

Are We Getting Closer to Having a New Church Building?

Dear Father, friends ...

Exciting news! Do we have a new larger church building, affordable, in good condition and with great facilities? Yes I believe we do. Praise God!

There is no certainty at this stage, only good prospects, BUT the Lord may have given us a new building for St Aidan's and it is ideal!

I am sure we will be putting in an offer in due course and, if it is God's will, we shall succeed. There is now a long path ahead of us. There are competing housing development bidders, but I am sure we are in with a good chance. The matter is in God's hands. Please pray.

NAME AND LOCATION

Hatherlow United Reformed Church Sunday School Building, Otterspool Road, Romiley, Stockport SK6 3DR

Owners: The United Reformed Church (their church is nearby; this is a hall complex).

Location: Hatherlow > Romiley > Stockport MBC > Greater Manchester

Excellent transport links (including Sunday) by bus (from Stockport) and train (from Manchester Piccadilly – direct). Just off Junction 27 on the M60, but from the north you can also use junctions 25 and 26. It is a short walk (15 minutes) from St Chad's Well and Chadkirk Chapel where we have been on pilgrimage before. Because of this area's historic association with this western Orthodox Saint ... I am proposing that, if we acquire this building, we add St Chad to its dedication. So, the Church would then be named: St Aidan and St Chad, Stockport, subject to community consent and the Metropolitan's blessing. The bishop has already blessed us to make an offer on this property.

THE PROPERTY

Pictures here on this link: -

<http://frgregory.jalbum.net/Hatherlow%20Sunday%20School%20Building/>

I have recently attended a first viewing of the property. If you would like to see for yourself (**you MUST advise me first**).

This property “ticks all the boxes.”

1. It is visually in good shape and a large building (survey of course in due time).
2. The Main Hall (Chapel) ... which could be our church worship space is substantially larger than our present church.
3. The stage is slightly wider than our present iconostasis, but this can be accommodated by erecting panels on the outside edges of the deacon's doors.
4. Our present iconostasis and the Virgin of the Sign icon over the altar will be transferred intact to the new building.
5. There would need to be a combination of a narrow walkway immediately in front of the iconostasis and a wider solea (as we have now) and then possibly two more steps to floor level. If it is not ready by the time that we occupy the building ready for worship, then servers can use the side steps.
6. The gallery at the rear of the church could be used for the choir.
7. The Chapel will have an excellent sound system and an induction loop for the hard of hearing.
8. There are no issues with disabled access. Although food will mainly be served on the first floor, it can be served on the ground floor as well.
9. The building has 4 other rooms of varying sizes plus offices, toilets (including disabled), storage areas, basement cellar and a small courtyard where we can place some planters and garden furniture.
10. These rooms, BUT NOT THE CHAPEL, would be available (as they are now) for hiring to local community groups. We need that integration of the church into the community and to provide that service. We have never been able to do that at St Aidan's as there is no non-church usable space. I have made these commitments to ongoing community use very clear to the vendors.
11. David Green has agreed to be the Property Manager for the building, responsible for the good order and maintenance of the building, working with the Parish Council and as an “ex officio” new Trustee. He will refer new bookings or problems to me with the Council, the Wardens and Trustees overseeing more substantial issues.
12. The Chapel will be locked when we are not present as a church with key admission at the discretion of David (if people wanted to come in and pray).
13. There is a modern, very well-equipped kitchen.
14. The building has modest onsite car spaces but (neighbour sensitive) parking in the vicinity would not be a problem.

15. The building will be registered as a Place of Worship and for the Celebration and Registration of marriages only Orthodox weddings of course.
16. We will NOT be applying for an alcohol licence.
17. The building is NOT listed and has D1 planning permission Which means it can be immediately used as a church.

THE WAY AHEAD

Offers need to be in by 25 September and then there will be a few weeks (at least) before we are advised of the Church's decision.

The Community of St Aidan, its Councillors and Trustees and its people will be involved every step of the way.

If the United Reformed Church sells the property to us, there will then be a further two to three months of searches and surveys before exchange of contracts and completion, possibly early next year. At the same time, we shall be completing the formalities of the sale of St Aidan's in Levenshulme to our property developers in order to have sufficient funds both to acquire the property and carry out any necessary repairs and alterations.

If our offer is accepted, we shall need to find out if there are any "surprises" in terms of historical restrictive covenants or in the outcomes of the usual local searches and, of course, in the result of a proper structural survey. Only when all this is in place shall we proceed to exchange of contracts and final purchase.

With the two paragraphs above in mind, I shall be putting before the Trustees and the Parish Council a proposal to make a specific agreed offer before closure on 25 September. Please pray about these very exciting developments

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized flourish at the end of the word "Gregory".

Very Reverend Fr. Gregory Hallam

Getting to and from Hatherlow

<p>Bus:</p>	<p>Depart Stockport Bus Station (384) at 8.15 Arrive Bus Stop on Gorsey Brow, Romiley at 8.30.</p> <p>Depart Stockport Bus Station (384) at 9.15 Arrive Bus Stop on Gorsey Brow, Romiley at 9.30.</p> <p>Depart Stockport Bus Station (384) at 9.45 Arrive Bus Stop on Gorsey Brow, Romiley at 10.05</p> <p>Church is 3 minute walk away</p>
<p>Train:</p>	<p>Depart Piccadilly Railway Station at 8.29 (Train Destination New Mills Central) Arrive at Romiley Railway Station 8.45</p> <p>Depart Piccadilly Railway Station at 9.45 (Train Destination New Mills Central) Arrive at Romiley Railway Station 10.02</p> <p>Church is 15 minute walk away</p>

