



SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER



Issue #06

Dear Friends,

As the cost of living crisis continues to bite, we want to say thank you to our supporters for their generosity. Schools, pupils and teachers have never needed support as much as they do now and we are so grateful for you standing with us. There is much important work being carried out by Kt and Nicola and you can read more about our mentoring, Rooted and Prayer Spaces over the next few pages.

We are likewise grateful for your prayers and ask in particular that you keep in yours, our efforts to recruit more workers and Trustees to help meet the ever-growing demand in our local areas. There is information about upcoming prayer gatherings (and supporter brunches!) on page 4.

Finally, we say farewell to the wonderful Lynn Petts who has served so brilliantly as SVST's Treasurer for many years, guiding us all in ensuring faithful stewardship for the organisation's resources. Thank you Lynn!

God Bless,
Janet, Kieran, Kathryn & Nigel (Board of Trustees)

Inside This Issue

Page 2-3

News from Kt – mentoring, prayer spaces, supporting staff and more!

Page 4

An update from Nicola – news about a new Easter workshop

Page 4

Your invite to our supporter brunches and prayer gatherings

NEWS FROM KT

Mentoring

Mentoring is carrying on at a pace and there are substantial waiting lists at both secondary schools. There are some very difficult issues coming up, such as self-harm and young people trying to take their own lives. All support that can be given is, and we always follow procedure of safe guarding within the schools. It is hard and exhausting but vital work. I still see an average of 30 students 1:1 a week. Please continue to pray for the wellbeing and mental health needs of this generation.

I have just begun working with a young person with anxiety issues - we had a great time together, lots of listening and some tears. As part of that conversation, I was able to tell her how much she matters to God and explain to her a little about perfect love casting out fear and being able to take thoughts captive when Jesus is with us. It was a precious time and by no means all sorted but a great example of how by being present we are able to step in and serve even in unplanned circumstances.



Rooted

Rooted, as always has been a successful endeavour, but also as always takes longer than 10 weeks to run, so after 15 sessions this week it came to an end. Next week we wrap up with our Rooted Party. The students have loved it and some of them posed for us below. It's always sad when these things come to an end. I will be in discussion with the Head Teachers as to what provision we can offer next, be that SPACE or some form of prayer club. Please pray for all our Rooted Hubbers that as they continue on their journeys they do so with a new or deeper understanding that they matter, that they have purpose and value and that God thinks they're incredible and is interested in their lives.

Prayer Spaces

Advent prayer spaces went so well. I was really proud of the team. What is the collective noun for an exhausted student chaplaincy team? As always great feedback from kids and staff and a lovely piece of feedback from a parent,

“My son recently helped organise an Advent prayer trail at his school with the help of KT. Her hard work, guidance and gentle leadership enabled the children to create a very special Advent reflection for the other pupils in the school. KT took the time to thank the children for their hard work, but what's different about KT is that she took the time and thought to thank each child involved with a message that was personal to them and their role on the trail. She treats them as individuals, seeing what is special, wonderful and unique about each and every one of them. And that is totally what they need”



We will shortly be agreeing dates for Lent spaces and also have an eye to approaching the secondary schools once we have been to visit some permanent ‘Soul Spaces’ in mainstream secondary schools in Colchester.

