



Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust Newsletter, Spring Term 2023

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"Serving school communities by providing Christian learning and support"

Thank you!



Dear friends - sadly, this will be the last BSCWT newsletter with Gelila Melaku on our staff team. Gelila has been our Project Administrator since September 2019 and is moving on to new adventures (please see her message below). She has done a wonderful job of organising our seasonal projects - liaising between schools, churches and our own team's schedules - to make sure they have been accessible to as many schools

as possible. Literally thousands of pupils have benefitted from these projects and Gelila has worked hard behind the scenes to make this possible. Thank you, Gelila - we wish you well.

We will be looking for a new Project Administrator so, if you're interested in working with us as a part-time paid employee, please contact us for more information. On a similar note, if you think you might be able to help us in a voluntary capacity, we are also looking for more Trustees to help oversee BSCWT (see Mick's article on the back page) and for new Associate Workers to help us with the opportunities we have in schools.

Finally, thank **you** for all your support. I hope you enjoy catching up with us through this newsletter.

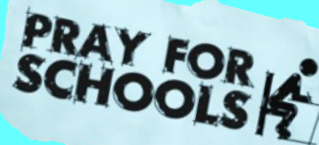
Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work

NINE things we are doing with schools this term.....

- Assemblies in 32 schools
- Weekly lunch time clubs in 5 schools
- One-to-one pupil support in 8 schools
- At least 8 'Sadness to Joy' Easter lessons for Year 2 pupils
- At least 13 'Love Easter' prayer space sessions for Year 6 pupils
- 6 Q&A lessons in a secondary school
- Exam Stress workshops for Year 11 & 13
- 'Caterpillars' support group in a primary school
- 10 'OT/NT Mini' lessons in primary schools

Pray for Schools Fortnight

With GCSE, A-Level and other exams starting in mid-May, Pray for Schools Fortnight provides a timely opportunity for local churches to be praying for our local schools, not least for everyone involved in taking exams. This year, Pray for Schools Fortnight is from **Sunday 7th May to Sunday 21st May.**



Staff news.....farewell to Gelila

The time has come for me to move on. It seems unreal to me, but I suppose there is a season for everything under the sun, in line with King Solomon's thought process (see Ecclesiastes 3)! It is not goodbye but farewell as I plan to remain involved with the Trust at some level.

The past three and a half years have been fulfilling personally. I have learnt a great deal about the work and met amazing people who love the Lord! I worked with the most extraordinary team, who really care for each other and love what they do, always going the extra mile and keeping true to the core values of the Trust. I have learnt a lot from them and treasure the times and laughter we shared!

Friday morning prayer meetings have definitely been the highlight of the week for me. Praying together for the work, with the extended family of the Trust, has been such a privilege and a blessing. I also particularly appreciated the opportunity to practice my IT skills during my time with the Trust, and can say with confidence that it has contributed to a yearning to revisit the IT sector.

I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues, the Trustees, the Associate Workers and other volunteers for all their support, help and prayers over the years. It is my hope and prayer that the work of the Trust will grow according to the will of God! *Where God guides, He provides* (see Isaiah 58:11).

Gelila Melaku, Project Administrator



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Some highlights for this term.....

Questions & Answers

At the time of writing, we have recently completed a series of 6 lessons in a secondary school. We were invited by the Religious Education Department in the school to visit all their Year 11 (GCSE) classes to share our stories of how and why we became Christians and to respond to questions the students might have for us. Six members of our team were involved in these lessons (two for each lesson) and the students were really engaged, asking a wide variety of great questions. Our team received a very warm welcome and the R.E. teachers seemed really pleased with our input.

The R.E. teachers wrote to us: "Thank you to all of your team. Our students have enjoyed your sessions and they have been a great help in their understanding."



Provoking thought: Assemblies in Secondary Schools

We continue to have the wonderful privilege of providing talks for assemblies in several secondary schools. These talks revolve around a theme that is relevant to students' lives as we aim to be thought-provoking and to provide insights into a Christian worldview on various topics.

This term our themes include "Perseverance – how do we respond when life gets tough?", "Wisdom – how wise are your choices?", "Exam Stress" (see below) and (for a church school) "Prayer – what's the point of praying?" At one of our assemblies, we were visited by a school improvement officer who, apparently, really enjoyed the assembly!

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work

Recent feedback from a school staff member:

"We love your assemblies!"

