

Connecting you

Spring
2020



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Scripture
Union

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We say goodbye to *LightLive* and *SchoolsLive*

Our renewed focus on the 95 has meant some long-standing ministries have had to come to an end. At the beginning of this year, we said goodbye to *LightLive* and *SchoolsLive* after over 10 years of service.

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Regional round-up

We share a few short updates from some of our development workers, involved in a variety of mission activities across England and Wales.



Connecting You is Scripture Union's supporter and prayer magazine, keeping you up to date with what God is doing through the work you support.

Connecting You magazine is also available online at: www.su.org.uk/connectingyou. If you have a

story for *Connecting You*, or a suggestion on how we could improve our service to you, please contact the editor: eddienn@scriptureunion.org.uk

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Belonging, believing, becoming

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“Come near to God and he will come near to you.”
James 4:8



Ninety-five per cent of children and young people don't go to church. But does that mean they have no interest in exploring Christianity? I don't think so.

In fact, we're increasingly seeing children without church backgrounds demonstrate an openness to exploring matters of faith; it's just that they need the right opportunities to do that. And what a privilege Scripture Union has, through God's grace and your support, to provide some of those much-needed opportunities.

Recently, we've been talking with young people who found faith in Jesus despite having no church background, so that we can understand more about their journey.

Initially, many weren't even looking for faith. They were invited to join a group centred on something that interested them, such as music (read about Soul Children on page 4). Faith underpinned the group, but it may not have been centre stage.

Those young people felt warmly welcomed and genuinely accepted, and there was an absence of judgement, so they began to feel that they belonged.

As they got to know and trust others in their group, they felt able to open up about what really mattered to them – to share their hopes and fears. That led to the opportunity to explore the difference

that Jesus could make to the challenges and adventures of life.

If that made sense to them, they found faith – they believed.

And then they 'became'; they began to grow in their spiritual understanding, perhaps disciplined by a Christian in their group. Some went on to join a youth group or a church, others stayed with their original interest group. That was the case for James Taylor, now a Methodist minister, who found and grew in faith at the annual Perranporth Mission – see page 12.

Churches have the potential to support this process of 'belonging, believing and becoming', but sometimes need some help to get new mission initiatives going. Our locally based development workers can be the catalyst that's needed; find out how Bob Goody and his schools-based Hope Tour helped to galvanise a group of Nottinghamshire churches into action.

Few children and young people may start out looking for faith. But with your support and prayers, we can help them to come near to God, so that he comes near to them – near enough for them to taste and see that he is good.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Myles".

Myles MacBean,
National Director



Soul Children: Music, faith and loads of fun!

When musician Chip K visited Norway he discovered Soul Children, a community choir concept that was drawing thousands of young people together and towards faith. Thanks to your support, Scripture Union is helping Chip to pilot Soul Children back home... and it's turning out to be a hit with children and young people both from inside and outside the church.

Put together high quality contemporary Christian songs and some nifty dance moves, add a little Bible teaching and some great games and you've got Soul Children. This fantastic mission concept, developed by Norwegian Ragnhild Hiis Ånestad, aims to introduce children and young people to a lifelong relationship with Jesus through music and song they can relate to.

Chip K met Ragnhild when he was touring Norway with his band. She invited him to the Soul Children festival in Oslo the following year. Chip says, 'There were thousands of kids and they'd learned all my songs so they could be my backing choir! It was amazing - we sang together as we paraded through the streets of Oslo to a stadium for a massive church service. The combination of music, faith and fun was awesome - so I asked Ragnhild if I could launch Soul Children in the UK, and she agreed!'

MAKING THIS EXCITING INITIATIVE POSSIBLE

Chip contacted Scripture Union for some support. We helped him write the spiritual resources, provided some funding, and SU north team leader Rob Steward helped Chip to track down four churches and local mission partners who were keen to pilot this new idea.

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“ Now we've got 18 boys and girls aged 9 to 14, some not from church at all. ”

.....

Buckshaw Village Church near Preston is one of them. Rachel Harris, the children and youth co-ordinator, is enthusiastic. 'Soul Children is energetic and positive, and I love the way it brings children and adults together which sometimes doesn't



Chip K
and the
Soul Children
in Oslo

happen in churches. We all join in with playing the games, doing the vocal exercises and singing the songs. We have lots of fun, but musically it is quite disciplined.

'Faith is woven through Soul Children - the song lyrics are unashamedly Christian, we'll pray together, and each session I give a short talk based on a Bible verse or one of the songs. But as far as the young people are concerned - and this is a positive - the focus is the singing and belonging.

'We meet every Thursday in the school because it's a neutral space. We began with seven children from our church. They loved it and invited friends. Now we've got 18 boys and girls aged 9 to 14, some from other churches and some not from church at all. One mum whose son joined the choir through school says he enjoys being part of the community, loves the buzz and has enjoyed

talking about faith. It's just what we'd hoped for!'