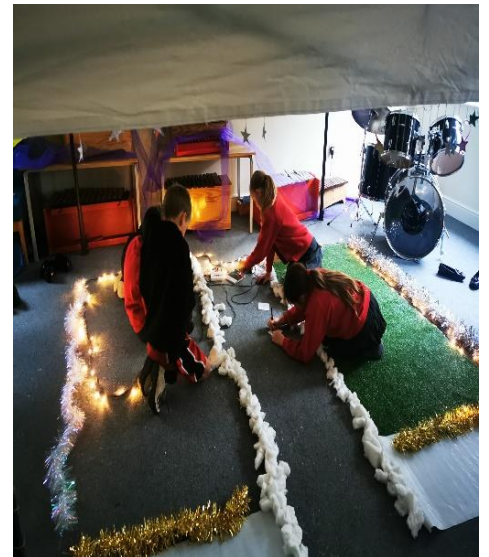


Here to Help You

As a team we have been in touch with SWCHS and Birchwood and extended an offer to help support, chat and encourage students as they exit their GCSE exams, even if this means for a short period rearranging our weeks to facilitate it. We’ve acquired, from the wonderful manager at our local Tesco, one of their large ‘Here to help you’ portable lollypop signs to help make us more visible. So, we shall see what comes from that but it would be an excellent way to demonstrate God’s care, love and interest to that year group before they leave. Please pray for this and for the Y11’s as they complete mocks and look to their final exams.

School Staff

The support of staff continues. I should like to make up some more staff blessing packs, especially as OFSTED looms! If that’s something you’d be willing to gift financially towards please get in touch. We’re always looking at ways to support our wonderful teaching staff, so likewise please forward any ideas onto us. Making sure staff know their value is a vital part of the work we do. The staffroom and hallways seem to be my main wells for conversations, as well as those that stop by the rooms I’m usually in. I had a great interaction recently with a lady who was finding her way back to faith after a series of events and this week came to see me to share how she had felt the peace of God renewed in her and a sense of new freedom, she was grateful for the support and prayers offered and I was able to slip a postcard of encouragement into her coat pocket.



Our Staff Team

Last but far from least NICOLA IS BACK! I cannot tell you how fantastic it is to be a team again, supporting and encouraging one another in all we do, I am so pleased to have her back. As you’d expect from Nic she’s hit the ground running, enthusiastically working for young people and schools as well as juggling her young family. Please pray for Nic, Matt and the children, for blessing over them and opportunities.

Kt Haynes kt.stortvalley@gmail.com

NICOLA'S NEWS

I came back from my second lot of maternity leave at the beginning of November and have been keen to get back into school as soon as possible. Despite my best efforts, the secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford are sadly proving to be extremely closed. Please keep praying for doors to be opened, that God will bring about new relationships with staff who support our work and create new opportunities for us to serve schools, particularly in Stortford.

On a much more positive note, I am really excited to be working on an Easter workshop and prayer space which we are offering to some of the rural primary schools. The day itself will be based on 'Easter Cracked' – the Scripture Union workshop that we have run at Bishop's Stortford and Saffron Walden Baptist Churches for several years. The difference this time is that we are taking it 'on the road' to make it accessible to schools who can't easily travel. So far I have had an extremely positive response and already have one school booked in for Thursday 23rd March, I have approached a few others and hope to have more dates in the diary soon – your prayers for these events are most appreciated.

Nicola Williamson - nicola@svst.org.uk



SUPPORTER BRUNCHES

You're invited to join us at one of our supporter brunches! An opportunity to enjoy great food, meet likeminded people and to hear more about our work in schools. We will also be spending time in prayer.

Friday 10th February - 10am at Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church

Friday 24th February - 10am at Saffron Walden URC

Feel free to just turn up on the day, alternatively, you can let us know that you're coming and/or make us aware of any dietary needs by emailing Nicola – nicola@svst.org.uk



PRAYER GATHERINGS

Our prayer gatherings are back for 2023 and **everyone is welcome!** Join us to hear an update from our workers and learn more about our latest prayer needs, all whilst enjoying a cuppa and delicious biscuits! We would love for more people to join us, whether it be occasionally or regularly so please do consider coming along to one of our next gatherings. Feel free to just turn up on the day, or if you wish, you can let Nicola know that you are coming by emailing her – nicola@svst.org.uk

Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church

Monday 17th April 10am to 11.30am

Monday 26th June 10am to 11.30am

St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

Friday 21st April 10am to 11.30am

Friday 30th June 10am to 11.30am