

St John's Mission Newsletter

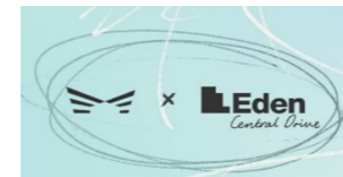
Reaching out at home and overseas

Mission Sunday 9th July 2023



Go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you

Matthew 28:18-20



Eden Team @ Beacon Church Blackpool
Matt & Hannah Lockwood

Here are a couple of highlights from the past few months (if you'd like to receive our newsletter please email

matt@beaconblackpool.co.uk)

Home — Beacon now has a permanent home! This is such a story of God's provision and I can't wait to share it with you in full. Here's a snapshot. Our old building is falling down and we can't afford to fix it. For the last 3 years, Beacon has been renting a hall across the road.

We had the money to buy it but after the week before Easter we could no longer afford to rent; we would have been homeless by Easter Sunday. Yet God came through. The landlord agreed to sell and literally the day the rent was due we completed. God is good (all the time), all the time (God is good)!

Baptisms — on Easter Sunday we had the privilege and joy of baptising 10 of our family who have all given their lives to Jesus after the past year.

Coronation Celebration — we LOVE an opportunity to have a party and the Coronation gave us the perfect excuse! We were able to close the road right outside the Church, fill it with games, face-painting, chalk pictures, huge bouncy castle and BBQ. Nearly 200 people from our neighbourhood joined us including the Morris Dancing Troupe.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Season — the next season has potential to bring with it a fair amount of change and challenge for us as a family and Church. Pray that we'd know God's peace.
- Discipleship — thank God for the new believers in our community. Pray for God's protection over them as they learn and seek to walk with Jesus.
- In Step — pray that we'd keep in step with the Lord. Pray that we'd have eyes to see what He is doing and join in with Him.



British Youth For Christ, Neil O'Boyle, National Director

26 years ago when Neil was the youth pastor at St. Johns and we lived in the basement at the church apartment on St. Johns road we brought home our first baby Jake from Greenwich hospital! Now, Jake has just become a dad himself, instantly making us grandparents! Jake and Grace and baby Jude live in Arizona and Joy was able to fly out and meet the newest addition to the family! The rest of us could only watch on from afar and look forward to meeting little Jude in time. Joy is now working 4 days a week as a counsellor for Marie Currie, Lucy has just graduated with her degree in theology and has in recent days secured a church ministry job in Wimbledon, starting in September! Molly has finished her first year at Liverpool University studying performing arts, and Maisey takes a 60 minute train ride in to Birmingham every day to study at Arts College. We are all doing well, even Billy the dog, though he had an unfortunate encounter with a grass seed in his ear, all sorted now!

Neil has been leading British Youth for Christ through major change as it repositions itself to support as many as 10,000 churches in youth outreach across the nation! The team are currently in development and piloting mode with a hard launch on its new strategy in January. It hasn't been easy as the current financial crisis has hit the charity sector and Neil had the less than pleasant task of losing around a dozen staff to redundancy. So with less staff and more pressure he champions the team onwards to change in its task of serving the 60 Youth for Christ Centres like Greenwich and seeking to encourage and resource the church to reach unchurched young people within the community.

Please do pray for the challenges associated with the changes at Youth for Christ, for the opportunities to mobilise local mission across the nation and the resources to fuel growth.

Please do pray for Neil for strength and encouragement to remain committed to core convictions. Joy for her increased hours as a counsellor, for Jake and Grace as they learn the ropes of being parents with baby Jude, for Lucy as she is about to start her new job, for Molly with her second year studies at University and for Maisey in her last year at Arts College.

We are so grateful to St. Johns for its ongoing love and support.



Japanese Fresh Expressions – Simon & Minako Hall

"The Japanese Anglican Church (South East London) has returned to an alternate format of Bible study and topic discussion monthly meetings at St Hugh's Bermondsey. On odd-numbered months, we are continuing a Bible study of the life of David; on even-numbered months we discuss the Christian themes behind a topical subject. For our April meeting, which fell on Easter Sunday, we attended the choral evensong at Southwark Cathedral. In our June meeting, we compared and discussed the late Queen's address to the nation from 2020 with the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, focussing on the changing use of the phrase "we will meet again". We also looked at the Archbishop's sermon, and the symbolism of anointing, during the coronation of King Charles III, linking it with accounts of the anointing of kings in the Old Testament. The British royal family is of general interest to Japanese people, so is a good topic for discussion with non-Christians.

The fortnightly meetings here at St John's Blackheath continue online via Zoom where schedules permit, looking at the Japanese Bible together. We are deciding on the next book of the Bible to be the focus of our study. Minako is spending more time in her role as leader of the welfare sub-group of the Japan Association in the UK, helping to make new connections with the Japanese community. Minako has now completed her second year of theology studies at St Augustine's College as part of her training to become a Licenced Lay Pioneer in Southwark Diocese. The licencing service will take place on Sunday 8th October at Southwark Cathedral – all are welcome to attend.

