

GRAPEvine

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Gifts for building the Temple

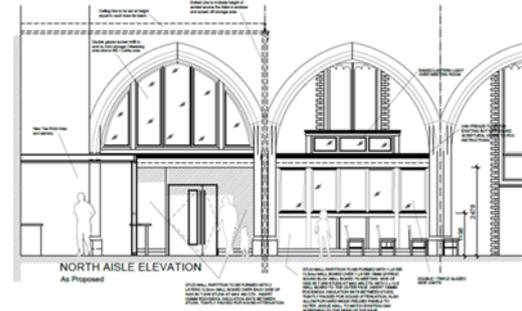
1 Chronicles 29:1, 5b-6, 9

Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the Lord God... Now, who is willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord today?" Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly... The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

In 1926 the St John's Church, Welling building was finished and we have worshipped in it ever since. It has seen 7 vicars and many, many people come and go, each adding to the wonderful tapestry that is the St John's family. In 1977 the present hall was added and the work of transforming our community through Jesus Christ continued a-pace.

We have reached a place now when the wonderful provision of the past needs to be brought up to date. The church needs to be 'self-contained' with an accessible toilet if we are to meet the needs of the less able, and if the church is to be used more during the day. We need a meeting room where confidential prayer can take place, and where smaller meetings can take place – separately heated for the winter. We need more storage, and we need to be able to offer refreshments independently of the kitchen. A space for our young people to meet midweek would also be great.

So that is the plan, and we are near to getting this. A generous legacy from Jackie Crocker kick-started the fund but we will need to raise around an additional £70,000 to see the work started (and completed). Then we will need to spend money on the hall... tired floor, tired kitchen, poor accessibility will all be priorities in the near future.



I have a vision of the Church buildings being more open, becoming more of a daytime community, with people dropping in to pray, to chat, to be more connected. We need to give to get God's house in order as it celebrates its 90th and gets ready for its 100th. Please pray about your response to this challenge. Any money over the costs of our current project will go towards the hall improvements. Do be careful to mark any donations clearly (meeting room project) and make it clear if it is to be gift aided if you pay enough tax to cover your donation. **2 Corinthians 9:7**

Blessings,
Adam

St John's News

End of term is just about here as I write which means a mere 11 days till **SPARK in the Park**, and almost history by the time you read this, but what of those events already history? The last two months have seen a number of opportunities to pray for and/or celebrate people's lives being transformed through Jesus Christ.

If you were able to take part in the Pentecost weekend 24-hour **Thy Kingdom Come** prayer event, you will know what an opportunity it provided to do the thing we know is so important, but often don't prioritise... praying for God's power to be at work in people's lives. Thank you Miriam for preparing so many helpful prayer zones.

At the **Confirmation Service** we were able to share in thanking God for what He has done in the lives of **Wendy Golding**

and **Luke Merrifield**. The Healing service on 25th June, at which **Danielle** shared her personal experience of God's healing, released many people to receive prayer. At the July **Transform Service** we were challenged as Stephanie Harris shared with us more about **IJM** (International Justice Mission) and their frontline work of rescuing children trapped in cybersex slavery. On the Tuesday following some of us met for the monthly **Community Prayer** evening... the subject **IJM!**

July 8th was **JustOne** and it was wonderful to be on our coach heading for the Emirates Stadium, for a much prayed for and anticipated event and, yes, God was so clearly at work that afternoon and we pray, right on into the future, for the many lives touched that day.

Two recent events have involved food, the **Marriage Course Party** and the **Welcome Meal**. I gate crashed both and was so encouraged, not just by the food! **Inspire,**

the mental health support group, has been running for a year and for many has become a greatly appreciated part of St John's. I found the session on autism especially moving and enlightening.

No account of the last two months would be complete without thanking **Doug** for the wonderful **concert/service** he masterminded, celebrating his achieving **forty years as organist at St John's**. It will remain one of my chief highlights of 2017. Many congratulations to **Billy-Jo O'Leary** on her new post with **Home For Good**. Have you managed to hear her being interviewed on Radio Kent?

It was with thankfulness we heard that at last Joan Attree was "In the presence of the One where there is fullness of Joy." So, on into, just maybe, a relaxing August before Autumn arrives!! Enjoy holidays and relaxation when they come your way!

Estelle Woodcock

JustOne

On Saturday the 8th July, the JustOne event had arrived. I had invited one of my best friends, Charlea, who was open and optimistic about learning about God's love, so thought JustOne was a great idea!



