

# Network

FEBRUARY 2021



JOURNEYS OF FAITH | UPDATE ON SEEDLES YARD | MISSION PARTNERS



## Journeying through Lockdown ... and through Lent

This month we begin the season of Lent, the 40 days, beginning on 17 February, that culminate in the celebration of Easter.

The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday because of the Christian service of the imposition of Ashes. In this service the Palm crosses from the previous Palm Sunday are burnt. Taking the cold ashes, the Priest dips their finger in them and marks the sign of the cross on the believer's forehead. It is a sign of **Recognition** that we are not the centre of the universe, as the Priest says to each believer "From dust you came, to dust you shall return."

So Lent begins as a time of recognition, but it is also a time of **Reflection**. We remember Jesus' journey for 40 days through the wilderness. When all the normal is stripped away, it can cause us to reflect on ourselves, our priorities and our purpose. These last 11 months has been a long time of reflection for all of us and in this issue of **Network** we have asked people to reflect on their journey during lockdown.

Reflection often leads us to the next theme of Lent which is **Repentance**. Yes, repentance is about being sorry, it is about turning around from the wrong and going in the way of right. But this has to be preceded by a change in thinking. I know a number of people for whom lockdown has been a time that has caused them to change direction in life, in career, in priorities. And in this edition of **Network** you will also read of two people who have done just that.

So whether you give something up for Lent as a sign of walking with Christ, or determine to do something positive as a sign of serving Christ, may we all in this season recognise our position, reflect on our lives and repent as God calls us.

Mark Pickett, Rector

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark'.

## Mission Partners Developments at 180

*Sunday Service @*



**As we explore the theme of journeys in this edition of Network, here are two people whose journeys are taking them to exciting new places. The first is Mark Dyer who tells us about his journey with the 180 Project**

For those that don't know, The 180 Project is a recovery programme in Lancashire and is one of the first of its kind in the UK, turning recovering addicts and alcoholics into "athletes", breaking the cycle of substance abuse, crime and prison to help rebuild lives, whilst also aiming to reach those people who are at risk of falling into this cycle as early as possible. Based at 180 Deltafox gym in Darwen, 180 uses an adapted CrossFit (high intensity exercise) programme, combined with education, mentoring and peer support, to give focus and hope to offenders in the system and those recovering from addiction.

St James' Church is a mission partner with The 180 Project, seeking to bring God's Kingdom to recovering alcoholics and addicts. Central to The 180 project is the vision for a kingdom community, a fresh expression of church to grow in 180, giving people the opportunity to hear, see and experience the gospel, to explore faith, and then to start a journey of discipleship as part of the 180 kingdom community, and out of this to begin to make a difference in their families and communities.

And so people who come through 180 are all offered the opportunity to explore faith. 'Alpha' is regularly run, and for those who want to continue on a journey of faith, there are on-going discipleship groups at the gym. And 180 has just launched 'The Sunday Service@180', a twice monthly service that is combined with a workout. All of these elements are outworkings of the 180 kingdom community that is being planted.

This fresh expression of church has been birthed from the life and ministry of St James' Church, and those involved are being sent to continue what God has called them into. It is an exciting development of mission and an outworking of what God has been doing at St James' Church. One of the implications of this is that those called to be part of this fresh expression of church will not be seen as much at St James' Church, although will remain a part of the St James' family: Mark Dyer (who is chaplain for 180), Julia Dyer, Lindsey and Robin Middleton, Caroline and Darren Sagar and Ian Morris. Please pray for The 180 Project as it continues to seek to follow God's leading.

*Mark Dyer*



**Mark Pickett says:** What an exciting opportunity to partner with this life changing project. Personally I want to thank Mark for his contributions to the Leadership Team and I know you will join me in wanting to thank him for his contribution to the worship teams and for leading us in worship. Whilst he has stepped down from this role, Mark and Julia remain part of St James' and we commit to journeying with them in this new area of personal ministry.

**Please pray for The 180 Project:**

- Those in leadership of this fresh expression of church – for ears to hear from God, courage to follow, and faith to trust Him
- Those currently going through 180 – that they may hear, see, and experience the gospel and begin a journey of exploring faith, and come to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ
- For those in the local community – that 180 may be an increasingly positive gospel influence.

## Welcome to our new Ordinand in Training

**And now to someone who has journeyed from the South (hurray!) to be with us. Moira joins us as an Ordinand in Training, which means she will combine studying and ministry at St James. I will let her tell you a bit more about herself.**

Dear Friends

This is the first opportunity I have had to write for Network, so please allow me to introduce myself and to say something about what you may expect me to do.

Following my years of formation, I'm pleased to now be an Ordinand Minister in a training role in Clitheroe.



