

# TRANSFORM CROYDON

**A Season of Prayer  
for our Borough**

**2021**



## Welcome to the 2021 Croydon Churches prayer booklet

Most people will agree that if there was ever a time or a season to pray for Croydon, it is this year, 2021, following on from the challenges we faced as a borough in 2020.

Firstly, we had the Covid-19 pandemic that hit Croydon badly with so many sad consequences. Secondly, we were faced with a very serious economic challenge. Our borough was plunged into a financial crisis which resulted in the Council issuing a section 114 notice in November. Thirdly, Croydon was in the news again over the brutal shooting of a Police Officer (Sergeant Matt Ratana) who was on duty when he was tragically killed.

How did the church respond? As a community of believers, we turned to God. We humbled ourselves before Him. We repented for the things which went wrong. We reminded God of His promise that *"If my people, who are called by my name, will 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."* (2 Chronicles 7:14)

We also rolled up our sleeves and got to work, taking our services on-line and transforming our ministries in order to meet the many and varied needs of the communities around us.

We welcome 2021 with a renewed zeal and determination to pray until something happens (PUSH). This booklet, published only in pdf format, is being launched in the midst of all that is going on around us and it is a call to prayer. Whether you pray for one minute or an hour, we are asking every believer in Croydon to use it as a tool to pray. We are trusting God "for mountains to move" and for God to turn around for good what the enemy had intended for evil. We have the faith to believe God that, "all things will work out together for the good of His people and the borough".

I commend this prayer booklet to everyone who calls on the name of the Lord in Croydon.

Damian Luke

Chair of Convenors

Croydon Churches Forum

February 2021

**Day 1 Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February**

## **Good Friday Walks of Witness**

*In various locations across the borough local church groups traditionally unite for a walk of witness and a short open-air service.*

**This topic is usually the Good Friday entry.**

But last year, with the nation in lockdown, all walks had to be cancelled and it is looking likely that social distancing restrictions will apply this Easter too.

So the Central Croydon planning team has been working hard to produce an online version of the dramatisation of the Crucifixion, which in normal years is enacted outside the Whitgift Almshouses.



**Please pray:**

1. For the planning, filming and production of the dramatisation. And for its effective distribution across the borough.
2. That God will provide all the necessary finances, resources and expertise to make it a success.
3. For all churches in Croydon as they consider how to witness to “Christ Crucified” in their community this Easter. Ask God to inspire them with creative, surprising, out-of-the-box ideas.
4. That many, many people in Croydon this year will be drawn to the cross, challenged by the Easter message and respond to the invitation of Jesus.

Day 2 Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February

## Woodside Bereavement Service (The Listening Ear)

*“Bind up the broken-hearted...comfort all who mourn...bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes...joy instead of mourning...praise instead of a spirit of despair.” Isaiah 61:1-3*



Woodside Bereavement Service (WBS) has been operating in Croydon for over 25 years as a supportive Christian-based bereavement service for those experiencing severe or prolonged shock or depression arising from bereavement and loss. It also serves to educate and increase awareness of the nature of grief and bereavement. Support is provided through counsellors who are trained specifically in grief counselling. WBS is a volunteer-based free service offering one-to-one and group bereavement counselling to adults at our centre or at a mutually agreed location. Children and young people are seen in their schools or at our centre. From April to August 2020 we had to suspend all one-to-one counselling and the training course for new volunteer counsellors, but we were able to provide some existing clients with telephone counselling and support.

We have now adapted our service model, allowing us to resume service in a Covid-safe environment and accommodate the unique constraints on bereaved individuals by the prescriptions put on end of life processes and funerals. We have developed a model for group counselling targeted at those who have lost loved ones in the past few months. We can now see individuals and groups and are able to meet new referrals without significant delay.

### **Please pray:**

1. With thanks to God for the generosity of our volunteers and of the community organisations which support WBS.
2. That those in the local community who are experiencing loss and change in their lives may find the help and support they need.
3. For volunteers to come forward to train as WBS counsellors and for our ongoing financial needs to be met.

**Contact Tel:** 020 3256 2009

**Email:** [wbs@thelisteningear.org.uk](mailto:wbs@thelisteningear.org.uk)

Day 3 Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February

## Croydon Churches Floating Shelter/ Croydon Nightwatch



*“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me.” Matthew 25:35-36*

Sadly, because of the pandemic, and restrictions which required each guest be allocated a single room (or pod), CCFS has been unable to provide a night shelter this winter and we have had look for other ways to support the homeless.

Each night, from November to the end of March, volunteers from our 21 host churches, instead of accommodating rough sleepers on the nights they should have been on duty, have been making the sandwiches to take down to Nightwatch in Queen’s Gardens.

The 80 sandwiches and biscuits that we provide are proving a great help to Nightwatch, who had been experiencing a strain on their funds due to an increase in the daily numbers looking for something to eat.

It is our hope and prayer that CCFS should run again in November 2021 to provide a night shelter for the homeless if there is a need for one.

### **Please pray**

1. For safety and well-being of the teams that operate in Queen’s Gardens – that they might be kept Covid-free.
2. Thank God for the faithful work 40 years the nightly work of Nightwatch
3. Please pray for long term solutions to the problems of homelessness

**Contact (CCFS):** John Broom

**Email:** john\_broom@sky.com

**Day 4 Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February**

## **MENT4**

*“There is no shortage of teenagers in need of help!” Pete Stanley, Director*



- Ment4 mentors Croydon teenagers vulnerable to crime, drugs, knife crime, self-harm, gangs, domestic violence, mental health issues, school exclusions, trauma, lack of hope. We are at the sharp end of helping Croydon's families in trauma.
- Ment4 demonstrates Christian love and has seen behaviour change, crime reduction, family cohesion and school engagement over many years. Our team are all members of local churches with a heart to help and to push through tough times.

### **Please pray with us that:**

1. We have more teenagers referred to us for help.
2. We have more mentors join our team to help them.
3. We have finances, donations and grants to pay for our work.
4. Many more people in the Council and schools come to us for help.
5. Church leaders see our value and refer families to us for help.

**Contact:** Pete Stanley if you'd like to support us by receiving our monthly prayer letter

**Tel:** 07752 817882

**Email:** [info@ment4.org](mailto:info@ment4.org)

**Website:** [www.ment4.org](http://www.ment4.org)

Day 5 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February

## Toddler Groups

*“He gently leads those who have young.” Isaiah 40:11*



Many of our churches have run parent and toddler groups for many years, offering friendship and support to parents as well as play opportunities and social contact for pre-school children. But these groups had to close when lockdown began in March 2020 and at the time of writing the majority are still closed and it's unclear when they might be able to re-open.

In normal times toddler groups can be a lifeline for carers struggling to cope with the challenges and responsibilities of being at home with small children. This is particularly true for new mums or single parents who can find the whole experience overwhelming. At toddler groups, carers help each other through their shared experiences. If a mum is having a rough day there is usually another pair of arms ready to hold a baby or distract a crying child. Children get used to interacting with others. Now, because of Covid restrictions, a generation of children is growing up who have not experienced any human contact outside their family bubble.

### **Please pray:**

1. For churches to find new and creative ways of connecting to parents or carers.
2. For patience, energy and well-being for parents stuck at home and missing the friendly interaction.
3. That any who are lonely, struggling to cope or in need encouragement, may find the help and support they need.
4. That this generation of babies will grow up happy and healthy and strong.
5. For families you may know who have toddlers.

Day 6 Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February

## Croydon Street Pastors and School Pastors

*The Church in Action on the Streets*



Our Street Pastors and School Pastors are trained volunteers from local churches, who usually patrol the streets of Croydon town centre to be a Christian presence and demonstrate God's love in practical ways.

Historically Street Pastors have operated most Friday evenings and School Pastors have operated on Monday and Thursday afternoons in term time. The work of both teams has been severely impacted by the pandemic. On top of this both teams are going through a time of transition and change.