Travelling in a coach on the way to the stadium was a good opportunity to get chatting to others on the way. The atmosphere in the stadium was incredible, and the music got everyone dancing and singing in the stands, despite the intense sunshine! After the event my friend received prayer from one of the JustOne team and she felt that praying with someone else really helped. It was truly an amazing and moving event and I can't



wait to have the opportunity to invite my friend to something similar in the future. JustOne has given me the confidence to ask other friends or family members to the next JustOne at the Priestfield Stadium in Gillingham – my home town!

Harriet

Welcome Meals

Alpha small group leader training, and Church research, tells us that people start coming to church, or return to church, for many reasons, but they stay for just one reason: they make friends.

We have people who come and go from church, and those who go also go for many reasons, but for those who come and don't make friends, they usually can last about 6 months before they feel they don't belong. This is a generalisation of course but we recognise that people who join church and join an Alpha group or a housegroup usually make friends and stay. This is one of the strengths of Alpha and other similar programmes based around a small group, (and food) that friendships are made which last. Once we feel we belong, if it isn't already part of our lives, believing grows and other things follow.

Over the years, there will have been many different patterns of welcoming people into the life of St John's, all sorts of welcome meals and similar. A few years ago some of us began praying that, as well as people finding God for the first time (which we absolutely love, and so does He), God would also send us some people who weren't new Christians but were already ready to serve in the church, as we needed more person-power (not that we think of people for what they can give! We are all people first, special and loved by God).

Thanks be to God He did this. They clearly didn't need to attend an Alpha

course, but they did need to make friends and belong. This is hard to achieve by just coming to church services; Sunday mornings alone aren't an ideal time for this to happen, and not everyone finds it easy getting into a small group. We now have a regular pattern of Welcome Meals, which are an opportunity to invite people finding their way into St John's to meet some of us in an informal setting where we have plenty of time to chat over a meal. Our new friends meet others also new, plus several in the welcome team or in leadership, and if they're wanting to join a small group or start serving somewhere, we can talk about that too.

We do our best to invite everyone we spot who might be wanting to stay but inevitably we will miss someone. That's where we all come in. If you meet someone who turns out to be new to St John's and isn't just visiting for a special occasion, please feel free to invite them to the next Welcome Meal. The dates will always go onto the notice sheet and we also specifically invite people.

These are not exclusive occasions! Do keep on trying to talk to people you don't know yet, whether they are new or long-standing. Try a smile, put your hand out to shake theirs, and say "Hello, my name's Linda/Barry/Jean/Tom, what's yours?" It may be hard (and we give each other permission to find it hard!), but it doesn't get much simpler than that.

Kate Foot



Marriage Course

One of the many things that we have been reminded of as part of the Marriage Course is that relationships are so important. They need our time and commitment to get the best out of them. Over the past few months, eleven couples have committed their time to improving their marriage. Whilst we continue to pray that God blesses these couples and their relationships as they reflect on their relationship journey, we would like to thank each and every person who has helped on the course. It has been a journey for the Marriage Course team with many twists and turns!

It was challenging for the team to cook dinner for instance when we discovered on the day of the course that the cooker was broken!

We have been immensely privileged to work alongside so many willing and able people as we have worked together as a team to help facilitate a time and place where these marriage relationships can be developed and improved. It has been hard work, but, then, investing in any relationship is hard work and that is what we have done, together.

Please take a moment to reflect about the many and varied relationships you have. How could you invest in them and improve them? If you are married and want to invest in your relationship, do get in touch and we can let you know more details about the Marriage Course. If you want to know more about helping on the Marriage Course, from cooking to serving to setting and clearing up, please also let us know.

Thanks, **Andrew and Amy Rogers**



Superheroes!

“And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.”



John 13:34-35 is 3Dub's Bible verse for this year. I wanted to tell you this because everyone who has contributed towards our Soul Survivor trip, whether that is giving money or praying for us, has shown so much love to us. This is a real blessing! For those of you who don't know, we organised a Marvel vs DC quiz evening to raise money to help us all get to Soul Survivor this summer. Soul Survivor is a huge Christian event, 'that encourages and equips young people in their relationship with Jesus.' It's so important to us all as family in Christ. We have lots of fun, whether the weather is good or bad (and

we always have a water fight!).

For those who came to our Quiz night, on behalf of 3Dub, I would like to say a GI-NORMOUS thank you! You have helped us to raise £824! The thing that got me the most about our quiz night was, as a youth group, even though we represent different churches, we are always supported by others from the younger and the older generations. This, to me, made the evening special and unique.

May God bless you all,
Charlotte O'Leary

A Fortieth Anniversary

It was back in June 1977 that I was appointed organist of St John's. It therefore seemed appropriate to arrange a celebration, set for Saturday 24th June. A small committee was formed to help plan, and after weeks of planning the day arrived - it certainly turned out to be a day to remember. The gathered choir rehearsal was the first event of the afternoon and it was lovely to see a number of former singers participate – some I had not seen for several years. Totalling over sixty, they made a wonderful sound. The forty-minute rehearsal passed quickly, and guests started to arrive. By the time I gave a brief welcome, the church looked almost full with around three hundred people.

