

Spring Update



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Due to the Corona Virus COVID:19 pandemic I am writing this edition of my newsletter from my living room in Mid Devon, having heeded Mr Johnson's directive to stay in. I have my printer set up and the radio on. It may seem to some that it doesn't sound that bad. I suppose it isn't but I am missing my direct work with young people, families and churches. Everyday I met people, I laughed with someone, I supported someone, I spoke to someone. In these days, weeks and probably months ahead it's going to get pretty lonely in my little home as I won't see no one – I'm going to miss it. The thought of there being hope may seem a distant thing.

However, there is definitely hope in these dark and difficult times. I may not have people around me to fill my day but now, possibly I can fill my day with God. Sometimes my Christian ministry is so busy that God doesn't seem to get a look in. Well now there is no excuse because it's just me and God for the foreseeable future. And do you know what? - I am excited by that. I'm excited by what God is going to talk to me about, about what he is going to share and about what he plans for me. I'm comforted that in these quite scary times – he is going to be with me.

This time of isolation also coincides with me seeking God's face for the future vision of TheO6. I must admit I did wonder how I was going to be doing this with a packed weekly programme. But now I have no programme, I can really now get down to business and see what God wants me and TheO6 to do for the next three years.

This time of isolation will also see me looking to do youth work in a new and different way. With the use of technology, we will still be able to communicate and see the young people and families that we minister to and work with. I am currently in the process of purchasing a decent webcam that can be used for online youth, children and support sessions, so that after Easter I hope to be doing some regular youth and families video sessions. I still have to work out the details but information will be coming to you soon. Also, I want to be doing some regular prayer sessions online.

During this time, I will also be communicating with the young people through social media posts to get them talking and interacting. Today I posted a simple message of 'How are you feeling' and got them commentating below it.

I am still going to press ahead with communicating with school leaders and church leaders about their experience of TheO6 and how they would like that to continue. Again, with communication tools we have – this can all be done from the comfort of your living room.

Please continue to pray that I will find a home in Ottery St Mary. It's during these restrictions that I really feel separate from the Ottery St Mary community – a community I care for and love.

So, for me there is certainly hope. Hope that through this God is doing a new and different thing. And a hope that what we do in the future has been really God inspired.

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."

Zephaniah 3:17

Stay Safe and Be Blessed

Graham

O6 in Schools

Ottery St Mary Primary School – In February I had to say goodbye to Anna Vine – Pastoral Manager at Ottery St Mary Primary School as she left her role to work with CAMHS. She will be sadly missed by me. However, the work at the school continues. This last term I continued to mentor four year 6's once a week. I also started a weekly pastoral support drop-in session for Year 6's. The first one had each slot completely filled. When school resumes, I hope to continue this. Once a week I have also been running a games club with year 5 children. In the last week before school was closed, I learnt the secrets of completing a rubic's cube. I realise now it isn't just luck and there is some method and technique involved!!

Feniton Primary School – This term we have been looking at encounters with Jesus in the New Testament. We have also looked at the subject of Lent, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. The group of girls that come, have been really faithful to the club and seem to really enjoy themselves – especially when there is food. They particularly enjoyed decorating gingerbread men and having pancakes. This term I have also had the pleasure again of being part of their Acts of Worship on a Friday afternoon.

West Hill Primary School – This term I have done a few assemblies which I have really enjoyed taking. We also had planned after the Easter Holidays to do a weekly craft club, after school on a Monday. I am hoping that if school resumes at some point during the summer term this can still happen.

Kings School – One of the highlights of my week continued to be my visit to the school two lunchtimes a week. This term I particularly enjoyed my conversations with the Year 11's, talking about exams and future plans. My prayers are with them at this moment as they must feel quite nervous about their grades as their exams have been cancelled. All the young people I have spoken to have worked so hard.

The Hub – Drop In Youth Cafe

Following a difficult few weeks, some of the trustees met with myself to discuss the weekly drop in. We decided to tighten up on procedures on health and safety grounds and also put in place a clear structure in terms of managing behaviour. We also changed the time – it will now run each Wednesday for an hour starting from 3.30 pm. At the end of the meeting we all felt quite positive.

BIG NEWS

I can now reveal that following lots of prayer and immense fundraising efforts we have secured enough funding to continue the work we have been doing for the next three years!! And not just that...as from February 2020 I started work **FULL TIME** for TheO6. Thank you to everyone for their prayers and support during this time. HOPE...in Difficult times.

XL-MENTORING

POSITIVE FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Well, our prayers have certainly been answered in terms of male mentors. This term I have been approached by four men who are interested in becoming mentors. I have met up with a couple and hope to see the other two very soon, as soon as government restrictions are lifted. I also met up with a lady who was also interested in mentoring. The plan will be to have an induction session as soon as we safely can and the restrictions are lifted. I am also currently designing a leaflet to promote the Mentoring Scheme. Please continue to pray for the scheme.

O6 in the Churches

This last term I have been busy in the churches. Predominantly I seem to be doing most of my work with the United Reformed Church and St Luke's in Newton Popleford. It is really good supporting them and working with the young people. One thing I really cherish is the relationship I have with all the children and young people. With the extra hours I hope to be able to support the New Life Church Youth Group more on a Friday night – it is just getting my timetable right. I would like to support the churches more – so please if you are a church leader and would like me to speak, run an all age service, support current youth work or even advise on youth or children's matters please contact me. I would love to support you and be part of your youth ministry in the community. We are now in the process of planning the holiday club for the Summer. Hopefully by then the restrictions will have been lifted and we will be able to have a fun week. Also, we will be looking to start the new children's club as soon as we possibly can, now that the planned date of 17th April has had to be cancelled.

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on our website?
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