Please remember us in your prayers:

for the leaders to be equipped as servants of God;

for Minako's licencing at Southwark on 8th October 2023

for a member of the group who is coming closer to faith in Christ

for growth in the church in Japan reaching out to those who have not yet acknowledged Christ as their saviour."



Neema Crafts, Iringa Tanzania, Update by Ben & Katy Ray

It was really great having Mum/Bibi come over to help us out with the kids recently - whilst Katy had her op in SA. It was probably her final time to come to Iringa as we look to move to Arusha next month.

I'm really pleased to say, Katy's operation couldn't have gone better, Katy has been back in Iringa for a couple of weeks now and is walking without a crutch. Thank you for your prayers! It was quite a big operation - they had to cut away her ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) and reconstruct one using pieces of her hamstring. So, it will take about six months of physio to get her back to normal again.

In terms of prayers, please could we ask for prayers for the following:

Praise God for Hannah and Joseph Adams (our replacement managers at Neema) and how well they are coping with life in Tanzania. Please pray for their swift uptake of Kiswahili and Tanzanian Sign Language and that their handover time with Katy and Ben can equip them sufficiently for all they will be taking on.

Praise God for CMS's support of Ben and Katy's move to Arusha. Please pray that they will find the right home there in Arusha, for the packing up and goodbyes in Iringa (set for mid-August) and that God will meet their needs for the additional schooling and rent. We are currently working with CMS to apply for trust funding for the school fees.

Please pray for a swift recovery for Katy's knee after the operation. She is expected to need physiotherapy for at least the next 6 months.

Please pray for SAFL Tanzania as it looks to grow its work to support the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalised in Tanzania. We have just set up a new office in Iringa. Please pray for God's clear guidance as to what to prioritise and for his provision for the works he has planned.

- Please pray for Zachary (9), Alessia (7) and Julia (4) as they say goodbye to the friends and home that they love. Pray that they make good friends very quickly in Arusha and really enjoy their new school.
- Please pray for the ongoing work of Neema Crafts and for the trainees and staff there, that God would continue to sustain and develop the work he has started there.



Rachel & Bene Medhurst - Hebron School, Ooty, India

Praise:

- a wonderful end to the school year where we were able to celebrate the graduating class
- we loved having some visitors this semester! Rosie and Roger Medhurst enjoyed 3 weeks with us and got to see our work at Hebron
- thankful to God for his provision for new staff and, especially, for the appointment of our new Principal: Richard Naylor

Prayer:

- lots of staff left at the end of this year for a number of reasons and we continue to pray that God would send the perfect people to come and work at Hebron
- for our various roles at the school. Bene - Vice Principal for welfare/PE teacher and Dorm Parent. Rachel - International Guest coordinator (overseeing our volunteer program), drama teacher and Dorm Parent.
- for our boys. Eden (going into year 6), Judah (going into year 4) and Shiloh (going into year 2). For continued friendships and schooling.
- for God to continue to bless the various families that we serve who are working in various parts of South Asia



**Sports Chaplaincy UK,
Matt Baker, National Director for England**

twitter @gambettola68 and Sports Chaplaincy UK @sportchaplaincy

It seems incredible but I am just starting my 25th season as chaplain at Charlton!

And whilst the club aren't in as high a position as when I started (we were in the Premier League then) chaplaincy is in its strongest position ever. I have a good relationship with the current manager, Dean Holden, Gareth Morgan continues to do a great job with the academy and Kathryn Sales is still very involved with the women's team. As always there will be players coming and going now that pre-season training has started but that will give new opportunity for staff to be cared for and some players to be disciplined.

Give thanks for chaplaincy throughout the years & please pray for ongoing favour and opportunity for chaplaincy across the club

Although there was a month off from games the closed season hasn't really seen a break from chaplaincy. Ahead of the new season we have seen an appointment at QPR and new chaplains have been through induction training to be placed at Birmingham, Huddersfield & Norwich. I have also had time with other members of staff & trustees to plan and strategize for the coming year. Chaplaincy in motor sport continues to grow and we now have 15 chaplains involved at events. Plans for this year's annual conference are also taking shape with two 1-day conferences planned for 5th & 12th October in Wrexham and Reading respectively.

- **Please pray for the successful appointments of those chaplains who have been trained**
- **Pray for the ongoing organisation of the annual conference**

Give thanks for the growth in chaplaincy in motor sport and pray for discussions around chaplaincy in golf

Finance continues to be a big issue for the charity but we have had some positive news. My CEO, Warren Evans & my assistant, Christian Wienkamp recently completed a sponsored climb of the 5 peaks in the UK & Ireland to raise funds. If you would like to sponsor you still can <https://sportschaplaincy.org.uk/fivepeak/>

Also, the EFL (English Football League) have slightly increased their contribution but it would be really helpful if the Premier League & Professional Footballers' Association followed suit.



