

GRAPEVINE

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Rejoice!

Philippians 4 ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Dear Friends,

Sometimes it is hard to rejoice because the circumstances seem to preclude rejoicing. Our current chaos and lack of unity as a nation make it hard to rejoice, and in church the departure of two of our most outstanding workers (Danielle and Laura) makes life seem that bit less certain and a bit harder and a bit less likely for us to rejoice.... But!

As Charles Wesley entreats us: **Rejoice! The Lord is King.** We are His and He is Lord and that is sufficient grounds for

rejoicing at all times.

We also rejoice WITH Danielle and Laura; Danielle, empowered by God's riches leading the church in Snodland, preaching the Gospel in season and out, and taking with her the best of St John's. Laura will now be sharing her passion and skill as a

roles, and God will do something new in our midst.

Can I ask you to think afresh about what you are offering in the way of time and gifts to St John's? Our children and young people in particular will need fresh leaders and support. We are in the process of

seeking a Youth Worker to lead our older youngsters – but this was in place before Laura's move. Can you help on Sunday morning or with Open Door on Thursdays?

Isaiah 43 ¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

God will do a new thing in our midst – and a new thing in Snodland and Bromley and Bexley. What will your part be in that new thing?

Enjoy the summer.

Blessings,

Adam Foot, Vicar



young people's worker with the whole of the Anglican Church in Bromley and Bexley.

I will miss their partnership in the Gospel here at St John's immensely, but many others will be blessed by them in their new

St John's News

School is out for the Summer, Term time groups and events are having their last gathering of the session, Alpha courses are just finishing, Spark is just around the corner, it's nearly August!

Life in and around St John's has continued to be rich and busy with regular services and gatherings providing the ongoing environment in which our faith is nurtured, challenged and developed.

Special events over the past two months have included supporting Danielle at her welcome and induction at Snodland at the beginning of June, Thy Kingdom Come

24/3 Prayer weekend and Confirmation at St Peter's when Hannah Wood, Laura Gibbs and Jim Golding confirmed the promises they made at their recent Baptisms.

Most recently the Healing Service saw God at work in many lives and situations, and God working is a fact those completing the current Alpha courses testify to (see Alpha article).

The Messy Morning service followed by a BBQ and bouncy castle, saw "the Church" coming out of the building to pray and then have fun and food together.

We continue to support Linda Dowell as she struggles with a fractured ankle.

We are so appreciating getting to know Gordon McBean who is on a placement with us as part of his training for ordination.

And finally, we are still reeling at the news that Laura Webster will be leaving her post as Children and Family Worker, at the end of Spark, to take up a new post serving all the churches in Bexley and Bromley Archdeaconry. Many congratulations, Laura, we are going to miss you so much but are pleased that more churches, children and families are going to have the benefit of your passion for Jesus and skills in encouraging them to have it too.

And so till October,

Estelle Woodcock



IJM

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION



recognize and respond to violence and are helping justice systems protect more than 150 million vulnerable people.

The Problem:

Around the world, millions of innocent children, women and men are living in fear of violent abuse. Slave owners are trapping entire generations of families in silkworm farms or rice mills. Powerful criminals are abusing young girls without

Over 40 million live in slavery today generating \$150 billion in profit each year! 1 in 4 victims of slavery are children. Many of the goods we purchase, clothing, makeup, coffee, mobile phones etc will have slavery somewhere in their supply chains.

The business model of violence and slavery is appalling, but extremely effective. Those who profit know how to find and thrive in markets where laws aren't enforced.

Our Solution

But we believe ending slavery in our lifetime is possible. In the face of this brutal oppression, IJM protects the poor from violence by rescuing victims, bringing criminals to justice, restoring survivors to safety and strength, and helping local law enforcement build a safe future that lasts.

Around the world, our teams work alongside local authorities to rescue and restore survivors of trafficking, sexual abuse and other violence, and hold the criminals accountable so others know they



consequence. Traffickers are exploiting children in brothels, private sex-trafficking networks and on-line. Police officers are terrorizing the very people they should be protecting.

Dear St Johns,
Thank you for supporting the work of IJM.

Who Are We?

IJM is the world's largest anti-slavery organisation. We're a global team of over 1,000 Christian undercover investigators, lawyers, social workers, advocates etc—and you! Together we:

- * **Set the slaves free** – we've rescued over 49,000 people from slavery and other forms of violent oppression
- * **Bring the oppressors to justice** – we've helped local authorities arrest 3,800 suspected slave owners and other criminals and so far seen 1,600 convictions with many in process.
- * **Are stopping the slave trade forever** – we've trained 188,000+ justice system officials and community members to

Inside SPARK

We all know, I'm sure, what SPARK looks like from the visitor's point of view, and very many of us know what it looks like from the team's point of view, but you may not know a great deal about what it looks like from the planning point of view.

The SPARK year begins in the Autumn when we hold a feedback meeting for what worked well and what could do with improvement or change, and this is the time when we take the decision on whether SPARK will run the following year. Heads of all the different sections are either invited to this meeting or their views sought. We thank God for all that He has done, and that He enabled SPARK to happen for a further year.

