

GRAPEVINE

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View from the Vicarage

Dear Friend,
On Monday Danielle and I attended the local New Wine Leaders Network meeting at Hildenborough. We heard Mark Aldridge speak on leadership in the local church. He based his talk on a book by Chris Lownley titled *Heroic Leadership* which draws on Jesuit teaching. I found what he said helpful, both as a leader but also as a disciple, so have decided to share it.

Christian leadership can be seen as followership. As Christians we look to see what the Father is doing: *'Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."'* John 5:19 The four principles Mark shared mirror what we have discovered at St John's and are a timely reminder in case we have moved off the path.

1) **Who I am** as important as what we do. We need to, ourselves, be so secure in who God has made us to be that we can

give it away and rejoice when people surpass us. It is not about individual; it is

about team. We must have self-awareness of our weaknesses and trust people around us who can point out our blind spots.

2) We need to have **ingenuity for change** since changing nothing does not keep us in the same place – it leads to decay. The Jesuits have a saying: **"Live with one foot raised"**. 30 years ago people were interested in 'Is it true?'. Preaching the truth of the resurrection was very effective. We still need to do that BUT the current mantra is not **"Is it true?"** but **"Does it work?"**. The Gospel has not and must not change, but the method must. Stories of HOW God has met with you and changed things are needed today so that we can earn the right to share the Gospel (search 'Christianity Works – J. John' on YouTube for one such story)

3) We **love** each other. We must eat and celebrate more together. **By this shall all men know**. We need to believe in each other and let them know it. Who

was the person who first believed in me? Youth leaders Gillian & Brian Taylor and John & Heather Brockman trusted Kate and me, loved us and encouraged us. That's why we grew. On our first Parish Weekend 16 years ago Ken Gardiner shared the need for 5 warm fuzzies for each cold prickly. Psychologists talk of a 7 to 1 encouragement bias. Next time you feel like criticising someone (the worship band?) ask, 'What is this going to do to them?'. We need a passion to see others grow, encouraging and inspiring.

4) **Elicit great desires**. The New Wine strapline is 'Local Churches Changing Nations'. We have to dream big, aim high, spend our all on the Kingdom of God. Why? Because Christ first loved us and made a bold and decisive plan to rescue us. We need to be a band of brothers and sisters with a goal. This is a call to a real challenge and a call to enter eternal life with our petrol tank empty saying, "wow, what a ride".

Many blessings,
Adam Foot



St John's News

Who'd have thought last magazine time that today, as I write, we would be a mere three weeks from a General Election, the results of which will be dominating the media around the time you read this.

Unpredictable as the national news may be, our life at St John's continues to be dominated by the unchanging truth that Jesus is alive and is at work in us, individually and as a fellowship. He is using our hands, lips and feet and longs to reach others with his love and transforming power. So, we continue to work and pray for **JustOne on 8th July** which provides a special opportunity for a friend or family member to hear Christian truth. Those of us who were able, spent time praying for JustOne during the 24 hour prayer chain so well planned by Billy-Jo and Danielle.



Our children had a great three days at the pre-Easter **Holiday Club** when we had loads of fun and learnt about some surprising Super Heroes, a young girl, a little boy and, less unexpected, a very brave man. This last Sunday **our children were the Super Heroes** as, with guidance from Laura and team, they led our morning worship with confidence, reverence and obvious enjoyment.

At the April **Transform** three more recent members who have joined our family took the brave step of being baptised, **Kranthi** and **Andy**, and reaffirming baptismal promises, **Luke**. They would all three agree that being a Christian does not magically remove life's problems, but that they never now face them alone and experience the joy and privilege of being part of **HIS story**.

Holy Week and Easter enabled us to reflect, meditate and celebrate Good Friday and Easter Truth. My particular highlights were the lovely **Agape Meal** at Bishop Ridley and **Carole Bevan's** humbling testimony, at the Son Rise Service, of what Jesus has done for her.

