

## HERE COMES GOD'S KINGDOM!

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God's good news, saying "Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!" Mark 1:14-15

At home, we are reading Mark's Gospel as a family using a devotional written for children, *Best News Ever: Your 100-Day Guide to the Gospel of Mark* by Chris Morphew. One of the best books we've read together, we are all learning and growing. The book focuses on just a few verses a day and, as we progress through the Gospel, we are learning, with the disciples, more and more about who Jesus is, how He defies their expectations of the promised Messiah, and the nature of His kingdom.

**"Jesus gives orders to storms, and they obey. He feeds huge crowds from almost nothing. He claims to forgive sins – which would be completely outrageous, except that then he backs up that claim by healing the sick and even raising the dead. He talks constantly about God's kingdom, but he doesn't seem to just be announcing it, like John did. It's as if he's saying he's actually here to bring the kingdom."**  
p.124

In encounter after encounter, we see Jesus' rule and authority over sin, evil, death and suffering: a paralysed man, someone with a damaged arm, a man overwhelmed by evil spirits, a little girl

who has died, an impoverished woman who has been bleeding for years, and others who cannot see or hear BUT all completely transformed for good because of a meeting with Jesus, the King of Kings.

We still live in a world where there is sin, evil, death and suffering, and sadly, at New Hope, we are familiar with all of these. We see the effects of abuse, trauma, violence, and addiction on a day-to-day basis. But yet, we can say as Jesus did: Here comes God's kingdom!

Please pray this year for New Hope service users to encounter Jesus, just where they are, whatever their needs, whatever their sorrows, whatever their past, whatever their fears. Please pray for people to trust Jesus' good news and to change their hearts. Please pray for God's kingdom to come more and more at New Hope. We long to see more freedom, more joy, more peace, more truth, more hope, more faith and more Jesus!



**Rebecca Palmer**  
Fundraising and Communications  
Manager

Please pray for the Watford Winter Shelter which launched on 1 December and will run every night until 31 March

**Mon**

### **Outreach Plus, the Haven and the Watford Winter Shelter**

Providing support, advice and practical humanitarian aid for people who are street homeless, sofa-surfing or worried about evictions.

Give thanks for the Watford Winter Shelter and its wonderful homely atmosphere. Thank God for the staff and volunteers. Please pray for move-on options for people currently staying in the winter shelter.

Thank God settled status has been granted to someone who has been homeless for many years. Give thanks for the work of the Haven in helping him with this. Please pray for the next steps which need to be taken to ensure he can access long-term accommodation.

Please pray for the outreach team who walk around Watford at different times of day and night. Please pray for the people whom they encounter. Ask God for relationships of trust to develop.

Praise God for the many donations the Haven received throughout December, especially the Advent donation from Our Lady and St Michael's Church.

Please pray for the health event which is taking place on 18th January at the Haven in conjunction with University College Hospital and Change Grow Live. Please pray for a good attendance and for service users to be blessed with hair cuts and podiatry.

**Tues**

### **The Sanctuary: Emergency Accommodation**

Providing short-term accommodation and intensive support for 22 people who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness.

Thank God for the applications for the support worker roles. Please pray for the recruitment and induction process of these new members of the team.

Give thanks for the Christmas presents received for the residents and for the seasonal food which was donated.

We are working with a recruitment agency to help find a permanent manager and assistant manager for the Emergency Accommodation. Please pray for the right people to be appointed to these crucial positions.

Please pray for Emergency Accommodation residents to encounter Jesus, just where they are, whatever their needs, whatever their sorrows, whatever their past, whatever their fears over this year.

**Weds**

### **Recovery Services Accommodation (New Hope House and the Manse)**

Two homes providing accommodation for up to 14 individuals who are in recovery from alcohol and substance misuse.

Give thanks for all the staff and volunteers who supported the residents during the Christmas period.

Thank God for the generous gifts for each resident and the donated turkeys!

Praise God for the staff's dedication, hard work and sacrifice. Give thanks for the return of a staff member following surgery.

Please pray for an outpouring of love and grace. Ask God to break the cycles of relapse and for the shackles of addiction to be destroyed.

Pray for more freedom, more joy, more peace, more truth, more hope, more faith and more Jesus for all the staff, volunteers, and residents throughout 2024.