The Croydon night time economy is much quieter than it used to be and St Andrew's, our original partner school for School Pastors, has now closed. Both teams have also shrunk in size. If we are to continue, both teams will need to adapt to the changing needs of Croydon.

### **Please pray**

1. For wisdom and guidance as we consider the future vision for both initiatives.
2. For God to raise up new Street & School Pastors and for new church leaders to join our management team.
3. For God's blessing on our Street Pastor teams as they begin to resume their patrols.
4. For God's powerful presence on our Croydon streets

**Contact: Email:** [croydon@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:croydon@streetpastors.org.uk)

Sign up for regular news:

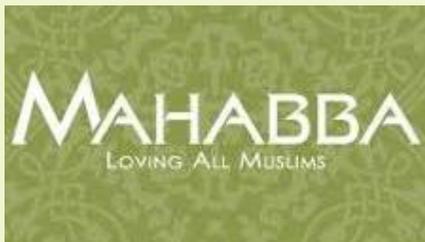
**Email:** [www.croydon.streetpastors.org.uk](http://www.croydon.streetpastors.org.uk)

**Instagram:** [croydon\\_street\\_pastors](https://www.instagram.com/croydon_street_pastors)

**Day 7 Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

## **Mahabba Network**

*Mahabba operates as a relational network, which gives people of Muslim heritage the opportunity to find and follow Jesus, by:*



### **Encouraging prayer**

Helping to grow regular, persistent prayer for Muslims.

### **Enabling Christians**

Helping them to recognise the opportunities, grow in confidence, build friendships and share Jesus with Muslims.

### **Envisioning the Christian community**

Inspiring church leadership with what God is doing and helping churches see their own vision fulfilled for Muslims to have the opportunity to follow Jesus.

### **Engaging with Muslims**

Helping local churches to build bridges with local Muslim communities in order to reach out in love, share Jesus and nurture Christ-followers who reach out in their own community.

### **Please pray:**

1. The Croydon Asian community has been disproportionately affected by Covid-19. Pray for comfort for the bereaved.
2. For the opportunities Mahabba has to help churches engage with their whole community.
3. For Croydon Christians to share their faith with grace and truth, and for many Muslims to encounter the love of Jesus through them.
4. For all Christian organisations reaching out across cultures.

**Contact:** Chas **Tel:** 07860 692053

**Email:** london@mahabbanetwork.com

**Website:** www.mahabbanetwork.com

Day 8 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February

## Croydon Community Against Trafficking (CCAT)



*An effective UK anti-trafficking/anti-slavery organisation working on the ground, in the community - where it matters.*

Human traffickers are drawn to Croydon because of its good transport links and highly-populated commercial centre. CCAT campaigns vigorously to free slaves of human trafficking within Croydon and beyond, ensuring that the issue remains high on the agenda, locally and nationally.

We work in partnership with various services in Croydon to help and motivate them to improve support for victims and to disrupt trafficking activity. Progress is being made but there is still much work to be done.

The Covid pandemic creates circumstances that make it impossible for many victims to escape from their captors thus it is essential that we all keep our eyes open to spot the potential signs of people being controlled and enslaved, reporting our findings to the Modern Slavery Helpline.

The pandemic has also had a financial impact on our operations. Several of our traditional funding streams have dried up and we are relying entirely on our volunteers to campaign and petition local and national government.

If anyone feels they can help CCAT in its quest to prevent slavery in Croydon in these challenging times, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

### **Please pray:**

1. For the public to report any suspicions of this heinous crime to the authorities, or to call the free public Modern Slavery Helpline 0800 0121 700 (open 24/7).
2. For CCAT's work in co-operation with other agencies to liberate, protect and support trafficked people, and for success in disrupting the activities of human traffickers.

**Contact: Tel:** 07973 746308

**Websites:** [www.theccat.com](http://www.theccat.com)/[www.ycaht.com](http://www.ycaht.com)

Day 9 Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February

## Renew 23



*A quiet shared space where it's OK not to be OK...*

Renew Wellbeing provides simple café-style spaces run by local churches for people who might find a traditional environment overwhelming.

Renew 23 was set up in 2019 by Purley & Kenley Churches Together, partnering with local mental health practitioners.

Each Thursday, when restrictions allow, Purley Baptist Church offers a place for people to come and sit quietly or to share their hobbies and activities.

Three times during the day we stop to pray simple prayers and visitors are welcome to join us. We have been encouraged by the response. Our prayer times have been well-attended and we regularly have people of other faiths praying with us.

During Covid-19 we are using Zoom, and meeting together when the rules allow (following social distancing guidelines) either in a local park or in Get Fired (a local pottery studio) so that we can keep this support group available for those who need it. Our guests have been so grateful to have this lifeline. We have also kept in touch in other ways with those unable to travel during these challenging times.

### **Please pray:**

1. That our café will continue to be warmly received in the community and the people who need this type of space will be able to find us.
2. That our hosts will be welcoming and easy to talk to.
3. That people will encounter God as they join us in prayer.
4. That the mental health professionals will see the value in this project and point the right people towards us.

**Contact:** Lisa Downham

**Tel:** 07940 777492

**Email:** [lisa@getfired.co.uk](mailto:lisa@getfired.co.uk)

Day 10 Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February

## Christian Family Concern



*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

We are a small Christian charity based in South Croydon which seeks to express the love of Christ in action.

We provide services to support families in all sections of the borough’s multicultural community, particularly the disadvantaged and those needing additional support, through:

- Housing support and accommodation for young mums and their children.
- Day nursery.
- Counselling service. Currently all our sessions are being held online.

### **Please pray:**

1. For the good health of all staff, residents and nursery children.
2. For our young mums to experience the love of Christ through our services and to acquire the necessary skills to live independently and to flourish in the future.
3. That our children may be blessed with a happy and secure childhood and grow to know Jesus personally.
4. For those we counsel to find peace and joy through the love of Christ.

**Contact:** Mari Walters, Operations Manager

**Tel:** 020 8688 0251

**Email:** [info@christianfamilyconcern.org.uk](mailto:info@christianfamilyconcern.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.christianfamilyconcern.org.uk](http://www.christianfamilyconcern.org.uk)

Day 11 Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February

## Work with Elderly Folk

*“Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you.” Isaiah 46:4*



Isolation and loneliness are very real issues for many elderly people. According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and even before Covid-19 more than one million older people said they could go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. The requirement for the elderly to shield during lockdown, even if fit and well, has made life extremely tough and added to the anxiety levels for many. This is especially true for those who aren't able to access technology to keep in touch.

There are some church ministries for the elderly which haven't opened at all since March 2020, others have adapted to enable contact to be maintained. Praise House, in Central Croydon, for example, has transformed its weekly lunch club into a meals-on-wheels service, delivering to their members and stopping for a short socially distanced chat at the same time.

Some groups have been able to keep in contact through phone calls and New Life Church has set up a phone line by which members without internet access can join in their church services by phone.

Some churches have worked with their community to form Covid support groups, such as Selsdon Contact which has made more than 5,000 "befriending calls" by phone to the elderly and vulnerable.

### **Please pray:**

1. For the physical and mental health and well-being of our seniors.
2. For a successful vaccination roll-out so that they are able to re-engage with society without fear.
3. For lonely people to be drawn into communities of love and acceptance and for many of them to meet Jesus.
4. For senior members in your church fellowship and for your own church's ministry to the elderly.

**Day 12 Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February**

## **Croydon Christian Youthworkers**



*Networking the borough's Christian youthworkers.*

Croydon Christian Youthworkers is a network for youthworkers who usually meet termly to pray, share information and keep updated on issues relevant to young people and youth ministry.

The last 12 months have proved to be very challenging for church youthwork, with most youthwork moving online rather than face to face.

Youthworkers have worked so hard to adapt and to stay in touch with our young people. It's also been a difficult year for our young people with education and exams being disrupted and limitations on their ability to meet other young people.

