



Wednesday, 23 May 2012

Resource aims to make church buildings blessings not burdens

<http://methodist.stage.studiobonito.co.uk/property-matters/legionnaires-disease?stage=Stage>The Arthur Rank Centre has provided an answer for the many rural congregations struggling with church buildings that are seen as a burden rather than a blessing. The charity has created an online information hub guiding a church in all it needs to transform its building from a millstone to an asset.

Resources for Rural Places of Worship is a free online resource developed in response to findings that, for many, church buildings are a drain of time, energy and money. It signposts people from churches of all denominations to the broadest range of available information and help.

Research by the ARC's Rural Life and Faith project (published in November 2011) uncovered where key resources and support were missing for rural churches and ministers. This new resource was developed by Becky Payne, a consultant and researcher on sustaining historic places of worship through wider community use, and Simon Martin, the ARC's Training and Resources Officer. It responds directly to the research findings.

Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson, National Rural Officer for the Church of England says church buildings are a vital tool for mission, and allow engagement with the wider community. "The Big Society and Localism agendas bring great opportunities for churches to develop their buildings for the benefit of everyone; this website will help them to do this. In practice that might mean a small rural church looking at some of the case studies to find out what is possible, then discovering how to access guidance and funding to turn their ideas into reality."

Revd Ian Bunce, Head of Mission for the Baptist Union of Great Britain, said: "This looks to be a very useful resource."

Nigel Walter, author of *'The Gate of Heaven: how church buildings speak of God,'* said: "This site looks really good – a wealth of useful information and pointers to more – well done."

Resources for Rural Places of Worship is available free at www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk. The ARC's website offers many other new online resources and training materials for rural churches, including a 'library of rural good practice', tools for mission and community engagement (especially involving lay people), and a rural evangelism training course.

Ends

For more information please contact:



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You can find pictures to go with this story on the ARC photostream:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/arthurrankcentre>

Notes

The **Arthur Rank Centre** is a Christian charity supported by the National Churches and the Rank Foundation, which supports rural churches and their communities through a programme of community and social projects, resourcing and training; website: www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk

Four grant making trusts (Allchurches Trust, the Maurice and Hilda Laing Charitable Trust, the Henry Smith Charity and St Peters Saltley Trust) provided £180,000 of funding for the Rural Life and Faith project.