

Lisa's news and prayer update New Year 2024

New things I declare ...

***'I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. See the former things have taken place, and new things I declare: before they spring into being I announce them to you.'* (Isaiah 42:8,9 NIV).**

As we step into this new year it is good to take stock of what has taken place and look to the future. These verses remind me that although God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, he is continually doing new things and moving forward and declaring them before they take place.

I aim to listen to our Heavenly Father and watch what he is doing. As I meet up with Local Mission Partners, Faith Guides, volunteers, event leaders and others I aim to encourage us to tune in to what God is doing and ask him to lead us in the year ahead and discern what our focus is to be.

Please pray for all our Faith Guides, Local Mission Partners, event leaders and others that everyone will hear our Heavenly Father and step into what he is leading us into in 2024 and beyond.

Thank you for all your encouragement, prayer and support! It really is appreciated!

Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust

Recently I met up with Levi at Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust (SAYT) as they would like to partner with us.

SAYT is a charity that seeks to come alongside and support young people through what can be an incredibly turbulent period of their lives. SAYT listen non-judgmentally and seek to model God's love. They already do amazing work reaching out to young people in detached work in the community. By detached work, they are going out to where young people are, such as streets and parks.

SAYT also work in local schools through lunch clubs which are a great way to meet new people, build on existing relationships and come alongside young people in the environment they spend so much of their time in.

SAYT also do special events like trips to Thorpe Park and the beach for games etc.

SAYT has been running since 2001 and Levi is a new worker.

Why do they want to partner with us at Scripture Union? They really like and value our strategy and it provides them with a flexible framework giving direction for their work as they come alongside young people and explore faith.

Please pray for SAYT trustees and SU as they discuss this potential partnership. Please pray for Levi and the young people they meet.



Updates about Faith Guides

Lisa G is seeing lots of young people come along to the Youth Café on Friday nights. Lisa is building connections with local young people and inviting them along. Through conversations and discussions, the aim is to engage the young people to gently explore faith. Lisa also ran Light parties last term and saw a good number get involved. Some of the children are now coming along to activities on Sunday.



Barney and I have been planning our next term with Pure Dance. Our new theme is going to be Love, in particular exploring God's love. A key verse we will look at is 1 Corinthians 13 verse 4: 'Love is patient, Love is kind'. We are aiming to attract more newcomers to join us. We would also love to inspire other Faith Guides to go on this journey using dance movement to engage children and young people and explore faith.

We are considering using a podcast sharing our thoughts about Pure Dance.

Becky says 'Christmas was exceptionally busy. We had two Christingle services, one linked to our Messy church, plus one of the schools invited me to talk about the meaning of Christingle at their end of term service. We also held another "Crafternoon" in the week before Christmas as we knew the children were off school. We had over 20 families attend during the 2-hour session and everyone went home with a nativity activity sheet. We are seeing returning families who only come into the church for the Crafternoon.'

Hanna also had a busy Christmas and says that 'As well as doing a Christmas Service for the school during the last week of term, we held a Christingle Service on Christmas Eve.'

Please pray for these Faith Guides as they step into 2024 that they will know God's guiding and leading and be encouraged in all they do for him to reach children and young people.

Mission Support and Mission Sparks

We know that many churches are finding it hard to get enough volunteers together to do outreach. Some are finding it hard even to get enough together for the existing work. Some find it challenging to get their leaders on board with the vision. So we are offering Mission Support which isn't as intensive as becoming a Faith Guide but it does offer up ideas to help churches do what they can and when they can, and to take some small steps. This might be the first step a church has taken. So we offer Mission Support where they sign up to receive a monthly email which includes:

- **Monthly Mission Sparks** – bitesize inspiration for mission
- The Revealing Jesus First Steps Guide
- New resources and content
- Findings from research into mission
- Exclusive training opportunities

The monthly **Mission Sparks** is a short inspirational document with ideas for mission, a game, a story or example of something someone has tried with outreach, some Bible exploration and more.

I'm part of the team that are writing Mission Sparks. These offer great nuggets of inspiration including stories of people who have tried things before, offering ideas for mission opportunities, engaging with relevant Bible passages and offering up game suggestions.

