

St Mildred's Church Newsletter



March 2021

Praying for each other

Marion shares some helpful thoughts on how we can pray for each other.

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Amen cornered

That simple word Amen, have you ever stopped to think what it means? Henry provides a helpful insight.

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Mission Focus

In this month's edition we focus on the Nehemiah Project and its work to help men beat addiction.

Pages 12-15



As we head towards Easter let's reflect on the greatness of our God's love for us shown at the cross.

The call of God on our lives at St. Mildred's is to make and equip disciples of Jesus Christ locally and globally in the power of the Holy Spirit.

www.stmildreds.org.uk

Tom Writes ...

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Newsletter Articles

Anyone who is part of St Mildred's can contribute articles to the newsletter.

Articles should be sent to the editors no later than Wednesday 24th March for the April 2021 edition, which will be available on Sunday 4th April 2021.

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As we're now in Lent we are beginning to prepare for Holy Week and Easter Sunday. It will be the second year we have celebrated Easter with considerable restrictions. This, of course, changes what we would normally do, but it also provides an opportunity to do new things (as we saw at Christmas).

At the moment we are hoping to organise a *Stations of the Cross* memorial in the church car park. This is an ancient tradition in which different moments of Jesus' final day leading to his crucifixion are remembered through artwork and prayer. Church traditions like this can be helpful when done in faith as a response to God's word.

The *Stations of the Cross* is an opportunity to remember the Bible's record of the details of what happened on Jesus' final day. They give us a moment to pause, consider and meditate upon those Biblical details so as to inspire our thanksgiving and prayer for what Jesus has done.

In fact, I was amazed, in preparing for our *Stations of the Cross* recently, that there was one detail I had never spotted, despite the many times I've read and considered the gospel accounts.

"Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it."

(Mark 15:23 see also Matthew 27:34)

I had noticed the similar incident of Jesus being offered wine vinegar on a sponge when he was actually on the cross (Matt 27:48, Mark 15:36), but somehow completely missed this detail.

This detail happens when Jesus arrives at Golgotha, before they crucified him. As he was standing there they offered him a drink

of wine mixed with myrrh. Matthew tells us that he tasted it, but then refused to drink it (presumably once he realised what it was).

Why did Jesus refuse the drink? Well neither Matthew nor Mark explain why so we have to speculate cautiously. Some people think the wine mixed with myrrh was offered in spite. They argue that the condemned were offered a drink to quench their thirst, but its bitterness made it unpalatable and furthered their torment as they had to refuse it. But why use wine and myrrh in this case? The much cheaper option of salty water would work just as well.

It is more likely that wine mixed with myrrh was considered a pain killer. It was a way of dulling the senses before enduring a horrible death. It was possibly a small act of consideration shown to Jesus in this moment of horror, but more likely it just made the soldiers' lives easier.



Yet he refused. Why? I think a likely reason is that he wanted to keep a clear mind. The problem with substances that numb the senses and feelings is that they also dull the mind. They take away clarity. But Jesus needed clarity in that moment and could not give way to purposeless abandon. He would not cry, '*it is finished*' until he actually died (John 19:30). Until then, he had a lot to think about. Wine and myrrh would only hamper this.

But, also, Jesus was offering himself as a fragrant, unblemished sacrifice (Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:14). It was important that he face the cross without using a crutch in the process. Rather he offered himself "through the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14). A substance used to aid him in the process could only ever take away from the purity of his sacrifice.

And so this detail, which I had missed till now, causes us to meditate and think. It causes us to consider that Jesus endured his suffering on our behalf with the Holy Spirit only. In taking away our sin, he faced the full, undiluted pain of the cross and wrath of God against evil. Our salvation came about through a work of God alone - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are spectators and recipients of their work on our behalf contributing only our sin to the process.

The details of the crucifixion matter. The *Stations of the Cross* give us an opportunity to let those details sink in to inspire our thankfulness and to encourage our response.

As we move through Lent towards Holy Week and Easter, may the Lord fill us with thankfulness for what he has done and help us to respond to his grace. Amen.

Rev. Tom Lake
Vicar



Praying for each other

We are encouraged to ask each other for prayer on a regularly basis. Indeed, we have a prayer ministry team who are available to pray with us as required. We also hold weekly prayer meetings when we focus our prayers less individually where our focus is more outward looking.

Since we went virtual, I have been keeping a record of who and what we pray for each other within the daytime homegroup. I have noticed a consistent pattern. We pray for each other's health problems, our struggles with lockdown, the problems of home schooling and conflicting priorities of life. There is nothing amiss with this. The Lord is concerned about every aspect of our daily lives and is always ready to listen and hear our prayers than sometimes we are to pray.