Sisters Esther and Phoebe are in the choir. Esther says, 'The songs have brought me closer to Jesus.' Phoebe says, 'It's fun and I love going there. The teaching has been really good.' Their mum told Rachel, 'How blessed we are to have a choir that isn't just singing, but Christian teaching too. And it's an opportunity to see other people who share their faith and aren't afraid to show it.'

Chip's vision is ambitious. 'I think that Soul Children can become a microcosm of the church; young people are all welcomed and accepted, learn teamwork, worship together and get to hear the hope that Jesus offers to them.'

We look forward to exploring with Chip how that vision could be realised in England and Wales, and to supporting some more pilot choirs in 2020.

Your gifts enable us to support exciting initiatives like Soul Children. If you'd like to help us develop and support more new ministries like this, donate at su.org.uk/donate or call 01908 856 000



*Photos credits: Chip K and Oslo Soul Children



WEEK
BEGINNING
MARCH 1

Prayers

.....

Please pray for those involved with Soul Children

SUNDAY 1

Give thanks to God for inspiring Ragnhild Hiis Ånestad to develop Soul Children, and for the thousands of children and young people in Norway who have heard and responded to the gospel through it.

MONDAY 2

Please pray for those Christian leaders and volunteers involved in piloting Soul Children groups here in the UK, in Preston and across the north. Give thanks that they have caught the vision, and pray that they will see fruit from their efforts.

TUESDAY 3

Ask God to bless the children and young people in these pilot Soul Children choirs, for them to find real joy and fulfilment in being part of their group, both musically and spiritually.

WEDNESDAY 4

Please pray that God will guide Chip K and Scripture Union on how the

Soul Children concept could be taken forward in England and Wales, and help them to make wise decisions.

THURSDAY 5

Praise God that children and young people who aren't part of a church are really enjoying finding out more about Jesus through Soul Children, and ask him to bless them as they explore faith so that they will be hungry to know more.

FRIDAY 6

Give thanks to God that Christian children in Soul Children groups find it something that it's easy for them to invite their friends to, especially those that aren't part of a church.

SATURDAY 7

Please pray for those children, young people and adults in the 400 Soul Children choirs that have already developed in other parts of the world, for God to be glorified through their singing and, through their songs, for the wider community to hear what God has done for them through Jesus.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 8

SUNDAY 8

Pray for the Global Children's Forum leadership team meeting this week. Annette Osborne and Terry Williams will be representing Scripture Union International at the meetings of this global alliance headed by Alan Charter (formerly of SU England and Wales) which exists to find ways of enabling children worldwide to hear the good news of Jesus.

MONDAY 9

Back in late February, local mission partner Re:generation held an evening in Harrow on protecting children from knife crime. Pray that this will have a lasting impact bringing hope and peace in a broken world.

TUESDAY 10

Last week, SU in the north partnered with The Message Trust and local mission partner Southport and Area Schools Worker Trust to run the Higher Tour. Several hundred young people will have heard something of the hope Jesus gives. Pray for the SU team as they follow up in many of the schools.

WEDNESDAY 11

National Mission Partner Festive asks us to pray that Christian Unions in sixth forms and colleges will take the opportunity to run Easter events focusing on Jesus' death and resurrection and aimed at the many young people who have never heard.



THURSDAY 12

Impact, our local mission partner in Bedford, is running prayer spaces today for 150 children at Scott Primary School. Pray that all who take part will engage with God in their own way and that staff will be touched as well.



FRIDAY 13

Amplify is a large-scale collaborative initiative to train 11- to 18-year-olds to share their faith. This weekend there is a residential. Pray that God will enthuse and equip those who come and that he will raise up many to share their faith in this generation.



SATURDAY 14

Thank God for all those who faithfully support us financially through their donations and through their prayers. Pray for those working on SU's fundraising activities over the next year, asking that supporters would catch the vision and generously support the work.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 15

SUNDAY 15

This month, SU Bulgaria is holding a Lego weekend hoping to reach new children and families and share the good news with them. Pray that it will reach children who will form lasting relationships with the churches where the activity is held.

MONDAY 16

It is 25 years since the first Easter Cracked. Praise God for its growth and impact on thousands of children. Pray for originator Wayne Dixon of local mission partner Christian Connections in Schools as he runs the programme again, and for all who will use it and similar programmes in schools and churches in the run-up to Easter.



TUESDAY 17

Ask God to give wisdom to the regional teams in both the south west and the north as they meet today. The south west will be meeting with local mission partner South West Youth Ministries.

WEDNESDAY 18



This term local mission partner York Schools

and Youth Trust will be sharing the Easter story in creative ways in over 50 schools. Pray for the team and

volunteers, and for the students from the schools who will be involved.

THURSDAY 19

Local mission partner Hunsley Christian Youth Trust has a prayer meeting tonight. Join them in giving thanks for partnership with another local trust and for the development of a Rooted hub in the secondary school. Pray that the hub will continue to attract young people.

FRIDAY 20

The Youth Evangelism Conference takes place this weekend, aiming to inspire and encourage leaders to share their own faith and to equip children and young people to share their faith with their friends. Pray for SU staff who will be involved.