The "Thanksgiving Service" started with a theme of "Remembering Jesus", briefly looking at six key aspects of our Saviour's life (His Birth, In the Desert, As our Shepherd, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, His Ascension) with each part including a reading, a hymn or anthem of special meaning for me and a concluding prayer. I was delighted that Mark Kichenside (our former vicar), was jointly able to lead the service with Danielle. Ron Bewsey and Bill Price (churchwardens forty years ago), Linda Coring and Elizabeth Worthen (former singers), Rev Alan Howard (curate when I was a troublesome teenager!) were chosen as the Bible readers and Keith Mackley led the prayers. Adam gave the "Thought for the Day", initially reminding us what names mean and much humour was had as after explaining his own name (the original sinner), one of the church banners crashed to the floor! He also reflected on Zephaniah 3:17 and the immense value



Psalms, Hymns and Songs can have in our walk with God.

The second part of the afternoon was a "Celebration Concert" featuring a variety of music with different friends performing. A Purcell vocal duet "Sound the Trumpet" sung by Alison Hawthorn and Miriam Giles started the proceedings, leading nicely into the famous Trumpet Voluntary. Next came two pieces transcribed for the piano - an arrangement of the Holst's Jupiter Theme ("I vow to Thee my country") for six hands at one piano (Kate Foot, Doug, Frank Roddy) and then Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance March No 1" in a duet arrangement (Peter Finney, Doug) with

audience participation as the famous theme was played. The gathered choir then sang the Stainer's famous and moving arrangement of John 3:16-17 "God so loved the world".

A fun piece for twelve hands at two pianos followed (my thanks to Marilyn Davey, Kate Foot, Peter Finney, Val Gompers, Andrew Lewis, Michael Macey). A friend from my youth, Alison Jackson, then sang Schubert's famous "Ava Maria". An organ duet with Frank Roddy (Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes" March) was great fun - we managed to remember who was playing which manual when and the audience clapped along on the final rendition of the march theme!

The cutting of the three anniversary cakes provided a pause from the music before the final piano duet with Kate Foot ("Tea for Two"). Widor's well-known Toccata on the organ concluded the concert (well not quite, an encore prelude on the famous Londonderry Air). A buffet and plenty of

Rachel Belsham

Hello, my name is Rachel Belsham. This time last year I had just graduated from the University of Exeter where I studied Modern Languages for four years. This included a year abroad which I spent working in Germany and Spain.

For the past year, I have been studying for a Masters in Forensic Linguistics at Cardiff University, the study of language and the law. This can be language in the written law itself but primarily it concerns how language is used at various stages of the justice system (police, courts etc.) or language as forensic evidence. I have really enjoyed being able to study something new this year while still pursuing my love of language.



Currently, I am writing my dissertation which is due in September. This means that in less than two months I will have completely finished my MA. As my time as a student comes to an end, I am beginning to think about life after university and what I would like to do for my career. As of yet, I have no definitive plans and am pretty open to ideas. Over the next few months I will really have to put my trust in God as I embark on new adventures.

Rachel Belsham

time to catch up with old friends followed to round off a very memorable day.

Thanks to so many people who worked behind the scenes, making the day run so smoothly. In particular I must mention Steve and Barbara Rouse, Wendy Cole and Michael Macey. Over my forty years, I have worked with four different vicars, and although two have died, I was delighted that all four families were present; here is a photo of the four vicars' wives, Philippa Kichenside, Jo Worthen, Kay Tong and Kate Foot. I have been truly blessed as I look back over the forty years, both through the many good and occasional more difficult times. Hopefully this brief account gives a flavour of a wonderful afternoon. I was honoured that so many friends made the effort to be present, some having travelled many miles from various parts of the country.



*"Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory Thou o'er death has won!"*

Doug Snow

Soul Food

Soul food has been created so that people can meet with Jesus through literature.

Christian books, carefully selected, that touch on issues such as how to read the Bible, healing, prayer, marriage, parenting, divorce, addiction, bereavement and spiritual warfare are placed in places where they are needed the most. We are looking to create these Soul Food 'hubs' in many places throughout Bexley, giving people the opportunity to know God. We all need to know that God loves us. These hubs could be in places such as prisons, community groups, foodbanks, women's refuges, night shelters and support groups etc. People can then borrow books and return them, ready to be used again.