Primary School Assemblies

Our assemblies in primary schools this year, entitled '**God's Second Greatest Rescue Plan!**', follow the story of Moses.

Using the theme of 'stepping up for a challenge', we have already covered Moses' birth and the encounter at the Burning Bush, and this term we are telling the stories of the Plagues and the Exodus. These stories may seem tricky to tell young children, but they involve conflicts on the level of other superheroes that are the common stuff of their entertainment – it is the story of a battle involving a God who intervenes to save his people and prevails over the false gods of the Egyptians.

In these assemblies we are able to paint a picture of a real and powerful God who hears and cares for those who call to Him, who invites us to be part of His rescue mission, and who helps us and goes with us as we face our challenges.

Sue Evans, Schools Worker

Feedback from a school staff member on a recent BSCWT assembly:

"An excellent assembly that was really well received."

Exam Stress Assemblies & Workshops

In November, a secondary school approached us for a talk on exam stress. This led to a request for assemblies this term with Years 11 and 13, plus workshops to follow for students needing further support. We focused on: exams being important, a time that would pass, how they don't define you, learning through the experience, feeling in control rather than out of control, bodily responses to stress and other practical advice. By sharing Bible verses and how prayer can help, it's great to be able to express God's care and interest in stressful lives! We were able to offer techniques for coping with pressure that could hopefully help them throughout life.

It has been an exciting new opportunity to bring a Christian perspective to exam year groups, especially in the form of an assembly. Please pray with us that the assemblies and workshops have provided the peace and perspective to help pupils through the exam season and help equip them for any future times of stress ahead.

Fiona Mason, Administrator & Schools Worker



Our clubs in Schools

This term, we are continuing to run a variety of lunchtime clubs in our local primary and secondary schools. In our three primary schools clubs, we are following various themes which include "Meeting Jesus" (helping pupils to explore the stories of people in the Bible who met Jesus in some way), "Characters of the Old Testament" and (towards the end of term) "Easter". Sessions include icebreakers, Bible stories, games, crafts and prayers. At our secondary school "Wonder Space" club, we are inviting pupils to engage with a variety of reflective activities to help them consider various topics including "life purpose". And at another secondary school, we support a Christian Union providing a safe, relaxed space for students to pray together and discuss the Bible.

.....and Projects with Primary Schools



Love Easter



This Easter, we are running two projects simultaneously for primary school pupils – *Sadness to Joy* for Year 2 and *Love Easter* for year 6. These will run during the last few weeks of this term.

Love Easter provides a reflective space for the children to engage with the Easter story from Palm Sunday to the post-resurrection encounters with Jesus, focusing on the theme of love. This project took place for the first time last year and received many positive comments from schools. It has a similar format to our *Christmas Wonder* project. Pupils move around five different zones involving a variety of activities to help them consider different questions, such as:

- **Who do you follow?**
- **How do you remember?**
- **What are you sorry for?**

The children are also encouraged to ask their own questions about the Easter story. We would like to thank the local churches that are willing to host this project.

Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker

Sadness to Joy

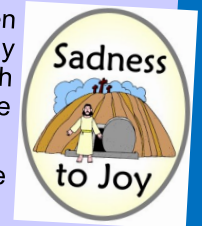


If you read our last newsletter, you may remember that we restarted *Darkness to Light* with Year 2 pupils in local primary schools, which we hadn't done since before the Covid pandemic. Similarly, this term we are also restarting *Sadness to Joy*, which is the Easter equivalent, for the same year group.

This project has many similarities, in terms of presentation, to the Christmas project. We walk the children through the story in a fun and interactive way, guided again by puppets. We explore Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, how he washed the disciples' feet and taught them communion, and then his death and resurrection. We conclude by creating an Easter garden together, which they can keep in their class to encourage further thought and discussion.

We hope and pray that the children engage with this story and its meaning and that they will appreciate this Easter season in a new way.

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker



Thank you!

Thank you to local churches and all our volunteers for helping us to deliver these projects for schools.

Gelila Melaku, Project Administrator



Discussing Christmas gifts



Christmas Wonder

Last term, 15 primary schools took part in our *Christmas Wonder* lessons, enabling 446 junior school pupils to wonder about the events of Jesus' earthly birth. One pupil shared

her excitement and wonder, saying, "I really, really want to be a Christian!"

Feedback from school staff:

"Thank you for a lovely, calm opportunity to think about Christmas and the story behind it."