The **APCM** enabled us to reflect on the past year, considering and praying for the year to come with hopefully the realisation of our **PRAYER ROOM!**

Laura Webster and **Bob Morris** were elected onto the PCC. What a joy a fortnight ago to welcome little **Leo McGill** when just over a week old and then to see Chas Cole back in church last Sunday!

So there's much to look forward to with Summer on the horizon. SPARK and a myriad of other special times are just round the corner.

Until July, **Estelle Woodcock**

Holiday Club

Calling all superheroes!

50 little superheroes from Reception to Year 6 joined this year's holiday club in the church during the Easter holidays. We had a great time of fun, games, crafts and worship. The mornings started with superhero training, different group challenges and worship. Everyday we were thinking about real superheroes from the Bible: Miriam looking after her brother Moses, Elijah fully trusting in God, and the little boy who shared his lunch so that Jesus could feed 5000 people with it.

In small groups we had the chance to talk about the stories we heard, do crafts and activities and play fun games together. On the last day we had a lovely picnic outside with the children and their families. Thanks to the many wonderful helpers they had a good time and it was great to see how much they enjoyed the three days.

The children did not only learn about Jesus being our superhero, but also about how they can be superheroes when God is with them. This was also highlighted by our memory verse from Philippians 4:13, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." As part of such a great team, I personally really enjoyed the club and spending time with all the children. Come and have a look next year; it's definitely worth it!

Nina Doll

Easter



Ruskin Avenue Housegroup



Last year our group had an evening of prayer for Evergreen and the elderly (including Age UK and the Alzheimer's Society) which was held in church and was well attended. We also pray regularly for our mission partners and receive their prayer letters.

We have two main social evenings a year, one at Christmas and one during the summer.

day to get to church, then try a house-group. Our main aim is to encourage new Christians into these groups, where they will find people who share the same difficulties, hopes and dreams; and with Jesus who will be our guide, you can't go wrong!

Joan Wood

Housegroups are the most friendly, compatible places to be: meeting to together; reading and discussing the Bible; helping each other with problems; and with prayer and love, giving those problems to the Lord.

Our group meets once a fortnight and we are currently 13 in number. Over the years we have learnt so much from the Bible, and what a learning curve that has been with the wonderful stories and main characters bringing this Holy Book so alive and with Jesus teaching us how we should live through all the examples he gives.

Danielle came last Christmas along with Doug who played carols for us; we all enjoyed a lovely evening together.

Why would you want to join a housegroup? We are all very different, but if you find Sundays a difficult

2016-17 Season



League Table

POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Christ Central	16	12	3	1	51	18	33	39
2	Emmanuel Lightning	16	12	1	3	43	18	25	37
3	St Marys West Croydon	16	10	2	4	49	37	12	32
4	Selhurst United	16	7	3	6	37	33	4	24
5	Heart 2 Heart	16	6	5	5	35	30	5	23
6	New Life	16	5	2	9	34	41	-7	17
7	St Johns Danson	16	4	4	8	34	35	-1	16
8	St Marks Battersea Power	16	3	1	12	23	56	-33	10
9	XLP	16	2	1	13	14	52	-38	4 *



I have long been interested in the work of Christians Against Poverty, commonly known as CAP. Back when there was a CAP debt centre based in Welling Baptist I wasn't able to get involved. Then CAP began to expand and, as with so many projects that help bring the Gospel to people by positive action, God's hand has definitely been on it since the beginning.

From a one man debt centre in Bradford CAP has now grown to be an award-winning national charity with debt centres in nearly 300 churches and a further 300 plus churches involved in running Money Courses, Job Clubs and/or Release Groups for people with addictions. So when I found out about the opportunity to train locally to become a CAP Money Coach in November 2015 it seemed like the right time for me to finally get involved with this great organisation. (I recommend CAP founder John Kirkby's, book "Nevertheless". It's an inspiring story.)

Having done the training I was put in touch with the local co-ordinator for Bexley Borough and found out there were a few of us in the borough, but as far as I know I am the only one from a Welling church. Since my training I have helped

run 3 Money Courses, attended by 10 delegates. The Money Course is a revolutionary system which gives people the opportunity to learn budgeting skills which will have a lasting impact on their finances.