By way of background, I was trained at The Anna Freud Centre, London, over 30 years ago and have worked in the NHS ever since, mainly in London. I was Head of Psychotherapy & Psychology in Tower Hamlets, London, until leaving to study Theology at Hope University in Liverpool. Between Liverpool and my home church, Christ Church Spitalfields, Tower Hamlets, I was better able to visit my mother more regularly in Lancashire. I returned to work for Children's Social Care in Tower Hamlets and took up further



theology studies at St Mellitus Theology College, London. I began ordination training in September 2020 with 'All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry', North West England. I am so very pleased to return to Lancashire.

In Sept 2020, I took up my first Clitheroe Church placement with Revd Catherine, at St Paul's Church and Christ Church Chatburn and now I will be placed with you until I am ordained in 2022.

My Ordinand's task is to take up responsibilities and duties in training to be a Priest, under supervision. To preach, to lead worship and intercession and be involved in mission and pastoral care, as deemed appropriate. I will lead services and endeavour to make contact with more people than those who attend services and meetings. I have both a passion for and experience in schools and counselling and would hope to continue this type of ministry here. Before Christmas, I joined with the Wednesday congregation and had such a generous welcome. Thank you.

This time of Covid-19 brings challenges for us all. It is a time to discover and rely on the gifts God has given to every member. Ministry is a collaborative exercise, with everybody working in partnership for the good of the whole body, each employing the gifts and filling the role God has given them, clergy, ordained, and people together. I greatly look forward to our faith walk together. I will make mistakes, as we are all flawed human beings; so please be patient with me! I look forward to getting to know you all better and to working with you. Please pray for me in my role and I promise to pray for you. May God bless all that we seek to do in His Name.



*Moira McCutcheon*

*The face behind the mask!*

### **From the Register**

Funerals: Anne Thompson  
Janet Stenning

# Journeying through Lockdown: A personal reflection



Connecting

ST JAMES' CHURCH NETWORK

*"You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning. My God turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop. With my God I can scale a wall." (Psalm 18:28,29)*

I must admit that the thought of me climbing up a wall is hilarious. Flights of stairs and I am struggling! As a teenager I had posters on my bedroom wall that were trendy at the time. One was of a sleepy lion, captioned 'I wake up slow.' My friend had one with a kitten precariously clinging on between two branches, captioned 'Together, you and I God, can do anything.' And this leads me back to the psalm. This lockdown I have really been learning that I am in a partnership with Jesus.



My first reaction to being asked to write this was, 'Why me?' I feel unqualified, as I know of folk who have had such an awful time in lockdown. One of my friends, only 49, has been in hospital since the beginning of December, not allowed even to see her husband to visit, and is now coming to terms that she will probably never get to go back home.

Others have lost jobs, relationships, struggled with home schooling, developed debilitating painful illnesses, missed holidays of a lifetime, suffered with mental health issues, isolation and illness. I think it is very easy, with all the above context, to feel that I have no real worries. I almost hear my mother telling me I've got nothing to complain about, just get on with it.

This is not what I'm hearing from Father God. What matters most to me matters to him. I'm hearing that he and I together can do this. If I ask, he will keep my 'lamp burning.' There have been times when I'm just exhausted, physically and mentally. Turning to Jesus and asking for his strength, his energy, has worked.

Initially I loved lockdown - yes, I know I'm weird! But life suddenly took on a different pace and I had time to do things. It was a delight to have Tilly and Isaac lock downed with us and planning a wedding we prayed would be able to go ahead. It did! The weather was wonderful and we are blessed with a huge garden at the Rectory. I got to see one of my grandchildren regularly, as I look after her on a Monday. Life was good.

Later in the year it really took me by surprise when I started to feel blue. I'm someone who likes routine (and enjoy breaking it occasionally!) and so I felt unmotivated. I missed out on three planned large family celebrations, holidays and visits down south. I missed corporate worship, arthritis got worse and I couldn't see anyone. The less I did, or could do, the less I wanted to do and ended up very introspected and down. To me this was as real as other people's struggles were to them. Jesus cares about them ALL. I am learning in a very practical, day by day way, to be in partnership.

One of the real highlights of this year has been my quiet times. I have found a real delight in listening to Lectio 365, reading my Bible and daily notes and completing various journals. As a dyslexic, I struggled to get to grips with the Bible and still can't remember where things are, but I am now half way through reading it all the way through for a second time and loving it. I've been focusing on prophetic prayer, weekly going to the prayer room at church (when allowed) and reading some really inspiring books. I am back on an even keel now and thankful for all I'm learning. If I'm struggling with temptation (I'm back on a diet and tee total), I pray for God's help there and



then. If I'm aware that I'm out of sorts, I will ask Jesus what is going on. I will also talk and pray things through with friends if I need to.