### **Please pray:**

1. That the young people in our churches will grow spiritually even in this challenging time.
2. For all young people who have been impacted educationally, mentally and socially by the pandemic.
2. For Christian youthworkers as they continue to adapt and innovate in the ways they engage with young people.
3. Pray that Christian youthworkers from different organisations and churches will continue to network and support one another.

**Contact:** [mark.rossell@newlifecroydon.co.uk](mailto:mark.rossell@newlifecroydon.co.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/croydonchristianyouthworkers](http://www.facebook.com/croydonchristianyouthworkers)

**Day 13 Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March**

## **Together Croydon Churches**



*“So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” Mark 11:24*

Together Croydon Churches (TCC) is an organisation that represents the views and interests of Pentecostal/Black Majority churches in Croydon and is an affiliation of Croydon Churches Forum (CCF).

TCC has already kickstarted 2021 with 31 days of prayers and declarations over Croydon.

Since the start of the first lockdown last year, a group of pastors has met every morning at 8:00am to pray.

### **Please pray:**

1. For a spirit of Kingdom unity and cooperation among churches and church leaders.
2. For God to bless and prosper key projects and initiatives planned for 2021.
3. For the TCC leaders as they carry out their roles.
4. For TCC to step up and take over certain services that benefit the most vulnerable in our community.

**Contact:** Damian Luke, Chair

**Email:** [dluke@praisehouse.org.uk](mailto:dluke@praisehouse.org.uk)

**Day 14 Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**

## **Alpha and Christianity Explored**

*Informal introductions to the Christian faith.*



Alpha and Christianity Explored are two popular courses offered by many churches in Croydon. They are designed for those who want to know more about the Christian faith, or to brush up on the basics, and offer opportunities to ask questions and think through issues in an informal setting.

The Alpha course centres on “big” questions such as “Who is Jesus?” whereas Christianity Explored bases sessions on Mark’s Gospel. Both have proved very effective tools for leading people to faith.

The pandemic has led many people to investigate or re-engage with matters of faith. One report claimed as many as one in four people attended an on-line religious service during the first lockdown. Churches are still reporting surprising numbers of visitors to their virtual services, and increased interest in their Alpha or Christianity Explored courses.

Virtual courses may not include conversation over a meal but they are still able to offer time to connect, relax and build friendships at the start of each session.

Each year over 1.3 million people globally participate in these courses.

### **Please pray:**

1. For local and national advertising campaigns to catch the eye and cause people to consider joining a course.
2. For people to find opportunities to invite their friends.
3. For courses to be well run, welcoming and safe.
4. For a harvest from the courses run by your church.

**Websites: Alpha:** [www.alpha.org](http://www.alpha.org)

**Christianity Explored:** [www.ceministries.org](http://www.ceministries.org)

Day 15 Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

## Croydon NHS Trust Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care



*“Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” Matthew 28:16-20*

As part of its provision of holistic care, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust’s Chaplaincy & Spiritual Care Team provides pastoral, spiritual and religious care for people of all beliefs. This includes patients, relatives, staff and volunteers. Since March 2020 we have had no alternative but to stand down our Chaplaincy volunteers for their own safety and to help stop any possible spread of Covid-19. However, Rev Andy Dovey (Team Lead) and Rev Lynbert Douglas (Ecumenical Chaplain) have continued full duties to all those in need regardless of whether they are Covid-positive or not.

The function of our team has been a critical element in the Trust’s support of those in their needs and will continue to be so. We see our chaplaincy responsibility as that set out in “The Great Commission” - we are called to serve on the front line, providing God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s help and guidance to those in need, in their darkest hours, regardless of the risks to us.

### **Please pray:**

1. For gifts of empathy and compassion for all staff, that they may be effective and efficient channels of healing grace.
2. For healing and wholeness for all who come to Croydon Health Services NHS Trust as patients, relatives and carers.
3. For the Chaplaincy Staff putting themselves at risk to provide God’s grace to all in need.

**Contact:** Rev Andy Dovey, Lead for Chaplaincy & Spiritual Care for Croydon Health Services NHS Trust

**Tel:** 07557 014 739 / 020 8401 3105

**Email:** [andrew.dovey@nhs.net](mailto:andrew.dovey@nhs.net)

Day 16 Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March

## Vineyard English Classes (VES)

*Free conversational English classes for speakers of other languages.*

Over the past five years Croydon Vineyard has provided free conversational English classes in Croydon Central Library to people whose first language is not English.

Currently we are operating entirely through Zoom, with around 25 people logging on each Wednesday and Thursday morning to both improve their English and connect with others.

Each morning of teaching is followed by an optional online “Discovery Bible Study”, where people discuss easy English translations of the Bible and how it applies to life. People of all faiths stay on for this group, and it's wonderful to be able to share God's Word openly with people from all over the world who are hungry to learn.

### **Please pray:**

1. For our international students to improve their English so that they can integrate more easily into UK life.
2. For Jesus to open their eyes to His goodness and grace.
3. That people from many backgrounds will be drawn to Jesus and come to life in Him.
4. For wisdom and guidance as we navigate this Covid environment and look to further develop the school.

**Contact:** Andy Brims

**Email:** [andy@croydonvineyard.org.uk](mailto:andy@croydonvineyard.org.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/croydonvineyardenglishschool](http://www.facebook.com/croydonvineyardenglishschool)



**Day 17 Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

## **Purley Cross Information Centre**

*Open Monday-Thursday 10:00am-4:00pm,  
Friday 10:00am-2:00pm.*



During this unprecedented time Purley Cross Centre has remained open but providing a limited service to its clients and enquirers. All face-to-face services were suspended in March until further notice but we continue to respond to requests for information, training, help, guidance and advice, online and by phone.

Services currently being offered include IT training (online); 15-minute free legal and family law advice (consultation by phone); tax help advice for older people (by phone) as well as socially prescribing and signposting clients to external agencies such as the Food Hub, Job Centre, Benefits and Welfare etc. We hope to restart our English Language for Beginners course (“Speak It Out”) as soon as restrictions are lifted.

### **Please pray:**

1. That God will give us wisdom and guidance to sustain us and inspire us with a new vision as we move forward into the next season.
2. That our volunteers will feel safe to return when restrictions are relaxed.
3. That God will bless us, resource us, and give wisdom in dealing with matters that are raised.
4. That the love of Jesus will be demonstrated and communicated through all the centre’s activities, resulting in positively impacted changed lives.

**Contact:** Leo Cardow, Centre Manager

**Tel:** 020 8668 4189

**Email:** [info@purleycrosscentre.org](mailto:info@purleycrosscentre.org)

**Day 18 Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March**

## **Purley Food Hub**

*Showing God's love and provision to people in crisis.*



In 2020 the number of meals provided to hard-pressed clients and their families was 48,987 - by far the most in a year since the Food Hub opened eight years ago, and an increase of 60 per cent on 2019.

The Food Hub is an independent charity run by Purley & Kenley Churches Together. Since our launch in January 2013 we have provided more than 215,000 meals to nearly 24,000 people without enough food. We receive donations of longlife food from churches and schools, supermarkets and businesses, uniformed organisations, Rotary and WI, and many local families and individuals. We are grateful for their generosity and to God who ensures that we always have enough.

Clients are referred to us by frontline staff in around 130 agencies in the borough. For the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic we are operating as a home delivery service, delivering the food parcels direct to our clients' homes in Purley, South Croydon, Coulsdon and Waddon, with three days' food for each family member.

### **Please pray:**

1. For our hard-pressed clients and their individual difficult circumstances.
2. For opportunities to talk about Jesus, to offer prayer and to see people coming to know Him. This isn't always easy when we have to keep our distance.
3. For continuing support - food, volunteers and finances, giving thanks to God for His provision.
4. For safe-keeping and good health of all staff serving in the many local ministries working hard to feed people in crisis and alleviate food poverty.