You do not have to be in debt to benefit from the Money Course; it is helpful for anyone. If you are good with your finances, it can help you be better; if you are not so good with your finances, it can help you gain control. The Course will help you to budget, save and still have money left to spend on the things that are important to you. You can also be signposted for further help should you need it. This is what one of the delegates has to say about the Course:

"The CAP Money Course has helped me to focus on areas that I struggled with."



Putting their strategies in place has shown me how to improve expenditure, make cuts and manage a positive cash flow. More importantly to look at how to save for things I wish to do or achieve. The last reason alone is a reason for all people to look into CAP. Its method opened my eyes to other areas I would not have considered... Plus they offer 1:1 support if deemed necessary taking away any kind of embarrassment. I recognise I do stumble but I am pleased that I can contact my CAP Money Coach for further advice. So still a learning curve. Yes I would recommend CAP. It is ideal for all ages too, which is important when 13 yr olds are walking around with a debit card in our ever growing 'let's spend' society!"

I hope that one day there will be other St John's CAP Money Coaches so that we can provide more courses and offer bespoke help aimed at different groups. In the meantime, if you would be interested in attending a future course, or just want to know more about CAP and what they provide, please do ask me or check out their website.

Wendy Morris

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www.capuk.org



Time in Rukungiri

I'm scared of flying, snakes and spiders, and I dislike very hot weather – so it seems unlikely that a place on the equator in the middle of Africa would be somewhere I have longed to visit since joining St John's.

A group of nine of us went on this year's trip to Rukungiri, Uganda, in February, including Sue, Steve, Lena, Steve, Pete and me who are connected with St John's or Bishop Ridley. We flew into



Uganda's capital, Kampala, where we were welcomed by Simon-Peter and his family. The church service on Sunday was a wonder: a few hours long, we sat in this place of peace with choruses and testimonies abounding, largely in a local dialect. It was incredible to share communion with hundreds of our brothers and sisters in Christ: God's Kingdom stretches across the world.

After travelling past swamps, banana

plantations, papyrus, mountains, tea, coffee, and more bananas, we arrived at the stunning expanse of the savannah and the Queen Elizabeth safari park. I struggled to keep my jaw shut as we watched buffa-

loes, hippos, waterbucks, elephants - more huge than I'd imagined - and hilarious warthogs who came right up to our lodge. I was struck that people also live there, fishing or mining salt from a crater lake.

We finally turned our sights to Rukungiri Modern Primary School where we joined them for a celebration of their excellent academic results last year. We were guests of honour, met with a marching band and anthems. The honour we were shown at the school, and throughout our trip, was almost too much to bear. The children were desperately excited to see us, play with us, be near us, touch our funny white skin. I was hit by the emotional and material poverty so many of the

children bear without complaint.

The school is a truly special place, providing for the children in every way they can. The younger children sing "Education is the key", and they truly value education as the way out of poverty. At their chapel service on Sunday they worship as if they are the richest people in the world. For me, a highlight was teaching a couple of maths lessons. That a class of seventy 11-15 year olds would instantly obey my request for quiet rather startled me! Sue and Steve are inspirational in the depth of their commitment to the people there, and led our group amazingly.

We've been looking at a series at our housegroup called, "If you want to walk on water, you've got to get out of the boat." This was a definite trip outside my comfort zone where I was truly met with God's faithfulness. The flying – I loved. The heat – was glorious. And when my heart felt broken, God's loving kindness held me together with the beauty and hope I saw around me.

Louise Russell



got me interested in knowing more. These people, no matter how bad their situations and background, had found God and had their lives completely transformed. This gave me hope. I often feel broken, like an outcast whether because I was a child in care or because I have mental health issues. It doesn't matter what you've done God still loves you and will continue to love you. That's pretty amazing.

On Alpha I very quickly learned there was no right or wrong answer and everyone in the group would view things in a different way. It was all about talking them through and helping each other to learn and understand. The session about resisting evil was a hard one for me, because of my past. But the support, love and kindness in the conversations really struck me. They saw that I'm not evil - I'm someone. They accepted me, and as a friend not a label. Wow, that really grabbed me. Praying that evening gave me strength.