Then in the new year, we began our studies in Paul's letter to the Ephesians in our home groups linked with sermons on a Sunday morning. Suddenly I was challenged by reading Paul's prayers for the Ephesians as to how I prayed for other people and realised that here was a pattern I could follow as I prayed for them.

1. Begin with giving thanks. Paul gave thanks for the Ephesians. I too should give thanks for every member of our home group and others I pray for. This is not always easy to do for people we might not normally get on with or find difficult. Yet I should still give thanks for them.
2. Ask God to give each person the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know the Lord better. In our mutual support of each other in home group, the aim is surely that we get to know the Lord better. How much we need for the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom and revelation

as we strive to know the Lord.

3. I should pray that the eyes of people's hearts be enlightened in order to know the hope to which they have been called. We often sing, "open the eyes of my heart Lord, I want to see you". The gloriously rich inheritance we have in Christ is not stingy or poor; it is very rich. We need to see the Lord for who he is which will give us hope and how much we need hope in our current situation with the COVID-19 virus and lockdown.
4. I should pray that the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead be at work in each person to his praise and glory. And that is some power!
5. To pray for each person to be strengthened in their inner being through the Spirit, again out of God's glorious riches which will never suffer a stock market crash.
6. To pray that Christ may dwell in the heart of each person on a permanent rather than a temporary basis through faith, which is believing and trusting in Jesus no matter what.
7. To be rooted and grounded in love; to grasp the width, length, height and depth of the love of Christ for us that reaches every person everywhere and to experience it daily.
8. To be filled with the fulness of God for Christ came to give us life in its fulness and abundance.

Finally, I should always remember to finish praying for each person by giving God praise and glory for all he has done and continues to do in their hearts and lives.

One of our home group members reminded us of a very old chorus which many of us learned as children (this may reflect our age!).

Wide, wide as the ocean, high and the heavens above
Deep, deep as the deepest sea is my Saviour's love.
I though so unworthy, still am a child of his care
For his word teaches me that his love reaches me everywhere.

Then of course there is a more modern song which we sing and echoes these thoughts.

He's higher than a skyscraper and deeper than a submarine

He's wider than the universe and beyond my wildest dream.
And he knows me and he loves me since before the world began.
How marvellous to be a part of God's almighty plan.

I commend Paul's pattern of praying to you for those for whom you pray. Also, if you are not part of a home group, why not speak with Tom about joining one? It is a good way of getting to know the Lord and other people and to receive support in living a life that is worthy of the Lord.

Marion Barber

Book Review: *Experiencing the Trinity* by Darrell W. Johnson

The doctrine of the Trinity is one that many people are reluctant to consider. Possibly one of the most common words used when the subject comes up is the word, "mystery".

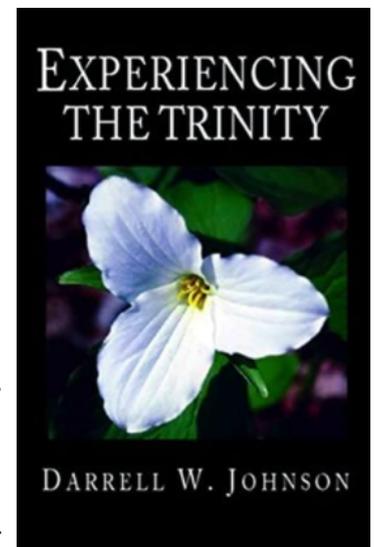
God is holy and unique, majestic and awesome and we shouldn't think it easy to understand Him. But neither should we say it is impossible to understand Him if He has, in fact, made Himself known.

In this book Darrell Johnson sets out to show that we should not only understand that God is Trinity, but we should actually experience the Trinity. That is the expectation of the Bible (see Jesus' prayer in John 17 or Paul's in Ephesians 3:14-21).

As he says, "The Gospel of God as Trinity overwhelms me. I only wish I had understood what I now understand much earlier. The living God is not a solitary God. The living God is not a lonely god. The living God is Relationship. And this God draws close to us to draw us close to himself, pulling us into the circle to participate with in the Trinitarian Intimacy."

I recommend this book to you.

