

'Secret Church' is eye-opener for parish

WORSHIPPERS at one of our churches were told to keep quiet about one of their services – as they experienced what it's like to be persecuted.

'Secret Church' was the name given to a recent service organised by St Matthew's Church, Blackmoor. Congregation members were told in confidence about the meeting, and told not to tell anyone else where or when it was happening – unless they trusted them completely.

They arrived at the secret location without Bibles, a cross or anything that could identify them as a Christian. Once they were there, they gathered in a room with drawn curtains and dim lights so they didn't draw attention to themselves.

It was inspired by the work of the charity Open Doors, which helps persecuted Christians around the globe. A group from the church discovered the charity at New Wine, and saw the VW Beetle used by Brother Andrew to smuggle Bibles into the Soviet Union, as described in his book *God's Smuggler*.

Their service included Bible readings about persecution, an Open Doors video, prayer and the lighting of candles for those still persecuted around the world.

Worshipper Sorrel Wood said: "People were visibly moved by the plight of our brothers and sisters across the world. Our hearts were broken as we learnt about Christians being imprisoned and murdered, and churches being destroyed."

We will replace bishop's old car

HE was driven for 100 miles around hairpin bends on a mountain road – in a car with no brakes.

That's when Canon David Power realised he had to do something to help replace the Bishop of Ho's car. The clapped-out vehicle breaks down so often that it prevents the bishop from doing his work properly.

During a 12-day visit to Ghana, David realised that the bishop, the Rt Rev Matthias Medadues-Badohu, was driving hundreds of miles around his vast diocese in a car that wasn't up to the job. Now David is appealing for Portsmouth churchgoers to help raise the £25,000-£35,000 needed to pay for a new car.

"If a bishop's diocese is half the size of the UK, there's no way he can carry out his ministry without safe, adequate transport, especially when many of the roads are just dirt tracks," he said. "I travelled to Ho in October 2015, spending much time with Bishop Matthias – a truly remarkable and inspiring bishop to his diocese.

"Within hours of arriving it was obvious his car was in a desperate state. During our visit all of the following went wrong: electrics, air conditioning, ignition, battery,



(Left): the Bishop of Ho; (above): his clapped-out car being repaired again



steering, cooling system, gears, central

locking system, and most alarming of all, the brakes. The clapped-out car constantly broke down.

"Each time it did, we pulled over and asked around to see if anyone local knew anything about car mechanics and could get us going again. We never knew if those who came running had any mechanical training or expertise as they started taking things off the car.

"On one occasion brake fluid was leaking all over the road and the problem couldn't be solved, so a local lad disconnected the hydraulics to one wheel and we drove on, hoping the brakes in the three working wheels would stop us!

"We once drove over 100 miles with no brakes at all, partly

in a mountainous region, complete with hairpin bends! A further 600 miles were driven with partial brakes, often pumping frantically to prevent a collision.

"When we were finally delivered to the airport in Accra to fly home, I have never been so relieved to get out of a vehicle, thanking God that we were all still alive.

"But as our plane took off, I was deeply aware that Bishop Matthias was getting back into the wreck of a car to drive well over 100 miles back home, and then continue to use it to conduct his faithful ministry around a huge diocese, often on roads that take a heavy toll on both him and his vehicle.

"The 15-year-old car is a danger to both the bishop and his passengers, and limits the ministry he can offer. Our diocese wouldn't accept this state of affairs, and

we can help to put things right in Ho. Bishop Matthias has no means of getting a replacement used vehicle, so our next deanery project is to support the purchase of a suitable car."

David was visiting the Diocese of Ho, which is linked with Portsmouth deanery as part of our Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link.

Support from this project has been promised from the Diocese of Fredericton in Canada, which is also linked with Ho, and from a parish in Charlotte, North Carolina, in the USA. David has therefore set a target of £10,000 for Portsmouth deanery towards the full amount needed.

Worshippers in Portsmouth deanery can donate using the envelopes given to their own PCC treasurer. Others can contact David Power directly on davidmpower@ntlworld.com or 023 9282 7071.

Pompey Chimes

The *Pompey Chimes* is the official newspaper of the Church of England's Diocese of Portsmouth, which covers 142 parishes in south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Its circulation is 8,000, and it is produced monthly except for January and August. Each parish pays 15p for each copy, which allows our readers to pick it up for free on the final Sunday of the previous month. Paid-for adverts are dealt with by our publishers, Cornerstone Vision. For a list of editorial deadlines, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/pompeychimes

DEADLINE FOR JULY/AUGUST EDITION: Monday 6 June (NB: There is no separate August edition)

AVAILABLE TO COLLECT FROM DEANERY DEPOTS: Thursday 23 June

AVAILABLE IN YOUR CHURCH: Sunday 26 June

CONTACTS: EDITORIAL: Neil Pugmire, First Floor,

All photos and details of children and young people in the *Pompey Chimes* are published with the informed and express written permission of those who have parental responsibility for them.

Peninsular House, Wharf Road, Portsmouth, PO2 8HB (023-9289 9673 or neil.pugmire@portsmouth.anglican.org)

ADVERTISING: Glenda Charitos, Cornerstone Vision, 28 Old Park Road, Peperell, Plymouth, PL3 4PY (01752-225623 or glenda@cornerstonevision.com)

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Neil Pugmire (contact details as above)

Parishes link up to learn about differences

CONGREGATIONS from two very different parishes will discover more about each other as they link up this month.

The church family from St Luke's Church in inner-city Portsmouth will go 'on tour' on June 5.

They'll be worshipping with the congregation at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Hawley, in the north of our diocese that morning.

The priest-in-charge of

St Luke's, the Rev Annie McCabe, said: "Clearly the parishes could not be more different in terms of context and that is the point in a way.

"The idea is to worship and enjoy time together and learn more about each others worlds. There will be a lunch, Messy Church and fun activities."

Around 60 worshippers from St Luke's Church will make the trip, packing themselves into a minibus and

several cars.

The vicar of Hawley, the Rev Rona Stuart-Bourne, said that a return visit by Hawley's congregation to St Luke's at some point in the future might be possible.

The special joint service with St Luke's Church starts at Hawley parish church at 10.30am on June 5. The church building was created in a Norman style using local stone in 1865.