

Kettle & Fish

'Thank goodness you're back.' 'We've missed you.' 'Where've you been?' These are typical reactions of regulars of *Kettle & Fish* on our return to St Peter's on Thursday 1 September after an absence of almost two months. *Kettle & Fish* is a project, operating under the auspices of *Churches Together in Sudbury*, which organises and runs a café and Christian information centre most Thursdays in St Peter's.

Why the name? As discussion took place regarding setting up a café, someone exclaimed 'what a kettle of fish!'. This was seized on as a possible name for the new venture as it could be reinterpreted to describe what we wanted to do. The *kettle* refers to our refreshment wing - serving good quality food and drinks. In the colder months we also provide two flavours of home-made soup per session. The *fish* symbolises the Christian aspect of the project - a fish was the symbol used by early Christians to denote their faith. There are opportunities to light a candle, have a time of stillness, to reflect and pray, to pray with a member of the *Kettle & Fish* team, to write a prayer request that is taken to the prayer breakfasts run each Saturday by *Churches Together in Sudbury*, as well as information about what is going on in the town's churches and a great variety of literature to help folk in their spiritual lives. In addition there is a well stocked Fair Trade stall, supplying probably the best collection of Fair Trade goods in one place in the town. Live music is played on most Thursdays. We are also joined on a regular basis by other folk selling goods for Christian charities or projects. Not only that but St Nicholas Hospice, Age UK Suffolk, RNLI, Trefoil join us from time to time. *Kettle & Fish* also provides refreshments in support of other activities staged in St Peter's, such as the Switching on of the Christmas Lights, the Christmas Tree Festival and the Historic Churches Cycle Ride.

The clientele is very diverse. Our regulars are folk who have come into town on a Thursday to do their market shopping and enjoy a break and a sit-down in a very convenient, quiet spot - cool in summer, warm in winter! Families and friends use St Peter's as a meeting place. Although the majority of visitors - and we receive about 350 per session - are inevitably on the elderly side, a fair number of mums and dads with young children also come in - there are plenty of toys, and space, for the children to enjoy. We also welcome a variety of tourists, visiting the town and excited to be able to enter the imposing and inspiring building that St Peter's is. What impresses them is not only the beautiful interior but also, as much if not more, the atmosphere of gentle calm and caring engendered by *Kettle & Fish* and the fact that cooperating together are members of practically all the churches in the town. It is thrilling to realise that our sixty or so volunteers are drawn from many churches, all with a desire to serve God in the peaceful setting of St Peter's.

Only four more sessions of *Kettle & Fish* left before Christmas (10 and 24 November, 1 and 15 December). All visitors are most welcome.

Malcolm Offord, Chairman *Kettle & Fish*

October 2011