

St Matthew's is now a little warmer — thanks to Tom

It is, by far, an understatement to say that the congregation at St Matthew's, Overseal, has had to put on many extra layers of clothing for quite a number of years to keep the cold at bay. So much so, that during the winter months services have been held in the adjoining Community Centre instead of the church building.

BUT, not any more, and thanks are due to Tom Hartley - a well known Overseal businessman - who heard about our concerns for the church following the baptism of his granddaughter. In conversation with Gill Edwards, Churchwarden, Tom said he wanted to help in any way he could and give something back to the village. Gill told him that we had been hanging on by a shoestring for quite a few years and the situation was getting desperate. He came to talk to the ECC one Sunday morning, and from then on it was a "*leave it to me*" response (Tom's words).

He then sent along his experts who advised freestanding additional heaters, and alongside this he offered to replace the old defunct water-pipe to church so that we didn't have to carry plastic containers of water from the Community Centre down what was sometimes a very slippery slope to Church. He wanted to reach out to all the villagers to explain the worrying situation at St Matthew's and suggested holding a special service with gospel singers who he knew, and posting invites through every letterbox in Overseal.

So on Mothering Sunday, 11 March, the church was vibrant with villagers and the sound of gospel singers, ending with delightful refreshments put on by Tom. This was indeed something totally different for St Matthew's.

We have been truly overwhelmed by Tom's generosity and thank him most sincerely.

