

# GRAPEVINE

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## Be a blessing...

### Philippians 4 Final Exhortations

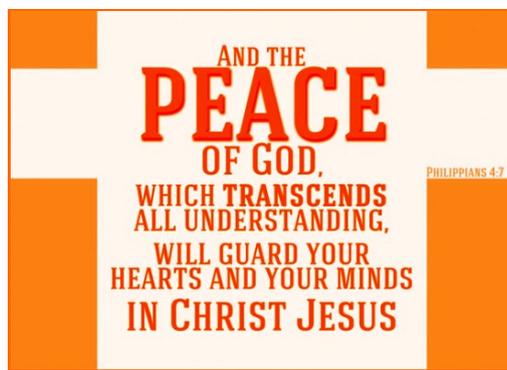
*<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Dear Friends

It is easy to slip into the thought processes and behaviour of the world around us during the uncertainties of the Covid crisis, but we should resist the temptation (very hard I know!). I observe in myself and others a low level of stress and even depressive moods which is a human response to the levels of uncertainty around us but we need to remind ourselves of the wonderful truths contained in Philippians 4v 4-7.

We have so much to rejoice about! As

the old Ishmael song goes 'Jesus acted in the past just to guarantee the future so I know that he cares about me!'



We have prayer as a direct link to a loving Heavenly Father.

We have access to a peace that is bigger than big, a peace that the world does not have!

And God calls us to be people of blessing and Good News to those around us.

Something I have found important is not to become too hooked on the news – or on social media. I would not

go as far as the great Pentecostal minister Smith Wigglesworth who would not read the newspaper stating 'If I read the newspaper I come out dirtier than I went in. If I read my Bible, I come out cleaner than I went in, and I like being clean!' but we do need to balance what the world says with what God says.

Again from Philippians 4 <sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. So may God's Grace and Mercy bless you in the Name of Jesus Christ, and may you in turn be a blessing to all around you.

God bless,

Adam

**Adam Foot, Vicar St. John's Welling and Priest in Charge St. John's Erith**

## St John's News

Summer is gracefully giving way to Autumn, children are back to school, students to University and slowly, slowly we are on the journey of returning to worship together in church. St John's Erith and Bishop Ridley are having their own services and Playgroup are back in session in the Church Hall and as I write we are waiting with bated breath for Boris Johnson's announcements on the tightening of restrictions and how and whether they will impact Christmas celebrations of various kinds.

As we reflect on the last two months it's easy to grieve the holidays we couldn't have, the family celebrations and occasions which didn't happen

BUT Spark@Home DID happen and although much harder than with Spark in the Park to assess its impact, we know that many children and families appreciated the activities and opportunities offered. And we prayed daily for God to be at work in hearts and lives.

We believe He was!

House Groups have managed Summer picnics and Garden get-togethers and are now back to meeting online.

We are delighted to welcome Shannon CausbySmith who is just starting a gap year with us and CRiBS.

Online Alpha is underway... an exciting and different way of introducing people to Jesus

### Family News

Gordon and family are settling into Clifton Road although son Gareth was due to leave for Portsmouth University

on the very same day Dad Gordon was ordained Deacon.

We have had to bid Charlotte O'Leary farewell as she starts her course at Nexus in Coventry.

Sophie Banks has begun at Canterbury Uni, but continues to live at home.

Congratulations to John and Georgina Beech who recently celebrated their Golden wedding anniversary.

Fred Kaul and Bryan Kingham are in hospital as I write (Bryan now just home). We pray for them and their families.

Can it really be December next time? Yes it can!!!!

Till then, enjoy the Autumn and wear your mask!