I have had a very colourful life and experienced all the bad things life can give. My home life as a child was very bad so I experienced bad behaviour until I was 26. I went straight into a violent relationship at 15. I turned to drugs and was an addict for 10 years. I also became a drug dealer and have done time in prison. I was a violent person myself. I lost my daughter and my home; my life was stripped bare. I met my husband a month after I went to prison and he showed me what a normal, loving relationship was like. I am currently living with a few chronic conditions because of the trauma I've experienced. I became a Christian in 2011 and God blessed me with so much in abundance. He healed me and guided me through prayer ministry and reading the Bible and other Christian

books. I am truly blessed to still be alive. I have a huge hunger to help people who have experienced bad things and want to pass on Jesus' healing, love, forgiveness, joy, strength and guidance. As this mission is growing fast, I am so grateful for the help of my sister who herself is also in recovery:

I'm Kirsty; I'm 36 and only now am I starting to understand myself; it's been a long, hard struggle to accept who I am. I've struggled in addiction for around 20 years. However, I am clean and sober now due to the love of our Father God. It's still early days but Jesus is taking away the obsession over my addictions. I had a very tough up bringing with no attachments to any adult. I believe Jesus gave Sharn to help me know what love is. I've come through so much because of the love, mercy and grace of God. I understand what it's like to lose everything and gain it all back. This is why I love the Soul Food project, not because I don't have to buy books ever again, but because God reaches us all through Scripture and the testimonies of others!

Soul Food's dream is quickly becoming a reality. The first is in Hope School, Sidcup, for parents attending the Alpha course. After the course has finished, a full-time hub will be created making the books

available for the whole school community. The second hub is at Inspire, the mental health group at St John's. We also have a hub at Trinity Baptist, at the Foodbank. Finally, there is a hub at the Tuesday evening Cornerstone meeting at Trinity.

Soul Food has only been possible due to others' generosity in giving books and praying. Some lovely authors, such as Joyce Meyer and Rob Parsons, have donated their books to help the project get started. For this mission to continue and grow we will need more to support and catch the vision. If there are books on your shelf that have changed your life and you would like to bless others by donating them please do not hesitate to contact us!

If you can think of a setting that would benefit from a Soul Food hub, please contact us! Soulfooduk@outlook.com. Finally, and most importantly, please pray for the project, that those whose lives are touched will get to know Jesus and that their lives will be transformed by His love.

'Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out of the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.' *Isaiah 58:10*

Sharn Haines

Peru: the Tester family

It has been a privilege to meet Paul, Sarah, Sophia, Emily and Annabelle Tester, our mission partners who live in Peru, in person this year. Baby Annabelle arrived safely in October. I know many of you will remember the prayers requested when Sarah and Paul wanted to start their family - now we praise God for their three beautiful girls. When Paul spoke at church in early February it was exciting to hear about the discipleship work they are doing; it certainly challenged me to consider how I respond to Jesus and share his love.



As the family returned home, others in Lima stepped up a gear, responding to the needs of those around them. Heavy rain has led to flooding and landslides which devastated the country. Over 100 people have died and tens of thousands of homes have been lost. After receiving this information we shared this with Jesus Kids and they wanted to help. The children were encouraged to give as part of their preparation for taking over a family service last month. They gave generously with one of our youngest members emptying his whole money box out; the children gave £33.66 of their own money. We wanted to show how God multiplies what we give and that even a little can make a big difference. With the support of the congregation who bought the children's pennies, we

were (amazingly!) able to send £300 to support the relief effort. But more importantly we prayed. Every penny exchanged served as a reminder to lift Peru up in prayer. I know the children were encouraged to see their contributions growing. A big thank you for your support. This link will lead you to the Facebook page where you can see how the money raised is being used: www.facebook.com/IglesiaAnglicanaPeru

In their latest news Paul and Sarah gave thanks for all the support they have received and ask for our continued prayers for the

victims of the flooding. They are encouraged by the growth in the young people who seek opportunities to help those in need. Pray the discipleship around the diocese develops in all areas. **"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"** *Matthew 5:14-16*. Please continue to pray for the family as Sophia and Mum are still trying to find time for speech therapy, along with the day to day life of raising three small children in Lima.

If you'd like link letters forwarded by email do contact me at sarahdaldson26@hotmail.com
Sarah Coates

BCDO!



This year was my first experience of the Big Church Day Out. I'll be honest and say I was a little hesitant as I've only really been attending church since meeting Peter three years ago. I've always felt welcomed and included by everyone at St John's, but making the leap from morning services to a big Christian festival seemed a little daunting.

As it turns out we had a lovely time! For me personally, as someone still working out my faith and beliefs, I thought I'd feel out of place but this was not the case. We had a great experience as a family and I even knew one of the bands! (Thank you for introducing us to Rend Collective, via Lauren's favourite 'My Lighthouse'.) I think we'd definitely go again, maybe next year Peter will convince me to camp as well...

Clare Finney