**Contact: Tel:** 07546 635295

**Email:** [purleyfoodhub@gmail.com](mailto:purleyfoodhub@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.purleyfoodhub.net](http://www.purleyfoodhub.net)

Day 19 Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March

## Church Schools

*There have been church schools in Croydon since the late 16th century when Archbishop John Whitgift opened a school for the poor of the borough.*



Some years later, in 1714, Archbishop Tenison founded a school for some “ten poor boys and ten poor girls”, which is now believed to be the oldest surviving mixed-gender school in the world.

The Church has always been at the forefront of education, not just providing church schools for church kids, but opening doors of opportunity for those who were disenfranchised.

Today, on governing bodies, PTAs and in other community involvement in and around our schools, Christians in Croydon continue to be heavily committed to the education of our young people and to being salt and light within their sphere of influence.

### **Please pray:**

1. Thank God for the many church schools in Croydon, of different denominations, both primary and secondary. May the name of Jesus be honoured through each one and may they be distinctive because of this.
2. That staff may teach well and work with God-given energy, patience, compassion and humility, and not be knocked off track by all that is happening at the moment.
3. That pupils and students this year may be given the strength and confidence they need to cope with the challenges imposed on them by the pandemic and the restrictions it has brought.
4. That God will meet the many financial and practical needs that families (and schools) have at the moment and help us to get through this year successfully - it is worth praying particularly for those scheduled to have their GCSE and A Level exams this year.
5. That many young people in this Borough would come to know Christ personally and grow up with a deep and genuine understanding of God's purpose for their lives.

**Day 20 Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March**

## **The Well**

*The Well exists to help mend broken lives.*

For over 11 years The Well has been running from 11:00am-2:30pm on a Monday to “provide rest, support and hope to all of those within our community marginalised through homelessness, the threat of homelessness, and related addiction and mental health challenges”.

Working closely with outside professional agencies, we see up to 35 clients each week, some just dropping in, some being referred to us. These sessions aim to meet both the immediate day-to-day needs of homeless people, and those with the potential of becoming homeless and to address underlying, complex issues over the longer term. The project works in effective partnership with wonderful volunteers from our own church, other churches and the local community.

When the lockdown restrictions began in March 2020 we continued the work by operating from the church car park. Keeping within the Covid guidelines has been challenging but we have managed to provide a hot meal every week as well as providing access to the homeless outreach agency who come along to support.

One amazing statistic: at the time of writing (December 2020) we were able to say that from March to December it hadn't rained on us once!

In the same time our (Salvation Army) food hub was able to provide well over 2,700 food bags which is meeting a very real need here in our community.

**Please pray** for renewed energy for the task before us, for focused working to meet our intended mission, for more volunteers to join the team and for the lives of our visitors to be changed and transformed into what God intends.

**Contact:** Chris Waldock or Mary Russell-Redman

**Tel:** 020 8680 9924

**Email:** [chris.waldock@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:chris.waldock@salvationarmy.org.uk)



**Day 21 Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March**

## **HGEO Foodbank**

*When we opened our foodbank four years ago we could never have imagined that God might use it to transform our church.*



Before lockdown last year we opened one day a week, helping around 130 people. But from March till June we found ourselves operating six days a week (with PPE and social distancing) serving up to 500 people with queues forming outside the building. It was exhausting but we discovered that the more food we gave away, the more we were given: we were contacted by restaurant chains offering lorries-full of food deliveries which they were unable to use. We became a small hub for distribution to other food banks around the borough.

Through this ministry we have had the joy of leading 15 of our visitors to the Lord. One Sunday morning just before the second lockdown, three Spanish-speaking families (with very limited English) who we'd helped, walked into our church service. I asked if anyone in the congregation could translate and amazingly someone spoke Spanish. That was the start of our church transformation. These guests have stayed and integrated into our church family. They've committed their lives to the Lord. Each week in our Zoom service, our worship team chooses well-known songs that have already been translated into Spanish and we all sing along, in our homes, in our native tongue.

Currently we are operating two days a week, helping around 350 people. We offer fresh and dry produce, cupboard basics, toiletries, kitchen utensils, baby clothes, shoes- we try to give people whatever they need.

**Please pray** that God will continue to resource us to meet the needs we face. And we will be willing to adapt to welcome those He brings our way.

**Contact:** Pastor Bola Thomas

**Tel:** 07946 546 507

**Email:** [info@hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk](mailto:info@hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk)

Day 22 Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March

## Overseas Mission

*Croydon...to the ends of the earth.*



The global pandemic has had a severe impact on the work of charities in poor countries around the world. In response, many agencies have taken the decision to suspend their development projects and transition into “relief mode” in order to feed and support those who have no way of supporting themselves.

**International Needs (IN)** is a Croydon-based, world-wide development agency working to help families suffering through poverty and crises to create a sustainable future. Currently IN teams are feeding over 3,000 families with no other means of support, as part of the global relief effort.

**Contact: Email:** [inuk@ineeds.org.uk](mailto:inuk@ineeds.org.uk)

**Website:** <https://ineeds.org.uk>

Many in the UK are looking to vaccines as the way out of the pandemic. Poorer countries have little such hope as vaccine supplies are snapped up by wealthy nations able to pay before they are even manufactured.

**African Child Trust (ACT)** is a local charity with relational links to many Croydon churches. Its vision is to relieve poverty and advance the education of disadvantaged orphans and children of needy widows, breaking the cycle of generational poverty. These people are often forgotten. They are vulnerable economically as a result of Covid, yet they are also most likely to be at the back of the queue to be vaccinated and receive protection.

**Contact: Kunle Email:** [office@africanchildtrust.org.uk](mailto:office@africanchildtrust.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.africanchildtrust.org.uk](http://www.africanchildtrust.org.uk)

**Please pray:**

1. For God’s favour to be on the work of IN and ACT; for the gospel to be demonstrated, and the Kingdom to come, visibly and practically through their work; for God’s abundant provision.
2. For justice for the poor – for vaccine supplies to reach those most in need.
3. For missionaries and overseas mission work supported by your own church.

Day 23 Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March

## Croydon Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health (APCMH)



*Enhancing the quality of life, self-respect and spiritual growth of those affected by mental health difficulties.*

Public awareness of the importance of good mental health has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At APCMH we are working towards a better understanding of mental health, illness and distress and to remove barriers to acceptance and inclusion which are so often a part of our society. We are a Christian foundation but people of all faiths and none use our services.

Lockdown has required us to cancel our entire regular programme of activities - drop-ins, groups, courses, church services and workshops. We have been keeping contact with our regular service-users by phone. Anyone needing help can leave a message on our answerphone and our staff will then get in touch.

During autumn 2020, while we were in the local tier system, we were able to meet for socially distanced walks and a few small, socially-distanced services, and we hope to resume these simple activities as soon as restrictions allow.

### **Please pray:**

1. For help and healing for all service users, particularly those who are struggling with isolation.
2. For people to recognise their need of support and find courage to pick up the phone.
3. For the well-being of our staff currently furloughed or working from home.

**Contact:** Project Co-ordinator

**Tel:** 020 8654 4010

**Email:** [admin@croydon-apcmh.co.uk](mailto:admin@croydon-apcmh.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.apcmhcroydon.co.uk](http://www.apcmhcroydon.co.uk)

Day 24 Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March

## Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

christians  
against  
poverty

CAP

*A national charity partnering with local churches to bring hope and salvation to people caught up in debt and poverty.*

Croydon churches now offer the full range of CAP services:

**Debt Centres** offer personal debt help and advice.

**CAP Job Clubs** help people find meaningful employment.

**CAP Life Skills** provides practical help for those on a low income.

**CAP Fresh Start** supports people to break life-controlling habits.

**CAP Money courses** teach simple budgeting skills.

Since March 2020 CAP has transitioned its service online and over the phone. This has enabled the service to continue to support clients affected by issues such as furlough, redundancies, unemployment, evictions, addiction and mental as well as physical health issues. In this time we have seen clients go debt free and supporters reach out with amazing generosity. We have been able to provide clients with emergency support such as food shops, phone, gas and electric top-ups, school uniforms and small home goods for those who have had to move home. As the pandemic ensues, it continues to be a very difficult time for many and CAP is preparing for the service to be in higher demand. But it has also been an opportune time to share the gospel, bringing light and freedom into very dark situations.

