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Dear Friends,

## NEWSLETTER: MAY 2009

We have been so encouraged with all the emails and telephone calls we have received over the past few weeks and months letting us know that you are praying for us during this period of reflection and discernment but we do apologise for not keeping you up to date with all the developments. It is really precious to hear that many folk are actively concerned and praying for us - and we are **deeply** grateful.

### Period of Reflection & Discernment

These last 12 months have been such a re-adjustment whilst we have felt the Lord's hand on us to be quiet and draw on the deep 'wells' of God's refreshing water/Spirit (John 4). We genuinely thought that maybe Wellspring's time was coming to a natural end with a number of us moving on to pastures new, however, whilst I, (Sally) was on retreat and feeling pretty glum about Wellspring's future, the Lord gently reminded me of the many promises he had given over many years. Later on, I went out to



explore the grounds and came upon this inscription on one of the paving stones by the pool outside the front door. 'A spring of water welling up to eternal life'. I laughed out loud and sensed the Lord clearly saying that He had not finished with us yet! So we are beginning to emerge from this period of reflection and discernment with a renewed sense of passion that the Lord continues to call us to teach, lead and train people in worship and mission – and to serve Him with all the gracious gifts that He has given us.

We believe God still wants us all to draw on the deep 'wells' of God's refreshing water/Spirit (John 4); to minister his love, grace and compassion as we 'walk the



### Wellspring Arts Trust Ltd

Trustees: Peter Adams-(Chair), Rev Rob White, Robert Weston, Mike Thornton  
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ancient pathways (Jeremiah 6:16) to the ancient meeting places' and to cry out to God to 'bestow crowns of beauty instead of ashes' (Isaiah 61:3). It is a missional call to all musicians & artists to continue to serve and worship our Lord, with our gifts wherever we are called! We minister to the Lord, and by his grace, he ministers to us all.

This last year has been an incredibly busy year for me (Sally) personally; completing my MA in Emerging Church with Cliff College/University of Manchester and beginning ordination training at Hartley Victoria Methodist Training College at Luther King House, Manchester. I've also been on placement in Hyde & Denton in East Manchester throughout the year. We knew this year would be the 'killer' year, in the sense of a very heavy workload, where one just has to 'hunker down' and get on with it.

However, the combined effects of Jon & Sarah Blamire receiving a call to music ministry in USA and Richard & Susan Williamson leaving to develop a ministry purely with classical musicians has had profound consequences on Wellspring's own ministry and infrastructure. These folk are sorely missed and anyone stepping into their roles will have big shoes to fill! However, a new leadership team is beginning to emerge and one that is full of vision and plans, and doors of opportunity are already beginning to open - some very strategic.

Whilst many within the group are still sensing new directions, we have ministered at some small events over the past twelve months...

### **'Still Waters', Bury (October 2008)**

The Bolton & Rochdale Methodist District asked us to play at their reflective event called 'Still Waters' which was a 'liquid' worship style event (liquid in this context meaning 'fluid, flexible, flowing'). There were a number of worship zones and in many ways was similar to the Resonance and Derby Renewal Worship events that we were involved in a few years ago. The day was designed to give opportunities for people with busy lives to just slow down! How hard is this now in our frantic world? The idea was to immerse themselves in the presence of the Lord in prayer and worship via all sorts of thoughtful zones and artistic installations. We need to take time out regularly to walk with the Lord beside still waters and to be open to receive from Him.

We were asked to lead the opening and closing worship along with some 'still moments' (a song, a reading and a prayer) on the hour and on the half-hour throughout the day. The Lord's presence was deep and moving – and many folk afterwards were commenting on how they had felt drenched with the Spirit of God. This was such an encouragement to us as we felt that we were just at the beginning of tapping the deep wells of God's refreshing Spirit. We humbly bless God for continuing to use us in this way.

### **Isle of Wight – (February 2009)**

In February, we joined with fellow Wellspring players Helen (Flute) & Clive Malabar (Keys/Percussion) in Isle of Wight to run an Instruments & Voices workshop with 40-50 musicians from across the Island. It was a lovely afternoon meeting the musicians who were really game for learning some new practical skills. We also shared together some reflections on the importance of not neglecting our relationship with God and our relationships with each other. Later that evening, we all took part in a worship Celebration service, which was a really special time together. Exhausting...but so well worth it!!

## **Manchester Cathedral 'Oils & Vows' (April 2009)**

On 6<sup>th</sup> April, we were invited to join the whole of the Manchester Diocesan Clergy at Manchester Cathedral to contribute to their annual 'Oils & Vows' service during Holy Week – where the clergy renew their ordination vows and renew the supply of oils to be used during the coming year to anoint those being baptised, seeking healing and wholeness. There were over 300 clergy present so it took two long hymns for everyone to process in to their places!! It was a great privilege to be asked to participate in this service and we met up with many people we have served across the Manchester Diocese over many years.

*Canon Precentor Gilly Myers, Manchester Cathedral writes...*

*Many thanks, again, for bringing Wellspring to play at the Oils and Vows service at the Cathedral in Holy Week this year. The added musical dimension made a tremendous difference to the service, and I am still on the receiving end of comments from people who were delighted and moved by the result.*

## **Website Re-developments**

As many of you will be aware, the website is well out of date and we are actively re-developing the site to be much more interactive and informative. We are hoping to have the new website up and running within the next few months but ordering CD's is still possible via the old website.

## **Wellspring USA? – New Wineskins 2010, Ridgecrest?**

When Jon & Sarah Blamire left for the USA we all had thoughts that maybe...just maybe...this could be the start of Wellspring USA? Jon is now the Musical Director and Organist at Prince George Episcopal Church in Georgetown, S. Carolina, which is the church Wellspring visited after the New Wineskins Conference in 2007. He's been developing all sorts of new work in developing both traditional and contemporary styles. As well as leading and training the regular Choir, he's also organising and leading all the music for new mid-week services, a Junior/Youth Choir and contemporary worship group and beginning to write new compositions again. We're pleased to hear that Jon & Sarah along with their group have been approached to lead the worship at the New Wineskins event in North Carolina in 2010. Please join us in continuing to pray for Jon, Sarah and the family as God leads them in all that He has for them.



## **Christmas Candle-Lit Concerts 2009?**

If ever we were in doubt as to the popularity and effectiveness of our Christmas concerts with wine and mince pies, we were surely told 'loud and clear!' that they were sorely missed. We were inundated with calls and emails last year asking when and where we were performing and so hopefully by the next newsletter we may have one or two dates for you. So watch this space...!!

## **PRAYER**

Please pray for all the musicians and artists within the community of Wellspring with so much uncertainty and instability in the music profession, especially during the current economic climate:-

- That we hear the Lord clearly as we seek to honour, worship and minister to him;
- We give thanks to God for his gracious love and leading through this past year;
- For guidance as we re-develop the infrastructure;
- For the new website developments;
- Jon & Sarah Blamire – USA;
- Candle-lit Christmas Concert planning;

Thank you once again for continuing to support Wellspring with all your prayers and financial gifts and please do continue to get back to us with any queries or thoughts you may have - we always love to hear from our supporters.

Every blessing,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Sally Thornton' written in a cursive, flowing style. The signature on the right is 'Mike Thornton', also in a cursive style, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**SALLY & MIKE THORNTON**