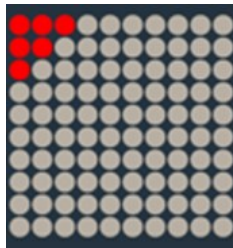


GRAPEVINE

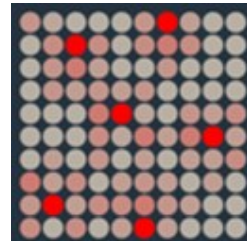
grapevine@stjohnswelling.org.uk www.stjohnswelling.org.uk 020 8303 1107 editors: MCC & NC

'...I chose you and appointed you, ...'

Dear Friends,
Where is your front line?
We gather together on a Sunday to worship God and share fellowship and it's estimated that across the country about 6 people in 100 do so once a month or more.



effect. Gradually those around us should become warmer towards Jesus as we give off his light, his love, and occasionally even say something!



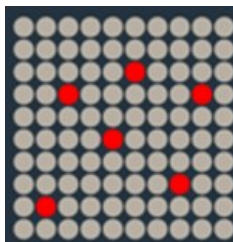
whatever you do, together we can ...
¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. John 15:16 NIV
God bless you

Adam

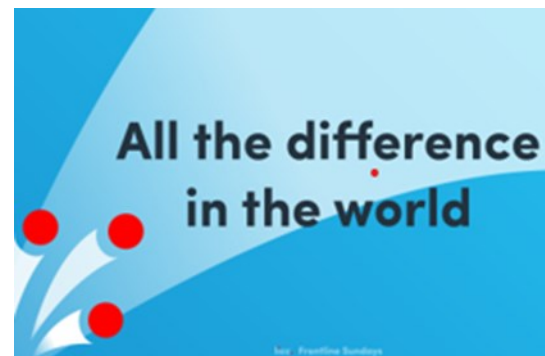
Vicar, St John's Welling

That seems like we cannot make a lot of difference, but the truth is that as we go out into our everyday lives we all have a unique frontline; no-one else is placed where you are and no one else can reach the people you can. I certainly cannot! There is only one of me! BUT 150+ church members being Jesus on their daily frontline can have an exponential

On Sunday mornings and in Home-groups we have been following a course from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity called Frontline Sundays, looking to see how as individual 'red dots' we can make all the difference in the world.



Do Join us – do catch up 'on line' wherever you are, whoever you are,



by Frontline Sundays

St John's News

What a lovely, busy couple of months 'bookended' by Lamplighters..! So lets start there with the start of Christmas at St Johns, **The Lamplighter Christmas Fayre**. It was a lovely time of fun (and finance)... and a little more freedom than previous years space wise, as both the Hall and the Church were used. The overall total was £3,400. From the Fayre onwards, **Advent and Christmas** dominated our time, thoughts, services and events with every group celebrating individually as well as at the great altogether Carol services and worship services. Every January I say it - but it's always true, that the beautifully decorated Church and music add a great dimension to our worship. Numbers are **not** the whole story, but

nearly every service had higher numbers than last year with many regulars bringing friends and family members to a place where Jesus was very definitely the reason for the season. Our **Prayer Team** met recently and greatly appreciated a morning of listening quietly to God 2024 is maturing nicely and, in our **Morning services and House Groups**, we are being challenged to be **red dots** ie distinctive Jesus people in our varied weekday frontline environments. Sunday worshippers, we have learnt, nationally make up just 6% of our population and we join together on Sundays to be prepared for the rest of the week where we are in contact with many people who do not know the God who loves them so much. As **red dots** We have the challenge and responsibility of touching their lives. It has made me recall a prayer given to

me years ago .. **Lord may I walk so closely with you this day that everyone I meet touches you. Amen**
The Life Service are working through the Gospel of Matthew and at the 6.30 pm service sermons are helping us consider the book of Hebrews an excellent follow on from the Exodus series . We are praying for **Lionel King** , recovering at home after an infection and a consequent stay in hospital; **Doreen Jones** awaiting major surgery and **Haydn Moyle** still awaiting a diagnosis as to what his body is dealing with. And that closing Bookend? The hilarious **FUNTO** that **The Lamplighter team** treated us to recently - such talent needs regular airing!!!!
So, until, hopefully the much milder days of March,..

