

Prayer Items

Thank God for the all that CIS has been involved in within schools in Letchworth and district over the past year.

Thank God too for continued positive response from staff and students where CIS are involved.

Please pray for:

All in Year 11, 12 and 13 who are taking exams this term.

Year 6 pupils as they take their SATs (11th-14th May) and as they prepare to move up to Secondary School in September. (Transition Day Thursday 9th July)

Assemblies

Etonbury Academy Year 13 8th May; **St. Mary's C of E Academy, Stotfold** 11th May, 15th and 29th June; **Grange Academy** 20th May, 17th June and 15th July;

Norton St. Nicholas C of E Primary School 8th June; **St. Francis College Prep.** 18th May, 15th June and 6th July; **Roecroft Lower School** 25th June

SPACE Resource at Norton St. Nicholas 20th July; **St. Francis College Prep. Year 6 Leavers Service** 9th July

Speaking Engagements and Future Events

New Life Church 17th May and 7th June;

Grange Afternoon Fellowship 18th June

CIS Quiz Friday 19th June, The Icknield Centre (LGCC)

(To book tickets contact Martin Money - treasureratcis@gmail.com)

CIS Concert Friday 25th September

CIS Annual Celebration 13th October, Grange Baptist Church



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www.cisletchworth.org.uk



“Behold I am doing a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19)

At our recent trustees meeting, Christopher informed us that it is his intention to retire from Schools Ministry at the end of this year. Naturally there was an element of shock and sadness at this announcement but also one of deep gratitude for all that Christopher has given to CIS since joining us in 2009.

Schools work, along with Church Youth Work, is considered by some as a “stepping stone” to roles of greater importance or responsibility. This is not a view I subscribe to. The time that Christopher has given to schools has enabled strong relationships to be built up, with staff and pupils alike. There are children that have first been introduced to Christopher’s assemblies in year 1 and have continued through their school life right through to year 13. When Christopher is seen by pupils within school he is often greeted with a cheery “Hello Mr Baker, are we having an assembly with you today?”; if the assembly Christopher is going to be taking is for a different year group there is genuine disappointment expressed by those pupils.

A Scripture Union statistic is that 95% of our young people and children are not connected to a local church ... but 100% of them do attend school so what a privilege it is to have the opportunity to explore and explain the Christian faith over so many years through the school assemblies and hubs. So much seed sown over many years. How could such a Ministry be considered anything but essential and worthwhile of a lifetime investment.

Likewise, the opportunity provided through chaplaincy to teaching staff has been much appreciated, particularly when a school is experiencing troubling circumstances. The respect that Christopher is held in takes time to be built up.

Someone said to Christopher “it will be difficult for someone to fill your shoes”. His response, “they will not be filling my shoes, they will bring something new.”

Please could I ask you to pray for the trustees as we commence the recruitment process to replace Christopher, and for God to lead us to the right person to take CIS on to the next chapter of ministry.

Ashley Croft. Interim Chair of Trustees

The end of another academic year is fast approaching. With it comes an opportunity for all of us - whether we work in education or not - to step away from the usual pressures of daily life. It's a chance to spend time with family and friends, free from the constant pull of routines and alarm clocks.

While routine can be helpful, stepping away from it gives us space to reflect on what has been and to look ahead. Times of rest and renewal help prepare us for whatever lies ahead.

This term is especially significant for children and young people. Exam season is approaching for Year 11 and 13 pupils, where revision becomes the focus as they prepare for the challenges ahead. Year 10 and 12 pupils will sit mock exams, while Year 6 children take their SATs - an important milestone in their learning journey. Once these are completed, staff and pupils alike will finally be able to pause - and breathe.

On a personal level, this academic year has been both positive and challenging. In recent months, I have experienced the loss of friends, along with the tragic deaths of two Year 13 pupils at a school I regularly work in. The loss of young lives is especially difficult to process.

In these moments, the opportunity to offer pastoral care is a privilege. It is only possible where strong, trusting relationships exist. As Pauline Wade once said, this is about "being Jesus with skin on" - sharing in grief and pain, not offering easy answers, but simply being present.

This theme was reflected during the Easter period, when I spoke on John 11 - the raising of Lazarus. When Jesus hears of His friend's illness, He does not rush to get to Bethany immediately. Instead, He arrives at the point where grief is deepest. He meets people in their pain. He meets people in their suffering. He weeps with them.

But the story does not end there. The voice of the one who spoke Creation into being, who breathed life into the first human beings,



calls Lazarus to come forth and he is called back to life - an extraordinary moment that points forward to what is to come.

Jesus enters Jerusalem knowing the suffering ahead: betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. Yet He does not turn away. Through His death and resurrection, Christians believe that sin

and death are defeated, and that new life is offered to all.

This message has been at the heart of my work in schools over many years. In a society where many have not encountered the Christian message, sharing this hope remains a deep passion of mine. Easter assemblies continue to be a highlight, offering young people the opportunity to explore these ideas for themselves.

As you will have seen from the front page, this will be my final year with Christian Initiative to Schools as I prepare to retire at the end of December. It has been a privilege to serve in this role for nearly 18 years.

My prayer is that these final months will be the most impactful yet.

Thank you for your continued support - both practical and prayerful. It has made all that we have done possible in the schools of Letchworth and the surrounding area.

Christopher Baker - Schools Worker