**Estelle Woodcock**

# SPARK@HOME

completion. Usually Spark in the Park involved every church member somewhere in the planning, prepping and delivery, but Spark@Home needed a much smaller team. However, we needed the power of prayer and created a prayer walk for all people to pray for Spark@Home. Our theme this year was 'Mission: Deep Sea' and Spark Kids invited children on daily missions as S.E.A agents to explore water-related Bible stories. It went live each morning giving access to crafts, songs, videos and stories from our website and Youtube! A treasure map took you to wonderful treasure sites (prayer stations) located all over the community to interact with (safely). We also had a Spark Youth programme that included online hangouts, group gaming and more, which was enjoyed by all. There was also Spark Extra that included all-age activities and competitions that ran throughout the week. Though we can only go by impressions on websites and social media, which doesn't give us an exact picture of its reception, the overall impression is that it went well and we were able to leave it up for the entire summer to bless more people. We're excited for next year's possibilities and what we can collectively do between now and then. Blessings,

**Linzi Golding**

This year, unable to meet in person, we were so excited to move Spark in the Park online, transforming it into Spark@Home! Originally, I was going to use the theme and idea to do an online holiday club for the church for which I am the youth worker, but God showed me it could be something much bigger, spreading His love much further. A team was assembled with just over a month to plan, prepare and deliver SPARK@HOME. It was wonderful; everyone was passionate and that passion, in addition to God given talents, drove us to

member somewhere in the planning, prepping and delivery, but Spark@Home needed a much smaller team. However, we needed the power of prayer and created a prayer walk for all people to pray for Spark@Home. Our theme this year was 'Mission: Deep Sea' and Spark Kids invited children on daily missions as S.E.A agents to explore water-related Bible stories. It went live each morning giving access to crafts, songs, videos and stories from our website and Youtube! A treasure map took you to wonderful treasure sites (prayer stations)

# THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER THAMES

They say the river is often the life of the city. I remember going to see the Queen's Diamond Jubilee River Pageant in June 2012 from Tower Bridge. There were more than a million people who lined the River Thames to pay tribute to Her Majesty, The Queen. Coronations and royal weddings often included spectacular pageants and processions on the Thames and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant was no exception. With over a thousand boats in the flotilla, providing a spectacle, to echo those days of former glory. Power, pageantry and the Thames go a long way back in history. The River Thames was London's grandest street. It acted as stage for royal and civic ceremony for hundreds of years. The greatest thoroughfare connected royal palaces and was a site for pleasure, entertainment and celebration. The river provided a uniquely accessible setting for the public theatre of coronations, royal weddings, state funerals and the Lord Mayor's annual procession. The Thames connected principal royal palaces of Tudor England. In addition to the historic Tower of London, the palaces at Greenwich, Whitehall and Hampton Court were all potent statements of the monarch's power and authority. Royal power was also manifest in the burgeoning Navy with its new dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford on the Thames.

*Psalm 46 verses 4 to 5 says*  
*There is a river,*  
*its streams delight the city of God,*  
*the holy dwelling place of the Most High.*  
*God is within her; she will not be topped.*  
*God will help her when the morning dawns.*

*Revelation 22 verses 1 to 5 says*  
*The source of life*  
*Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their fore-*



*heads. Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.*  
 In September 2020 I went on holiday to the Cotswolds with some friends. One

of the sites a few of us wanted to visit is the Source of the River Thames. Once we arrived at the source at Thames Head on Tewsbury Mead near Kemble in Gloucestershire, we came across many ramblers who were also on a quest for the source of the River Thames to be disappointed to see the source is only marked by some stones. There is a spring underneath those stones and you will only see water at the source when there has been a lot of rainfall causing the water table to rise. There is a stone to the side with the inscription.

**THE CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER THAMES**  
 1857-1974  
 THIS STONE WAS PLACED HERE TO MARK THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER THAMES

The wooden signpost points downstream to the beginnings of a dry river bed stating Thames Barrier London 184 miles 294 km. We got talking to a friendly local lady walking her dog by the source who remarked about the number of ramblers walking past the source on that day. The lady was keen to tell us about the clothiers who poured money into the many churches in the Cotswolds. I asked the lady if she believed in God whose immediate response was "it was rather a personal question". I shared how I became a Christian and what faith in God meant to me.

We prayed discreetly on our way back downstream along the beginnings of a dry river bed for God who is the source of life to pour out His majestic power and life into London and the surrounding counties.