SATURDAY 21

Solid, an annual event enabling young people to grow in their faith in a lively fun-packed environment, has led to a number of local events. Pray that in Rayleigh, Essex, the young people who come tonight will have a genuine experience of Jesus.



Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 22

SUNDAY 22

Development worker Steve Hutchinson is leading the Youth Hub at Barnwood in Gloucester



today, doing bushcraft, including shelter building, fire-starting and stick whittling. Please pray for good connections with the young people who come.

MONDAY 23

Scripture Union in Southern Vietnam asks us to pray that all the teachers coming to their teacher training will be well-prepared physically, intellectually and spiritually. Ask God to guide them in the three days of training.

TUESDAY 24

Scripture Union movements around the world are using *Guardians of Ancora* in English. Please pray for growth in ministry of the app for the latest international partners: SU Solomon Islands, SU South Sudan, SU Rwanda, SU Republic of Ireland and SU New Zealand.

WEDNESDAY 25



Pray that relationships with staff and

students established by local mission partner Reach (working in Woking) will be protected and that lives will be

transformed as pupils meet up at school groups each week.

THURSDAY 26

Pray for Keren Mallinson, Director of Mission Development, and the Mission Development Management Team: Richard Shaw (regional), Richard Witham (sports), Jo Morley (events), Gemma Willis (Development Hub) and Mandy Hagon (PA support).

Pray that they'll help our vision and mission to be effectively and creatively delivered.



FRIDAY 27

Please pray for the regional support workers as they provide an organisational, digital and administrative service within each of the five regional teams, and as they work closely with the rest of their teams participating in and supporting regional activities.

SATURDAY 28

Today local mission partner Thrive Youth Ministries working in and around Warwick and Leamington Spa hosts Thrive Juniors, a twice-yearly worship event for primary-aged children and their leaders. Pray that the children will have a real understanding of the love of Jesus.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 29

SUNDAY 29

Pray that a Bible reading promotion campaign organised by SU Malawi for 300 churches across the whole country will lead to a renewed interest in engaging with the transforming message of the Bible.

MONDAY 30

Many of the children who attend the lunchtime groups run by local mission partner Beverley Schools Christian Trust have a growing interest in the Bible and are reading Bible stories at home. Pray that they will find a growing understanding of Jesus and put their faith in him.

TUESDAY 31

Development worker Helen Franklin asks us to pray for the follow-on to the Higher mission in north Wales especially for groups that are meeting and for ongoing contacts between churches, schools and individuals.

WEDNESDAY 1

Ask God to give wisdom and creativity to content managers, Angela Grigson and Pam Rowden, and administrative assistant Jill Warren as they work on the content for our Bible reading guides and *Word Live*.

THURSDAY 2

GW Tracks is a mountain biking holiday at Great Wood for 12- to 17-year-olds led by Nathan and Lucy Johnson. Pray for the team during

the event, which starts tomorrow, as they accompany young people on their journey of faith.



FRIDAY 3

Following the success of last year's fully booked Edale Adventure, the north region will be running a new children's holiday this weekend: Edale Challenge (led by Rob Steward). Pray that the leaders will have wisdom and sensitivity and that the children will meet Jesus.



SATURDAY 4

Give thanks for the second year of The Bristol Brickers Basketball club in Bristol, an outreach initiative for 10-15s funded by SU's Good News Fund. Pray that as the young people enjoy their game and hear how God can help them in their daily lives they may want to explore further.



Perranporth Mission: A community of God's love

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Your support is helping Scripture Union missions like the one at Perranporth to reach children and young people beyond the church. And their lives are being transformed as they encounter God's love in these communities of faith.



EMMA
ELLIN

James and Emma Ellin have led Scripture Union's Perranporth Mission in Cornwall for eight years.

Emma says, 'Much of what we do is in

outdoor public spaces – often as people pass by, they stop out of curiosity to listen, and end up staying.

'One family came and sat on the wall to watch our activities on the beach one year, and we got chatting to them about cars and life. The next year they returned, and we chatted about cars, life – and Jesus. Since then, they've come to faith and now help on the mission!

'Sometimes children accept Jesus even if their parents don't – that happened last summer with two brothers aged five and eight, after they'd been coming to the mission for three years. They've decided to read their children's Bibles together to find out more about Jesus because they can't get to a church.'

JAMES' STORY

One particularly inspiring story is that of James Taylor, now a Methodist lay pastor of eight Cornish churches. He grew up in Perranporth and, although his family weren't Christian, his mum took him to the mission because he was an only child



JAMES
TAYLOR



“ I was suddenly overwhelmed with a deep sense of God's presence, and wept as I realised how much he loved me. ”

and she thought he'd enjoy playing with other children.

James says, 'I went every year from the age of three. When I was ten, the leaders gave me a youth Bible and a music tape by the Christian band Delirious.

'But a few months later, my life took a downward turn. I had developed body dysmorphia; I was depressed and had no hope. I wanted to belong to something, but I looked in the wrong place, found the wrong crowd and got into drink and drugs.

'The following summer, I couldn't bring myself to go to the mission. But I kept on playing my Delirious tape and listening to the lyrics. It was a spiritual lifeline.'