### **Please pray:**

1. For those who need help to have the courage to pick up the phone and seek support.
2. For God to resource us with a good supply of volunteers and sufficient finances.
3. For our clients to find the freedom and support they need and meet Jesus in the process.
4. For wisdom for all the service managers and helpers.

If you are a Christian with a passion and heart for the poor and would like to volunteer with CAP there are a variety of roles, some requiring only 2-3 hours a month. Please contact the centre manager (details below) for a friendly chat.

**Contact:** Amanda Austin Tel: 07833 621926 **Website:** [www.capuk.org](http://www.capuk.org)

Day 25 Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March

## The Foyer

### Oasis Community Housing

*Established in 2000, in partnership with Croydon Council and local churches, to provide temporary supported accommodation for homeless young people aged 16-25.*



Very sadly, after 21 years of operation, The Foyer will be closing in June 2021.

Over the years the building has developed some structural issues which require substantial repair work to remedy. The landlord has taken the decision to sell rather than repair the property and given our team until the end of June to vacate the premises.

The Foyer was set up in partnership with the Council, but has to bid for the required funding. This year we were unsuccessful in their latest round of bidding and as a result the project will be winding down in the next few months.

Our vision has been “for everyone to be part of a community where they are included, belong and have what they need to reach their God-given potential”. Each of our residents has received an individual programme of holistic support aimed at developing life skills, independence and employability.

#### **Please pray:**

1. That we will have a smooth transition with the closure.
2. The residents will find new homes that will enable them to thrive in life and find the right support to continue their journeys in life.
3. God’s direction for the staff and the organisation on the next steps.

**Contact:** Sherisha Haynes

**Email:** [sherisha.haynes@oasiscommunityhousing.org](mailto:sherisha.haynes@oasiscommunityhousing.org)

**Website:** <https://oasiscommunityhousing.org>

Day 26 Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March

## Transform Croydon prayer

*Croydon churches praying together.*



Three times a year we draw together from across the denominations to pray, as one church, for our borough.

Over the years we have prayed for deepening unity, the health service, the police, education, housing and many other aspects of Croydon life. We have had great feedback and seen God move powerfully as we have prayed in unity.

At our most recent meeting in January 2021, the prayers were focused on **recovery** (from the ravaging effects of Covid-19 on our community and from the desperate state of Council finances) and on the **response** of our churches to the Council's forthcoming cuts in services.

For the duration of the pandemic our meetings are being held on Zoom. Login details are sent out in advance by email.

Please consider joining us.

### **Dates for 2021:**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October

**Please pray** for more individuals and churches to get excited about praying together, for our united prayer to influence and bless our borough and for God's Kingdom to come in Croydon.

**Contact:** Judi Lane

**Email:** [info@croydonchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@croydonchurch.org.uk)

Day 27 Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March

## Croydon North Deanery with Croydon Citizens

*Faith and Social Justice.*



The Deanery comprises 12 Anglican churches in West Croydon, Woodside, Thornton Heath, Norbury, South Norwood and Upper Norwood.

We are working together, whether socially distanced or online, on three priorities this year: a new priority of “Black History...in the Making” and continuing with Young People and Housing & Homelessness.

### **Please pray:**

1. That *Black History* becomes a “shared church history” and a “shared church future”.
2. For our continued social justice project *Public Spirit* with young people and Croydon Citizens.
3. For the newly formed Croydon Citizens Alliance and change for those seeking housing in Croydon.

**Contact:** Rev Catherine Tucker

**Tel:** 020 3784 3017

**Email:** [holysav@hotmail.com](mailto:holysav@hotmail.com)

Day 28 Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March

## Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation



*In January 2014, Dan went to a party and made a fatal decision to take the drug ecstasy with a group of friends. He died two days later from multiple organ failure.*

Dan was from a strong Christian family, a member of the church youth group at Emmanuel, South Croydon, and a popular student at Archbishop Tenison's School. His parents, Fiona and Tim, felt that if this could happen to him, it could happen to anyone, and their determination to do all they can to prevent it has led to the establishing of a drugs education charity in his name.

They work with young people, families, professionals and teachers in schools, colleges and communities across London and further afield, through an evidence-based drug and alcohol education programme "*Making Safer Choices*", and a powerful play "*I Love You, Mum - I Promise I Won't Die*", published by Methuen Drama, which has toured professionally since 2017.

This is not where they would have chosen to be but God has opened doors for their message from the very beginning.

**Please pray** for the growth of their drugs education work, which now offers online delivery: a filmed play production and other resources for schools and colleges, so they are able to reach further, offering effective drug and alcohol education to students, parents and professionals during these very difficult times.

**Contact:** Amanda Shortland

**Email:** [admin@dsmfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@dsmfoundation.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.dsmfoundation.org.uk](http://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk)

**Day 29 Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

## **The Link**

*A weekly drop-in for homeless and vulnerably-housed adults, based at East Croydon United Reformed Church and open Thursday evenings.*



Due to Covid-19, we have had to rethink The Link as it was clear that it wouldn't be safe to continue to operate as we were.

Having closed for six months, we opened again at the beginning of October 2020 but this time offering a takeaway service from 6.45 - 7.30pm on Thursday evenings.

Some of our guests own little more than the clothes they are standing in. Many have very troubled histories and it is only the transforming power of Jesus that can make a lasting difference to their lives.

We try to serve them as Jesus' representatives.

### **Please pray:**

1. Thanking God that we have been able to open again.
2. For those who are homeless and vulnerably housed to be able to get safe accommodation.
3. For energy and creativity for those working with the homeless in Croydon, as they struggle with limited resources and have to make decisions about priorities.
4. For opportunities to share the good news of Jesus in a way that is relevant and accessible to our guests.

**Contact:** Pauline Miller

**Email:** [reception@purleybaptist.org](mailto:reception@purleybaptist.org)

Day 30 Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March

## Alive Community Centre Food Bank

*Elim Pentecostal Church, Thornton Heath.*



Our existing “Fresh Food Bank” had to close in March 2020 when the first lockdown began. We immediately expanded our operation in order to deliver food to those shielded or otherwise unable to access food and became the “Elim Food Hub”. By the end of April we were delivering food six days a week to around 180 households in Croydon.

We were so blessed by the response of the local community; so many people who had been furloughed or made redundant came forward to help, often delivering food several times a week.

Once shielding ended in August, the demand halved and we dropped to three days a week, while encouraging people to come and collect instead of us delivering. Finally, we dropped again and are now running a mix of deliveries and self-collection on Tuesday and Saturday afternoons. We are still serving around 100+ households.

All this has led to one of the biggest witnessing opportunities our church has ever had, as our dedicated group of volunteers are a mix of both Christians and non-Christians and most of our clients are also non-Christians.

We believe that we have responded as the Church of Jesus should- reaching out to meet the physical and often emotional needs of a community in shock and despair.

**Please pray** for many of our volunteers to respond to Jesus and give their lives to Him and for God to continue to give us the strength and perseverance to maintain our service in what is one of the poorer areas of the Borough. Please also pray for the very real need for money to run our food collections van and to keep buying PPE for our volunteers!

If you know anyone who could benefit from collecting fresh food from us:

**Contact:** Matilda **Tel:** 07949 489075

**Web:** [www.mershamroad.org](http://www.mershamroad.org)

Day 31 Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March

## Croydon Burn 24/7



*Communities passionately pursuing His presence.*

Since its launch in September 2017, Croydon Burn has been hosting extended hours of non-stop worship and prayer on the third Friday of every month.

When the pandemic hit last year and we were unable to gather in person, we continued to meet as an online community via Facebook, streaming our worship from various homes.