"Lovely interactive and thought-provoking activities."

"Really helped children to think and reflect on the impact it may have on them today."

Frances Coe,
Schools Worker

Pupils enjoying Christmas Wonder



Darkness to Light



At the end of last term we ran *Darkness to Light* workshop lessons with 16 groups of infants. These lessons take place in schools and are an interactive telling of the Christmas story using Knitivity characters and two puppets - Lucy Light and Frightened Freddy.

Throughout the lesson we focus on themes of darkness and light, and the children are encouraged to look out for dark and light situations in the story. Together we build up a Nativity scene, dress up as shepherds, and follow the star with the wise men. The lesson rounds up with the children offering Freddy helpful thoughts from the lesson to help him feel less afraid.

This lesson is a delight to be part of, and the children relate very well to the puppets. One little girl wisely advised Freddy that: "If he feels sad he should remember that God's love is bigger than any of the mess we can make".

Sue Evans, Schools Worker



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR:

As I write this we are going through a very cold spell with frost and ice around for most of the day. However, as this newsletter indicates, we are looking forward to spring, warmer weather, and new life, as snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils start to flower.

Spiritually we are also looking forward to Easter and to celebrating the new life that Christ has given us all. We are so grateful that the Trust has the opportunity to go into schools and present to pupils the Easter message. As we started the New Year, the staff and Associate Workers have been busy in schools with assemblies, clubs, pupil support and also preparing for our Easter projects, *Sadness to Joy* and also preparing for our Easter projects, *Sadness to Joy* for Key stage 1 and *Love Easter* for Key Stage 2. We thank the staff for their professional and loving input into all these activities, which are much appreciated by local schools.

We are pleased that we have appointed a new Trustee, Nick Higgs. We are also in discussions with others who have shown an interest in becoming a BSCWT Trustee. If you have HR or financial skills and would be interested in using these as a BSCWT Trustee, we would like to hear from you.

Mick Bastable, Chair of Trustees
See www.bscwt.org/vacancies

Thank you to everyone who has used *Amazon Smile* over the last few years to make donations to BSCWT. Sadly *Amazon Smile* has now ended but we plan to consider other alternatives for future fundraising.

How can you be involved?

If you are a Christian with a passion for schools, education, children and young people, and think you might be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us at the BSCWT office. Please join with us to:

GIVE: BSCWT depends on the continued generosity of people who support us financially. If you'd like to support the work financially, please:

- Set up a standing order or a donation via your online banking. Please contact us for a Gift Aid Declaration form, if applicable (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Contact us for a standing order mandate (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Donate online at www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20028156 or send a cheque to our office.
- For on-line banking/standing orders, please contact the BSCWT office for our bank account details.

If you no longer wish to receive communications from BSCWT, please contact us via the office at office@bscwt.org to be removed from our circulations.



In association with

Scripture Union

Finance Update from the Treasurer & Trustees



The Trust continues to be grateful and thankful to all individuals, churches and charitable trusts for their continued generous support of BSCWT working with the young people in schools in the Brentwood area.

To the end of January, regular income was £51,308 and expenditure was £108,128 giving a deficit of £56,820. The deficit is covered by previous legacies and one-off larger donations. We are grateful to the Mulberry Trust for their continued support.

If you are not currently a regular donor and would like more information on how to become one, please do contact me via treasurer@bscwt.org.

Please continue to pray that the current opportunities remain open and also for new opportunities so that every advantage God has given the Trust to communicate with the young people in the local schools can be taken.

Claire Lim, Treasurer



Some of the BSCWT team

PRAY: We believe praying for our local schools, children and young people is really important. Please contact us to:

- Request our weekly prayer email, termly prayer calendar and newsletter by email or post. Contact us at office@bscwt.org or 01277 249275 or visit www.bit.ly/BSCWTconsent
- Start a prayer group for schools in your church or start/join a prayer group for a particular school.
- Just pray — on your own or with others!

VOLUNTEER: There are over 40 people who give their time and energy to volunteer with BSCWT:

- Our **Associate Workers** volunteer with us in schools, working with children and young people.
- Our **Trustees** oversee the running of the Trust.
- Our **Support Teams** assist the Staff and Trustees by doing important tasks in areas such as prayer, finance, human resources, policy-writing, events, monitoring and publicity.
- Our **Church Reps** help us to liaise with our local churches.
- We are also open to applications from people interested in doing an internship or work experience with us.