At 15, James took a summer job in a local restaurant. 'The mission

leader came in, we got talking and, at his suggestion, the following year I went to the mission for the whole two weeks. I asked the leaders lots of questions. But the real breakthrough came when a friend shared just how powerfully God had worked in her life and how he had answered her prayers.

‘I was suddenly overwhelmed with a deep sense of God’s presence, and wept as I realised how much he loved me. He wasn’t distant, he was so close and understood my pain. As I wept, the mission leaders took turns to sit with me, and I felt a genuine sense of care from them. I in turn felt a deep love for them – God was showing me just how much they meant to him.

‘It was transformational; I felt as if a great burden had been lifted, and I started following Jesus.

‘The next summer, I became a mission team helper and experienced



the Holy Spirit – I felt an incredible sense of liberation, warmth and love for others, and all my self-image concerns vanished. I wrote a song, “I’m God’s Son”, all about belonging – because at last I had found something good to belong to – and performed it on the last night.

‘As a child, I never went to a church. But Perranporth Mission became my church – a community where God’s love shines like a beacon and draws families, children and young people to learn more about Jesus.’



.....
“ It was transformational; I felt as if a great burden had been lifted, and I started following Jesus. ”
.....



Perranporth is just one of the missions and holiday clubs that SU runs. To find out more or to see if you could help, go to su.org.uk/missions

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 5

SUNDAY 5

Andy Bathgate, who has led SU Scotland since 2001, has just retired. Give thanks for his faithful leadership. Pray for a clear sense of the Lord's call to his successor, for wisdom for those interviewing, and that God continues to lead, guide and provide for SU Scotland in the coming days.

MONDAY 6

Bridleways riding holiday and the SU Bake Off holiday (led by Jo and Rachel Morley) run side by side from today until Thursday. Pray that the 12- to 15-year-olds who come will have a great time, improve their skills and learn more about Jesus.



TUESDAY 7

The Go Wild residential, aimed at 8- to 12-year-olds and led by development worker Chris Eales, takes place 23-25 May. Pray for the recruitment of new team members, including a core team member for the planning of the programme, and that children from the 95 will attend.



WEDNESDAY 8

Give thanks for the continued impact of the HOPE Tour in Mansfield and Ashfield in the lives of children and young people (see page 18). Pray too for the ongoing connections into local schools, many of whom are now allowing Christians into the school for the first time in years.

THURSDAY 9

Last autumn, development worker Geoff Brown worked with a church in Northumberland to run a new pop-up Lifepath event. The feedback from the school and volunteers has been very positive. Please pray for wisdom about how best to develop this and how we might work with other churches to roll it out in their area.

FRIDAY 10



The week-long Kestrels sailing holiday for 14- to 17-year-olds on the Norfolk

Broads (led by Tore and Sarah Butlin) starts tomorrow. Pray for safety and for encounters with Jesus.

SATURDAY 11

Development worker Jenni Whymark is involved today with the High Tide youth service, which gathers young people from across Portsmouth for worship, activities and teaching. Pray that the young people will have a real sense of God's presence.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 12

SUNDAY 12 (EASTER SUNDAY)



As we celebrate the resurrection, pray for the 95 who may have no sense of the

life that Jesus came to bring. Pray too for the many youth leaders and workers who try to come alongside them to share this great message.

MONDAY 13

Scripture Union in Australia's Northern Territory thanks God that they are still able to teach the Bible in schools. Pray for teachers and volunteers who faithfully serve each week and pray that God will raise up more volunteers.

TUESDAY 14

Pray for those working on developing resources to help leaders open the Bible with the 95. Ask for insight and the ability



to build bridges into the lives of children and young people who have no Christian background.

WEDNESDAY 15

C4E, local mission partner in North Wales, is praising God for many openings in local schools and the

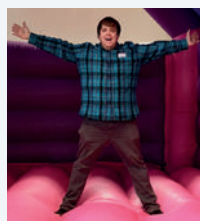
Higher tour in the area. Pray for wisdom and resources to make the most of every opportunity to engage with the children and young people of the area.

THURSDAY 16

Local mission partner Stort Valley Schools Trust asks us to pray for a renewed sense of vision for trustees and schools workers, for inspiration and wisdom in maintaining a relevant and appropriate approach to helping young people hear of the love of God, and reflect on their response to it.

FRIDAY 17

For the fourth year, development worker Bob Goody is running the 3Sixty residential for 8- to 11-year-olds this weekend.



Pray that the children who come will gain a new understanding of how God can be part of their lives.

SATURDAY 18

Pray for local mission partner Fleet and Crookham Churches Together in Schools, asking that they will gain an open door into the one school that they don't yet go into and that young people involved in their schools work would be drawn into church youth and children's activities.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 19

SUNDAY 19

Scripture Union USA gives thanks for the new PrimeTime (after school) programmes in the New York City area. Pray for the churches and teams that are reaching children who don't normally go to church on a Sunday. Pray for the children, that they may experience God's love and come to faith in Christ through this outreach.

