

1st March 2021

Dear Friends

Rita Rothery, who was a member of New North Road Baptist Church for many years, has kindly made us a remarkable gift in her will and I wanted to write and tell you about it.

Rita died in August 2019 when she was 87 years old. She attended Greenhead High School for Girls at the same time as Hazel Wigmore. Other children thought Rita's fine clothes indicated that she was rich but her mother bought end of line materials at the market and was a skilled dressmaker. Rita was a highly educated and cultured woman; after studying at Manchester University she taught English at schools in Devon and Halifax (where she was Head of Department).

Rita travelled extensively and was an enormous lover of poetry and music. She was constantly grateful that she lived in West Yorkshire and had easy access to superlative classical music concerts in both Huddersfield and Halifax. She was a member at Birkby Baptist Church for many decades and then joined us at NNR with many other Birkby people in 2005. Rita was refined and genteel but she had a lovely sense of humour and she never lost her mastery of local dialect, the dialect poems she recited were a highlight of socials at Birkby.

Half of Rita's estate is being given to Kirkwood Hospice and the other half is being given to New North Road Baptist Church. The final total will be close to £180,000. You may want to take a moment to take that in. It is a generous and wonderful legacy to receive and it's worth pausing to give thanks.

Our deacons are keen that we should grasp the opportunity this bequest offers us without becoming complacent. Although we have a healthy balance in our bank account, our accounts show a considerable loss last year, as our expenditure exceeded our income. Because of coronavirus we have had to close our buildings and that means our rental income for 2020 and 2021 will be much lower than we are accustomed to and while our giving can't make up for that we want to encourage you to continue giving as generously as you are able to. It really does make a difference.

In normal times we would have shared this news with you at a church meeting and everyone would have had an opportunity to contribute ideas about the way we could use Rita's legacy to advance the Kingdom of God at New North Road. We are exploring options for another online meeting but that wouldn't include everyone so in the meanwhile we are inviting you to think and to pray about the ways this legacy could be used. You can share your ideas in writing via email to our admin address or by post to 16 Heaton road Huddersfield HD1 4HX.

We would like to invite three kinds of ideas.

Memorial. How can we give thanks and celebrate Rita's life and generosity in a memorable way?

Maintenance. What things need doing in our building which may be costly but essential?

Mission. What could we do to share the good news of Jesus Christ here in Huddersfield that we couldn't do without generous funding?

There may be some things in the way of maintenance that the deacons will authorise in the spring but our firm intention is to give the whole church an opportunity to reflect and pray together when we are able to meet together again as we begin to prioritise and choose how we can best use this remarkable gift.

Jesus said 'freely, freely you have received, freely, freely give.' There is much to give thanks for. Thanks be to God.

Your friend and pastor

Mark