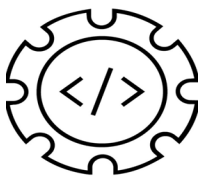
I love responding to Holy Spirit nudges and pray for people or ring them up or send a text. Having time to pray about church, the church family, King's Highway and our community is a privilege and a joy.

So I may not have been on a rollercoaster this year, but it's certainly been an up and down year. I hope I manage to keep the good things learnt in lockdown going when we get back to 'normal.' I will remember that "my God turns darkness into light," and with his help I will be able scale my walls, whatever size they may be.

*Della Pickett*

### **What have been your lockdown highlights?**

What kind of journey has the last year been for you? What have you learned? Have you and your family met Jesus in a new way through that time? Why not reflect on your year, and share with us for a future edition of Network. Email your contribution to: [gchaldane@gmail.com](mailto:gchaldane@gmail.com).



Changing

## Journeying through Lockdown: 2020 The year that changed our behaviour (I hope!)

2020: A year which started in fear, but ended in hope. I, among many, prayed continuously for the scientists and technicians working to find a way forward in beating the dreaded virus which was causing such stress and fear. By God's grace our prayers were answered. The news of a vaccine, hailed by many as a miracle, put me in mind of two writings of scripture.

One, Ecclesiasticus 38:1-4 (in the Apocrypha section of some bibles) reads:

*"Hold the physician in honour for he is essential to you and God it was who established his profession. From God, the Doctor has his wisdom.....God makes the earth yield healing herbs which the prudent man should not neglect".*

Two, Mark 11:23. Jesus's teaching:

*"Therefore I tell you whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will."*

Remember though, in claiming that promise in prayer, it must not conflict with the rest of biblical teaching on prayer and healing.

I mention the above because much of my time in the past year has been wrestling with what this pandemic has taught me personally. The first thing is an awareness of the close relationship between God, mankind and the earth or nature. Watching too many television documentaries and dramas has re-awakened me to the wonder of the world around us, but also to the greed and carelessness of mankind in despoiling it. In many of the drama series, I ponder on the futility of war and violence, feeling ashamed of the contribution I have made in the past to both. I do not think that I am alone in these thoughts, but see good coming out of what at first seemed catastrophe.

I remember years ago I was visiting the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem and became overwhelmed at the atrocities suffered by the Jews. Outside, whilst giving vent to my emotions, a Jewish friend put his arm around me and said "God works good in all things for those who love the Lord. Hitler and his Nazi Party are finished - but we have a country".

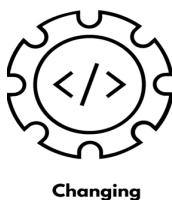
May we emerge from this pandemic more positive and caring for God, each other and our environment.

*David Wotherspoon*

**AND WE KNOW  
THAT ALL THINGS WORK  
TOGETHER  
FOR GOOD TO THEM  
THAT LOVE GOD, TO  
THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED  
ACCORDING  
TO HIS PURPOSE.**

— Romans 8: 28

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## Journeying through Lockdown: Highlights of our year

### From Ruth Seed

Although the March lockdown was serious, it didn't feel too bad at first. The weather was warm and sunny and I enjoyed my lovely garden and listening to the blackbirds, thinking how fortunate I was. I found that supporting others, e.g. by playing hymn tunes for Lemmy, gave me focus and kept me positive.

It was a relief when we were given more freedom and we were able to go to the Lakes for a sunny September holiday and reconnect with loved ones. The present lockdown feels far more daunting. High death tolls and infection rates dominate our news. Hardship in our communities and grim weather make it more difficult to think positively.

However, support from Church in many guises has been a great encouragement and the vaccination programme gives "bright hope for tomorrow."

### From Mary Paige

I think most, if not all, will be praying and hoping for a 'new normal' in 2021. For many people, parents, students, older people and those who live on their own, 2020 was a challenging year. A journey we would not have chosen to take as we were battered with social, financial, emotional and spiritual issues, and for some physical problems as well. We have survived and though there may yet be challenges to face, we are still surviving.

My main tools have been positivity and thankfulness. When I focus on these, everything is better. I do not manage this every day, some times are just rubbish. But, when I remember how I walk in green pastures, how many things I am thankful for, and how I am surrounded by love, I do more than survive, I am victorious.

### From Judith Blackburn

This has been a year like no other !! The first lockdown was something of a novelty: good weather, longer Spring evenings, time to sit or work in the garden, Clitheroe a ghost town, quiet roads, outdoor visits from family, great community spirit as we clapped for NHS workers, rainbows in windows and volunteers offering to shop for us. Church services online kept us focused on God. Thoughtful neighbours Peter & Anne and John & Sarah organised a memorable Street Party to celebrate my 80th birthday - and the sun shone!! People generally took lockdown seriously.