Greenwich Youth For Christ, Joe Crisp-Hihn, Director

After a number of years of consolidation, stripping back and running as a small, yet efficient and far reaching organisation, thanks to partnering with the local church, we are looking to grow our own staff team. We are in a position to recruit for a part time schools and youth worker who will help to develop and run more schools work and strengthen our current youth work delivery alongside local churches. It is a really exciting time to be working for GYFC, the new groups we have launched are all seeing growth and are providing opportunities for churches to engage with and impact young people in their communities. We are meeting between 80-100 young people, at the Tramshed in Woolwich, on Friday afternoons with Trinity Vineyard Church. We have met over 20 young people from around the Earl Rise estate through our group meeting on Wednesday evenings at Johns Plumstead. We also ran our 3rd "Gathering" event at St Johns on the 1st of July. Nearly 100 young people from 9 churches coming together to praise God and spend time with other Christians locally.

- Please pray for that we are able to make a good appointment to help grow our team.
- Please pray for The Tramshed group in Woolwich, for wisdom in managing the large numbers and for the young people's safety.
- Please pray for the churches where we host groups, that they remain keen to develop and build relationships with the young people we meet and draw them into the life of the church.
- Please pray for The Gathering. That it continues to be a place where young people can come together to meet with God and deepen their faith.
- Pray for Youth Workers, employed and voluntary, who share the privilege and responsibility of passing on the teachings of Jesus to the next generation.



Greenwich Street Pastors - Update by Christine Legg

It is over two and a half years since we resumed our 'soft' patrols since lockdown. We go out for a couple of hours from 7pm – 9pm or 10pm, instead of 9pm – 1 am and perhaps our times will change as needs change. Woolwich is getting busier and there are more people in General Gordon Square and Woolwich Royal Arsenal Riverside. The summer weather brings people out and we have more conversations. When we meet new homeless people and can give them sustenance and remind them about WSUP and The Day Centre, which GWNS has opened three days a week to get showers, warm food, clothing and advice. GSP patrol the streets of Woolwich on Friday Nights. We remain a force for good on the streets as we are there to Care, Listen and Help. We can help in situations where other organisations are seen as threatening. We are usually able to assist people in a number of practical ways, providing space blankets, water, and snacks. Giving out information on how to access the Food Bank, WSUP and The Day Centre. For many, just stopping and having a conversation helps them feel less lonely and know that someone cares about them.

If you are interested in knowing more about being a Street Pastor, caring, listening and helping people, please speak to Christine Legg, Valerie Lester or Philip Landergan.

For your prayers we would ask:

- Please pray for all of our Greenwich Street Pastors; especially for those who are key workers. Since the pandemic our numbers are low, please pray that people in the churches who support us, will express an interest in the work of GSP and join us for an evening as an observer, to find out what it is like.
- Please pray for Yoma as she starts her training in September and when she joins us on a Friday night. Please pray that this will be the beginning of more people joining GSP.
- Please pray for the homeless we meet, that the Council will soon be able to help them with accommodation.
- Please pray for those who are lonely, that through conversations they come to know God's love for them. Please pray for those who have been made redundant and those affected by the increase in cost of living.



Following Jesus where the need is greatest. Update Ann Hill

Ethiopia Crisis Appeal: In southern Ethiopia, over 20 million people do not have enough to eat as the harvests have failed 5 times in a row. Tearfund is appealing for funds to continue its work with the local church (the Ethiopian Guenet Church Development and Welfare Organization) to provide assistance and improve community resilience for the long term.

For the pastoral communities of Borena (in the Oromia region), cattle have died leaving people without their usual means of trading and earning a living. Some families are desperately cutting branches from trees to sell the firewood for food as a last resort. As the drought persists, exacerbated by climate change, a lack of access to food and safe water weakens people's immunity and increases their vulnerability to diseases. Funds raised by Tearfund's appeal will help families protect and adapt their livelihoods to the changing climate and avoid starvation. In some cases this means buying new livestock, especially sheep and goats, which are more able to withstand drought than cattle. To reduce dependency on livestock, families will be shown agricultural techniques that are more climate resilient and help grow food even as the climate crisis worsens. Self-help groups to enable communities to support each other in the long term will also be set up. Tearfund's country director in Ethiopia says: "For rural communities, who rely on farming, the drought has made their way of life impossible. It also means that, when the rains do come, the land struggles to absorb the water like it used to. This leads to flash flooding – as the water has nowhere to go. Homes and what little crops or cattle are left are washed away. There are some techniques that we can offer to improve farming outcomes, but the situation is very serious and we need more resources".

Please pray for:

- provision of food, medicines and clean water for those in desperate need.
- refreshing seasonal rain so that the life families enjoyed in the past will come again.
- Tearfund's partner churches that they be equipped to help farmers adapt to the changing climate