MONDAY 20

SU Ministries Trust, local mission partner on the Isle of Man, has a residential weekend for years 6-9 next weekend. Please pray that young people will gain a deeper understanding of God and their own faith and then continue to engage with SUMT as they enter secondary school in September.

TUESDAY 21



Making good connections and partnerships with churches is a huge part of our ministry. Pray for north
Regional Team Leader

Rob Steward as he speaks about the work of SU at the Blackpool Deanery Chapter meeting today.

WEDNESDAY 22

Next week filming will take place for this year's Shine video. Shine encourages, equips and empowers young people to share their faith with

their friends.

Pray that all will go smoothly and that the videos will prove to be a powerful means of reaching those who do not know Jesus.

THURSDAY 23

Pray for the Schools Focus Group meeting in London today. Pray that they will clearly see what God is calling us to as they consider how we develop our resources and training for those in schools.

FRIDAY 24



Tomorrow Gemma Willis (Head of Development Hub) and Jenni Whymark (development worker) will be at a Guildford Diocese

Day where churches will be looking at how they work with children and young people. Pray that as they present *Explore Together* this will give fresh vision and enthusiasm to those present.

SATURDAY 25

Alison Harvey, Johanna Nieuwelink-Jordan and Tricia Bastable of local mission partner Watford Schools Trust will be running a prayer space at Rickmansworth Park School in Watford next week. Pray for energy for the volunteers during this intensive week and that the children will be fully engaged.



Hope Tour opens doors and young hearts across Nottinghamshire

.....

Last autumn, your support enabled SU development worker Bob Goody to bring together churches and schools in Nottinghamshire – and it's helped to take mission to children and young people not in church to spectacular new heights.

When Bob helped to lead the Higher Tour in Cambridgeshire in October 2018, he felt God challenge him to do something similar on his home turf of Nottinghamshire.



BOB GOODY

So he devised the Hope Tour to visit 20 schools across Mansfield and Ashfield.

‘But for the Hope Tour to have lasting impact,’ says Bob, ‘we needed the local churches to work together, develop follow-up events to which we could invite children and young people, and commit to journeying with them longer term.

‘It was a lot to ask. But when I shared the vision with the churches, suddenly there were prayer meetings happening, leaders getting together to discuss what part they could play, new initiatives being planned – they really stepped up to the challenge!

.....
“ Since then, a number of those families have joined church-based groups or church itself. ”
.....

‘For the primary schools, I wrote a one-hour, one-man show based on SU’s *Diary of a Disciple* book. Playing Dr Luke, I shared the story of Jesus, and why he came, with 5,000 children in 15 schools over 2 weeks. I invited the children and their families

to Family Fun Saturdays at the end of each week, which I organised with help from church volunteers. We offered food, crafts and games, and a Christian illusionist shared more of Jesus’ message, and gave out goody bags with tracts and invitations to forthcoming church activities including Lego church, Messy Church and mother and toddler days.

‘Since then, a number of those families have joined church-based groups or church itself. And some churches are now running lunch clubs and assemblies in schools they’d never been in before!

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

‘In the five secondary schools, Christian bands Brightline and SoulBox shared their faith stories with nearly 4,000 students during lesson times. One lesson was gatecrashed by a gang of kids wearing black nail polish and eyeliner who started mocking the band. One later said “I thought this was going to be rubbish. But it was actually amazing!”

‘Seven hundred students came to two follow-up concerts on the Friday and Saturday, and 98% responded to an invitation to find out more about Jesus – Brightline said they’d never known such a high response rate before! Those responding included all bar one of the gang who had disrupted the lesson – they even took a Bible away to give to the lad who couldn’t make it.

‘We invited the church youth workers onto the stage to introduce themselves, saying “The bands are

only here tonight – but these guys are here to support you day in, day out.” And every student left the event with a copy of John’s Gospel, and a link to a website that explained more about Jesus – it had hundreds of visits in the weeks that followed. A Youth Alpha has launched, some of the young people now go to church or church-based groups, and the local churches are getting

.....
“ The bands are only
here tonight – but these
guys are here to support
you day in, day out. ”
.....

together to run further concerts once a term.

‘I’ve been so inspired by the way that local churches have sprung into action and changed their whole approach to mission. There was very little in this area before – now they’ve developed a whole year-round programme and are building ongoing relationships with children and young people who never come to church. They’ve used what they’ve got to do what they can. Doors have opened, children and young people’s hearts have been opened – and God’s kingdom is being built in a wonderful way.’



It’s only through your gifts and prayers that SU development workers can support local churches in mission like Bob did. To give a gift, go to [su.org.uk/donate](https://www.su.org.uk/donate) or call 01908 856 000.



WEEK
BEGINNING
APRIL 26

Prayers

.....

Please pray for God's hope to reach young people across the nation

SUNDAY 26

Praise God for the impact of the Hope Tour, which has shared the message of Jesus with nearly 9,000 children and young people, inspired churches in Mansfield and Ashfield to develop year-round mission programmes, and strengthened their relationships with local schools.