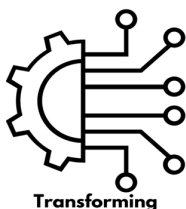


There were sad times too: missing my nephew's funeral in Surrey; not being able to visit a close friend in a care home; awareness that for families in high rise flats with only a limited time and space to exercise plus home schooling, life was stressful.

July/August brought more freedom: it was good to be back in Church for services; shops and cafes reopened; we 'Ate Out to Help Out'; and children returned to school in September. Then came the realisation that Covid 19 had not gone away. Yet more restrictions followed. Christmas had to be low-key. Now we are bombarded and shocked by numbers of new infections and deaths. Will the vaccine help life to return to 'normal'? How long can hospital staff cope with the pressure? Why do some people not take it seriously? These are matters for prayer.

We are in God's hands and trust the future will be brighter.





## Mission Partners: Journeying through the desert with God

*'Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. At the Lord's command the Israelites set out and at his command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle they remained in camp. When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the Lord's order and did not set out.'*  
(Numbers 9:17-19).

It was March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and we were due to fly back on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Our suitcases and holdalls were packed to the brim with various gifts for our friends in the villages. As always, we were more than ready to fly back to Vilanculos in Mozambique in the spring of our 14<sup>th</sup> year, excited to re-join our national team and full of ideas about how to continue to reach and expand our integral mission amongst the rural vulnerable poor in the provinces of Mozambique.

But as we watched the daily roll of grim news about this strange new thing 'Coronavirus' sweeping mercilessly across the world, our hearts discerned the Lord's 'cloud' was not lifting or allowing us to break camp and set out. For a few days we chatted and struggled with the dawning reality that we might not be able to fly, worrying about leaving our vulnerable parents in the face of a cruel pandemic, but also worrying about the impact on our team. However, as we prayed, we felt God calm our hearts and tell us to trust him. So, with one day to go we rang to postpone until June. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Boris Johnson put the country under lockdown and the full horror of the pandemic began to unfold.

June came and went. We rebooked for September, but the borders in South Africa and Mozambique remained firmly closed. There was a loosening of restrictions in October and so we made a last-ditch attempt to return, but our Mozambique partners, through whom we get our temporary resident

permits, told us to stay at home until 2021 because they feared a second wave!

We are not new to interrupted journeys. There have been delays, stops, U-turns, 'no entries' for various reasons over the years, mainly because we live in a fallen world, where there is sickness and trouble and an enemy, who delights to frustrate our path. But we have learned that God ALWAYS brings GOOD out of it for those that love Him.



### **2020 has been a year of new beginnings**

We started the *Envision short course* on cross-cultural mission devised by All Nations Christian College, facilitating 4 groups including one at St James. Our last group was with our Charis UK and Mozambique teams together and, despite being on Zoom, it was great for our team here to get to know the national team members.

We also were led to start working in *Ethiopia*. A nurse called Elizabeth, who Mandy met and got to know on her short-term mission trips in the late 90s, got in touch again after trying for years to find Mandy. Over the months it became clear that this was no chance coming together. Elizabeth shared her desire to work with Charis Ministries and we felt God's confirmation. So, since October we have started helping a few very poor, vulnerable, sick and elderly people through Elizabeth, with a view to visiting Ethiopia when the way is open to consider the way forward there.

We have also started a *joint monthly Charis Prayer on Zoom* including Elizabeth in Ethiopia, our Mozambican team and a wider Charis team not limited by physical distance.

And finally, we have welcomed back our beloved *Bento* into our Mozambican team, focussing on his gift of bible teaching. He had to leave 2 years ago after some problems, but God is a God of reconciliation and power and His transforming grace is always at work!

*The national ministry in Mozambique has strengthened* despite a few challenges and we have been able to help many vulnerable people with monthly food and basic necessities at a very difficult time. We have seen the team growing in confidence as they have had greater autonomy and responsibility. In the summer we also invited *Sergio* back on board after he lost his job due to the Covid situation. He is passionate for God and loves Jesus and for the last 6 months has been faithfully discipling a small group of 5 young men.

*Our role* has morphed into being daily facilitators, encouragers, administrators and teachers as we have directed the ministry from afar. How much of this new way will remain is in God's hands. We are still ready and eagerly waiting to break camp and set out to unite with our friends, but we are not flapping against our cage as we did at first!

We thank God we have been here to care for our parents and elderly relatives, as well as provide help for others in various ways, and for the opportunities to get to know more folk at St James.

The secret is always to accept God's plan and be the best wherever we are for His glory.