Visit our website if you would like to know more: www.scriptureunion.org.uk/missionsupport

**MISSION
SPARKS**



My cluster of Local Mission Partners

Shelley at Engage Woking says that Engage is putting on an event called Encounter on Saturday 2nd March. She says 'Encounter will provide a central gathering place where young people in school years 7 to 13 can meet, have fun, worship, pray and encounter God. We are delighted that there is already great enthusiasm for the event amongst young people in the schools we visit.'

Please pray for Shelley and her team as they step out and run this event to engage local young people.

Maggie at Acts Thanet says 'This year Christmas Unwrapped reached over 900 children—more than it has engaged with for years! Fourteen schools and ten churches were booked meaning that over 900 Year 6 children explored the truth of the Christmas story this year! The last three weeks of term were completely full with Christmas Unwrapped, as well as Advent R.E. and Assemblies.'

Please pray for Maggie and Acts Thanet and the children they encounter.

Sarah at CSWH Hastings has been busy doing lots of assemblies which have reached 1,860 children since September in schools in Hastings. She has also been running Prayer and Reflection spaces which enabled 280 children to explore the Christian faith.

Please pray for Sarah and CSWH and all they have planned.

Lizzie at Lighthouse Crawley says that they have connected with 5,500 children through assemblies in the last term and 50 children are exploring the Christian faith. Lizzie and a local church have set up a club where children are growing as disciples.

Please pray for Lizzie and her team and the children they encounter.

Will you support Lisa with a donation?

Scripture Union's Mission Enablers are based all around England and Wales, each of them with a heart for empowering the local church and taking the good news of Jesus to the 95 in their area. They have years of experience and expertise to equip and support you and your church so that together we can reach children and young people who don't go to church with the love of God. They can't do what they do without a team of people that financially support their work. As they look to increase their impact and reach more children and young people, they need your help.

A gift of £75 could help Lisa coach and train a Faith Guide.

A gift of £300 could help Lisa support a network of local churches engaged in the Revealing Jesus Framework.

Any amount you can give can help to create some great opportunities for children and young people to learn more about God and grow in their faith. If you feel able, you can donate using the enclosed form, online at su.org.uk/lisaj or over the phone – 01908 856000 or use the QR code.

Thank you for your consideration!

Our SU Event Leader Conference

We held our Event Leader Conference in Northampton on Saturday 13th January. This conference is for the volunteer leaders who run our holidays and missions through the spring and summer. We are also running the conference in Manchester and Bristol to enable as many volunteer leaders across England to come along. Our amazing volunteer leaders are doing fantastic work leading events such as Longbarn near Tonbridge and Minnis Bay Mission in the south east. We also have many other holidays and missions across England such as Lager Advance and Great Wood eXperience. I had an opportunity to catch up with Tim Lewis who leads Longbarn.

Our bookings for spring and summer 2024 are now open. If you know of children and young people who would like this adventure of a holiday, then do have a look at this page on our website: www.scriptureunion.org.uk/holidays



National Day of Prayer for Schools

I am part of a working group with representatives from these organisations: Youth For Christ, Youthscape, Prayer Spaces in Schools and Pais Movement who are meeting to plan and prepare the National Day of Prayer for Schools. This year we have marked Friday 27th September as the date it will be held. Please do save this date. There will be opportunities to join us in prayer on Zoom and in person on the day, and there will be videos and posts on social media so do keep a watch.

In the run-up to the main day of prayer we are running a couple of Zoom prayers in January and April to encourage people to come and join in and also to help us in getting word out in time for September 27th.

'Love Our Schools' is an initiative of Pray for Schools and is coming up soon from 4th to 18th February. This initiative encourages churches to step out and show kindness through practical ways to their local schools as well as pray for them. Please see here: www.prayforschools.org/loveourschools



Please pray that many people from churches and organisations will join us in prayer.

Please pray that churches will step out this February and show kindness to their local schools through practical ways and pray for them too as part of the Love Our Schools initiative.

Key diary dates

16th Jan every Tuesday term time Pure Dance

From Mon 19th to Fri 23rd Feb Event leader online training

2nd March Engage Encounter event

19th March South East Team meeting in person

28th March South East partnership meeting

Further ahead

17th and 18th June South East Regional gathering

Thank God that we are able to continue ministry in these changing and challenging times. Thank you for your continued support through prayer and finance.



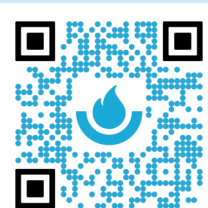
Get in touch

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