Tom Lake



Amen cornered



I was sitting with my feet up having a Guatemala Elephant (it's a coffee blend) and listening to a recording of Handel's oratorio *Messiah* and enjoying myself on a chilly winter afternoon when the piece came to the last chorus. The very last chorus lasts 3 minutes and 39 seconds and consists of only one word, 'Amen', which sounds rather dull but it is actually stupendous, amazing and thrilling. It's the sort of Amen that would not be out of place in the heavenly realms. The *Messiah* is full of great music, but man that Amen is fabulous. It makes you even more amenable to Handel's inspirational work.

It made me curious about that small word, so I went off to explore online and was surprised by the wealth of knowledge about it. Amen is a word that came to English from Latin, which got it from Greek, which got it from Aramaic, which got it from Hebrew. How's that for a journey! The word is first found in the Old Testament, rooted in ideas like confirmation or dependability or truth. Common meanings are 'verily', 'truly', 'it is true, and 'let it be so.' When Jesus wanted to emphasise something He used it at the beginning of a phrase, 'Amen, Amen I say to you...' which was an unusual usage at the time but that's the Lord for you.

When one says "amen" in response to another's prayer, it serves as an affirmation of agreement with the prayer. Which made me pause for a little, so I had a Monsoon Malabar (it's a coffee blend) and pondered on

what was hovering in my mind. If you say amen at the end of someone else's prayer, you are saying I agree, I think that's true, yes, yes, yes. But what do you say if you don't agree? Do you stay silent or not? I would be grateful for any thoughts on this.

There are things in life we do say but don't really mean. 'Sorry' being a popular one. Or that's a good hair style or that's an artistic tattoo all the way up your arm (what can you say to a relative?) or that's a funny joke (what can you say to someone who has just bought you a beer?)

An amen is a firm word. It's not to be taken lightly. It should not be mechanical and said out of unthinking habit. That would be lamentable. When you say amen after a prayer are you not saying to God, I believe this, this is not just from my lips this is from my heart? I recently read an article by John Rowe called, *Why Christians Should Stop Saying "Amen"*. It was interesting but on consideration the goal should be let our yes be yes, our no be no and our amens be amens. In other words, mean it when we say it.

Henry Girling

Walk toward Jesus

*When my feet do not follow
Or my face has a frown.
Or I'm wagging my finger
Am I letting God down?
Quite likely I'd say,
It might be a bad day
But we have a good God
Who takes sin away.*

*So let your heart guide you
And wear a big grin.
With the Lord on our side
Our bad moods we can bin.
No frown needs to linger,
No wagging that finger.
Instead walk toward Jesus,
The saviour who loves us.*

Denise Sanderson-Estcourt

This poem is inspired by St. Mildred's 14th February Service



Mission Focus

The  **Nehemiah** Project

 **Open Doors**

This month our focus is on the Nehemiah Project. I had the privilege of interviewing Lois Momoh, Development Director at the end of February to find out more about their work during the pandemic and what impact they have had. It was inspiring to hear about the work of the Project, how they have coped in the last 12 months and how we could pray for them as a church. The interview was recorded and the video is available on the church website. For those without access to the internet a short excerpt of the interview is available on pages 12-13.

We're growing...

The Mission Committee has expanded a hundred-fold with the addition of two new members! It's a joy to welcome Larissa King and Maggie Brookes to our small group. There is still room for others with a heart for mission to join us and so please get in touch if you would like to find out more. Anyone can get involved, men or women, young or old. We'd particularly like some men to join so we have a balance to the group and so don't be shy! Kay Nicholls who has been a dedicated and long standing member of the Mission Committee provides a helpful reflection of why she's involved in mission on page 10 to inspire you.

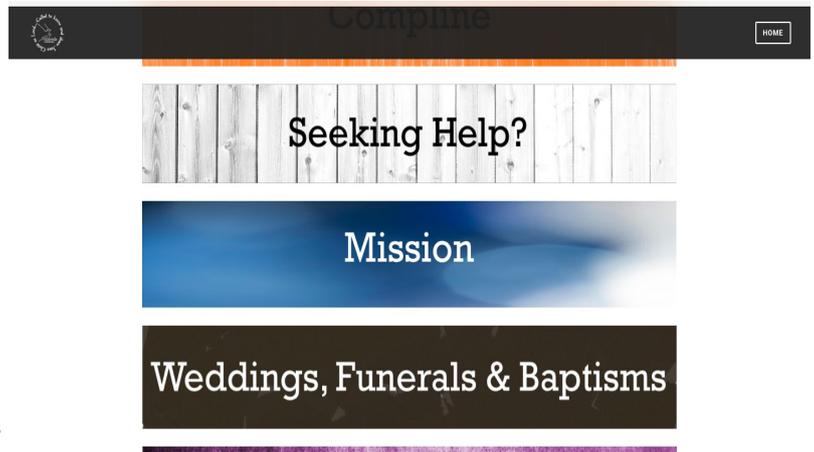
Open Doors sent us a 'Thank you' letter in February for our financial contribution to their work. You can read a copy of the letter on page 11. A copy of the full Impact Report is also available to download from the church website if you would like to find out more about their activities in 2020.