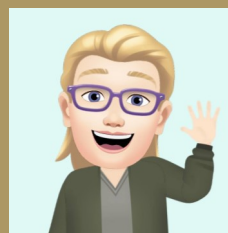
Love and blessings

*Mel Welch & Mandy Hunter*, Charis Ministries Mozambique

#### **Please pray for Charis Ministries:**

- Pray for Mel & Mandy, as they seek to coordinate the team from a distance, and for provision of all they need
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless and grow the work in Mozambique, and now Ethiopia, regardless of circumstances.

## It's not the destination, but the journey that matters: Some thoughts on my journey through a world pandemic



I love journeys.

The definition of a journey is travelling from one place to another. Some synonyms for journey are odyssey, expedition, wandering and... peregrination!

Peregrination = a journey, especially a long or meandering one. That's it, that's just how this journey has been. So much longer than we imagined, so drawn out, no direct routes, sometimes going round in circles and no short cuts and with a destination that seems to get further and further out of sight. What is the destination anyway?

There is a famous quote that says, "it's not about the destination, it's the journey itself that counts". How true that is and that's why I love journeys. I love the new experience, new view, new landscapes, new relationships, the opportunities, new thoughts and ideas that a journey gives me. This peregrination through the Covid 19 pandemic has certainly provided a wealth of new experiences and opportunities, and I am grateful and blessed by that journey. I feel changed by the journey, if not slightly exhausted!

In many ways the destination is the same - connection, change and transformation - but the journey's route is different and has changed several times as new meanders revealed themselves up ahead.

The exciting challenge has been to listen to God, to hear and feel his nudges directing me around each new meander that has appeared on the journey. Time spent alone with God on walks, in the garden, in a quiet space at home, has been so special, such a gift. The wonderful thing is to be able to testify that God was with me and in me all the time, as he promises in Isaiah 41:10:

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Listening to these nudges has led me to wonderful new opportunities, new ways of doing things.

**Forest church** has been one such opportunity. Because we couldn't all meet in the church and because being outdoors lowered risks, there was a wonderful opportunity to go outside and to connect with God by connecting with his creation. This has been a wow moment on the journey. With the joy of worshipping outside, the school eco zone has become a very special God space for some of us. It has created more connections; it has allowed us to be changed by God. I'm not sure I can imagine being back in a building!



**Baby Fishes** has been an amazing opportunity to bless new mums of Lockdown babies, mums who felt isolated, who felt they had not had chances to meet other new mums and so to share problems and stories. It was an opportunity that only arose because we had to limit the number of people in the church building and so decided to split Little Fishes into two sessions. The relationships that have developed from this group have been so special. Something new has begun!



**Home visits** to drop off blessing bags containing treats and craft activities has been wonderful. The doorstep chats with families have been a treat and a highlight of the Covid restrictions. They have shown the importance of relationships. Doorstep chats and blessing bags are here to stay!

**Zoom Alpha** was amazing. Who would have thought that zoom could be amazing! Who would have thought that Alpha would work on Zoom. There really are some benefits to Zoom, like not having to leave your home in the evening!

New perspectives have come into view. We all love the times on a journey when a wonderful new view appears. For me, God really used the preach by Bishop Jill in April to lay these verses on my heart:

***This is what the LORD says:***

***"In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you;***

***I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'***  
(Isaiah 49:8 -9)

I felt nudged in a big way to ask who the captives were in my community. Who is living in darkness in my community? I was challenged to pray for them and to ask God how I can help them. It seems only now in this third Lockdown that God has been revealing answers to this prayer. Again God is showing me how relationships are key, how doorstep chats bless people.

The journey continues and there are many more meanders ahead! My heart is thankful for all God has done, but at this point, nearly a year since the journey began, I do feel myself crying out, "Are we there yet?" But it's not about the destination, it's the journey that matters, and I place myself in God's hands, I trust in his might. I remember with gratitude the amazing journey so far and all he has taught me and put my hand in his hand to continue the journey.

*Helen Potts, Children & Families Minister*



## Journeying through Lockdown: St James' Youth and RVY

Almost a year ago my daughter and I arrived in Clitheroe at 4a.m. in the morning, the dawn of a new chapter for my husband (who had already arrived), my daughter and myself. As someone who is quite visionary, I already had plans and ideas and I could not wait to have my first day in post just two days later. I had spent the last 12 years building a Christian schools -work organization up from the ground and it was time to leave that and start with a new exciting opportunity.

Over the next few weeks, it rained and it rained and it rained - it seemed to never stop raining! I got to know the staff, meet some of the young people - and then, after just 4 weeks in post, we were put into national lockdown! Youth ministry is based on relationships, it doesn't really function very well if you can't build up connections based on trust and respect with young people. I produced some online content each week and we started a couple of Zoom calls where the young people could catch up with each other, the



other leaders and me. It quickly became very clear that despite young people seemingly living on their phones, their energy and enthusiasm for screen time was burning out. We kept going with those that wanted to, but we had to think what the next step would be. How could we continue to journey with these young people?