MONDAY 27

Ask God to open the hearts and minds of the children and young people who saw the Hope Tour and to receive his love and the hope that he offers through Jesus.

TUESDAY 28

Give thanks to God for Bob and our other development workers across England and Wales, for their gifts in sharing the gospel with children and young people without church backgrounds so that it makes sense to them.

WEDNESDAY 29

Please pray that God will continue to help all our development workers to build strong relationships with

churches and other partners and work with them to put together really effective mission activities for children and young people.

THURSDAY 30

Ask God to release the resources we need so that we can take on more development workers, and help more children and young people right across the country to discover Jesus and the hope that he offers.

FRIDAY 1

Please pray that God will encourage churches of all kinds to work together more closely so that more children and young people that aren't in church get to hear the message of Jesus.

SATURDAY 2

The importance of music in communicating the gospel is featured several times in this edition of *Connecting You*. Praise God for all those Christian musicians who write and perform songs which help children and young people discover and learn more about Jesus.

Prayers

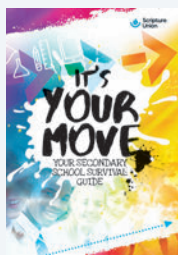
WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 3

SUNDAY 3

In many countries the governments are tightening up anti-conversion rules and making Christian work with children illegal. Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in these countries who are still reaching out to the young generation.

MONDAY 4

Please pray for the Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust team starting *It's Your Move* lessons with Year 6 in approximately 30 primary schools.



They'll be looking at the character of Peter and the choices, changes and challenges that he faced.

TUESDAY 5

Please pray for Rooted hubs that will be developing as follow - up from outreach across Anfield in Liverpool. Pray too for Rooted groups across England and Wales who are booked onto the Rooted retreat in June, that this will give them an opportunity to respond to the good news of Jesus.



WEDNESDAY 6

The Solid Festival takes place again this year in July. Pray that at the planning meeting, which takes place today, the team will catch God's vision for this year's event and come up with a programme that will have a major impact on the lives of children and young people.

THURSDAY 7



Pray for the team led by Toby Chant at the Surf Break holiday for 11-to 17-year-olds in Devon, which runs from tomorrow until

Sunday. Ask God that they will model the love of Jesus and that young people will respond to this.

FRIDAY 8

The Families Together holiday at Great Wood takes place this weekend, led by Steve and Judy Hutchinson. Please pray for a wonderful family time together, with opportunities to focus on the Bible as well as games, walks, woodcraft and lots more.

SATURDAY 9

Local mission partner Lighthouse in Crawley asks for prayer for the team as they face staff changes, with new team joining and another going on maternity leave. Pray for good, creative and productive relationships.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 10

SUNDAY 10

Earlier in the year, SU in German-speaking Switzerland launched *Spoken Word*, a new project which tells the gospel from the viewpoint of Matthew, combining poetry with music, quotes from the Bible and short movie clips. Pray that through this new programme, many people will get in touch with God's Word.

MONDAY 11

Pray for Schools Worker Christopher Baker of local mission partner Christian Initiative to Schools, in his preparation for and taking of assemblies in junior and secondary schools in and around Letchworth Garden City, and for the continued work of lunchtime Christian groups in four secondary schools.

TUESDAY 12



Pray for the development of Rooted hubs in Pembrokeshire that will enable young people

to explore Christian faith at their own pace with the help of adults who will accompany them on the journey.

WEDNESDAY 13

Please pray for the recruitment of a primary school's worker to join the team of local mission partner Engage in Woking, who has the heart, passion, gifting and vision. Pray too for the continued growth

of Christian Unions in Woking.

THURSDAY 14

Development worker Jenni Whymark provides support to the Jeremiah Project organised by churches in Portsmouth, which trains young people in leadership in church and community. They are planning an outreach event for summer 2020. Pray that as the young people meet tonight, they will be full of expectation at what God will do.

FRIDAY 15

Tomorrow local mission partner PSALMS, along with the Diocese of Gloucester, are running an Olympics Sports Day at Gloucester Cathedral. Please pray that the day will be a success and that all those attending will have an opportunity to engage with God and hear his message.



SATURDAY 16

Felpham Mission are going through a leadership change for this summer. There is a preparation meeting today. Pray for the new leaders and ask that the team of God's choice will come together.





Goodbye

Goodbye *LightLive* and *SchoolsLive*

.....

A few years ago, statistics revealed that nearly 12 million under 18s don't go to church - 95% of all children and young people in England and Wales! That shocking statistic motivated us to rethink our focus and review our activities to make sure everything we do either helps that 95% to discover the good news of Jesus, or equips you and your church to reach them. Ideally both!

Of course, that's meant plenty of opportunities for new and exciting resources, but it's also meant we've had to make some difficult decisions and bring some ministries to an end. Sadly, this includes our *LightLive* and *SchoolsLive* websites which have been a staple of our digital offering for over 10 years now.

