

Summer 2023 - Newsletter

“Finally an update from Medway Centre of Mission...” I hear you say. And indeed it has been far too long since the last one, for which I apologise. Much has happened in the last 2 years, so let me bring you up to date...

Staffing – All Change!

First of all, there have been some big changes in staffing... Mike and Claire Dare left to lead the Centre of Mission at Haverford West during lockdown, and Stephen and Lynn Ramshaw have moved north, with Stephen being appointed Lead Evangelist at the Sheffield Centre of Mission in August 2021. This left our flagship outreach project, **Medway Oaks**, in the capable hands of volunteer Helen Kiralfy. Her role was formalised and expanded in March 2022 when she was appointed as part-time Pioneer Evangelist working with marginalised people. She was joined for a while by Simon Morbey, who was appointed Pioneer Evangelist to work with children and families, but he has recently been replaced in this role by Esther Barnett. Since 1st July Helen has worked full-time as the Lead Evangelist at Medway Centre of Mission.

Through all these changes, the Centre of Mission has continued to work closely with the team at the newly reopened St John’s Church in Chatham town-centre, contributing in a number of ways to the rapid growth of the new congregation there.

Meet the New Team

Helen is a natural at building relationships and making people feel valued, and is passionate about the power of the Gospel to change lives, though she would say her main gifts are drinking coffee and listening to people. By the time you read this she’ll have been formally admitted and commissioned as a Church Army Evangelist after 3 years of spare-time study – there’ll be more about this in our next Newsletter.

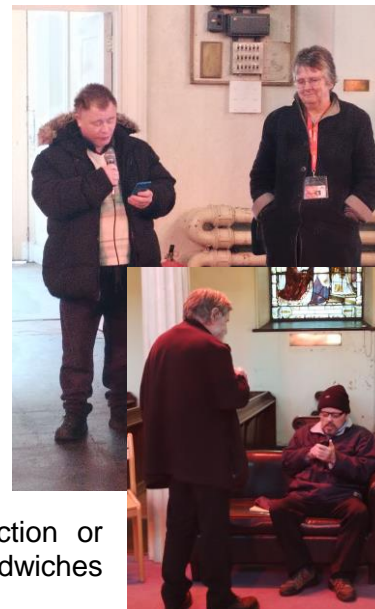


Esther is an amazingly gifted children’s worker, who regularly leads Collective Worship at our local Church of England primary school and runs a lunch club and leads end of term celebrations. She heads up the team running Little Lambs, the stay and play group at St John’s and is part of the team for Sunday morning children’s work there. She is also in the middle of planning our Holiday Club, to be run in conjunction with another local church. She assures us that the lion outfit she has recently acquired is a vital part of this.

What We're Up To



Medway Oaks, our drop in church on Sunday afternoons for over 18s, survived lock-down and goes from strength to strength, with between 35 and 40 attending most weeks. We provide a place of welcome and hospitality, centred around a short talk on a Bible passage.

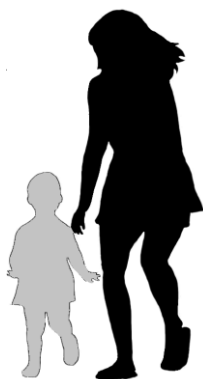


Over the last 2 years we have seen a group of often isolated individuals become a community. In response to their sense of belonging, a number of our guests now contribute to the afternoon, either bringing prayers and scripture readings to the faith reflection or volunteering to serve drinks and sandwiches or tidy up each week.



In the last year Helen has run two **Medway Oaks Discover** courses, providing a basic introduction to faith and a forum for people new to faith and for those wanting to find out more. Discussions have included who God is, what prayer is, healing and more, but we often get side tracked and no subject is off the table, leading to many interesting conversations. We ended each course sharing communion, with Rev. Luke Bacon, one of the vicars at St John's and a regular attendee at Medway Oaks, explaining what communion is and why we do it. A special moment for many of us...

The success of Discover led to the setting up of **Medway Oaks Deeper**, a follow-up course for those who have completed the Discover course or who have already taken a step of faith. As the name implies, it offers a more in depth look at the practical implications of following Jesus, at how faith should shape our lives and how we live them



Our latest initiative is a group run jointly by Esther and Helen for mums who have children in the care system. These ladies have never received the support or counselling that they might have had if, for example, they had been bereaved, yet the heart ache is often the same. So far it has been an amazing place of sharing – experiences and tears, but also some laughter. Oh and a fair bit of cake too! Most of all it has been a place of healing and they both believe God will work powerfully through this group and are excited about where this might go.

Celebrating Our Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the work of the Centre of Mission – without them much of what we do wouldn't be possible or would be a lot more difficult,

In June, Church Army hosted a celebration of volunteers at Wilson Carlile Centre in Sheffield and Helen had the absolute joy of taking a group of our volunteers. It was an opportunity to meet other volunteers from projects around the country, hear more of what Church Army is doing beyond Medway, and join in assorted fun activities. Everyone had a great time and had a chance to see how valuable they were to us.

Pictured here are some of our team, enjoying some sun. The pigs? Ah, well if you know, you know...



Congratulations to Sophie Dent of the Marylebone Project, voted Church Army Volunteer of the Year 2023!

Supporting Our Work

There are a number of ways to support what we are doing in Medway:

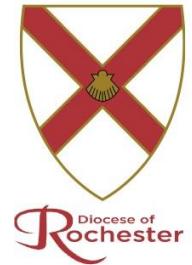
Pray – Please pray for all of our activities, for our staff and volunteers, and for those that we come into contact with, that lives will be changed and people will be brought into closer relationship with God.

Be inspired – We would love to expand our activities and groups into other churches around Medway and offer advice and help with setting up groups and other missional activities. For more information, or to discuss opportunities to volunteer at the Centre of Mission please contact Helen (details below).

Spread the Word – Tell your friends what we are doing or send them this newsletter. Helen is also happy to talk to churches or other missional groups about the work of Church Army and to share some of the real stories of the lives we've seen changed.



MEDWAY CENTRE OF MISSION



Financial Support – It’s a real-world fact that everything we do costs money and there is never enough. If you or your church would like to financially bless the work we are doing we can assure you we will put the funds to good use. Regular giving is the best way to support our work as it helps us to budget, meaning we can focus more on the frontline work. However, every gift makes a difference.

To Support **Medway Centre of Mission** please quote reference: **1177**

To support **Helen Kiralfy** please quote reference: **2020HKI**

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| Donate Online: | churcharmy.org/donate |
| By Phone | Call 0300 123 2113 to make a card donation over the phone or to request a Direct Debit mandate for a regular gift |
| Internet banking | Barclays Bank Sort Code: 20-49-81 Account Number: 80255459 Account Name: The Church Army |
| Standing Order | Email Helen (details below) for a form |
| By Post | Send cheques made payable to “Church Army” to Church Army, Wilson Carlile Centre, 50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield, S3 7RZ |



Church Army is a registered charity so donations by qualifying individuals can be enhanced by Gift Aid – Contact Church Army for a Giftaid declaration form.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

If you would like to do a fundraising event to support our work please contact Church Army’s Fundraising Team on 0300 123 2113

Thank you for your support!

Contact Details

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Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MedwayCOM

For more general information about Church Army see www.churcharmy.org

Medway Centre of Mission is a partnership between the Diocese of Rochester and Church Army, based at St John’s, Chatham.



Transforming lives and communities