**Mushi Rahman**

# PRAYER COURSE

# LEEDS SOUP RUN



The Men's Group has been following "the Prayer Course" over the last few weeks. It works well for something you can go through with friends on Zoom even though you have

to watch the 15 minute video by yourself, so it is a good one for this time of not being able to get together so much and it is more up to us as individuals to keep our relationship with God strong and prayer is a big part of that.

Pete Greig (you might know of him from the 24/7 prayer movement, Spring Harvest, Big Church Day Out, etc) presents the course in what we thought was a very interesting and engaging way with a different theme each week based upon each line of the Lord's Prayer. I have done it three or four times over the years and each time it has felt fresh and relevant.

I know that the guys in the Men's Group have found it useful and also a good way of bonding. I would think it would be very good to do by yourself. It should help you remain or become an effective pray-er so that has to be good at a time when there is a danger of drifting into a more distant relationship with God as well as with your church. You can find all the sessions at [prayercourse.org](http://prayercourse.org) (all free) and on youtube.

**Bob Morris**

In the early 1970's I moved into a small Christian commune in Leeds which was in two adjoining terraced houses with a door way knocked through between the front bedroom walls of each house! One night one of the leaders of the commune and I were talking about my experience of being involved with a soup run whilst volunteering with St Mungo's in London. After chatting, he thought it would be a good thing for us to pray about the possibility of starting a soup run in Leeds.

We both spent all night in prayer at the end of which we felt that God was wanting us to start the soup run. The next morning, we visited both the Samaritans office and St George's church in the centre of Leeds. The people we spoke to told us that they thought there were very few people sleeping rough. But we both felt it was right to go ahead with what we believed God was directing us to do.

We started off doing a weekly soup run taking homemade soup and rolls, made with donations by friends in the church. Gradually the number of days increased to five each week. Sometimes we fed five people and other nights thirty. We would of course talk to the men and women about Jesus.

We invited one of the homeless men to join us for a meal in the commune. He didn't arrive, but his friend knocked on the door and said his mate wouldn't be coming but he had come instead! That same night this man became a Christian and moved into the commune with us and stayed for a number of years.

A number of years later the soup run was taken over by Leeds City Mission.

**Paul Hoyle**



# Youth Alpha: Autumn 2019

The Church Youth Leaders in the Borough are increasingly working together on various projects for young people, and in Autumn 2019, several groups joined together to run another Youth Alpha. We settled on Sunday nights this time, because four groups had Sunday as their regular meeting night, but there was also a Friday course at Sidcup Baptist Church and a couple of Boys Brigade groups in Crayford and Bexleyheath.

Belvedere Baptist Church (BBC), Bexley Christian Life Centre, Bexleyheath (BCLC), 3dub and Dubsters, plus another couple of teens from other churches, joined together to eat (always a great idea), listen, discuss, worship and socialise for 10 weeks from 5-7pm at BCLC.

The meals were shared out between the churches to provide (thanks St John's!), and youth leaders took turns in leading the evenings, with the brilliant new Youth Alpha talks online.

Charlotte: "It was good to be able to do Youth Alpha again (last time was 4 years ago) having matured a lot in faith since then. The talks were helpful, and the Q&A's being interwoven was good. Because we laughed and joked, we really learnt."

Jess: "The worship was good, I found lots of new people as well. I am not very emotional usually during worship, but God challenged me to let my guard down and allow Him to touch me, which was good for me.

All: "We really learnt a lot about each other and consolidated relationships. It was nice to have a new youth leader each week leading each group, they were all good in different ways. Charlotte and Linzi put together a youth band from the different



residential centre in Ashford.

We handed the end of course Celebration over to the young people themselves to lead, and Martha gave her first talk – on 1 Timothy 4 v 12 about not letting people look down on you because you are young, but setting an example to believers in speech conduct, love, faith and purity.

Charlotte led a band drawn from the churches in worship, there was testimony, and a good period of time to allow God to move in ministry with opportunity to pray for one another and receive from God.