Through *LightLive*, we were committed to providing high quality biblical activities for church Sunday school groups, but the reality was that it only served to reach the 5% of children and young people already in church. With that in mind, we simply couldn't justify investing all that money and time into it when there are so many outside the church who need to hear the good news. It was a different story with *SchoolsLive*, as it was helping to reach the 95% through resourcing Christians in their engagement with local schools. However, too few people were using the free service to justify the expense of maintaining the old website. As such, we made the painful decision to close that site too.

CAN YOU STILL ACCESS THE OLD RESOURCES?

The old material from *LightLive* and *SchoolsLive* is still available, but you'll now find over two years' worth of sessions as free PDF downloads within the Resource Centre on the main

Scripture Union website at su.org.uk/resources. So if you've got old favourites you want to return to, they haven't disappeared completely.

WILL THERE BE ANYTHING NEW?

We're not going to be writing any new *LightLive* or *SchoolsLive* material because we're concentrating on resources to help you bring the Bible into contexts where the 95 can engage with it and discover the God who created them and loves them. You can definitely expect plenty of new resources from us – just not for these two resource banks.

.....

“ You'll now find over two years' worth of sessions as free PDF downloads within the Resource Centre on the main Scripture Union website at su.org.uk/resources. ”

.....



Whether you support SU in prayer or financially, or you're just interested in what we do, we hope this will reassure you that we're committed to making the best possible use of the resources God provides. Please join us in praying for the 95 and for churches as they seek to engage with the children and young people in their communities.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 17

SUNDAY 17

Pray for the rebirth of Scripture Union Trinidad and Tobago's children's ministry at a Community Children's Home in Trinidad. SU Trinidad will be ministering to at-risk children who are wards of the State.

MONDAY 18



NEIL
JACKSON

Today there is a youth and children's gathering facilitated by Ben Jones, the worker for local mission partner Missional Generation. Pray

for development worker Neil Jackson as he shares

ways in which Scripture Union can help them become more effective in building lifelong faith with the 95.

TUESDAY 19

Central region team leader Simon Barker is involved in a Lifepath based on the life of John Newton, which takes place in Olney over the next three days. Pray that the children who come from local schools will understand that God can turn lives around.



WEDNESDAY 20

Local mission partner Grantham Christian Ministries has relaunched as LightSpace. Pray for them as they train volunteers to work alongside schools worker Jennie Fytche running collective worship, prayer spaces in schools and school clubs.

THURSDAY 21

The world of technology does not stand still. Please pray for the *Guardians of Ancora* games design development team who are currently upgrading the app and changing the way it is released to meet new app store requirements – essential but invisible work to keep the app working at peak performance.

FRIDAY 22

Local mission partner Matlock Area Schools Trust is in a time of transition and development. Please pray for wisdom and guidance as they plan for recruitment and training of new workers, and for a clear vision of their core role to take Bible-based assemblies into schools.

SATURDAY 23

Today, the Impact community mission week starts in Romford; children and young people will be doing community outreach through a holiday club, family fun day, sports mission and more. Pray that people in the area will see the love of Jesus and that those who take part will grow in faith.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 24

SUNDAY 24

It has been ten years since the coup in Honduras left the country with a corrupt and drug-linked government. People are fleeing to other countries and there is much discontent throughout the population. SU Honduras asks us to pray for justice and a return to peace.

FOCUS ON THE SOUTH EAST

MONDAY 25

This week we shall focus on the work of the south east region who have a vision to see children, young people and whole communities transformed through sports ministry across the city of London. Pray that churches will be encouraged to use sport as an evangelistic tool.



TUESDAY 26

Pray that the South East Team will be able to create new opportunities for the 95 to explore faith in a way that is fun and relevant, getting alongside churches to encourage fresh ways of sharing the good news of Jesus through clubs, events, sports and crafts, in schools, at church and in community spaces.

WEDNESDAY 27

Please pray for all those working in schools in the south east, that they would have opportunities to be a light and witness. Pray for local mission partners who are faithfully serving schools and sharing the good news of Jesus.



THURSDAY 28

Pray for all the churches who are seeking to reach out to the 95 in the south east, and for more opportunities for the team to join with churches in long-term initiatives to reach the 95. Pray for courage as they step out in faith to try new ways to share faith.

FRIDAY 29

Please pray for the South East Team as they seek to find ways to help children and young people grow in faith as they respond to Jesus.

SATURDAY 30

Pray that churches in the south east region will grow in confidence and vision as they reach out to those who do not know Jesus, so that children and young people will experience the life-changing good news of Jesus Christ for themselves.

Regional round-up

Here are a few short updates from some of our development workers involved in a variety of mission activities across England and Wales...

SCOUGHALL, EAST LoTHIAN

Geoff Brown co-led our Quantum Holiday for 12- to 17-year-olds back in August. He says, 'we had a fantastic team helping the young Christians to become confident in sharing their faith.'



Fellow SU development worker Neil Jackson helped on the holiday last year. He recalls, 'It had

such a great welcoming, warm feel to it. My own daughter particularly enjoyed it and wants to return next year. And her non-Christian friend also had a great time and was really interested in finding out more about Jesus. The two of them went away with the intention of reading the Bible together.'