Estelle Woodcock

Lamplighters



If you have youngsters 5 to 16 we would love to have them join us. In November we had a farewell

Christmas Fayre extended into the Church for the first time and we had an amazing night!! Over £3,000 was raised

Motto: To light the Lamp of Love for those with Leprosy.

Lamplighters had a very good fund raising year in 2023, £3,000 was given to support Purulia hospital together with £2,000 for the Leprosy affected Tea workers of Bangladesh during our World Leprosy service last January. A further £1,000 was raised at the Coronation Tea Gardens Fayre, a fun event for all.

Our group is for children aged 5 to 10+ and we meet every Friday from 6.10pm - 7.30pm. During 2023 we developed the Challenge group within Lamplighters for the 10+ to 16 year olds who are valued helpers as well as becoming a friendship group. We have 12 Challenge group members now, 2 of which are doing their volunteer work for their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards at Lamplighters.



party for Gordon MacBean, a valued adult member leaving for Northfleet. Near the end of November our annual

which we will be giving to our TLM rep Wendy on Friday January 26th when she visits us to receive a cheque, update us on information from Purulia hospital and tell us about this years Big fund raiser!!

The TLM hospital in Muzaffarpur, Northern Bihar is in the poorest state in India. The extreme poverty means Leprosy cases are 3 times higher than in the rest of India. Six hundred patients a day queue at the Out Patients in Muzaffarpur where buildings are crumbling and facilities are few and in a poor state. They need a new Out Patients

(Continued on page 3)

JOBS: Sue Read

Sue didn't always work in Health and Safety. Her first job after school was in Lloyds Bank for 2 years, then the Iranian Bank in London for a further 2, during which the Iranian Embassy Siege took place. She was a foreign exchange cashier, but was asked to undertake correspondence, being English in a predominantly Iranian environment. After children Lisa, Ben and James' early childhoods, she returned to full-time work in the Halifax in Bexleyheath dealing with mortgage arrears, a hard call making decisions on whether a client was just being difficult or whether they really didn't have the means to pay. From there she processed mortgages in the Business Centre, and was promoted again to Assistant Manager and then Branch Manager in Regent St. For someone with no post-16 qualifications or training, this seems to me a very successful career trajectory.

It was as branch manager that Sue's compliance side started to kick in, and she made a fresh start working for Amey (<https://www.amey.co.uk/>), contracted by the MOD to manage all their facilities in London, as part of the Compliance Team. She dealt with compliance in all the many systems in an office work environment, managing in rotation the 4 huge MOD buildings in London during refurbishment, decanting all staff into temporary workplaces, and took on the role of Controlling Officer for managing emergency evacuation, searching and securing sites. Working for AMEY was the job Sue has enjoyed most in her career, and also where she met her second husband Steve, who was working for the MOD Police in 2002 and delivered part of her training. Her older son Ben still works for Amey. Sue did the NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) - General Certificate in H&S and was then responsible for

all things H & S as well, "improve, prevent". In 2002 Sue was head hunted by Lendlease (a national company which then managed 5 shopping centres, 15 schools, a university, a waste plant and 6 hospitals) to become the Health and Safety (H&S) Manager at Bluewater, and further promoted with a team of 6. She took the NEBOSH Diploma Parts 1 and 2 and worked for 3 years with multiple sites until only Blue-



water and Solihull Shopping Centres were left in her portfolio. The job morphed into Property Management, Construction & Development, and she moved to work in Deptford 2012-16 (where she had been brought up originally so could relate well to the residents, who hated developers). Moving businesses so premises could be re-developed sometimes involved law enforcement (e.g. run-ins with illegal events or residencies), which threw up moral questions to grapple with, as a Christian. In 2020 work moved to the Elephant and Castle developing a Build to Rent Scheme. All the relevant ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) policies and procedures had to be developed from scratch, even a procedure around cleaning a glass atrium!

