

## Prayer Time

Let's come together to be still. Our lives are so full of busyness, that sometimes we struggle to be still and pray. At Southside we recognise the importance of prayer, and would like to invite you to our short prayer sessions (at Southside) which will last for around 30 minutes.

There will be no pressure to pray aloud, there will be no expectations. Just to sit and be still.

This will be a very informal and safe space, and we would love to invite you to come and join us. No need to let us know that you are coming, just turn up and we will be there to meet with you.

**April 23rd 7 - 7.30pm**

**April 29th 4 - 4.30pm**

**May 11th 7 - 7.30pm**

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them"

Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

**Suzanne**

Interested in Prayer but would prefer to meet with others to pray online?

Then why not join Southside's online

### **Emmaus Prayer Group**

Meets most Saturday mornings

9:45 am on Zoom

***(Please ask Janet for details)***

## Wednesday Friends

Next meeting:

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**2 - 4pm**

Refreshments

Everyone welcome

**Stay all afternoon or just call in for a 'cuppa' and a chat.**

**See Sylvia for more information**

## Church Spring Cleaning Session

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May**

**10 am - 1 pm**

Come and help give the church a jolly good spring clean

Coffee and tea will be served

Many hands make light work so please come along and help if you can.



## Footsteps

Wednesday Mornings in term time group for pre-school children (mostly up to 3 years)

Mums and Dads are welcome at this group, providing the opportunity to socialise over refreshments whilst the children play

Some Christian input is included within little films and songs

## 'A Night on the Tiles' – Sleeping out in the Nave of Peterborough Cathedral in aid of the Light Project



In January this year I signed up to take part in a charity event in the cathedral to support the Light Project, an organisation which supports homeless and needy people in the city. For those who work or shop in the city centre, homelessness is a visible and pressing problem: shop fronts and porches often become temporary homes for rough sleepers, and passers-by are often approached by needy people asking for money. Like the biblical Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan I admit to at times crossing to the other side of the pavement to avoid the embarrassment of saying 'no' to those in need. Yet there is no excuse why a wealthy economy like ours should not ensure a roof for all, and the presence of rough sleepers on our streets reflects badly on society at large.

Light Project Peterborough is a remarkable project based in the Garden House in the Cathedral grounds. Between October 2024 - September 2025, the Project supported 989 people at the Garden House, helped 576 to move off the streets and into accommodation, and had 495 new people come through their doors. I had a been to the Garden House a few times on a professional basis and was impressed by the level of support and professionalism given to its guests. As a member of Southside Church, I knew about the 'pod' in the carpark in which we housed a homeless person in collaboration with the Light Project. When I saw the request on Facebook for volunteers to sleep out in the Nave for the night to support the Light Project, I didn't think twice and signed up.

Asking for sponsorship was not difficult – I was overwhelmed by people's generosity. Friends, colleagues and, of course, members of the church and circuit gave freely: there was clearly a great deal of goodwill and appreciation for the work of the Light Project. For the first time in my life (and I had raised funds for charity before), I did not feel that the burden of fund-raising was solely mine; God's presence spurred me on, and I was buoyed up by the support of those around me. The result was a total sum of £1,840 (plus 25% gift aid)!

Finally, the night of the 'sleep out' arrived. I had been unwell with a chest infection for several days beforehand so my plans to sleep outside in the cloister were modified to sleeping in the nave of the church. Arriving at the door, I underwent the inevitable bag-check and was told to find a sleeping space. The South aisle of the cathedral had been taken, so I grabbed some cardboard to sleep on and settled under a column on the North side. I remembered the superstitions from my childhood about churches: the south side was associated with light, warmth and goodness whilst the north side was the place of cold, darkness and evil! Absolute nonsense, of course, but it lingered in my mind. The evening started with a concert and singalong with the St Botolph's Ukulele Band – they were brilliant.

After snacks provided by Tesco's we were treated to a quiz and free Easter eggs and the instructed came to settle down to sleep for the night.

Sleeping was not easy. The main obstacle, apart from the discomfort, was coping with the noise. Outside the cathedral, in the square, people were celebrating Eid Al Fitr – the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and fireworks were rampant! In the cathedral the sound reverberated in the vast space, however, the festivities were drowned out by the sound of sleepers snoring in the nave! After a while, the sounds became a gentle lullaby, and I drifted off to sleep. I was woken in the morning by the sinister dark silhouette of what looked like a medieval sentry staring at me in the North aisle. It was true - I had chosen the wrong side of the nave. It was a ghost! However, closer examination revealed that the 'ghost' was in reality a cardboard cutout of 'Old Scarlett' in the gift shop, one of the colourful characters from the cathedral's past. After breakfast I made my way home bleary eyed but having benefited greatly from the experience.

What had I learned? I did get an insight into the discomfort and the cold experienced by rough sleepers as well as the disruption caused by the noise and bustle around them. But the difference was that I had a warm and secure flat to go home to and did not have to worry about being verbally abused while sleeping or attacked by passers-by. I had food at home, an income to rely on and a profession which provided self-esteem and a sense of purpose. Yet I also remembered the words of Jesus when he said 'foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head' (Matthew 8:20). In this sense, when we see a rough sleeper or homeless person, we could in some way be staring into the face of Christ himself. A humbling thought.

So let me thank those who donated towards the Light Project – members of Southside Church and Peterborough Methodist Circuit, and Val who lent me a sleeping bag. But let's not forget those church members who over the years supported and made meals for our guests in the pod. Let's pray that in some way we will be able to continue to support the homeless and need in our city in a practical way.

Just a quote from Matthew 25:35 to finish - 'For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me'. Surely, this reflects the very essence of our Christian faith.

Paul

### **Southside Diary Dates**

#### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June**

#### **Annual Church Meeting**

7pm to 8.30 pm in the Church – including election of officers.

#### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June**

#### **Strawberry Tea – Fundraiser**

#### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

#### **Southside Church Anniversary**

Bring and Share lunch after the Service