**Thurs**

### **Tenancy Sustainment Team and HopeHomes**

TST supports people who have recently moved into their own accommodation and our three HopeHomes provide long-term accommodation for 13 individuals.

Give thanks for the many donations we received last month for Christmas presents for service users. We are particularly grateful for the generosity of Lidl customers and the parents at Little Green school in Croxley.

One of the HopeHomes residents will shortly be moving into a social housing flat. Give thanks and please pray for him as he moves.

Thank God for the opportunity to open the new Dunelm and for their generosity in providing homeware items for people moving into their own homes. Please pray this relationship would grow.

Please pray for HopeHomes residents who are bidding on social housing properties. Please pray for peace throughout this process.

Ask God to provide the right person for the vacant support worker role.

**Fri**

### **Cultivate**

Horticultural therapy and wellbeing

We are grateful for new beginnings and how they unfold in nature. The sleeping potentials in seeds and silent trees, the cold that cleanses and renews and the winds that clear spaces in the cluttered and busy accumulations of the past.

Thank God for last month's activities which included trips to garden centres, walks in the park and wreath-making.

Give thanks for the continued support of VINCI Facilities and their supplier Ground Control, for their recent visit, and renewed commitment to ongoing help in contributing towards our therapeutic garden.

A resident has decided working with plants is a career that he would like to pursue. Please pray that he will maintain motivation and the necessary focus to progress and find success with this chosen career.

Thank God for the openness of the Watford Homelessness Strategic Forum in using a Cultivate plant metaphor model.

Please pray for our engagements with residents and staff especially at the Sanctuary.

Pray for a greater understanding of how trauma, especially relational early trauma, impacts people and for trauma-informed approaches to be integrated in all aspects of our work.

**Sat**

### **The Hub (H) and Chaplain (C)**

'The Hub' is our working title for a proposed new building which will incorporate both the current work of the Haven and the Sanctuary. New Hope's chaplain provides spiritual and emotional support to staff, volunteers and service users.

Give thanks for the volunteers who have offered to help with our fundraising committee. Please pray for this group as they begin to meet to plan the fundraising campaign for 'The Hub'. (H)

Please continue to pray for good relationships with partners and for favour in buying our chosen location. (H)

Give thanks for a donation from a local church for the chaplaincy. (C)

Thank God for a service user choosing to follow Jesus. Please pray for her as she reads the Bible and prays with the chaplain. (C)

Praise God for the carol service at the Haven which we held last month. (C)

Please pray for the Alpha course which will start this month at New Hope House. Please pray for the people helping and for each resident. Pray each resident would experience God and would turn to Him. (C)

Please pray for direction and guidance for the chaplain for the New Year. (C)

**Sun**

**Watford Shop (W), Croxley Green shop (CG), and Head Office (HO)**

Give thanks for the donations received in response to Hope, not Homelessness (this year's Christmas appeal). (HO)

Praise God for the 45 volunteers who have been helping at the Watford Winter Shelter and for the volunteers who served over Christmas and New Year. (HO)

At New Hope, we seek to be both 'thoroughly Christian' and 'thoroughly professional'. Please pray for the launch of our new policy handbook which happens this month. Please pray for the training process and ask God to help managers further embed these policies into everyday work and practice. (HO)

We thank the Lord for being with us throughout 2023. Give thanks for the donations which were turned into much needed funds to help people experiencing homelessness in Watford. Please pray for good donations and sales in 2024. (W)

Praise God for the amazing team of volunteers whose giftings dovetail so amazingly to make the shop such a wonderful place for customers to visit. (W)

Please pray for the volunteers who are going through health and family issues. May they know that the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us. (W)

Please pray for the volunteers at the start of this year. May they keep their eyes fixed on the Lord and have opportunities to share about His love in 2024. (W)

Give thanks for the good break over the Christmas and New Year period. (CG)

Please pray for the volunteers as they sort the January donations – it's always a busy month! (CG)

# Dreams United: Stadium Sleep Out

On March 1st 2024, spend the night at Watford FC to raise vital funds for local homelessness charities.

[www.newhope.org.uk/stadiumsleepout](http://www.newhope.org.uk/stadiumsleepout)



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