We are really keen to increase our communication and engagement with our mission partners and with you. We hope to share with you more ideas of the different ways you can get involved in the coming months. As well as sharing these updates with you, we would love to hear from you and hear your thoughts so please get in touch. All feedback welcome.

You can contact us at missions@stmildreds.org.uk

Every blessing

Edna Petzen



Hi!

I'm Larissa and I've been a part of St Mildred's for nearly 3 years now. I am excited to be joining the mission committee and looking at how we can serve communities both local and further afield in the name of Jesus.

In the past, I've been part of short-term overseas mission trips to Eastern Europe and Asia serving in practical ways as well as through prayer and literature/Bible distribution. I've also enjoyed being part of local initiatives such as youth/children's camps.

I always imagined I'd end up serving a church abroad but the Lord seem to want me in London for now! I have a passion for social justice and the persecuted church - my heroes are Corrie ten Boom and Brother Andrew.

I look forward to working with the team to prayerfully serve Christ and the community of St Mildred's in its commission to reach out in the name of Jesus.



Larissa King

Hello everyone

I support three of the Christian charities that we partner with. I became involved with them financially and prayerfully, because I knew someone who worked for them.

Two of those people later moved on to other employment, but I remained a supporter. The charities all provide updates and prayer requests, as well as answers to prayer, which is really helpful. I also appreciate those that are clear about how the money is used. I don't feel like I'm anyone special – anyone can take an interest in Mission.”



Maggie Brooks

Why Mission?



In 1949 my father took us by boat to East Africa via Mombasa on the Kenyan coast and from there we travelled inland up to Uganda, where he was part of a team which set up the telephone system. As a family we attended the Anglican Church in Kampala called 'All Saints'.

When I was 1 1/2 yrs old at a Girls Crusader class, after a talk by Hilda Langston, a CMS missionary, about Christians being a lamp upon a lampstand a city upon a hill, I made a firm commitment to Christ, and this was such a significant time for me as within a few months I was sent to boarding school in the UK while my parents and brothers continued to live in Uganda at this time. So, I effectively left home at this stage and learnt to make my own decisions.

In the early sixties my parents returned to the UK and we settled in Edinburgh. We attended a good evangelical church where my earlier commitment was built up and my faith grew. After training as a nurse in Edinburgh, I came to London and qualified as a midwife. It was at this time that I received the "Baptism of the Spirit" which deepened my faith enormously and transformed my prayer life.



So when in the early 1990's I took over the running of the Parent and Toddler Group, the Lord had given me not just a heart for pastoral care but also a desire to share the faith which can transform lives, families and ultimately communities. In 1994 while attending the first Alpha conference at HTB with our then vicar, Malcolm Hill, the Lord gave me a very clear picture of a desert and across this desert came an endless stream of people, pushing prams, pushchairs and carrying babies and children. Many were weary and seemed worn down. So I asked God what does this mean and He replied, "I want you to minister to them, help them, love them and bring them to Me." And so with the Lord's help this is what I have tried to do over the last 29 years.

When in the early 2000s we first met Pat Botwright I went to visit her in Kenya, and getting off the aircraft I immediately remembered all the sights, sounds and atmosphere of Africa. It was just like coming home and see Pat's work in Kisumu, so dependent on faith and the Lord to provide and sustain, so based on the Lord's Word, so Pastoral, so full of the Good news, so determined to support children who had nothing as they sought to gain something. It would be a great privilege to be able to accompany Pat's daughter, Sharon as she hopes (after lockdown) to return to Kenya and scatter Pat's ashes on Lake Victoria.

Kay Nicholls

THANK YOU

We really appreciate your generosity in prayer and provision. Your gift of £3,173.00 received on 15th June 2020, has provided essential practical and spiritual support to persecuted Christians.

In early 2020, before the pandemic, we had the privilege of hosting Pastor Abdalla, from the Alliance Church, Aleppo, Syria. This humble man left a lasting mark on the UK staff - maybe it was his sense of humour (trying to learn cockney rhyming slang), or maybe it was his devotion to his family (sharing photos with our team). But ultimately, the connection was built through our shared love for the Lord Jesus. The difference of course, is that he returned to Aleppo to minister in the midst of trauma within his own life, family and church.



