

St. George's Dagenham

April 2020

Thanks for your partnership with us in gospel work. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please email shona.hannant@virgin.net or write to 99a Oxlow Lane, Dagenham, RM9 5XD

Update on a new minister for St George's

The church Council had a helpful meeting with the Archdeacon and Bishop Rod in January giving us the go ahead to advertise for a new minister. With the parish profile completed, the advert went out in February and March. April 8th is due to be the closing date for applications and we had set May 6th/7th for interviews. However, Chelmsford Diocese have now paused the recruitment process because of coronavirus. We can't yet tell when things might get re-started. We are very thankful for our gospel partnership with other local churches and last week we joined with Dagenham Parish Church for their Sunday service via zoom.

Praise God for likeminded gospel churches in our locality and especially our partnership with DPC

Please pray the advert will attract the right man for the job, a man who loves Jesus and loves people

Please pray we will continue to trust in God's good timing, especially as the recruitment process is now paused

Holiday Bible Club

We had a great time during half term at our '**down on the farm**' holiday club, where we met a farmer and his animals. Around 60 children came this year. Some of the children were from church families, others from midweek clubs and local schools and a few from further afield. A couple of years ago we moved holiday club from August to February in the hope of gathering more children from Eastern European families. That was definitely true this year – out of a total of 60 children we think about 11 were from an Eastern European backgrounds. It was great to come together to have fun learning about Jesus.

Each morning we were put through our paces with 'animal aerobics' led by the farmer and his animals. We sang songs, we played games outside in the MUGA (we had sunshine every morning). We watched a drama and we heard God's Word as we looked at parables from Luke's gospel. On Monday we heard how Jesus searches for those who are lost. On Tuesday we heard how we foolishly ignore God and look for happiness elsewhere. On Wednesday we heard how Jesus welcomes with open arms all those who turn back to him. We ended with a family event on Wednesday evening which was well attended.

Praise God for all who came and heard God's Word

Please pray for growing connections with these new families we'd love to invite some to do Christianity Explored

Families

For the last 2 Sundays we have been unable to meet in our usual way because of the coronavirus. It looks like it may be some weeks before we can gather on a Sunday as we used to. As well as meeting via zoom we have been sending out a 'Faith in kids' podcasts to encourage parents of the church families to be talking about God's Word with their children. This week Shona will be delivering activity packs for the children who come to Sunday club. Some of the parents are more confident than others at teaching their children about the Lord Jesus. It was a great encouragement to hear about one 12 year old who had taken the initiative to read the Bible with his younger siblings.

Praise God for many good resources that are available to help us teach God's Word to children

Please pray for the parents at St George's to grow in confidence and ability to teach their children about Jesus

Crèche

We are very thankful for the team of willing helpers who faithfully serve in crèche week by week. This work is largely unseen by the congregation but such a valuable ministry. Last term these children have been hearing some stories from Luke's gospel. Each Sunday they sing along to some Christian songs on CD, they watch the Bible story on DVD and then have a simple craft activity and make something to take home.

Praise God for the team who serve these young children and the church by heling in crèche

Please pray for these very little ones to grow up knowing God as their loving heavenly Father and trusting in his son Jesus

Sunday Club (4-7s)

This term we spent 4 weeks hearing from the story of Jonah about what God is like and his dealings with both his people (Jonah) and with his enemies (Ninevites). Since then we've been hearing from Luke's gospel about some of the people Jesus met. It's been encouraging to have some more people join the team who teach this age-group. Previously we have mentioned M who was struggling to settle and can be quite tricky to manage. It's been great to see some small steps of progress with him. We've also welcomed some new children B & J, their Mum J has recently professed faith and had begun to join us on Sundays.

Praise God for progress with M and for bringing B and J under the sound of the gospel

Praise God for the leaders who regularly teach this age-group

Please pray for leaders to connect well with the children and teach the truth plainly

Please pray for children to be growing in their love for the Lord Jesus

Sunday Club(8-11s)

It's been great to welcome a new leader onto the team who teach this age-group on Sunday mornings and we thank God for how this work is developing. It is a delight to see these children grasping new truths from God's Word and really encouraging to hear them pray. A number of these children will pray out loud during open time of prayer in the main service. It is great to see their confidence in approaching their heavenly Father. Some in this group can be disruptive and some Sunday's it's a challenge to keep the group on track

Thank God for the leaders teaching these children week by week

Thank God that there are signs of spiritual life in these young people

Please pray we'll remember it's a privilege to teach these children and the Lord will give us grace and patience when they are hard work!

Little fishes (4-7s)

This term at little fishes we have been learning from the first half of Mark's gospel about Jesus authority. Numbers have picked up with C and C joining us and we have around 15 children coming regularly. Each week we play some games (to burn off some energy) we have refreshments, we hear a Bible talk and we make something to take home (sitting round tables gives the opportunity to chat with the children about what they heard in the talk). We have seen some of the more cautious children come out of their shells, participate more and really grow in confidence.

Thank God for the new children joining us and especially C and C

Please pray for growing relationships with parents and opportunities to speak with them about Jesus

Wednesday Club (7-11s)

This club continues to be full (30 children) and there are some children on a waiting list. We play games, get creative with craft activities, do sport in the MUGA and hear a talk from the Bible. Most weeks after the Bible talk there is an opportunity to ask questions and we're often amazed at how carefully children listen and what they ask.

When numbers were low one week because of a school disco S said 'who'd go to a school disco when you can come here and learn about Jesus'. On hearing about the raising of Jairus' daughter J who is new to club and new to the Bible said 'what you mean she got a second chance at life' which provided a perfect opportunity to explain that we all have the offer of second chance at life!

Praise God for freedom to teach the truth of God's Word to children who are not from church families

In June a number of these children would have been due to move up to TGI's. We can't yet tell how long clubs will be closed due to coronavirus and when things will get back to normal.

Please pray that we're able to keep in contact through the lockdown and that we see them back at clubs once things re-open

TGI/Sound (11-18s)

This term at TGI Friday/Sound we have been looking at the book of Daniel where we've seen God's promise of a new kingdom that will last forever. After the talk we split up into small groups and we've had encouraging discussions in those groups. We now have a strong team of 7 leaders and around 15 teenagers who come regularly. A massive encouragement has been P who said that she used to dislike the Bible teaching but now says that's what she comes for. Every other week, the young people help to cook and we all sit down and eat dinner together. This is a great time for discussion and has really helped in building a closer relationship with the young people.

Praise God for the 15 regular teenagers that come week by week

Please pray that the Word of God will shape the way these young people think and live

Schools

Shona has continued to visit Richard Alibon school regularly. Each week in the nursery there's an opportunity to read a Bible story and sing a Christian song with the whole class. Sadly, Alibon school haven't made it to St George's for a school service this academic year. In October they had no music teacher, in December the new music teacher was off sick and then all schools shut early this term before we had a chance to hold as Easter service.

Please pray this school will remain open for the gospel and services in St George's will become the norm once again

Shona also visits the nursery class in Hunters Hall school each week. Earlier this term a class teacher got in touch to arrange for her year group to come and visit St George's building and hear about what Christians believe. In early March (just before lockdown) three classes of year 2 children came to visit.

Praise God for such amazing opportunities with children who otherwise may never set foot in a church building

Please pray that once restrictions are lifted Shona's visits to Hunters Hall will resume

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