

Feedback #1 21st – 24th March



SUNDAY 21st MARCH

Ruth - I had a picture of a road ahead, the path wasn't straight or clear but at the side was a person holding out their hand and inviting us to journey on the road with them and promising to take us by the hand and keep holding us.

Sue - Have just spent an hour talking to God in prayer. Wow, felt such warmth and peace, a calmness and stillness of mind. Feel ready to face the day. Looking forward to tomorrow's hour of prayer. Thinking I should start every day this way.

Sunday Evening Community Hour

Great start to the community time of the prayer week. Good number attended.

Lots of praise for God's goodness and love for us.

Prayed for the people working on the front line, not only in NHS but those who are helping families with Universal Credit and helping people in different ways. Prayed for families who have lost a loved one and not been able to be with them as they passed away. For people who have not been able to attend funerals of friends and families.

Prayed for Pastor Andri in Romania as he has close family members who have Covid

Two verses given. Psalm 22 v 31. Meditate on the people yet unborn to hear the Gospel and Matthew 28 v 20. God is with us to the end of the age.

MONDAY 22nd MARCH

Monday Morning Community Hour

Prayer from story of cripple being lowered on stretcher by his 4 friends, and Jesus said "Your sins are forgiven"; may this be what ties us together in unity.

Isaiah 49 is the fulfilment of Isaiah 43; us being the light to the gentiles = the new thing....

United as bride of Christ (globally as well as locally)

Reminded of greatest evangelism strategy in John 17

1. UNITY

- All blessed with the spirit of Jesus; doesn't set apart BUT draws together
- Jesus is our head; speaking the truth in love. Prayer that we would all grow up into Christ.
- Each to be desiring to be more like Jesus.
- Submitting to one another; being a willing and co-operative body because of WHO we are in Jesus.
- Reminded that this is just a temporary abode, our home is in heaven.

2. STAFFING

- Growth through small groups; seems in many ways alien to the world but because of Christ in us we can have confidence in Him....
- Encouragement & strength for existing staff.
- Wisdom for how to be inclusive in recruiting new volunteers
- Unity in staff team both now and as team grows.
- Stirring of hearts

3. WHAT NEXT

- Talked of fragility of new shoots; picture of well-prepared soil, deep roots that are unseen and are all connected to God which gives strength where what is seen is fragile.

- God says "I will build my church"; it's not reliant on us other than to be available & willing.
- Each individual blade of grass is feeble but together formed into something beautiful (e.g. lawn)
- Isaiah 54:2 – reaching out beyond our own comfort
- Isaiah 45:3 (treasures of darkness) – strength of what grows lies in the darkness (roots). Strong roots -> strong plants; moving together with the wind/ breathe of the Holy Spirit.
- Looking around us and beyond us

New thing = God's blessing; carrying His mark of compassion & grace

Miracle of unity across Small Groups

Growth in roots & shoots

Emphasis on reaching out

Monday Evening Community Hour

Clear messages during worship song:

- Do not fear
- For I know the plans you have for me
- His arms are strong enough to carry me through it all by the grace of God

Thanksgiving:

- Staff team already here and those who have been here
- For the unity we have as a church
- For all that has happened to lead us to this point

Ask:

- Hear God as we move forward
- Use of discernment in filling staff vacancies
- God preparing hearts of potential new staff and that we would respond
- God speak to us as a church

We were reminded of a picture from a ladies' weekend away of rich black soil, spreading roots and a tiny shoot. Referred back to a contemplation of a green shoot from this morning's community hour and the thankfulness for past blessings from this community hour - like God reminding the children of Israel of what he has done for them in the past.

There was heartfelt prayer for those who had wandered from church contact, and children who had felt the disconnect during the year, and against evil in these areas. Urgent prayers about new youth and children staff appointments. Churches working together locally and worldwide for God's kingdom. Prayers for listening and unity.

Philippians 2:1-4

Church as a united family, listening to and hearing from God.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Closing song message:

Do not fear.

Do not let your heart be troubled.

Do not fear evil, remember where your help comes from.