As Covid hit in March 2020, Sue was put on a 4 month furlough. It was during that sunny Spring that she made the decision to move towards retirement. She retired in

Apr 21 but consulting for 1 day a week until April 23. However that was not the end of paid work altogether, as she was approached by a former boss to undertake an H&S Inspection for 6 weeks only. That was 2 years ago and she still works 1 day a week there now.

During her working career, Sue had twice been called for Jury Service which she really enjoyed, and it showed her that she had an interest in the law so she enquired about becoming a Magistrate. She applied in 2017 and was accepted for training 2 years later, following a tough interview. "You don't have to know the law, but you do have to be able to justify your decisions, put your point forward and question things." JPs commit to 13 whole or 26 half days a year. She sits on the SE Bench (Bromley and Bexley) and on the Warrant Panel hearing cases for search, immigration or mental health. "The Justice System is always short of JPs and looking for more. The average age has reduced, some are even in their 20s. They are more ethnically diverse than they used to be, but are looking to continue to diversify. If you would like to know more, do speak with me." Applying sentencing guidelines is part of the role. "1. Has the prosecution proved their case? 2. What is the appropriate sentencing?" Sue's memory for regulations and guidelines has been applied to a different area of community life.

Now Sue is not working full-time, she seemed to me to have a life just as full with other things:

- 1 day a week paid work
- Magistrate
- Trustee and sponsorship secretary of Rukungiri School in Uganda
- Joint team leader of The Life Service, Housegroup leader, Worship leader and Runner

And what she really wanted to be when she left school was a Police Officer!

Kate Foot

(Continued from page 2)

before the whole building collapses! We will support this with our prayers and fund raising.

Can you come along to help each Friday, we need adults?

Can you bring children along for a fun time?

Can you encourage 10-16 year olds to be part of a vibrant caring youth club?

LAMPLIGHTERS NEEDS YOU

A huge thank you to our amazing and loyal Lamplighter Group Leaders.

As a group we seek to light the Lamp of Love for those in need and so our Funto 'Aladdin' in January had a cast of Challenge group and adult leaders to provide a happy and free evenings entertainment and to raise money for the Bexley Night Shelter and Bexley Food Bank; £300 was raised.

COME AND JOIN US AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Jackie and Keith Mackley

Danson Crescent House Group

It was about 20 years ago with some trepidation I began leading this group

having taken over from Kate Foot. We now meet every other Tuesday morning and over the years have continued to become very close-knit and supportive of each other. Sadly we have lost some beloved members but have also welcomed new members. Malcolm has taken up giving lifts as more of the group are unable to walk so easily. He also does a great job of the refreshments and so has become an honorary member.

There are currently nine of us and the photo shows us at our Christmas meal last December with a few extra husbands. From left to right: Andy Inglis; Doreen Pride; Anne Hill; Tracey Knight; Pete Knight; Alan Hill, Yvonne Kaul; Hazel Arcott; Jenny Cosser; Malcolm and myself. (Nicky Inglis was behind the camera.)

We usually use the studies that Estelle so carefully provides. The series we are doing at the moment is one on Gifts of the Spirit which we have all found to be one of the best and very helpful. We are flexible and sometimes miss out the studies to talk and pray with a group member if there is a particular



need.

On the social side we often have group meals out for birthdays and special occasions or sometimes have a home buffet together.

I like to think that our group is very successful both spiritually and in friendship but the last words should be left to the members themselves. These are some of their comments which have been made on previous occasions:-

"A close group of friends, who enjoy our studies and each other's company"

"Attending is like a safe haven amongst our extended family"

"We rejoice in each others joys and happiness, laughing crying and praying together"

"Growing in faith, studying the Bible"

"Our group is very important to us"

Sheila Clarke

My Faith Journey: Beverley Beaumont

My faith journey starts in 1991. I was the single parent of a 6-year-old son and we came to church parade. My son enjoyed it so much, I asked if he wanted to come to 'Sunday School'. He skipped out to his group, not giving me a backward glance, which in itself was a small miracle. I was determined to sit at the back of church and not get involved as I did not believe God would want anything to do with me. God had other plans! Within a few weeks, I had joined a house group, and was invited onto a Saints Alive course



(there was no Alpha back then). On week 6, I said sorry to God. Sorry for all the things I was holding on to so tightly. Sorry for turning my back on Him. I know that God forgave me that night. Walking home, it was like a physical burden was lifted from me and I was floating about three feet from the ground.

