

Support for Missions

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Introduction

The Missions Committee has the responsibility of co-ordinating our direct support for the seven Christian missions which St John the Baptist Church supports on a regular basis with a donation of 12½% of the annual planned giving to the Church. This 12½% is divided equally between the seven charities:

- Church Army,
- Church Mission Society,
- Leprosy Mission,
- Corrymeela,
- Embrace the Middle East,
- Bible Society and
- Hopezone.



In addition we regularly support with various events the Alexander Devine Children's Hospice and the Children's Society. The members of the committee try as far as possible to cultivate particular links with someone working for the charity, one example is our link with our Church Mission Society partner who is working in a deprived area of Plymouth.

The committee which meet approximately four times a year also organises various events:

Support for Missions
St. John's supports these mission-focused organisations through planned giving and other fundraising

 Claire Taylor Church Mission Society	 Hazel Berry Missions Group Chair	 Ken Perrett Embrace the Middle East	 Carol Frost Alexander Devine Hospice
 Julie Richardson Bible Society			 Jenny McKeever Crowthorne Hopezone
 Gini Cope Church Army	 Diana Gray Corrymeela Community	 Tracy Perrett The Children's Society	 Wendy Allerton The Leprosy Mission

- A **'Lent Lunch'**, consisting of simple food provided by members of the committee and all donations going either to a project supported by our seven missions or an area of the world in particular need; in 2017 it was the famine caused by the war in Yemen.
- A **Christmas Giving Tree** where members of the congregation write messages and give a donation. For several years this has gone to our Church Army link on the Eltham and Kidbrooke estates in one of the most deprived areas of the UK to provide treats for some of the children.
- On **Christ the King Sunday** we have a visiting preacher with light refreshments, provided by the committee after the service and a retiring collection which is donated to that preacher's charity.
- We have **preachers from all the missions** we support on a rolling programme of two years. Our representatives of the Missions write regular articles for St John's News and we have a display set up in the hall, dedicated to one of the Missions on a regular basis.

Alexander Devine Hospice

Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service (Berkshire's very own local children's hospice service) was founded in 2007 with the aim of providing a dedicated children's hospice service for all children with life limiting and life threatening illnesses in Berkshire and beyond.

Families told them that they found it difficult to find the right support at the right time and they understood that it is the whole family who need to be looked after. Their aim is to provide co-ordinated support, which is available from the point of diagnosis for as long as the families want.

The hospice opened its Day Care facilities and welcomed the first families in 2018. In-patient and respite care services are planned for later this year.

Alexander remains the inspiration behind the charity, from its inception to today

They fund Alexander's Nurses who support families across Berkshire in their own homes, providing much needed respite, palliative care, emotional and practical support. They have built Berkshire's very own children's hospice for these local families which will be supported by a home care team.

Their ethos is that the child is central to everything that they do. They work in partnership with families and local hospitals so that they can provide 'joined-up' support that really benefits each family. They always listen and learn so that they can deliver a flexible service which meets changing needs.

The charity was founded by parents who wholly understand what these families are experiencing. They feel privileged to be supporting these exceptional children and their families – please join them as they work to make difficult journeys just that little bit easier.

Who was Alexander Devine?

This is just a story of an ordinary family who were blessed with an extraordinary little boy.

The journey that was to change their lives began in November 2001 when their precious first child was diagnosed with a brain tumour at just

four years of age, there is nothing in this world that can prepare you for such a trauma, and life is never the same again.

Alexander was a very bright and funny child; he loved life and his family very much and had wisdom far beyond his years. He was to call upon all his great qualities in the years to follow.

Once given a diagnosis like this, about their child, the grieving process started immediately, their whole world was consumed by hospital appointments, doctors, nurses, operations, treatments, scans, stays in hospitals, etc. They were on an emotional roller coaster that they had no control over and could not get off.

Their son endured four and half years of operations, treatments and therapy and sadly died at the age of eight.

It is through their experience and many months of research and speaking with as many relevant professionals and authorities in this very specialised area of care that they knew, there was no doubt, Berkshire needed its own Children's Hospice, and so they began the next chapter in the journey and the undertaking of realising Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service.

The word hospice is not a word that many relate to with happy thoughts, and Alexander's parents much prefer the Latin 'a resting place on life's journey' but it is a word recognised by all. They know from their experience that you cannot go into a children's hospice and not be filled instantly with love, laughter, happiness and tears. There is a huge amount of living that will fill a special home, like this. That is what the charity is all about, providing a safe place for all, a place to be yourself and have a safe pair of loving arms around you, as much or a little as you need them.

On this remarkable journey Alexander's family have been privileged and honoured to meet many amazing children and their families, supporters, volunteers, groups and benefactors, from all different walks of life, this has been the legacy their son has left them and they in turn know that their commitment is lifelong.

Our Vision:

- A much-needed children's hospice for the very special children of Berkshire and surrounding counties.
- A service that will give children and their families a choice of care and support from dedicated staff.
- A place of safety and security in a calm and loving environment, where no judgements would ever be made.
- A place where life is for living, for however long or short that maybe and respected in its frailest form.
- A place quite simply 'to be', where people really do understand.