On behalf of Abdalla and the many partners across the persecuted world that he is a symbol of, **thank you!**

Thank you, because this essential ministry to the persecuted church is not possible without you. Your financial support changes lives, your prayers have an effect beyond our comprehension and your love is an anchor of hope that we communicate to them. This combination of your much needed support is an essential reminder to each Christian facing persecution – 'you are not alone'.

This year has been challenging, and we have all shared the impact of the global pandemic. From this experience, we in the UK and Ireland have had a glimpse of what it means to be cut off from church, fellowship and community, something common to the everyday experience of many persecuted Christians across the world. Particularly, we are mindful of the large numbers of secret believers from other faiths, who follow Jesus but have to remain hidden for now. Abdalla told us of the many new Christians within his community, so we give thanks to God for changed lives and the seed of a 'new' church in the Middle East.

Another brother, Pastor Daniel in Iraq, best explains how significant your support is: "**Our supporters help us to go through the dark times.** They are like a light, an encouragement to us, to don't give up in this journey. It's impossible to mention **all the things that we've done with the help of our supporters,** it is too much."

Thank you for supporting believers in some of the most difficult places to follow Jesus. It is our joy to serve them with you.

Yours in Christ,



Andy Worthington
Head of Church Relations
Open Doors UK & Ireland

The Project

The Nehemiah Project is one of our Mission Partners. They provide a home and support to vulnerable men with a history of addictions. I met with Lois Momoh at the end of February to find out how they have been coping over the last 12 months managing to support the men in a COVID world. The video of the interview is available on the church website. Below is an excerpt from the interview.

Edna

Can you tell us a bit about yourself, your background and your role at the Nehemiah Project?

Lois

I've been working at the Nehemiah Project for three years which has gone very fast. I am a professional fundraiser. I've been fundraising for over 25 years. I'm currently the Development Director at the Nehemiah Project, so my role is to raise all the funding needed to keep the five houses that we have operating in South London, and to keep them going so that we can support the men.

I live in Cambridge and so I'm used to working remotely. I used to go into the office pre-COVID once or twice a week and work from home for the rest. So I'm quite used to working from home remotely. I attend a community church in Cambridge.

Edna

Tell us a bit more about the Nehemiah Project and what you do?

Lois

The Nehemiah Project has been operating for over 20 years. It's a Christian based organisation and it provides a home and support for vulnerable men with a history of addiction and crime, and often homelessness. The majority of the men that we support actually come to us directly from prison. We provide a holistic service. When a man joins they're provided with their own room. We give them emergency support and they participate in a 12-week recovery programme. This includes attending a daily group programme which addresses the fundamental issues of addiction and the root causes of their addiction.

It's a cognitive behavioural therapy-based programme and it's delivered by our specialised in-house staff. They also receive one-to-one key work support and we try to help them recover their lives.

A man must be abstinent from drugs and alcohol for at least four weeks prior to coming to us, and really they've had to make that decision to change their lives - that enough is enough and that they want to change their lives, for themselves and their families.

Once they've completed the 12-week programme they then attend a special employment and training programme that we've started and that's in partnership with Clean Sheet - another Christian organisation that works and helps ex-offenders gain employment.

Clean Sheet do a week's course with our men and then provide the ongoing employment and training support. The residents then graduate, we have a lovely graduation ceremony. Some of your church members have already been involved in that in the past and you're all welcome to join us at future graduations. The graduation is an opportunity for us to celebrate the men completing the programme. In some cases, the men that are with us have never completed anything, have never been on a recovery programme, or got any qualifications. It can be a really great step for them to achieve this step. It can be a very moving and touching occasion because they tell us about their journey, Nehemiah has had an impact and what their plans are for the future.

Once our residents complete the program and they've graduated, they're then eligible to move on into our houses. We have five houses in South London. Two are first stage houses. Residents can move into them and stay for up to two years and they still receive support from our staff regularly. They have the key work support, they have house group meetings, they can phone and speak to any member of staff any time. And they also get regularly drug and alcohol tested to keep them on track and motivated. The second stage house prepares them to live independently in the community.

Last year, we supported 41 men despite COVID-19 which is quite staggering. We've just completed our impact report and 16 men graduated from the programme. When we had our first lockdown we supported our men remotely through Zoom sessions, online and phone, and we were fortunate in that the majority of the men at that point had already either completed the programme or were due to complete very shortly.

Edna

How do people hear about your work and how to access your services?