GEOFF
BROWN



NEIL
JACKSON

MANCHESTER

SU development worker Lucy Pearson helped a local mission partner to organise a summer family fun day. Lucy says, 'It was amazing to see so many keen volunteers, and nearly a hundred people came through the doors, all from the community and all keen to come to the follow-up activities on offer. It was also great to see young people from the residentials that had run over the summer, and to see the ongoing relationships building across local mission partners, residentials, pop-up mission and follow-up in the community.'



LUCY
PEARSON

PENYGROES, WEST WALES

SU development worker Mike Adams helped three chapels to kick-start a weekly youth ministry through three pop-up mission afternoons, featuring a football cage and video gaming. Mike says, 'We had nine young people come on the first day, none



of whom had any church connections, and they were all up for having a weekly youth event which is great news! The club is now up and running and the discussions around faith are growing.'



MIKE
ADAMS

SOUTH EAST REGION

In Romford, the SU team helped a local church host Impact Community Mission, which included a holiday club, a street outreach encouraging teens to share their faith in public, an immersive youth event, a fun day and a live lounge. The combined events reached over 400 people.

A church in Portsmouth sought the help of SU development worker Jenni Whymark to build a relationship with a local infant and junior school. It was a sensitive situation – following a previous bad experience, the school had banned churches from visiting.

The school agreed to let the church run some assemblies. Jenni says, 'It went really well – the children got so involved! At the end, we mentioned some of the family activities that the church had planned. A teacher suggested we give printed invites out to all the children – what an encouraging change of heart!

'One five-year-old showed her family the invite and insisted they go to the church service. A bit reluctantly, her parents took her and her little sister along. It was nothing like they had expected and they were pleasantly surprised how much they enjoyed it. They started going more regularly – the dad joined an Alpha Course and now he plans to be baptised!'



JENNI
WHYMARK

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 31

SUNDAY 31

Pray for the preparations for the orientation course that will be held in Guinea in September 2020 for Francophone West Africa.

MONDAY 1

Local mission partner Future Vision, who work in Sudbury, Suffolk, is delighted to have a new worker, Nicki Dixon. Pray for her as she settles in and works alongside Lesley Mitchell developing prayer spaces and as she takes on a new school which has just signed up.

TUESDAY 2

The Quantum holiday aims to help young people grow in their faith and to become confident sharers of their



faith. Please pray for wisdom as the team plan for this summer, seeking to grow the holiday and incorporate the older young people into leadership roles.

WEDNESDAY 3

Local mission partner Archway Trust organises Pizza, Praise and Puppets for unchurched families, on the first Sunday afternoon of every month. After a recent session covering the stories of *Hidden Treasure* and *A Precious Pearl* from Matthew 13, one child wrote: 'Dear God you are brave

and strong.
Please live in my
life for ever and
ever. Amen.' Please pray for that child,
who is known to God.

THURSDAY 4

Local mission partner Milton Keynes Bridgebuilder Trust gives thanks for new office administrator Ellie and new schools worker Amy. Pray for wisdom as they look to recruit a further schools worker, more volunteers and more trustees.



FRIDAY 5

Pray that the Scripture Union ONE Conference this weekend will be a time of inspiration which leads to fresh vision and future initiatives, that there will be a sense of unity, an awareness of God's presence, a focus on Jesus and a confidence in the guiding of the Holy Spirit.



SATURDAY 6

Pray that the Rooted group at Todmorden High School, facilitated by local mission partner Christians in Calderdale Schools, will be effective and sustainable.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
JUNE 7

SUNDAY 7

Scripture Union Ecuador asks us to pray for the expansion of the Christian Floorball League, for coaches and equipment in different locations and cities. Workers are excited to begin this interactive and effective ministry with local youth.

MONDAY 8

The south west regional team play an active role in Creation Fest, an annual event in Cornwall. Pray for the planning of different missions into several towns and beaches over the festival which takes place in August.

TUESDAY 9

Pray for the preparations for a new families' holiday for those who have adopted or who foster, called All Together Now, which takes place at Great Wood next month. It is planned to be a time when those who need it can find support and help in the difficulties that fostering and adoption often bring.



WEDNESDAY 10

Pray for development worker Neil Jackson as he builds a team to plan for a new residential holiday which will be taking place this summer at

Moor House
Adventure
Centre near
Durham.

THURSDAY 11

Give thanks for Matt Smith, South West Youth Ministries trainee based with Regional Team Leader Margaret Lilley in Bristol. Pray for Matt as he studies at Moorlands Bible College and works it out practically with Scripture Union in Bristol.

FRIDAY 12



Each Friday morning, Trevor Ranger of local mission partner Synergy supports the staff at Walter Powell Primary School in the Wiltshire village of Great

Somerford. He is also a mentor to a number of the KS2 boys and leads the school choir. Pray for him as he goes into the school today.

SATURDAY 13

Go Wild Clubs originally started in a couple of schools in North Devon. Pray for opportunities to develop the material and share it nationally leading to the development of more clubs which will enable children to discover God in his creation.



Scripture Union



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