Over the summer we were able to meet up with small groups in the park. This was a lifeline for some of them who were missing that real human interaction. While walking around the park waiting for the young people to arrive, I noticed that there were a lot of young people at the skate park and just “hanging around” - young people who, like those at church, had been through an isolating and stressful time. I started to think about how we could connect with those young people. At the same time, Chris Meyer was being nudged by God about the young people who were spending their time gaming. He wanted to find a way to reach those young people. We had a conversation about our thoughts and from it RVY was born.

### **What is RVY?**

RVY is a cross-town, inter-church youth project. It currently has three streams of connecting with young people. The first stream is a monthly livestream on the RVY Youtube channel (which in time we aim to turn into an event); Chris and I with other guests have about 1 hour where we discuss questions, have some silliness and connect with young people through their



comments. The second stream – Gaming - is starting in February; it provides an opportunity for young people to play together on games that we have selected while having discussion, chat and a good helping of competitiveness in the game challenges using a Zoom call; it's supervised by two RVY youth leaders. We're aiming to start the third stream in March/April: the 'detached' stream is about going to where the young people are in the community; talking to them, building up those contacts based on trust and respect; taking the love of Jesus out into the community (and hopefully some hot chocolate!). The next part of the journey for RVY is to create a team to be involved. If you would like to know more about RVY then head over to the website: [www.rvyouth.org](http://www.rvyouth.org)

## Back to St James – Youth Band

One of the opportunities during Lockdown 1 was for the youth band to lead worship. They all recorded their own instrument/voice at home and two amazing young people and I worked to mix them together. The young people loved choosing the songs and taking a lead with it, so we took the youth band up a level. They met during the summer to really start to gel as a band and we welcomed some new members as well, some who were new to their instrument and others who were just new to playing in the band. Their skill as a band has grown so much since August, they are so much more confident and practiced together. So at Christmas I challenged them to learn about 10 songs for the [Children's and Youth Extravaganza](#) – if you haven't watch it yet, then head over to the church's Youtube channel and find it in the videos. It was a super collaboration between the young people and the children of the church, not just a little nativity, but an amazing display of how amazingly talented, committed and hardworking the young people and children are.

## St James' Youth Groups

Between September and Christmas we were able to run for a few weeks some Covid-secure groups for the youth at the church, including some in-house lasertag and a film night. It was so good to be able to spend quality time with them, before of course we went into Lockdown 2 and now Lockdown 3!

The journey of the youth ministry continues, maybe not in the ways I was quite expecting this time last year, but in the ways that God has laid the path for. It is exciting to be involved in all that is happening and to watch the young people grow and develop as time goes on.

*Lucy Skelton, Youth Minister*

### Please pray for our Children's and Youth Ministries:

- For Helen and her teams, as they seek to keep supporting children and families during lockdown, in a variety of creative ways
- For Helen and her family, following the recent loss of her mother
- For Lucy and the youth team, that their connections with church and other local youth will continue to grow and develop
- For RVY, that this new youth initiative will quickly get established and recognised by youth in our local community.

## Moving online: Alpha



*Like many organisations and courses, Alpha has moved online. When one of the core parts of the Alpha experience is meeting over a meal, we really weren't sure how well Alpha Online would work, but we've been surprised how great it's been. For some people, it's actually been easier to join an online course—no travelling, no babysitters required, and no strange building or home to walk into. Online Alpha courses have now been led by Ian and Kate, Naomi and Helen and (currently) Graham and Debi; and of course Mark Dyer and team continue to run Alpha as a regular part of The 180 project. Here Ian describes his recent experience of the course:*

During October and November, Kate and I led Alpha on Zoom. We had four people sign up to journey with us through a series of videos, questions and discussion around the key aspects of life and the Christian faith.

There was a change over time from the first week of nervous introductions and 'getting to know you' questions, to becoming a group of friends that laughed together, cried together and were vulnerable together as we shared various personal thoughts, feelings and memories. That happened alongside deepening our understanding of ourselves, God and the connection between the two. We journeyed together as a group and into the huge questions of God, eternity and personal faith.

It really was a privilege for Kate and I to be part of that group and watching the personal and collective journeys that those four people went on, and also to reflect on our own personal growth. The 6 of us journeyed together as a group, but also journeyed with God as we explored the questions together. This is a journey that I would encourage you to go on, either as part of a group or leading one.

*Ian Sarginson, Curate*

### **Please pray for Alpha:**

- For all who have been on an Alpha course to continue to explore and deepen their relationship with Jesus
- For those on the current course to have a personal encounter with Jesus as Saviour and Lord





## **Terrible timing or God's timing?**

### **The journey to Seedle's Yard**

"What's that run-down shed thing there? Does that belong to the church?"