Lois

We have a fantastic Referrals Coordinator, Paul Da Costa, and he liaises with a number of organisations in the community that can refer men to us. For example, different charitable organisations, homelessness organisations, but also more importantly inside prisons and the prison service, the probation service, or the other organisations, chaplains within the prison. We tend to take men from the London prisons. We also take men from other prisons that hear about our work and the men want to be, or have some sort of connection or want to move into the London area. We also have self-referrals as well.

Edna

How do you share the gospel with the men that you support?

Lois

Although we're a Christian based charity, there isn't a Christian element to the recovery programme. We take men of all faiths or no faith within the organisation. There isn't a sort of evangelical side of the program, but what we do have is a weekly prayer group. We have two chaplains that come in - one Protestant and a Catholic chaplain that work together in coming to the charity every week. They've been doing that through Zoom. We've got a number of our residents who attend. We often find that men have gone to the chapels and have quite a lot of connection in prison with the chaplains as well. And they've already started thinking about a relationship with Jesus before they've even come to Nehemiah.

Edna

What are some of the things that you could share with our younger audience about your work?

Lois

All the men that join Nehemiah are either sons, fathers, sometimes grandfathers. Even if they don't have their own children, they have nephews and nieces that they are supportive of and want to develop a relationship with. Often some of our men have lost contact with the families because of the behaviour of being in and out of prison and their lifestyle. It would be really nice for the children and the young people to actually pray for the children of our residents, because they want that relationship with their father, as much as the father wants a relationship with the children. To pray for reconnection so that the relationships can be improved and developed, through the recovery of their fathers, that would be really lovely.

Addiction affects so many people across the society. It doesn't just affect a small group of people. What we find is that a lot of our residents, it seems to be a pattern within their lives, started their addiction at a very young age, sometimes 11 or 12 years old. They may have experimented something at school, got into the wrong crowd. It might just be something quite minor or they feel that it's something quite minor and it develops, and the consequences of those addictions are quite alarming. Young people should really think

about what the consequences might be for experimenting or getting involved in drugs or addictive behaviour.

Edna

How could we as a church regularly pray for you as our mission partner?

Lois

We really need your prayer. It was a challenging year, last year, still challenging. Pray for our residents. We've noticed, especially our new residents coming to us that they've been in prison and they've been locked up for 23 hours of the day with little access to any of the programmes that they usually were on, or any work or educational work or training because of COVID. They've been really, really restricted. And so please pray for them, as they join Nehemiah and adapt to this new way of life and the new programme that they're on. Pray for their mental health.

We've noticed over the last 12 months that more of the men have more complex mental health issues than they had before. And we think that partly could be down to the lockdown as well, and just being very much restricted and not having the family contact that they had previously. It would be a good idea for one church member to pray every day for five minutes every day for a month between the church, that would mean somebody praying every day for a resident and that would be fantastic.

Please also pray for the staff. We've got a wonderful small team doing a great work, but as you can imagine, like everybody else they've been impacted by COVID as well. They've had to adapt to a new way of working, working more electronically than they have been before. They have also had the impact of COVID themselves or the family members, home schooling, and they're still having to try and support our men. Pray for strength and wisdom as they continue to support our men through the recovery programme.

Our IT consultant, Andy, unexpectedly passed away at the end of January. He was 51 and died in his sleep of a heart attack, leaving two daughters. Absolutely devastating. We are also in the middle of an IT upgrade with new computers, new server, new network, etc. And so please pray for Andy's family and the smooth upgrade of our IT system.

We've had some great men successfully graduate continue the journey of recovery over the past year. Please continue to pray for those men that they continue their recovery. It's a daily battle. Pray that God will give them the strength to carry on.

The Facts and Stats

- **64%** of people in prison have **used Class A drugs**.
- **38%** of men in prison report committing offences to get money **to buy drugs**.
- Only around a third of adults in prison (**34%**) in need of substance misuse treatment following release in 2018-19 were **successfully engaged in community based treatment** within 21 days.
- The cost to the taxpayer of holding inmates in our jails is at a record high. The bill is now **£43,213 a year** for every place at our 127 prisons. Compared to this, it costs £15,000 a year to support a man recover their life at Nehemiah.
- Nearly half (**47%**) of all adults receiving treatment in custody during 2018-19 **had problematic alcohol use**.
- A study has estimated the annual total estimated **economic and social cost of reoffending as £18.1bn**.
- Only **22%** (one in five) people leaving prison and referred to the Work Programme have **found a job** which they **held for 6 months** or more.

