

## Somewhere Else

Hidden above a book shop on Bold Street, not even a five minute walk away from Liverpool Central Station lies 'Somewhere Else' - Liverpool's city centre Methodist Church. Jan took Carmen and me last Thursday. Honestly, I did not know what to expect, how can a church not look like a church? Where were the pews? Where was the pulpit? It was at this point, I realised that there is a whole world of church out there that I have no experience of. Church is not about the building, it's the people that make a church and boy this was a place where I felt like I had come home.

The gorgeously flamboyant Reverend Ian Hu along with two volunteers Liz and Sue welcomed us like old friends. There were no dog collars, no Sunday best clothes, just a clean pinny and tea towel were offered! There were other people there to bake bread, about 18 of us in total. Ian explained that we could make two loaves, one to keep and eat ourselves and the other to give away as we feel led.

We could make white, granary or wholemeal bread. An enormous table was set out with bowls and all the ingredients. We set out mixing our dough. I had long forgotten how therapeutic kneading dough was. Refreshments were served whilst our loaves were on their first prove. There was a magical aroma of something tasty simmering on the hob. This was lunch, fresh soup made by Ian. Liz and Sue were making bread also, but they were making rolls to have with lunch.

We all chatted like we had known each other for years, these weren't strangers, just friends that we didn't know yet. We learned that Somewhere Else is a one church circuit welcoming those from all faiths and all backgrounds. It has been growing since 1999. How come it has taken me 16 years to discover such a wonderful place?

At 12:30 following the final prove, shape and into the oven, those of us who wished, went to the "cloud room" for prayers and reflection. Ian read from the book of Luke, the story of Zacchaeus up the sycamore tree. We were then invited to light candles for someone. I chose to light mine for Jan as she continues her journey at Marshside Road Methodist Church and to give her the strength to carry on the marvellous work she does with us all.

Lunch time! A steaming bowl of the most glorious soup with freshly baked rolls, thick with butter that you left teeth marks in! An assortment of homemade jams did us for afters, washed down with more tea and coffee. Everybody mucked in when it came to washing up. Such teamwork and friendliness was felt throughout the day. We will return, knowing full well we will be welcomed with the most open of arms.

Back to Southport we came, the smell of freshly baked bread filled the carriage on the train. I gave my loaf to a Marshside member who does so much work, often unacknowledged for our church. I don't wish to give their name on here but what I will say is that they were tickled pink with it. Something as simple as giving away a loaf of

bread made me feel amazing and this act of Christianity made me realise that I am a Christian of action, not words

Carmen and I shed many a tear as we were overwhelmed. "Where is God in all this?" I asked. "Can you not feel it ?" asked Jan. "Yes" I replied, and I am still feeling it now."

**Kirsty Howard**