The Alpha course is about joining a new family, a family who are on a journey just as you are. It's about asking lots of questions and maybe getting to the place where you can open up your heart and life to God. I would highly recommend it to anyone. It helped me to accept God into my life and take the next step of being baptised. I wanted my friends to understand my faith. More importantly, I knew God had been calling me but I just hadn't been able to see it though that thick cloud of darkness.

He has never once left me. I've continued to face very challenging situations. Since

being baptised I've felt low and sometimes questioned whether God was there. But I have found that these are the times when I have experienced him being there the most. He's given me the voice now to ask for and accept help. I'm no longer alone in my battle. No matter how hard things get, God is slowing getting rid of the pain. The light in my heart now shines brighter than ever.

Andy Lazell

Jesus' presence

Some of the 18-30s at St John's and BR have started to join together with 3dub to worship Jesus once a month. We've been learning to give him space to speak to us and have been overwhelmed by things he's said to us. On many occasions he has spoken the same thing to several people - he obviously really wants us to trust and obey him.

It's tough to learn how to be a disciple in a culture throwing all kinds of opposing morals to what Jesus calls us to. *He* is the wonderful alternative but we, his church, must not make him the less wonderful alternative. We have the challenge of dying to self, surrendering our lives and loving radically in honour and worship of him, not becoming bored and disillusioned with our faith. It is an individual and corporate challenge.

Please pray. **Nicola Foot**

Lollipop Lady

When Chris Gailer left school in 1966 she worked in Midland Bank for ten years. When her children, Sue and Robert, were young she took work cleaning and ironing to fit around school times but when Robert went to secondary school at Hurstmere, she took a job as a Lollipop Lady, working in Sidcup for children attending Hurst Primary School. I don't think Chris anticipated that 28 years later she would still be there!

At that time lollipopers were employed by the police and received training only on the first day. Today they are employed by the Council and have to be observed once a term with two training days a year. Primary Schools don't automatically get a lollipop even if they consider they need one. It depends on the head count and volume of traffic. Hurst Road is a very busy local road. Even though Chris holds her lollipop high as she is obliged to do, still there are drivers who don't stop once it's planted firmly on the ground as they are obliged to do, and claim that they never saw her despite a completely fluorescent uniform and arms wide. There can be a penalty incurred for a non-stopping driver and

Chris has once had to go to court as a witness in one such case. The driver was then fined. Trying to remember the registration number and car colour at the same time as keeping eyes on all pedestrians and other traffic means that it's quite hard to prosecute. In the 28 years there has only been once accident, and that not serious, when a 21 year old with learning difficulties did not heed Chris' warning to stay off the road. He was clipped by a non-stopping vehicle and thrown backwards.

Chris loves her job. She gets such pleasure from all the children she sees everyday. She now has children of children crossing with her, the next generation. All know her by name; she gets to know many of the crossers and some of their situations. The job is a leveller – people from all walks of life and all parts of the community. Occasionally some will use her as a confidante. There are some young unaccompanied children which always concerns her, she usually knows them and their situations. She has to remain completely neutral, no confrontation, so is not allowed to comment on whether a parent should be holding a child's hand or



any other situation about which she may have an opinion. She takes the opportunity to pray for some of them.

Since 2000 the law has allowed her to cross anyone over the road, not just children of Hurst School, so she has people going to work, elderly or disabled people using mobility scooters and some from Hurst Community Centre, plus students from Hurstmere School and Cleeve Park School. She much prefers this. Bikes, scooters, double buggies, mobility scooters, all must be accommodated and all must cross in front of her, despite what they might want to do.

Chris is clearly good with people, she has always been sporty and loves the outdoors, so the combination works well. She cares, is rigorous on safety, the split shift doesn't really bother her, she is fine in all weathers – rain and cold, and she gets a plethora of gifts at Easter and Christmas!

There is one conclusion to my discussion with Chris: STOP means STOP.

Kate Foot