Our Impact

Despite Covid-19, In the year 2020 the charity worked with 41 men. Of these:

27 engaged with 'A New Future' 12-week first stage recovery programme.

16 Successfully graduated from the programme, the majority moving into our move-on housing or independent living.

28 people including Residents benefitted from Family Support.

Our move-on accommodation housed **21 different men** during the year, all of whom had completed the stage one New Future Programme.

3 Residents were baptised at local churches

Only **5%** of the men who completed our programme in the last five years have returned to prisons, to our knowledge. Compared to this, nationally nearly **50%** of released prisoners reoffend within 12 months and this figure is higher for London prisons.

The Nehemiah Project was able to continue operating, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and worked hard to maintain our high standard of recovery support. Our staff and residents adapted quickly to the new conditions and we managed to complete the programme via Zoom and with a few staff present in each of our houses, we managed to have two graduations in the summer and autumn. We opened a new second stage move-on house at Croydon in November and the same month we decanted our first stage house and office at Streatham ready for refurbishment. The pandemic has changed our way of working. We have supported our Residents both electronically and face-to-face, and all staff have been electronically linked to the charity, making sure that Residents continued with their recovery at the same time as keeping everyone at Nehemiah safe.

The majority of our Residents had completed the recovery programme or were close to completion when the first lockdown started in March, and this meant that the houses were able to maintain a good level of stability at what was a very stressful time for everyone. Whilst in lockdown, we introduced a rent deposit scheme as an incentive to help our Residents concentrate on their recovery with a clear focus towards the future. The past year has been one of the most challenging for Residents, staff, and the charity as a whole. Fewer employment opportunities were available for Residents. We have supported men who because of Covid have increased mental health issues and have not benefited from the usual programmes in prison. Yet despite this, we are still seeing some exceptional individual results of men who have completely changed their lives and have a new future and hope.

"I'm where I am not just because I wanted to change my life but because you helped me also to change and become the man I am today who has his whole life back plus family and is now getting married."

Nehemiah Resident

Diary ~ March 2021

In these uncertain times, it is hard to plan exactly what our diary will be. We have tried to be as accurate as possible. Changes are likely - both in terms of new events appearing and some listed here being cancelled.

Sunday	7	10am Morning Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sundays@six
Monday	8	9.30 am Prayer meeting 9pm Compline
Wednesday	10	8pm Prayer meeting
Thursday	11	Blood donors in church 8pm Alpha Course (online) 9pm Compline
Sunday	14	10am Morning Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting 4pm Virtual Tea 6pm Sundays@six
Monday	15	9.30 am Prayer meeting 9pm Compline
Tuesday	16	8pm Homegroup
Wednesday	17	8pm Homegroup
Thursday	18	8pm Homegroup 8pm Alpha Course (online) 9pm Compline
Sunday	21	10am Morning Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting 6pm Sundays@six
Monday	22	9.30 am Prayer meeting 9pm Compline
Tuesday	23	8pm PCC
Wednesday	24	8pm Prayer Meeting
Thursday	25	8pm Alpha Course (online) 9pm Compline

Diary ~ March 2021

Sunday	28	10am Morning Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting 4pm Virtual Tea 6pm Sundays@six
Monday	29	9.30am Prayer Meeting 9pm Compline
Wednesday	31	8pm Prayer Meeting
Thursday	1	Blood Donors 8pm Maundy Thursday Service
Friday	2	2pm Hour at the Cross
Sunday	4	10am Easter Service 11.30am Prayer Meeting

Businesses to pray for...



Let us continue to pray for God's guidance, wisdom and provision for businesses everywhere, and in particular those local in our parish as they prepare to ease out of the lockdown and return to business.

Baring Road School

Lyca Newsagent

Café Lokum

Baring Food & Wine

Dry Cleaner

Golden Chicken

P & S Tyres

MRC Caribbean & European Cuisine & Jerk Centre

The Sun (Candid Lace)

The Summerfield Pub

Choice Homecare

Chris' Barber

ARCCI Design

Daniel Mercer

Prayer Page

**“I will lift up my eyes to the hills -
From whence comes my help?
My help comes from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.”**

Psalm 121

**Please continue to pray for
Keiko and her parents and her sister**
that as Keiko abides in You the truth of Your
Word will be made know to them.

We give thanks for our technical team keep-
ing us connected every Sunday. Pray for all
those learning technical skills for live stream-
ing our church services.

Pray for all educational establishments
that they will be able to provide for the needs
of all students and their staff.

