

REACH

AT GILLINGHAM PIER

STEP OUT IN FAITH & INTO PURPOSE

The temperature has crept over 21 degrees for a few days so summer must be here! It seems only a few weeks ago that we last wrote but now here we are at the end of June!

It has been a challenging period for REACH as we encountered a run of poor health and deaths within our families and those that we work closest with. The former may just be a function of my age but the latter has been a surprise and raised the question of 'how do we respond?' Jesus' teaching about healing, and his promise to respond to our prayers, is familiar to us all - so can, and should, we pray the audacious prayer for healing in every case? For me the answer is an unequivocal 'yes'. In faith I truly believe that each of our prayers are heard and responded to, frequently not as we expect, nor in the time frame we envisage, but they are always answered. I hold to the belief that whatever does or does not happen physically, healing is effected by intimacy with Christ. Our needs may appear physical but Jesus sees things in the scheme of eternity and the true healing required may be spiritual or emotional as opposed to physical. And so, we have prayed; some have been healed in line with our common understanding, but all have encountered love and compassion and that alone enriches everyone involved.

Our monthly outings continue; they are a means of opening the door for those who struggle to get out themselves, they're an expression of love and are just good fun! 'Reach for the Pie' saw about 40 of us lunching together at the Premier Inn - a place that does not usually open for lunch but responded to our request as we celebrated on Easter Monday. The food was great, the staff were fantastic and their attitude was brilliant. They laughed with us and served with



The Reach Team

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"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".

1 Peter 3:15 ESV



Please pray:

- For our conversations with the gatekeepers and that we identify the right people to engage with.
- For all the residents of the Gillingham Pier area, especially those in need of healing.
- For every person contemplating a move into the area.
- For us as we continue to plan and deliver outings.

Give thanks:

- For every new contact we have made.
- For the healing that we have seen and been part of.
- For the joy involved in our outings, in particular for the people at Norse without whom these trips would not be possible.
- That development has restarted on the Chatham Waters site.



Services & Meetings

- 1st & 3rd Sunday: Asda Breakfast 10.00
- 2nd, 4th & 5th Sunday: BBQ on the Pier 10.00
- 1st Sunday: Premier Inn 14.30
- 3rd Sunday: Church in the Lounge, Prospect Place 14.30
- 1st & 3rd Tuesday: Reach In, Prospect Place 13.45
- 1st Friday: Prospect Place 14.30, hosted by St Luke's

both skill and commitment. We returned to The Inn on the Lake for a Country & Western tribute themed lunch, followed a month later by a carbon copy outing to see Elvis. He was a true entertainer and our group enjoyed every minute. We also arranged a cinema trip to see 'RocketMan' on its opening day. The response of some of our older attendees to the lifestyle of Elton John made us realise just how quickly culture changes.

Other regular activities continue - services, visiting, Bible Study and Sunday morning breakfasts. To give some idea of scale, the Prospect Place service attracts between 15 and 40 people, whilst the service at Premier Inn regularly has over 20. Additionally, breakfast usually hosts around 6 to 12 people. Now that the weather is warming up the barbecue has reappeared and we are trialling locations to find where best we can encounter people; this is not an environment where people walk, so location and welcome are key.

At our last team meeting we felt called to engage more formally with the 'gatekeepers' of the location and so, we are in process of identifying and reaching out to them. We have no masterplan but have been led by God thus far and see no reason to change that.

In the Victory Pier area three new apartment blocks are nearing completion and development has restarted on the blocks, adjacent to Asda, on the Chatham Waters site. In addition, groundwork has begun on two further blocks with a different contractor. It is hard to see where new residents will be coming from but by the end of summer there will likely be accommodation available for around 1,000 new residents!

At one of our recent Bible Studies we looked at the feeding of the 5,000. The narrative tells us so much about the character of God, endless welcome, the provider of all that we need, but what struck us most was that he asked the disciples to be his agents in the feeding of the people. This poignant, but simple, image profoundly speaks to us now; we can trust that God has all good things for his people but we must recognise that we each have a role in the delivery of that goodness. May we all say yes...and step out