet??

As well as this, we will be methodical in our exploration of writing a covenant agreement that will enable us to share mission in Guildford, based at the SM building. This has been well described in the paper originating from GMC.