The planning and preparation begins in the New Year with Julie Stedman booking the field, pitch marking and access keys from the Council, the marquee / fencing / generator, and slightly later the inflatables, refuse and recycling bins (a challenging job). We also begin to consider a theme, a process that can go over several team meetings, which happen approx bi-monthly most of the year, and start to look for who will continue to head up different areas of SPARK – craft, inflatables, sport, refreshments, under 5's, face-painting, rotas, prayer tent, hosting our guests, 5 x the half hour presentations each day SPARK hosts on the microphone, music, safeguarding, cooks for team meals, design of the team application form, and each of the evening events which also come under scrutiny in case they need changing. We also start to engage other church partners at this point.

2019 is seeing the launch of a Youth Tent, overseen by youth workers from other churches than our own, through the youth leader network TBY (Transform Bexley Youth). TBY is also hosting their bi-monthly youth worship event on the first evening of SPARK. 2019 has also seen the production of our own booklet (designed by Linzi Golding) to go with the theme: Sherluke Holmes.



This year has seen the first massive change of personnel since SPARK began in 2003. Two key members of the Executive Team have stood down, and we have worked very hard to draw in new church partners. Adam (Chair) has visited several church leaders and gained a few new members of the Executive, and we have communicated much more with local churches than before. Despite hard effort and prayer, the number of volunteers is still at the cusp of being unworkable, however as I write we have 90 volunteers, and we need 100-120. We usually pick up a few

more on the launch weekend of people who didn't realise they had to register!

Another biggie change on top of the youth tent is that we have taken the decision to change the week that SPARK runs. There are several reasons why our regular week is not possible for different churches ie Annual Denominational Conference, New Wine Festival, Newday Festival, and as a bonus, a different week will mean that families can attend both SPARK and Lark in the Park in Sidcup. We are aiming to have next year's date ready for this year's SPARK so all visitors are aware, and it will help team members to plan their holidays.

As well as volunteers being a launch of faith, finance is always a faith challenge as well. We do apply for grants, but most of the finance is given by local churches and individuals. We are very thankful to all who contribute. We are church together. The 2019-20 season will see more changes: a new treasurer and changes for Laura (who heads up the craft and all things tent-wise) as yet unknown.

However our observation is that GOD IS FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS. He is the author of SPARK and the sustainer, and even though we have wobbles and panics, He has never let us down yet. We do pray that He will show us each year whether to continue, so that we don't walk out of his will. Please join us in that prayer, as we too want to be faithful to Him. God bless all those who will join us next week in Danson Park, may they know His love and care for them, his healing, his goodness and desire for us to have "life in all its fullness" (John 10v10).

Kate Foot

cannot exploit the poor without consequence. Our aftercare staff and partners restore survivors physically, mentally and empowering them to live successfully in freedom in their communities. And along the way, our teams collaborate with local authorities to design and implement powerful improvements in the justice system.



of His people and is once again saying "Let my people go". Will we be the Moses of our time?

IJM in the UK:

IJM UK is a registered charity, regulated by the Fundraising Regulator, with offices in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, who:

- * raise awareness
- * raise funds to support our operational work
- * mobilise a movement of abolitionists, including the Christian Church;
- * are raising a move of prayer across the UK to end slavery and injustice; and
- * provide thought leadership, leveraging our unique global experience to influence leaders across Government, businesses and institutions.

When the laws are enforced, the violence stops. In the Philippines, at the end of a multi-year programme, we saw the prevalence of children in the sex trade across the 3 regions we were operating reduce by a staggering 80%!

With God's grace, we are seeing similar results replicated in other parts of the world. But God is passionately interested in the one as well as the 99 and the 40 million.

The Vision:

By 2030, we aim to rescue millions, protect half a billion and make justice for the poor unstoppable—shutting down the business of violence for good.

To make this possible, we need to scale

our work exponentially by:

- * **Equipping partner organisations** to join us in stopping violence, expanding our model in areas beyond our direct reach.
- * **Inspiring and empowering champions** like you to demand justice through an advocacy and volunteer movement.
- * **Helping governments & corporations** shut down violence by offering consulting services.

All of this is underpinned in prayer. If we are going to knock down the gates of brothels and brick kilns, we must first knock on the gates of heaven and seek our Father's help. He has heard the cries

We Need You!

We so value your support, both as a Church and individually. If you would like to learn more about how you can help bring justice to the most vulnerable in our world, come and talk to me or visit www.ijmuk.org.

Steve Webster

The Men's Group

The Men's Group meets on alternate Thursday evenings from 8pm to 10pm. We have met in various homes and in the church hall but for now, we meet in the church Prayer Room.

There are anything from four to seven of us (ten once) and we do what house groups do, including going through the bible, which some of the guys really appreciate because not everyone reads much and not everyone gets as much out of the bible on their own as they do reading it through together with others. We also find that we can talk openly and honestly in a way that we probably wouldn't in front of the ladies.

We see ourselves as part of the wider consciousness that men need to get together and encourage each other.