The teams come from many denominations all over Croydon and beyond, leading us in passionately pursuing the Presence of God. Our united worship creates a canopy under which we cry out in intercession to God for awakening in the church and for transformation of our cities and nation.

We are part of the global Burn 24-7 movement (see: [www.burn24-7.com](http://www.burn24-7.com)).

### **Please pray:**

1. For an increased desire across Croydon for God's presence.
2. That we effectively facilitate and promote unity and honour across all ages and cultures, whether meeting together or on-line.
3. For more volunteers to join our team.

**Contact:** Ken Smith, Burn Director

**Email:** [kens@theburn247.com](mailto:kens@theburn247.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/croydonburn](http://www.facebook.com/croydonburn)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/croydonburn](http://www.instagram.com/croydonburn)

Day 32 Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March

## 133

*“When God’s people live together in unity...  
the Lord bestows his blessing.” Psalm 133:1,3*



133 is a group for church and ministry leaders in the Croydon area. It has been running since 1989 and takes its name from Psalm 133, where God’s blessing is promised when we live together in unity.

When lockdown first hit and the group moved on-line, all church or ministry leaders were invited to join. As churches found themselves having to transform their services overnight, there were many urgent questions and discussions about such things as compliance with government restrictions and the use of technology.

These 45-minute, weekly, Zoom meetings have become a platform for leaders to gather, offering an opportunity to take a short time out of their busy schedules to worship and pray together and to share and update one another on what’s happening in our churches and around the borough.

### **Please pray:**

1. That unity between leaders from a wide background of churches will continue to grow and develop and we will experience the blessing that God has promised.
2. For leaders to be refreshed and encouraged as they come together.
3. Specifically for church leaders who are feeling overburdened and stressed to find encouragement.
4. For the long-term vision, direction and growth of the group after we emerge from lockdown and return to meeting in-person.

**Contact:** Mark Rossel **Email:** [mark.rossell@newlifecroydon.co.uk](mailto:mark.rossell@newlifecroydon.co.uk)

Or Damian Luke **Email:** [dluke@praisehouse.org.uk](mailto:dluke@praisehouse.org.uk)

Day 33 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March

## Croydon's Statutory Organisations and Leaders



*"...Requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving... for kings and all those in authority." 1 Timothy 1:1-2*

The Croydon church commits to praying for our local authority, local councillors and MPs, as well as our emergency services, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust and our business community.

It has been a tough year for everyone involved in delivering these services.

### **Please pray:**

1. For wise management of the resources of our borough.
2. For policy-making, budget-management, team-building and voting in the May local elections that reflects God's heart for social justice.
3. For wisdom for our Council leaders and the central government team sent to help Croydon prioritise and meet the borough's pressing social and economic needs, particularly clearing our huge deficit and balancing our books.
4. For Council staff who have been made redundant and for social care projects that have lost their funding.
5. For the police and other agencies to receive the levels of funding they need to operate effectively and to keep us safe.
6. For the health, welfare, security and prosperity of our borough.
7. For the weak, poor and vulnerable in our borough to be well taken care of.
8. For our NHS and the hospitals not to be overwhelmed with the demand to care for people who need support during the pandemic.
9. For our three MPs, Steve Reed, Sarah Jones and Chris Philp as they represent the borough in Parliament.

Day 34 Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March

## Key Workers

*“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”*

*Colossians 3:23*



During this past year we've realised again that the people who are most important to keeping our society going are not necessarily those who are paid the most, who drive the flashiest cars or have the biggest houses.

“Essential workers” are bus drivers, delivery drivers, refuse collectors, postmen and women, supermarket staff, teaching assistants - as well as NHS, police and emergency service staff, teachers and many others.

Many of us joined in the “clap for carers” during the first lockdown, which was a powerful symbol of appreciation. Time will tell if it reflects a real change of attitude and a profound respect in society for those whose work really is essential to us all.

*“I cried at the end of some shifts... for the sheer helplessness of the situation... I cried to God asking where he was in this situation. I cried to God asking Him to make us safe.” (Hospital doctor)*

Once this pandemic has passed, many on the frontline, in the Covid wards particularly, will need to process what they have been through. Some have been severely traumatised by their experiences. They know too that they will also face the huge backlog of cases currently on hold.

### **Please pray:**

1. With thanksgiving for our keyworkers.
2. For energy, strength and protection from Covid and for their mental and emotional wellbeing.
3. For our essential workers who struggle to make ends meet, because of low wages, high rents and travel costs, or the costs of childcare. May there be a continued commitment from society as a whole to recognise the value of their work, resulting in fair wages for all.
4. For those who are prosperous, that in humility they may recognise that their material wealth is a gift from God, and use it generously for His Kingdom.

**Day 35 Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

## **Safe Families**



*Building connections of belonging.*

Safe Families has an ambitious vision to see thousands of local Christians right across the UK offering hope, belonging and support to their community's most vulnerable children, families and care leavers. We have been working with Croydon families since July 2020.

The need is huge and there is a growing care crisis with rising numbers of children in care and early help services being cut across the country. The need in Croydon is growing but we know that the churches in Croydon have a heart for local struggling families. Safe Families is ready to come alongside you, to honour and resource you in this call.

Safe Families already has over 4,500 trained and supported volunteers from over 1,000 churches and community groups across the UK. This year we expect to support 1,300 families, connecting them with these volunteers so that they no longer feel isolated and are being supported to stay together and thrive.

These relationships bring hope and practical help, they encourage, they provide the support of a good friend, neighbour, aunt or grandparent that many of us would take for granted and without whom our own stories could look very different.

### **Please pray:**

1. That struggling families in Croydon would know that they are loved and valued by God and experience the hope and belonging of being part of a church family and community.
2. That more people in Croydon will respond to the call to volunteer, give and pray for the increase of God's Kingdom.

**Contact:** Heather Valletta

**Tel:** 07436 141652

**Website:** [www.safefamilies.uk](http://www.safefamilies.uk)

Day 36 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March

## Croydon Refugee Day Centre

*"A place of love and peace where ordinary people from around the world are welcomed..."*

*(Asylum seeker)*



During the first lockdown in March 2020 we had to close our Tuesday Drop-in completely, simply because we couldn't have people rubbing shoulders. Instead we started to make up and give out food parcels and toiletries packs to those in need. We have formed working partnerships with other organisations such as the Jesuit Refugee Service and now deliver food parcels and toiletries packs to their clients who live in the area also. Eventually, after doing a Covid-Secure risk assessment, we were able to offer a clothing-giveaway service enabling 12-15 people at a time into the large hall where we set out racks and boxes of clothes for people to choose, with our volunteers acting as personal shoppers.

The second lockdown meant, once again, we had to stop people coming in to the building but we were able to serve some people who came to the door. A number of asylum seekers who were put up in hotels in Croydon by the Home Office were recently transferred to the Napier Barracks in Folkestone. We're in touch with the camp's Anglican Chaplain and have been able to send clothes and shoes for named individuals we got to know while they were in Croydon. Before Christmas we were able to take another delivery of warm winter coats and shoes which were donated by a film studio costume department. At present we're not looking for any more second-hand clothes or household equipment but we would welcome donations of new underwear and socks for men and women plus toiletries and long-life food.

### **Please pray:**

- 1 .For the health and safety of all asylum seekers in Croydon. May their cases be assessed speedily, justly and with compassion.
2. That it won't be too long before we are again able to safely open our doors to offer a warm welcome and practical help to Croydon's asylum seekers.

**Contact:** Rory MacLeod

**Email:** [rdmacleod@virginmedia.com](mailto:rdmacleod@virginmedia.com)

Day 37 Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March



## 5-Neighbour Initiative

*Encouraging all churches in the borough to bless and get to know their five nearest geographical neighbour churches.*

It's a well-established fact that all Christians and all Christian churches are part of Jesus' church and therefore belong to one body. The 5-Neighbour Initiative encourages strong local links between neighbouring churches, whatever their heritages and affiliations, to bless and get to know each other and work together for the benefit of their local community.