TUESDAY 23rd MARCH

Tuesday Morning Community Hour

Had a great time of prayer together. The theme was praying for organisations within Torbay that work with marginalised people. This was a very deep time of prayer and sometimes emotional because of what vulnerable people are going through at times and especially through this difficult time.

Psalm 5:11 - How people rejoice in God's care.

Children and young people

Prayed for the future of Open the Book.

For difficulties for organisations that link with schools as unsure how it will work in the future
Prayed for children and young people in UV families and how they will reengage once lockdown is finished. Concerns that some have not joined Zoom or other events since lockdown began in March 2020

Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable women who come to Ladies Lounge. The word from ladies are, "Where can I go, who will care for me". We are Jesus on earth and salt and light.

Unleashed Theatre who are filling the story of St. Mary Mags using people that are homeless, coping with addictions and loneliness as the actors in the film. Such wonderful stories of recovery from addictions

Street Pastors who are desperate for more volunteers. Prayed for new Co-ordinator and Trustees

Prayed that all organisations that are working with vulnerable people. Prayed for all vulnerable people in Torbay will find peace and hope in Jesus. Prayed healing for Torbay

Thanked God that these wonderful and heartfelt ministries, led and manned by volunteers, both Christian and non-Christian, touch lives across the age groups from babies to elderly people, no matter what walk of life they come from and are in.

Remember that "We are the people who can help them".

Calvin - The Lord is joining the dots between where we are as a church and where he'd have us be. We're on a journey and we must look out for His signposts and heed the prompting of His Spirit. Let's pray we would not fall short of His vision and purpose for us! Let's not have to re-learn the lessons of the Israelites in their journey to the promised land, recognising that they only secured a portion of the territory God had in mind.

Matthew 25:40 Through us, the Lord wishes to join the dots between where those who are estranged from Him are located and the Kingdom of His Son. The hungry, thirsty, isolated, unclothed, sick and imprisoned were most unlikely to have been the King's 'brothers' at the time the 'righteous' intervened in their lives. What an incentive to take care that the Gospel is an intrinsic part of our social action!

Tuesday Evening Community Hour

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Prayers based around The Lord's Prayer:

* We cannot pretend who we are not – we are a work in progress. Be who we are in Christ. God's unlimited patience.

Your kingdom come on earth and in Torquay:

GNT

* Use us at UV to be salt and light to the marginalised families in our neighbourhood. 'For our inheritance give us the lost'.

MONEY ISSUES – Salvation Army, courses for those in debt, financial peace. Teach how to manage money – how to buy the right food, to cook, so not needing food banks. Boldness and confidence to ask for help. John Kirby stepping down and personnel changes within CAP.

* Show us how to come alongside people, help us to be moved, how to help.

* Big difference between rich and poor in Torquay.

* Timothy Keller – give priority to the poor: the extent of which we do that is proof of the extent that we've understood the grace of God.

* Families of addiction resulting in poverty.

TRAINING FOR WORK – work ethic, job creation, jobs for the Bay, apprenticeships and work for young people. Creative solutions.

WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH – Isolation is like smoking 11 cigarettes a day. Kintsugi Hope, Mental Health First Aid Courses, Fresh Hope.

* Young people to know life to the full.

Give us today our daily bread:

Leviticus 2 – the grain offering – give our bodies as living sacrifices.

* With so much that we, at UV, have been given, comes the responsibility to give back.

Luke 3:11 - 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same'. Lord, help and guide us as individuals, as a church and as a community to be generous people in any way we can. Amen

WEDNESDAY 24th MARCH

Wednesday Morning Community Hour

- We see familiar faces and new faces in our community. As we are all God's children and in one family, we should endeavour to make those new faces familiar ones.
 - As we have all tried to come into God's presence during this 24-7 Prayer week, some may have felt unworthy to be there. Good News! Jesus is our mediator! All can come, no condemnation in Christ.
 - Friends support and strengthen us in our journey to God. It is God who has put those friends next to us for His purpose. Do you appreciate that these friends are divinely appointed, and are you also a divinely appointed friend to someone else on their journey?
 - Continually remember to pray for the Christians who work in government, Christian organisations, NHS, and that God will give them the words to witness for Him.
-