



# LIVING BY FAITH, HOPE & LOVE

Terry Whittaker, Leader of Reach at Gillingham Pier writes:

"Welcome to the first of Reach at Gillingham Pier's newsletters. We hope to produce a monthly update so that you can follow where we are and join us in praying for all that is going on.

**So where are we now?** The Bishop's Mission Order was granted in March and God has been good to us. Within our small, but perfectly formed, team we have experience, enthusiasm, an ordained priest, all ages and a real breadth of gifts. There is a gentle rhythm to our development which feels right, and we have been practically supported by a number of churches for which we are deeply thankful. We have had to source insurance which feels a little excessive, but I guess is a reflection of the society that we are in, as well as being wise given that accidents do happen!

Since September, we have slowly been forming relationships with some of the residents and the management team in [Prospect Place](#), a supported living environment. It has become something of a 'base-camp' for us as well as feeling that it is a 'God place' for us to start. We simply walked in and started talking, showing a little of God's love and commitment to his people, helped by the welcome sponsorship from St Luke's who have had a presence in the building for some time. We now visit the block regularly just to be with the residents, many of whom are bed or room bound, and run one of our two monthly services in the resident's lounge each third Sunday afternoon. We have taken some residents out on a day trip, facilitated the delivery of an upright piano, supported the afternoon tea for the Royal Wedding, organised a children's music concert for the residents and are in the process of helping them restore their terrace garden. Further plans are afoot for more community-based events, such as a quiz night and other outings.

## The Reach Team

Tim & Tricia Barrow  
Rev Liz Chapman  
Sheena Davidson  
Stuart & Caz Read, Finn & Lily  
Deano Standing  
Terry & Jo Whittaker, Charley,  
Rory & Conor

## Give thanks

- For the team.
- For Prospect Place, the residents, staff and care teams and the relationships being forged. In particular for James who 'opened the door' for us.
- For the support provided by local churches.
- For the encouragements and opportunities that arise day by day.
- For our Bishops, James and Simon, for their courage in sponsoring this ministry.

"But in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect".

1Peter 3:15 ESV



## Please Pray

- For the team in general.
- That we would make the right connections to open access to more residents in the other apartment blocks in the area.
- That we are able to show the love of Christ to the people in this place and journey with them as they encounter and respond to that love.
- For continued connections with our 'home' churches and that we are able to be fed ourselves.
- For Terry as he juggles Reach, his studies and school commitments.

You will be aware that part of the ethos of Reach is that Church needn't be structured in line with the traditional model of groups and committees, where servicing this model often drains the energy of the church family. Our idea is to do the things we like doing but make sure that we always invite someone else along to do it with us. For example, two Prospect Place residents love photography and militaria, we love aeroplanes and so, some of the team took these residents to Duxford Aircraft Museum. We had a fantastic day; in the hours that we were together we talked of many things, we built relationships and trust, Jesus was part of our conversations in a very natural way. I'm sure some would say that this is hardly work, I would say that we secured deeper relationships, we showed the hospitality of Christ and gave people a safe place to gently explore or encounter Jesus without any stress (other than how much traffic there was on the M25!) It certainly felt like a good day in the Kingdom.

Our second monthly service usually happens in the [Cargo Bar](#), a student bar in the heart of the Gillingham Pier site. Some may struggle with the idea of doing Church authentically in a pub but I believe it is as authentic as any other Church. We arrive, get a drink and chat together. There is welcome, a time of sharing, confession, a Bible reading and a talk planned to initiate conversation. There is prayer and a blessing, all going on in the environment of people being there, just doing what they do in pubs. Part of the vision was to be seen, to debunk the myth that there is something odd about having faith and that's what we are trying to do!

[So what next?](#) More small steps is the answer. Each time we visit the area Jesus seems to open a new door and it feels good, if somewhat odd, not to be working to a detailed strategic plan but just to be ready to serve in response to God's prompting. The flexibility of this is exciting although does feel a little exposed at times but that is the nature of this calling.

Practically we will develop a social media presence in the near future, probably via Facebook and Twitter as a starting point, our hope being that we can use this as an entry key to open the doors of the apartment blocks that are currently beyond us.

Personally, I am continuing with my MA studies in Applied Theology at Moorlands. Turning to academic education at the age of 57 has its challenges and I would welcome your prayers to enable me to get the balance of commitment right. I am also currently Chair of Governors at Rainham Mark Grammar School and Chair of the Rainham Mark Education Trust. These are important roles and ones that the Bishop gave his blessing for me to continue with until workload impacted them. I will be stepping down as Chair of the school in January and would welcome your prayers for the transition to a new Chair".

## Monthly Services

1st Sunday: Cargo Bar 14.30  
3rd Sunday: Prospect Place 14.30

## Contact Us

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