Linzi: "I loved being able to enable others to do the service. The words were from them, the music was from them, and I enjoyed being part of a Young People's group led by Charlotte."

Martha: "It felt really great being part of the older people in the service – all a part of it together."

We've always found the weekend away to be a changing point for many lives, and this was no exception.

Leader: "The weekend away was so fun, apart from the archery! We enjoyed much encouragement being

shouted by the young people to get us up the massively high pole for the Leap of Faith, and they encouraged each other too!" "Seeing people conquer their fears was amazing." "It was nice to sit on different tables each meal. Everyone was looking out for each other."

Dubsters will likewise have many comments to make on the course and the weekend, perhaps you could ask one of them.

**3dub**

**Jesus Kids is now on a Zoom meeting!** It is excellent to see Linzi and the other Jesus Kids and do fun



crafts, worship songs and Bible learning together on a Sunday morning. In school from late March we went to the Google Classroom during lockdown and it

was hard to receive work, mainly because you never know when it is coming. I miss seeing my extended family, but most of the time I feel happy and I often get to see them on Zoom, House Party, WhatsApp or Messenger. I can't wait to see them again when lockdown is over.

On Wednesday's at 11am I enjoyed the St John's Wednesday Weekly Zoom but I'm back at school now so I don't do that any more.

**A member of Jesus Kids**

## Jesus, Covid & Me

I had to stop blessing shops, and unexpectedly from May 14<sup>th</sup>, began to tell people about my Christian testimony on my morning jog on Bursted Woods Common. I pray "come, Holy Spirit" and it takes away my fear, and makes me laugh. The dog walkers now seem to avoid me, but God finds new friends for me most days. I have become a big fan of the You Tube videos of John Wimber, Blaine Cook, and Pete Greig.



Jenny and I pray on the St John's Zoom prayer meetings, and my house group meets on Zoom, I enjoy group prayers, though recently we had a picnic on Bursted Woods, which was fun. I celebrated my seventieth birthday on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and having delicate health, am wary about covid risks, but I do food shop at Sainsburys locally, after my jog.

We read a great deal; I like crime thrillers.

**Mike Cosser**



### CMS across Latin America

Throughout the pandemic Paul has continued to lead the work of CMS in the region. This has included encouraging and sup-

porting our people in mission in Latin America one-to-one and in weekly group calls. All of them face very challenging circumstances so do please pray for them. Each of us has had to adapt our ways of engaging in God's mission but we are seeing the creativity of God's Spirit as we do that. As an organisation we continue to look to the future and to seek God's vision for us in a post-pandemic world. Paul has been contributing to the ongoing strategic review process. All of this from a laptop in the back room which also serves as a shoe cupboard and general dumping ground!

#### Praise points:

- We continue to be healthy and able to encourage others
- For the healing of many who have contracted the virus

#### Prayer points:

- For Latin America (particularly Peru) as it continues to be the epicentre of the pandemic
- For those suffering illness, loss of loved ones or poverty due to COVID-19 across the region
- For God to uphold our church at this challenging time
- For God's guidance through the CMS strategic review process
- For continued good physical and mental health
- For Sophia (8), Emily (6) and Annabelle (3) to have moments of joy every day and to be allowed to go out for longer and further afield



## INTRODUCING SHANNON



A warm welcome to Shannon who joins the team at St John's Welling for a year, working with both the children and young people plus the wider church.

If you thought Shannon looked familiar, you may recognise her as a member of 3dub, or from the St John's Welling 'Growing Leaders' course, or even from leading Youth Services.

This year Shannon is the St John's Welling KORU placement (albeit the first one without a German accent!) and will be out and about (in a socially distanced way) in our local schools as she engages in her work with CRiBS.

Please join us in wishing Shannon every success as she embraces all her new roles.

- For patience for the girls as they deal with the frustrations of online learning

Thank you for encouraging us and building us up!  
With love and prayers,

**Paul, Sarah, Sophia, Emily and Annabelle**