

# Neil's News and Prayer Update

## March 2024

### The Journey Continues!

Hello! I hope you are well!

Thank you for all your prayers and support. There is so much to be excited about and so much to bring before God in prayer. Do read on with news about Launchpad, Festival Teesside, activities of Faith Guides and more!

Please pray that God will work it all for his purposes as we seek to see children and young people journey onwards in faith taking steps forwards in the Faith Guide journey from connect to explore to respond and finally to a growing faith in Jesus! Thank you!

Neil

### Launchpad

Planning for Launchpad is progressing well. It is a 'Faith Guide Holiday', which means that all the children who attend do so with a Faith Guide. Specific time is allocated to ensure that the engagement with those Faith Guides is maintained on the holiday, which is based near Durham.

Having had a space travel theme for the first two years, this time we are going to be launching under the sea! We will be using some of the material from the Deep Sea Divers Holiday Club resources and exploring some of the key stories of Jesus in Matthew's gospel.

Two Faith Guides, Claire Mead and Sam Cree continue to lead the holiday with me as well as bringing children and we hope and pray that other Faith Guides will also join us and bring children.

Check out the publicity for the holiday below and please pray as follows:

- For at least one more Faith Guide from another church to come this year and bring children.
- For the planning of the holiday.
- For bookings. We have a capacity of about 24 children and it would be good to get close to that number!
- That the children who come will take significant steps forward in their faith journeys.



### Faith Guide News

The number of Faith Guides and churches that we are working with continues to grow, and in West Yorkshire this enabled us to recently hold a gathering for Faith Guides and mission partners to come together to share vision, receive some training (including sports training) and pray. Several of those were really keen to start some outreach to schools, so do pray for favour as they begin to make the connections with their local schools.

One of the biggest challenges for Faith Guides is time pressures, but also many of them would love to have more volunteers to create the capacity to do more things and be more effective at helping the children and young people they are reaching to journey onwards in their faith.

- Please pray for new outreach and for ongoing engagement with children and young people in a range of settings and for wisdom about what comes next in each instance.
- Please pray for effective support for Faith Guides with increased numbers of churches being supported.
- Please pray that we will see clear evidence of children and young people moving forward in their faith journeys.



## Festival Teesside

This summer the churches across Teesside will be working together to run an exciting week of missional outreach entitled 'Festival Teesside'. The main focus of this will be on the weekend of 8-9 June, when there will be two days of large park-based community fun with zoned outreach including a children and families zone which I am helping to oversee the planning for.

I am also hoping to support setting up some local Soul Children choirs run by local churches and Faith Guides with the hope that they would then come together to perform at the Festival.



One of the key challenges in this will be encouraging churches, especially those with Faith Guides, to ensure that the Festival is part of a longer term approach to outreach to local children and families.

Please pray:

- For the churches of Teesside to engage fully and positively with the Festival but to do so with clear long-term strategic thinking.
- For all the planning for the Festival.
- For favour in trying to set up Soul Children choirs and bringing them together for the Festival.
- That children will respond and will be effectively supported by local churches in their faith journey.

## Faith Guide Focus: Nick Warner, CROSS Project, Wakefield

A few years before I joined Scripture Union, I worked for schools work charity CROSS Project in Wakefield and so it is great that over the past year or two I have been able to support the current project leader and Faith Guide, Nick Warner, as he has sought to journey further with the young people they are engaging in local secondary schools.

Nick has been working to identify how best to grow links between groups in schools and local churches and his colleague Steph has been among those who have responded positively to the challenge to invite young people from the schools into a context in which they can journey further in faith.



Please pray:

- For the development of links between local churches and the secondary schools where CROSS Project is working.
- That the 'next step' contexts run by churches will be appropriate for the young people and will help them to develop a growing faith in Jesus.

## My own youth group

I apply the Revealing Jesus approach in my own voluntary youth and children's ministry with my church. We have been journeying with a small group of young people for a few years and it has been great to see both numerical growth and young people taking steps forward from Connect to Explore and beyond. Indeed, the two have gone hand-in-hand. One girl, who has always previously asserted that she does not believe in God, has actively invited her cousins and friends to the group and now also attends a youth group at another church.

At Christmas the young people were keen to sing a carol at a youth/family service, despite their lack of church background, and we have now started to explore faith at a deeper level by running a variation of the Alpha Course.

Please pray for

- Further positive progress in the faith development of the young people.

## Supporting My Ministry

Thanks for all your encouragement, prayers and financial support for my ministry. It is so invaluable!

We are hugely grateful to God for all the financial support which we receive. While the past two years have obviously had some impact upon giving to SU, we are thankful for all those who have continued to support the work, which has enabled me to continue to do all my ministry full-time.

We know that more support is needed so that my ministry can continue to have a sustainable long-term future. So, if you do not already give, please would you prayerfully consider giving to support my ministry?

Please pray for God to meet all our needs. If you can be an answer to that prayer you can set up a regular or one-off donation at [www.su.org.uk/neilj](http://www.su.org.uk/neilj); or call 01908 856000 and a colleague can take a donation over the phone. Thank you!

## Get in touch

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