"Who owns that building? What is it?"

"Is that building even still used?"

I'm sure you've had similar thoughts if you've walked past the site known as Seedle's Yard. The former builder's yard is adjacent to our churchyard. The business itself was closed down several years ago, but the building still stands. To be honest, I think most of us had thought it a bit of an eyesore and wondered what the owner would do with it.

Well, early in the first lockdown, Mark had a phone call. The owner was now ready to sell the yard, and would the church be interested in buying it?

Honestly, my first reaction was, "What terrible timing!" We'd had a meeting in very early March which some of you might remember, explaining that we had a significant projected gap between our income and expenditure. We also shared plans for refurbishing the Oasis Room, which had been shelved by the PCC twice previously due to a lack of income. Again, it looked unlikely that this could go ahead fully – as soon as we shared the plan, social distancing came in, swiftly followed by the first lockdown. Not to mention that we were at the start of an unprecedented global pandemic, and who knew what impact that would have on our finances?

Like many things, the lockdown seemed to make time stand still. It wasn't until we returned back into the building – which, for me, was September – that we started seeing God move in the area of finances.

In early September, we received notice of a legacy which had been left to us. We didn't know the amount, only that we were one of the recipients. One principle that the finance team has become committed to is that legacies

shouldn't generally be used to cover our running costs; our running costs should be covered by our regular income, allowing us to use legacies and gifts for other projects. Could this be a donation towards, perhaps, the Oasis Room refurbishment?

During the last two weeks of September and the first two weeks of October, we held 'Beyond 2020.' As we went through that time of prayer and fasting, we were all aware of our need for God's provision. Again, it seemed like our timing was terrible – we were still in the grip of the pandemic, people hadn't returned to church services and I privately wondered if we were making a huge mistake. Sue and I addressed hundreds of letters explaining our financial situation, knowing that in early November, we had to set a budget for 2021.



Over the next few weeks, I kept finding notes on my desk or in my inbox, with people just letting me know about their giving. I think we were all a bit surprised by God's faithfulness and his generosity through our amazing church family. When all we heard on the news was fear, here were faithful and generous givers, starting to give, continuing to give faithfully, and being willing to give more to continue the ministry of St James.

For the first time in a long time, we've set a break-even budget for 2021. Next year, we will finish receiving some fairly substantial grants, so there is still a challenge there, but God's faithfulness has been amazing.

At our PCC meeting there was a sense of optimism, but also of caution. We discussed the possible purchase of Seedle's Yard for a long time. At that time, we had heard a suggested figure for the legacy we'd received, and, while that would potentially cover the cost for the refurbishment of the Oasis Room, it certainly wouldn't pay for Seedle's Yard. The PCC decided to proceed with the refurbishments to the Oasis Room, and suggested that we open discussions on Seedle's Yard. There was a definite sense of caution in that meeting though – no one said, 'Tread carefully,' but it was definitely implied!

In mid-December, Mark Pickett, Jonathan Frank and I had a meeting with Mr Seedle. This felt like a 'cards on the table' moment: how much was he wanting for Seedle's Yard, and how on earth would we raise the money?

We set a deadline of the end of February. If we couldn't make him a good offer by then, we would pull out of discussions. He had had three valuations done; we would have two more done. We would also explore costs for land clearance – many of you will have noticed the petrol tank embedded in the ground and the asbestos roof! Finally, we'd speak to Ribble Valley Borough Council about what kind of building they would give permission for.

That gave us just about 2 months – once Christmas was over – to raise the money, and get all that information. Fortunately, we were able to get some of that work done in the week before Christmas, so that we could start sharing with the congregation in January and February. You'll have seen – I hope – the [videos](#) that Mark has done, and the total of the money pledged or donated.

As I type, our total of donations and pledges received is at £162,000. We are aiming for £170,000, and we still have a month until our deadline.

Nearly a year after standing at the front of church and explaining that we were facing a significant funding shortfall, while wondering how we would

afford the refurbishments to the Oasis Room, we're now in a completely different situation. And that's while the church building has been mostly empty for the majority of the year and we've been in 3 lockdowns! The faithfulness of God and his people has been amazing.

We're hoping to get the work done in the Oasis Room before September, so that the space can be fully refreshed ready for the new academic year, when hopefully things will be much more normal. This involves new flooring, storage, lighting and acoustic panels as well as a fresh coat of paint everywhere.

As for the purchase of Seedle's Yard? We'll try to keep you as up to date as possible. Our current fundraising period ends on 28<sup>th</sup> February. We do need to acknowledge that at the moment, all we are trying to do is purchase the land: clearing and building come later – possibly much later! We have no firm plans for what could end up on the site, and we are still awaiting guidance from the council and architects about what could potentially work there. There are more unknowns than knowns!