That means that the monthly curry nights and occasional other events, eg watching Welling United or going to Twickenham or a Christian men's conference, all of which help keep us going as men for Christ. The ladies are often welcome.

The original vision was to encourage men to step up a level and grow as Christians. That hope remains but looking back, the group has probably turned out to be more about keeping us going and helping each other when facing life's struggles. God is good.

Bob Morris

service on Pentecost Sunday. People signed up to pray non-stop for one hour individually, some prayed in pairs, some grabbed two hours together, and some even filled in when people couldn't make their chosen time! There were six prayer stations to visit following the six main statements of The Lord's Prayer and this year the particular focus was on 'Praying For Five'. This follows the Archbishop's appeal for each of us to prayerfully choose five people we would love to see come to faith in Jesus, and undertake to pray for them every day – until they do!

It is never too late to decide to pray for people you would love to see to come to Christ. If you missed Thy Kingdom Come this year, and want to begin praying for your 'five' right now, the good news is that there are still prayer cards at the back of church – or why not simply write down your five names on a piece of paper, keep them with you wherever you go, and pray for them every day. Do join us!

Miriam Giles

THY KINGDOM COME...

This year at St John's, we prayed for 48 consecutive hours from noon on Friday 7th June till the end of the morning



3dub

This year in 3dub (14-18's, Y9-13 or equivalent), we have had a major change in leadership. After Soul Survivor last summer, Jeff and Kim with Phoebe moved to Cambridge for Jeff to begin ordination training, and Dave moved to a new church near to his and Sarah's home in Dartford. Fiona returned to Germany, and this left just Kate from Bishop Ridley (BR). 3dub continues to be a shared youth group across our 3 churches – BR, St John's and St Peter's, with occasional members from other churches.



As we had no new youth leader in the pipeline, Adam and I stepped in to take over until a more permanent solution could be found, and we welcomed in Anna as she joined us for

her gap year. In the new year, we also welcomed Naomi who joined us for a youth leadership placement as part of her 3 year degree course, and she brought with her 3

children – Edith, Jessica and Solomon – spread between 3dub and Dubsters (10-14, Y6-9).

In the first term, we joined St John's whole church JSP project, which deferred looking at the 5W's which make up our name (yes do ask one of us to explain): Welcome, Worship, Witness, Word, Worldwide. Every month we join the Transform Service and head for the Noodle Bar after, and alternate months this year we joined TBY Transform (just a tad confusing) – inter-church Youth Worship, hosted at BCLC in Bexleyheath. The last one for 2018-19 will be on the Monday of SPARK.

We have both welcomed and joined both Dubsters and BCLC Youth at least termly, and have had socials together in Gillingham with the Diocesan Midnight Ice Skate, Bowling, and Gravity (trampolines) at Bluewater.

Kate Foot

Alpha Summer 2019

Why do we run the Alpha Course at St John's?

Biblically, we need to obey Jesus' command to make disciples ...not an easy mission.

Our personal answer is because we so want people's lives to be transformed as they come into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our experience is that The Alpha Course environment, together with hard work, love and ongoing prayer enables this transformation to take place.. but enough from me. As the current courses conclude, here, with their permission, are the reflections of three guests who along with the other seven or eight from the Wednesday and Friday courses have now also become our friends:-

In answer to the question,

During the last 11 weeks we have covered a lot of aspects of the Christian life and you've had a chance to experience what this means. How has God been working in your life during this time?

They wrote :-

'I still have a lot to learn but Alpha has given me the rocket pack of spiritual awareness to launch myself into the next phase of my relationship with Christ. I have been introduced to a fellowship of love and compassion, where you can ask questions without judgement. I have realised the importance and power of prayer. I have appreciated my own life more and how through the example of goodness, charity and faith I can do more to help those around me. And finally I have experienced the strength and peace you can receive once you start to offer up your failings to Christ and invite The Holy Spirit into your life.' Julie Saker

'God has a huge impact on my life. God has spoken to me in many different ways not knowing what or who was talking to me. I've been going to church on Sundays and I have thoroughly enjoyed it and I feel blessed and privileged to be part of a church that feels like my second family, that has made me feel so welcomed and loved. I now pray when I need to for help or for other people in my life. That my daughter came to church with me meant the world to me and now she has started to believe. This whole journey has helped personally in my suffering with anxiety and (shown me) a purpose of why I am here' Becky Mawhinney

'I have loved every minute of it, I feel I have been on a lovely journey with you all, I have made friends with you and hope I never lose all of you, I am sure God gave me this friendship I have with you all, I feel God is working his way through me with my cafe I am running at Christ Church, I feel God is sending homeless people in there for me to help, I am also listening and looking for signs now, something I never did before coming to an Alpha course, I really will encourage anyone I can to do the course, For me it's really taught me so much.' Linda

So is it worth it? Yes yes yes!!!! And thank you for praying, catering and encouraging and

Please be praying when we should run the next course.

Estelle and Ken Woodcock, Wendy Morris, Wendy McKenzie-Ingle, Mike Cosser, Sarah Willy, Doug Snow, Kay Andrewartha