Churches will be able to illustrate their unity to local residents with common logo, posters, information and publicity, as well as locally co-ordinated activities. Imagine the impact if outside every church meeting place it said "Part of Jesus' church in Croydon" and showed the same poster! One church in Croydon with 230 meeting locations - the whole church presenting the same message.

### **Please pray:**

Use the prayer that our Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23 for us Christians in Croydon, and also:

1. Pray that churches will indeed get to know and bless their five nearest geographical neighbour churches, whatever their heritages and affiliations
2. Pray that such groups of churches will have God-given ideas as to how to bring an increased blessing to the community in their area.
3. Pray for a God-given strategy for communication and publicity across the borough.

For more information (particularly on who are your nearest five churches).

**Contact:** Trevor Hill

**Tel:** 07879 486974

**Email:** [ICTIAC1086@gmail.com](mailto:ICTIAC1086@gmail.com)

Day 38 Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March



## **PACT** **(Prison Advice and Care Trust)**

*“I pray that we may never forget that all people, whoever they are and whatever they have done, are loved by God and called to His Kingdom. I commend to you the work of PACT, who in every aspect of their work, go beyond their duty in support of those in need of hope and a fresh start.” Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster.*

PACT is a national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, defendants and their families to make a fresh start. Very often in our world there is a huge focus on prisoners and on their victims. Family members of offenders are seriously affected in many ways but receive comparatively little attention.

One area which appealed to our Justice and Peace Group in the Parish of the Holy Family, Sanderstead, was providing help to the families of prisoners. Two of the PACT staff came down to our parish and did some volunteer training with us. Unfortunately the pandemic has rather spiked our guns but two of us are now sufficiently trained to act as befrienders. This involves being allocated clients whom we ring weekly to offer our support. If more specialised help is required by our clients, we are able to liaise with PACT for advice.

PACT’s website provides a great deal of information about its work over a huge range of issues. We would love to hear from anyone interested in joining the work of prisoner family support.

### **Please pray:**

1. For all in prison, their families and their victims and for ex-offenders.
2. For those who work to support them.
3. For more local volunteers to commit to working alongside PACT and other agencies that work in the area of prisoner support.

**Contact:** Gerry Murphy **Tel:** 020 8651 2510

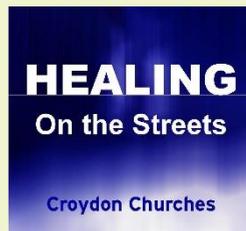
**Email:** [gsm.sjc@gmail.com](mailto:gsm.sjc@gmail.com)

**Web:** [www.prisonadvice.org.uk/family-support](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/family-support)

Day 39 Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March

## Healing On The Streets (HOTS)

*"God is doing something new!...As we worship our God on the streets, the atmosphere changes. His Kingdom invades our realm." HOTS Facebook 12.12.20.*



We are grateful for the grace of God on this ministry. HOTS normally goes out fortnightly on Saturdays between 1:00-3:00pm offering healing in the name of Jesus to anyone who would accept to be prayed for in the middle of Croydon shopping centre.

Over the past year, with Covid-19 and all the restrictions through tiers and lockdowns, we are glad to report that HOTS carried on.

We adapted, following the social distancing requirements, we prayed as there is no distance limiting our God. We felt led to preach the Gospel with a mic and to praise God with singing.

We are now having church on the streets! We are praising, preaching and praying. Lots of people have been prayed for, young and old, for various reasons- including Covid.

We also now have a weekly prayer meeting on Zoom on Tuesdays from 8:15-9:15pm. Please email us to join.

### **Please pray:**

1. For more labourers to join from different churches
2. That the Council won't introduce restrictions which affect the ministry
3. For an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the streets of Croydon

**Contact:** Veda Chumroo **Tel:** 07916 149073

**Email:** hotscroydonchurches@gmail.com

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/HOTSCroydonChurches](http://www.facebook.com/HOTSCroydonChurches)

Day 40 Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March

## Food Stops

*"For people who have more month than money!"*  
(Food Stop member)



Food Stops are community food sharing membership schemes whereby for £3.50 a week you can buy about £20 worth of food. They are run in partnership with Croydon Council and the Fareshare food charity and are open to anyone who is on benefits or who has been furloughed or laid off from their job as a result of the pandemic. They are also available to anyone who is self-isolating and has no support locally.

Since March 2020 membership of these schemes has almost doubled.

Council staff would normally be on hand to help with advice relating to welfare benefits, debt, job support and skills training, but since the pandemic began, face to face meetings have been replaced by phone calls.

Fieldway Food Stop in New Addington was the first to open in 2017; now three churches have opened Food Stops on their premises to serve the needs of their communities: St Francis (Monks Hill), Parchmore Methodist (Thornton Heath) and Old Lodge Lane Baptist (Purley) churches.

If you require further information, please use the contact details below.

### **Please pray:**

1. That Food Stops services will be easily accessible to those in need of them.
2. That supply will continue to meet the demand- God is so good!
3. For the safety and well-being of staff and members.
4. For the continuing partnership with the Council.

### **Contacts:**

**Parchmore: Becky:** 020 8653 7353 **Email:** [becky@parchmore.org](mailto:becky@parchmore.org)

**Monks Hill: Michelle:** 020 8657 7864 **Email:** [stfrancisselsdon@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancisselsdon@gmail.com)

**Old Lodge Lane:** 020 8668 6260 **Email:** [foodstop@ollbc.org.uk](mailto:foodstop@ollbc.org.uk)

For information about **Fieldway** please click [here](#)

Day 41 Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March

## Croydon Gospel Festival

*Reaching the community; preaching the gospel; bridging the generational gap.*



This annual inter-denominational event aims to bring a lot of fun into sharing the Gospel. By April last year it became apparent that the festival would have to be cancelled. Organiser, Pastor Bola Thomas, explains: “We tried to go ahead, but there were so many hurdles to overcome, particularly with track and trace. We took a decision to cancel with heavy hearts. However, almost as soon as we cancelled the venue, through Divine insight, we began to think about taking the festival to the streets. We sensed God was saying, ‘It’s going to happen!’ So we then had to ask, ‘Well how can it happen?! How can we evangelise and win souls?’ We realised it would have to be completely stripped back. God began to open doors: we identified spaces, around the borough that we might like to use- at East Croydon station, North End, outside Ambassador House (Thornton Heath) and Streatham Common. All, apart from the station, were given the OK with no payment required. Our theme was HOPE ON THE STREET. We invested in mobile speakers and had teams of people handing out PPE to those watching. Six out of our 21 original artists agreed to perform and more came forward wanting to take part.

Ten churches took part in evangelism training and prayer and fasting beforehand and in the end that wasn’t enough: people came forward for prayer and over 115 gave lives to the Lord— people were just so ready to receive. It seems amazing but out of Covid-19 God has brought a blessing!”

This year we plan to hit the streets again

**2021 dates:** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> - Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Venue TBC

**Please pray:** for a harvest of souls in Croydon and for God’s kingdom to come in our borough and for The Lord to provide all that is needed for this year’s Croydon Gospel Festival.

**Contact:** Pastor Bola Thomas

**Tel:** 020 8654 4433 / 07946 546507

**Email:** [event@hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk](mailto:event@hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk)

**Day 42 Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March**

## **Growbaby**

*"I needed clothes and you clothed me." Matthew 25:36*



Growbaby is a ministry of Grace Vineyard Church, Purley, providing pre-loved clothes, equipment and toys for children from birth to five years, to any who have need. We support refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked victims, those on benefits and those with no recourse to public funds. This year, due to the pandemic, we have seen more and more families unable to provide for their children's basic needs.

When we opened seven years ago, we operated out of a garage. For the last couple of years we have been given use of the most amazing space in Montpelier Church, South Croydon. This has been such a blessing to us and our clients.

During lockdown, we have been unable to open as usual but on many occasions we've been able to respond to an emergency call and then deliver the goods to the clients themselves.