From that point, God has guided me and called me into different ministries, often through the prodding of wonderful people who see God's purpose in me when I do not always see it myself, and I have grown as a person and as a Christian. God's word is very important to me. I have learned to say yes (which often starts out as no – there must someone better than me!), trusting that where God calls me, He also equips me, after all, it is His work, not mine.

I feel privileged to teach in a primary school with children, some of whom have quite dysfunctional home lives, and with colleagues, many of whom have no other Christian influences in their lives. I pray that I can be God's hands and feet in that place.

When I was first asked to read from the bible in a service, my knees knocked together so much, I told God I was never getting back on the blue carpet again. I am now a licensed lay reader!

I am still a work in progress, God hasn't finished with me yet. When I stand at the front of the church, I am not speaking from a place that says I have got this all sorted, I speak to myself as much as I speak to anybody else, and I feel honoured if God uses that to bless or challenge others.

The Evangelists Conference 2024 www.evangelistsconference.com

The Evangelists Conference 2024, Mercure Daventry Court Hotel and Spa, 9th-11th January 2024.

Thank you Lord for safe journey blessings with Billy Jo and Charlotte O'Leary to and from this excellent conference, organized and lead by the Philo Trust.

Mark Ryan spoke first, and told us our fruit is the souls of people who want to share the Gospel. He said we should expect push back as we will not be popular with the enemy, and his people.

We should urgently seek intercessors in the next few months.

Sally Bell spoke on our health and wellbeing; we need to sleep seven to eight hours per night.

Ultra processed food is killing us who live in the West. Our diet should have a plant slant, with a variety of foods to aid our gut biome. The average West-

ern diet contains a shocking amount of sugar, and we need to reduce it , and consider fasting which is very good for switching on our anti aging genes.

The wonderful Noel Robinson led worship beautifully throughout the conference and told us that this is the season of the evangelist, the season of the witness. Those in need of a fresh blessing with oil, for their ministries received it.

Matt Somerfield from Zeo Church, told us that they are discipling all their congregations, and we experienced the video of Barack Obama accepting the slogan 'I'm 'fired up, I'm ready to go'.

Alison Fenning inspired us with the fact that adversities that change our lives are used by God for good. We speak the Bible to adverse situations, and follow Jesus through our trou-

bles. God's call to obedience may include suffering.

Mitch from Northern Ireland told us we must fight for the kingdom of God to be established. We must preach Christ and stay true to our calling, building up the Church with stories.

Mark Greene asked us 'what do you like about Jesus?' He told us God can work anywhere through anyone, Have you seen God working in your life recently? A witness testifies to what Jesus is doing In their life.

Paul Mcgee said we are all mad, **making a difference**, and we all need the oxygen of encouragement, and not to respond to provocation quickly, but to stop, reflect, and move on.

I came away fired up and ready to go.

Mike Cosser



News and the Bible

We hear of things on the news. We talk about them and say our views on the Palestine situation, the post office scandal, immigration, etc.

To get a more informed view, we could read articles or listen to podcasts, etc. They will not all be balanced and unbiased and few will look from a biblical perspective. I really like CARE's articles so I would like to tell you so you can check them yourself.

Amongst other things, they do an article on the latest headline story each week and look beyond the hype to consider what is reasonable, what the Bible has to say and where the hope is. It can be surprising how we miss truths if we just listen to the mainstream versions- not because the BBC and others are particularly biased or anything, but because they miss the bigger, better picture and they follow popularity.

If you want to check it out on the internet, search 'care.org.uk' and scroll down the home page to the 'opinion' section. I have them sent to me by email each week- search 'care impact direct'.

If you know of another good source, let me know. **Bob Morris**



The Gompers Family's combined 255th Birthday Party — just after Christmas.

Left to right: Margaret, Micah, John, Valerie and Ray.