All we do know is that we are investing for future generations. We don't know what this will look like, but we know that God will continue to shape our church and our community in this town.

If you would like to contribute towards the purchase of the land known as Seedle's Yard, head to [www.stjamesclitheroe.co.uk/seedlesyard](http://www.stjamesclitheroe.co.uk/seedlesyard)

*Naomi Lynas, Operations Manager*

#### **Please pray for Seedle's Yard:**

- For wisdom in whether to purchase this land as an investment for current or future generations of St James' Church and community
- For provision of the required funds for purchase and clearing the land
- For favour with the sellers, neighbours and Ribble Valley Borough Council
- For vision and clarity from God as to how this land should be developed and used, now and in the future.



## Mission Partners

### Connecting in new ways

For the last few years, February has seen a team from St James' visit our partner church in Eldoret. In June 2021, we were hoping to welcome a small team from King's Highway Church to Clitheroe. But this year of course no visits are possible, either to or from Eldoret.

That doesn't mean our twinning partnership is on hold! As with all aspects of life, we're learning to adapt and discover new ways to do old things. Since the first lockdown we've held two Eldoret Stories services, both online, giving us opportunities to find out about life and faith in Kenya. We're planning more of these for this year.

Both St James' Church and School took part in fund-raising for specific projects in Eldoret over the last few months, and we'll be bringing updates about those projects in the coming months.

In January we partnered with the month of prayer and fasting held by King's Highway Church by joining together on Zoom. There were well over 30 people praying and worshipping together each week, separated by over 6000 miles and a different time zone, but united by a love of God and a desire to intercede for our families, our churches, our governments, and our nations.





Now with improved technology, even though physical visits aren't happening, we're still able to connect, share and grow together and bring opportunities for even more people to become involved in the twinning partnership. It's a partnership that expands our horizons about God, about the world, about faith and culture. As well as regular updates in the weekly mail and on social media from King's Highway Church and School, in discussions with our brothers and sisters in Kenya we're planning some interactive church-wide events for the coming year - so watch this space!

*Jill Ivison, on behalf of the Twinning Partnership Steering Group*

## Mission Partners

### King's Highway School

***The following email extracts are from Gilbert Abucheri, a member of the board of King's Highway School, and administrator at KH Church.***

Learning is in progress. The Grade 4 class reported back to school on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. We recommended class 8 pupils to other schools because we did not meet the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) threshold of 15 students for the class 8 exam registration. We recalled Teacher Nelly to help out with Cleophas, the Head Teacher, because of this class. Some of the teachers have attended training to get acquainted with the new system - CBC (Competency Based Curriculum) and EGMA (Early Grade Mathematics Assessment) - organized by the Ministry of Education. The full school reopened on 4th January 2021.

In order to meet government guidelines, a variety of work was required, including provision of more hand washing facilities, sanitizers and masks, replacing broken window panes, erecting a water tower and fencing off the school from the farm.

The pandemic has affected the school community making it hard for parents to pay their children's fees. The church has had to come in to support the two teachers, Cleophas and Nelly, and cater for the upkeep of the substaff.

We have made some progress in the construction work of the boarding facilities. We are running against time to stop losing the children we have prepared in lower levels to other boarding schools. The CBC system is designed to monitor the child from the time he/she begins school PP1 (Pre-primary 1) onwards. We want to maintain continuity for our children all the way through. The ground floor of the facility will also double up as classes, thanks to Shangilia who availed the money.

We are eagerly waiting for the new year to prepare the farm for planting. Usually this comes somewhere in late February or early March. Currently we have only the animals to look after. Collins has been a pillar in the running of the school and had come up with many new ideas on farming. He was a jack of all trades and through him we have learnt a lot. But during the Covid-19 crisis, he felt he needed to do more for his family and so sought to move to greener pastures. We ask for your prayers as we forge ahead into the new school calendar.



*Front view of Boarding facility construction in progress*

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## Future issues of Network

If you would like to submit an item to be included in a future issue, please submit it direct by e-mail to

[gchaldane@gmail.com](mailto:gchaldane@gmail.com)

as a Word attachment (.doc), or a plain text (.txt) file. Don't worry about formatting, as we will have to adjust items to fit the page.

## THANK YOU



We love our **small groups** in St James' Church. They are great for discipleship, fellowship and prayer. Many are trying to meet online during the COVID-19 stay-at-home period. Please contact Ali Groves if you would like to be linked with a group.

Helen and Lucy are continuing to support and encourage our **children** and **youth** during this time. Please contact them to see what online meets and other activities are available.

## Prayers Opportunities

Have you looked at the Virtual Prayer Spaces on our website yet? Try these as a way of communicating with God and praying for others at this time.

<https://www.stjamesclitheroe.co.uk/virtualprayerspace>



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