In Tier 2 we were able to serve together again, although with everyone masked and socially distanced. Clients could no longer touch clothes and equipment, instead they would give us their list and we chose for them. At Christmas we were able to give presents to the children and beautiful toiletries to the mums. We also offered everyone our prayers.

God is good and we are blessed to serve in this ministry. We look forward to the time when we can again open our doors.

Normal opening hours are Tuesday mornings during term time from 9-9.30 for donations and 9.30-12.30 for clients.

### **Please pray**

1. That our team will ready to serve as soon as the current lockdown allows.
2. For generous donations that continue to meet our clients' needs.

**Contact:** Gill Visser 07565415297

**Email:** [gill.visser7@gmail.com](mailto:gill.visser7@gmail.com)

Day 43 Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March



## Torchlight Ministries

*“Like many other ministries we have been galvanised to increase our operations to meet the needs of those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. We have had to be inventive in terms of delivery and style of outreach.”* Rev Alison Johnson

Prior to lockdown we were serving hot meals in several local hostels. Now the teams prepare take-away food for delivery direct to homes or to reception areas in hostels. At Christmas we were given the go-ahead to prepare (on site) a lunch for the students and staff of a central Croydon pupil referral unit. Forty meals were provided alongside some additional sweet treats. Our Doorstep Blessings initiative has encouraged people to nominate an individual they want to surprise with an unexpected gift. Over 50 of these have been delivered including bouquets of flowers, birthday cards and pressies and food hampers.

In the last two months we have served over 300 hot meals to rough sleepers living in temporary accommodation. Over the last 10 months we have contributed to over 150 dental kits being donated to St Mungo's; delivered over 150 sanitary-ware items for women living in temporary accommodation; provided clothing for children living in DV (domestic violence) refuges; given clothes and toiletries to Croydon Refugee Day Centre and also donated small household items (as part of our Bottom Drawer Initiative) to young people leaving supported living, women entering DV refuges and for students heading off to university. We continue to collect food surplus donations from Aldi, Greggs, Lidl and M&S and these items are then redistributed to those individuals and families in need in our borough.

### **Please pray:**

1. That the mental and emotional wellbeing of those experiencing housing issues will be hedged in and protected by the peace of God.
2. That churches will develop effective ways of working together to have greater impact in their local communities.

**Contact:** Rev Alison Johnson

**Tel:** 07385133408 **Web:** <http://torchlightministries.com>

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/torchlightministries](http://www.facebook.com/torchlightministries)

Day 44 Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April

## Spurgeon's College

*Preparing for ministry, mission and leadership.*

Spurgeon's College is one of the UK's leading theological colleges. Founded in 1856, the College has over 600 students on designated courses (full and part-time) and 80 ministers in training working in Baptist and non-Baptist churches.

The College had invested significantly in its IT infrastructure and digital capacity so when lockdown happened we were able to move all our courses online. We will continue to deliver courses digitally until it is safe for staff and students to return.

The College offers a range of courses suitable for Christians seeking to deepen their understanding of God's word or to be trained to serve in their local setting. "Equipped to Minister" is one of our most popular courses. Again this programme is being run virtually, offering students a great deal of flexibility over their studies. It has been specifically designed to resource and equip lay leaders in their local context. Our counselling courses are also very popular, ranging from a 10-week digital evening class, to the full two-year, one-day-a-week diploma course (currently delivered online).

**Please pray** for our students as they study and serve in their placement churches; our graduates serving God locally, nationally and globally; and our college as it continues in its mission to train men and women for Christian ministry, mission and leadership in the contemporary world.

**Contact: Tel:** 020 8653 0850

**Email:** [enquiries@spurgeons.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@spurgeons.ac.uk)

**Website:** [www.spurgeons.ac.uk](http://www.spurgeons.ac.uk)



Day 45 Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

## Croydon Churches Forum (CCF)

*Going where the energy is.*



Croydon Churches Forum is the “light-touch” unity body for all of the church and Christian organisations within Croydon.

There are over 250 churches in our borough which serve the community in many ways. We run a database for the CCF churches and pass on information by means of a regular newsletter, Facebook posts, the CCF website and at various meetings held throughout the year.

Each year, in the run up to Easter, CCF produces a prayer booklet which acts as a focus for unity and prayer.

CCF is a means by which outside organisations such as Croydon Council can contact and communicate with the wider church.

An appointed group of up to six convenors, selected to represent the broad nature of the various churches, meets regularly to lead and monitor policy and practice.

Currently the Convenors are:

Bishop Paul Hendricks                      Bishop Jonathan Clark

Pastor Damian Luke (Chair)      Rev Dr James Collins

Bishop Paul Reid

### **Please pray:**

1. For good communication and efficient working relationships between CCF-member churches and with our local community.
2. For more churches to appreciate the value of unity.

**Contact:** Judi Lane, Administrator

**Email:** [info@croydonchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@croydonchurch.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.croydonchurch.org.uk](http://www.croydonchurch.org.uk)

**Day 46 Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

## **Leaders' Breakfasts**

*Fellowship and information.*



CCF would usually host three breakfasts for church leaders in Croydon each year, gathering between 40-60 leaders. These events allow ministers to keep up-to-date, share their stories and get to know and encourage one another. Ministers and priests can move jobs more frequently than many members of their churches. The average time spent in a church is around seven years. The breakfasts provide a real opportunity for new clergy to meet other leaders and get involved in church unity as soon as they arrive in the borough.

Occasionally we invite presentations from outside agencies wanting to address the wider church. Last year, because of the pandemic, we were only able to gather once before the lockdown kicked in. We held a virtual breakfast meeting in November where we were joined by Hamida Ali, the new Leader of Croydon Council, who wanted to meet leaders to talk about how the Council and church might work in partnership.

We anticipate that our meetings will remain on-line for the rest of the year.

### **2021 Breakfast dates:**

**Wed 24<sup>th</sup> February**

**Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

**Wed 20<sup>th</sup> October**

Zoom details will be sent out by email to our mailing list.

### **Please pray:**

1. For a deepening of relationships between leaders and across church networks in Croydon.
2. For effective communication and sharing of information.
3. For leaders who have found it difficult to make the transition to on-line services.
4. For God to bless and resource your own church leadership team

**Contact:** Judi Lane, Administrator, Croydon Churches Forum

**Email:** [info@croydonchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@croydonchurch.org.uk)

**Day 47 Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

## **Easter Day**

*"It is finished!" John 19:30*

**If you know this song, please join in:**

Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day  
Christ on the road to Calvary  
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten, then  
nailed to a cross of wood

This, the power of the cross Christ became sin for us  
Took the blame, bore the wrath  
We stand forgiven at the cross

Oh, to see the pain written on Your face  
Bearing the awesome weight of sin  
Every bitter thought, every evil deed  
crowning Your bloodstained brow

Now the daylight flees, now the ground beneath  
Quakes as its Maker bows His head  
Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life  
"Finished!" the victory cry

Oh, to see my name written in the wounds  
For through Your suffering I am free  
Death is crushed to death, life is mine to live  
Won through Your selfless love

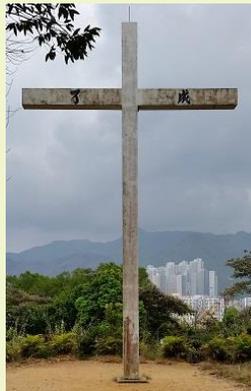
This, the power of the cross. Son of God slain for us  
What a love! What a cost! We stand forgiven at the cross

Songwriters: Lindsey / Caddell / Houghton / Sanchez / Sanchez

**Let's pray:** Father God, thank you!

Thank you for love that took Jesus to the cross for us. Thank you for freedom from all that holds us captive. Thank you for the secure and certain future and hope we have.

May the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, be at work in our lives and our churches today. Amen.



**Thank you for praying.**

**Croydon Churches Forum**

**c/o Purley Baptist Church**

**Banstead Road**

**Purley**

**CR8 3EA**

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