

December

For staff members who have been bereaved during this difficult time, and others who have experienced illness in their family.

For managers who continue to 'keep the light on' in our centres.

For staff struggling with furlough, or who may struggle with the return to work.

For wisdom and continued unity in the leadership of the Charity.

That the God who loved us enough to plan Bethlehem and Calvary has planned a perfect future for us, in His time.

January

That we could continue to advance the Christian faith through the use of our centres.

That remodeling of the operation of local centres will enable them to deliver ministry in a sustainable way.

That the church would treasure the benefit of taking time and space as a family of God, and retreat to places like our centres to do this.

That our centres would become places for the times we live in, as we seek to reach out to people in the midst of new needs.

That God's will would be done, and that we would gladly conform.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

"For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.'" 1 Kings 7:14.

Over the past 9 months our centres have been strangely quiet. We would have expected to have hosted around 45,000 guest nights. Instead we welcomed around 150 families, couples and singles for holiday lets during the summer months, and this only through a mammoth effort by a skeleton staff in a narrow window of opportunity.

Missing was the sound of singing & teaching from the conference rooms; laughter and running from the corridors; chatter from the dining rooms; and snoring from the bedrooms!

We are grateful to those who did stay with us, and particularly those who continued the legacy of our buildings as they joined for times of family worship.

Unfortunately, also missing was around £1million income that we would usually see during this timeframe, and which would carry the charity

through the quieter and colder winter months.

We are grateful for Government support of around £300k to date, and the ability to furlough almost all our staff.



We are also so very grateful to groups and individuals who have been moved to contribute to our appeal for funds. Including Gift Aid, that total is over £150k at present and has been of emotional encouragement, as well as the obvious financial help.

Efficiencies, savings and sacrifices by staff have added massively to the effort, keeping our costs to an absolute minimum.

But in and around and through this human effort, has been a very special work of God that has yielded a bounty that we could not have imagined:

Our bank balance at the end of November was the same as our bank balance at the end of March!

Please join with us (as you read this) in thanking and praising God for this amazing providence.

**Oh the saints will roar
on the final day
For the mighty King
and His glorious name
But the God who reigns
as the world shall bow
He is in my heart
and He loves me now**

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But...there's always a 'but'! Undoubtedly, our most difficult period lies ahead. Over 90% of the groups that make up our ministry are organised and led by volunteers. It is likely that Government support for us will cease long before this work fully resumes. We recognise the responsibility felt by organisers and we pray for them as they try to make plans.

For our part, we will continue to examine our methods, develop our ministry and seek to place ourselves in the will of God and in the path of His bountiful blessing.

We hope that you will continue to stand with us in this, in prayer, in availing of our facilities, and in gifts.

Happy Christmas!

Space to Change

Christmas carries a side-lesson for us all, in that sometimes we are simply called to provide hospitality so that God can do an amazing work in the lives of others.

How can we continue to follow God's call to a world newly impacted by constraints on finances, travel and social gathering? Rather than just saying there is 'no room' for us to continue in this new world, can we look outside our familiar and normal for an innovative alternative, like the Inn-keeper extending his accommodation options to include a centrally-heated stable?!

The Trustees and Senior Management have been, and continue, looking at our operational model to fit us for use in a post-COVID world. We want to continue to provide Space to Grow for those who

are weary, expectant or bringing good news to others.

But we have to face the very significant challenges that COVID has highlighted for us: we are operating in an ever decreasing 'market' and, financially, each year is more difficult than the one before. Like the Inn-keeper, our hospitality has to have a trace of viability running through it, or else it will be very short-term and of limited benefit.

We believe God has given us this Space...to Change. Please join with us in praying for Centre Ministries at this time, when we have time.

We would ask you to commit to praying for our people: staff, management & trustees, during the month of December.

And then to make January a month of prayer for our ministry and mission. Thank you.