Building Project:

The last of our planning appeal statements is
due to be submitted by 16th March, and then
everything is out of our hands. Please pray that
the right Planning Inspector is appointed to
determine the appeal, and that he/she will un-
derstand our vision and review our application
thoroughly and fairly. Please pray too for
God's will to be done in the final appeal
decision.

**"The Lord is close to the
broken-hearted and saves those
who are crushed in spirit."
(Psalm 34:18)**

We pray for those of us
grieving the loss of a loved one.
We ask for you to bring comfort in sorrow and
bring hope and joy for the future.

**Comfort to all young people
and their families** affected by loss of family,
friends or relatives. Bring them the hope,
comfort and support that they need.

Bring hope and light into all suffering
as a result of school closures, employment
difficulties, diminished support from
friends, family and services.

Pray for services and events
leading up to and over Easter.
Pray for wisdom and that we will reach
people with the message of hope in Jesus.

Pray for wisdom and direction
as we plan in the light of restriction easing
over the next few months.

**Pray for our children
and young people.**
Many the Lord help us to continue to build
them up in Him.

Pray for the PCC as we consider our
Mission Action Plan in March - may the
Lord direct us to do what builds up His
church and reaches people with His love.

Please pray for my special friends
Philip and Heather Risdon,
that our gracious Lord provide comfort
and healing with their health condition.
From Adrian Cohen

Pray for Alpha course
We pray for those organising these
courses and for all attending.

Father God, I thank you,
for your graciousness in giving hope to
my brother, Raymond, during his hospital
admission. I praise you for your faithful-
ness and restoration. In Jesus Name.
Lee-Ann

Pray for Covenant Home in Kenya.
Especially for the manager, Pauline.
Continue to pray for all those studying
that they remain focused and achieve
their goals.

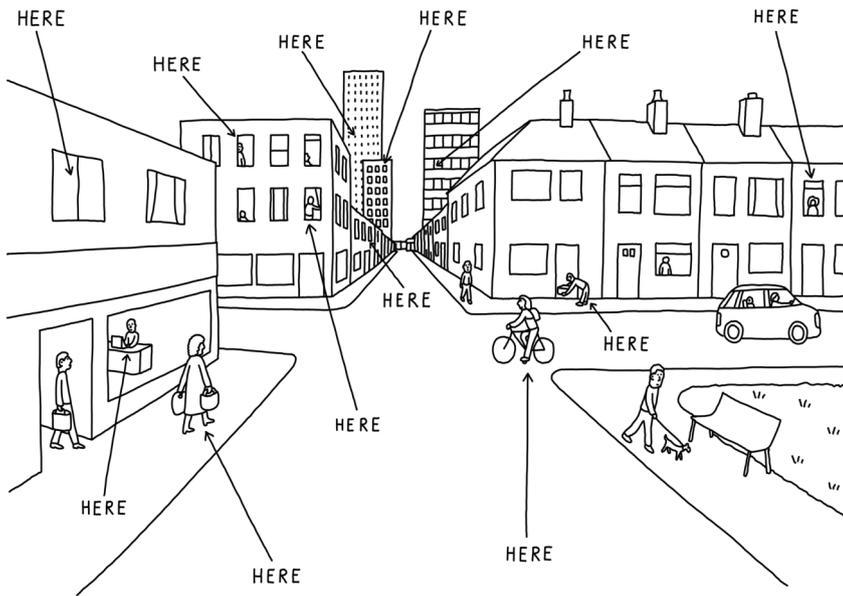
Send Prayers to lisharris68@yahoo.com

Bible Reading Programme

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Beginning						
8/03/21	Isaiah 1:1-20	Isaiah 1:21-31	Isaiah 2:1-22	Isaiah 3:1-26	Isaiah 4:1-6	Isaiah 5:1-17
15/03/21	Isaiah 5:18-30	Isaiah 6:1-13	Isaiah 7:1-25	Isaiah 8:1-10	Isaiah 8:11-22	Isaiah 9:1-12
22/03/21	Isaiah 9:13-21	Isaiah 10:1-19	Isaiah 10:20-34	Isaiah 11:1-16	Isaiah 12:1-6	Isaiah 13:1-22
29/03/21	Isaiah 14:1-23	Isaiah 14:24-32	Isaiah 15:1-9	Isaiah 16:1-14	Isaiah 17:1-14	Isaiah 18:1-7
5/04/21	Isaiah 19:1-15	Isaiah 19:16-20:6	Isaiah 21:1-17	Isaiah 22:1-25	Isaiah 23:1-18	Isaiah 24:1-23

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WHERE THE CHURCH IS



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