

# REACH

## AT GILLINGHAM PIER

### *PRAY & SEEK GOD'S FACE*

We look over our shoulder and Christmas has disappeared from sight, Spring beckons, Lent has arrived and the ancient rhythm of church life beats on. We can look at the repeated pattern of church life and be blind to the fact that its repetition is intentional, like the beating pistons of an engine. At face value nothing changes, the pistons power up and down in a repeated pattern, but we must not ignore that it is this engine that drives our life and faith journey and, when we take time to look up and out, we realise that we are in a different place from the last time we took stock.

Reach's pattern of activity is steady. January saw a day trip to Bluewater - a sentence that polarises response, some with the glow of familiarity, others with the sense of shock or even horror, how could this possibly be a good day out? Well for us it was a great day! Our first stop was the food-court. Those who know us will know that food is at the heart of our ministry and this day was no exception. We expected our guests to search out the staples of the 60's and 70's, (fish & chips, maybe a version of meat and two veg) but no! Sweet and sour chicken, KFC, McDonalds, the usual choice of the teenager, became the food of choice for our group most of whom were in their 70's and 80's! We then scattered in small guided groups as the largely female guest list made for their shops of choice or just enjoyed the window-shopping. For some it was their first trip to Bluewater, for one it was an affordable way to return - her last visit there costing over £80 in taxi fares. A sobering thought for those of us able to hop on a bus or jump in the car. We shopped, we talked, we became closer and love grew as a consequence. When are we going back was the common message on the way home.

Another lunch and silver screen cinema outing followed. Different to our last one, where we sang along to the songs of Abba, this film, Collette, was in stark contrast being the true story of a liberated French author who pushed the boundaries of society. The reflection on the film was mixed, but the meal beforehand was brilliant. An 86-year-old had her first ever paella and it won't be her last!



### The Reach Team

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

### Contact Us

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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



## Prayer and Thanks

Please pray for the families and friends of those at Prospect Place who have recently died; pray too for the other residents at this unsettling time;

Give thanks for the newly started 'Reach In' Bible study, that it will be a blessing to those questioning, exploring or going deeper in their faith;

Pray for our social media messaging during Lent, may it point people to Jesus and inspire people to think more deeply about Jesus at this time;

Thank God for Saju's support in this formative period for Reach and pray continued blessings as we move into a new season;

Pray for Ann and Terry as they work together to discern and deliver God's purposes for Reach;

Do pray for our Easter plans to take shape and enable us to further reach into the community;

Give thanks for our weekly breakfasts in the Asda Cafe, for growing relationships and the welcome and support provided by the cafe team;

Pray for Christ's blessing on the Christian community in Medway, may our lives and activity of the local churches be an authentic reflection of the love of Jesus.

## Services & Meetings

Every Sunday: Asda Breakfast 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

We are saddened at the death of two folk that have been part of our Reach family. Both lovely, gentle people with faith in God, who stood for and lived values that could be construed as of a different age, but, in truth, are values that are timeless - since when did goodness, kindness, integrity and self-control become unfashionable? It was a privilege to know them, gone to glory but their legacy and families remain.

In contrast, we have also had the joy of celebrating the renewal of marriage vows for a fantastic couple, after nearly 49 years of marriage. This was a great celebration and we were honoured to have our new Archdeacon, Andy, and his wife, Margaret, at our service too. Their presence was a blessing to us all and the services were great - as was the food and drink afterwards!

We are excited to have started our Bible Study 'Reach In', meeting twice a month on a Tuesday afternoon in the Prospect Place cafe. Please pray for these, we are advertising them as a safe space to question and explore. We are studying the life of Jesus, it feels like a good place to start, and had a great session looking at the foretelling of Christ's birth. Questions were real and together we grew.

Plans are afoot for Easter, including 'Reach for the Pie!', a community lunch on Easter Monday. In faith, we have booked out the restaurant at the Premier Inn. Let's see what God has in store.

Terry writes:

"A recent development is that there has been a structural change, with Ann Richardson, the Area Dean, taking on my line-management. This has been implemented by Archdeacon Andy, in his role as Visitor (the Bishop's Rep.). I would like to thank Saju Muthalaly for his part in Reach being where it is now and I look forward to working with Ann to see where God takes us.

Outside of Reach I continue to chair a local education trust. The challenges of education are many; please do pray for all those who work and serve in education, a true foundation of society. The MA continues, but the end is in sight with only one more module and a dissertation to complete. I will miss the regular gathering of this fantastic ecumenical group; my learning from being involved is way more than academic.

I was struck recently by 2 Chronicles 7:14, '...if my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land'. God responds to the prayer of Solomon in a staggering way and this feels like a good foundation for Lent. Lord forgive us and heal our land".