Our Core Values:

Determined

And resolute in our service to all those that need us.

Empowering

To enable whoever comes into contact with us, the power and courage to make decisions, ask questions or simply to be..

Valuing others

We value you and each other, because we are all unique and special in our own way.

Integrity

To be consistent in our ethos and values, principles and actions. To always behave and hold the integrity of our charity as core.

Nurture

To provide an environment of protection, support, growth and encouragement.

Empathy

To know that we will provide a place of safety for everyone to express their feelings, thoughts and emotions, without judgement.

Bible Society

For over 200 years the Bible Society has been working to bring the bible to life, to help people engage with it, relate to it and make sense of it. This is done through translation projects with distribution networks. Leadership training and closer to hometown advocacy in schools outreach and devotional resources. This includes providing Dyslexic – friendly Bible resources.

We live in a world where too many people don't engage with the bible. In some parts of the world, the scriptures are difficult to access or simply unavailable. In this country, the bible is readily available but has lost its significance and its value is unrecognised by millions.

The Bible Society is working to change this. They take the bible and translate and distribute it, create digital formats, advocate for its place in society and help people relate to make sense of it in their everyday lives. They believe that people who engage with the bible change for good.

The Bible Society is a registered charity that is led by a broad of trustees and leadership team. Her Majesty the Queen is the Patron. After 6 years Paul Williams has now stepped down from the role of President and this role has been recently taken on by His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox church in the UK.

How can you get involved?

- Look at the Bible Society website. You will find a host of resources on the Bible. There is a shop where you can get bible study guides or with Christmas in mind nativity booklets, short films and festive gifts. Sign up for a regular e-newsletter of what is happening around the world.
- The way we read today is changing with the development of technology from scrolls to scrolling. Lyfe is a resource to help understand the bible and has a free app to help you daily connect with God on the go.
- You may also support them and their world-wide spread of the bible through prayer or by sponsoring.
- Sign up on their website and
- There is a bible book club you may join and study aids.

Church Army

History

The Church Army was set up in 1882 by a young curate called Wilson Carlile to equip and empower ordinary men and women to reach out to the poor with Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today

Today the Church Army is a mission-focused community of people who are transforming lives and communities through the work of evangelists, staff and supporters. The Church Army is committed to sharing the Christian faith through words and action in a variety of projects across the United Kingdom and Ireland. At present the Church Army has 17 centres of mission with 5 more planned for the future. Our church has a direct connection with Captain Nick Russell, working on the Kidbrooke and surrounding housing estates in Greenwich.

The Church Army work beyond church buildings among some of the most broken, rejected and hurting people in society. They build new forms of Christian community to reach people who have little or no experience of church.

Transforming lives in challenging situations is long-term work and requires a special commitment and focus. Some of the areas of work include homelessness, helping women involved in prostitution, inner city housing estates, self-harm prevention, night time ministry, drug and alcohol addiction, family breakdown prevention, night-time street ministry and working in prisons and youth offending centres. The Church Army works with children, young people, vulnerable adults and older people in a variety of settings taking evangelism to those in need in their communities.

If you would like more information please contact St John's representative, Gini Cope on 079766876140

Church Mission Society

Church Mission Society began more than 200 years ago with a group of Christians whose hearts were stirred to put their call into action.

The Society was founded in Aldersgate Street in the City of London on 12 April 1799. Most of the founders were members of the Clapham Sect, a group of activist evangelical Christians. They included Henry Thornton MP and William Wilberforce MP. The founders of CMS were committed to three great enterprises: abolition of the slave trade, social reform at home and world evangelisation.

What do we want to see? Our vision

CMS vision is to see all God's people engaged in God's mission, bringing challenge, change, hope and freedom to the world.

As we join in God's mission, through Jesus, and in the power of the Spirit we see that:

- the love of Christ renews people and places
- pioneering leaders forge new paths of transformation
- people on the margins flourish
- the healing of creation begins

What are CMS values?

We are people who are:

- Pioneering: we try new things, ask questions, cross boundaries
- Evangelistic: we share Jesus in word and action
- Relational: we get alongside people, becoming a genuine part of the communities where we find ourselves
- Faithful: where others have left or given up, we remain committed for the long-haul

Currently, there are Church Mission Society people in 40 countries across Africa, Asia, South America, the Middle East, Europe and the UK. Some have been sent from Britain and Europe, some have been sent by their local church in partnership with us, some through our sister societies CMS-Africa and Asia CMS

St John's Church Mission Partner, Ruth Sayers, has been serving with Church Mission Society for over 10 years. Her first placement was in



Egypt working in the Diocese of Egypt and the Horn of Africa. This was followed by two years in Bethlehem and then Jordan, again working with the Diocese.

After nearly nine years in the Middle East, she was offered the privilege of working in the UK and is linked to a local church

community to be a presence in an area of deprivation and disadvantage. The move was a steep learning curve, seeing lives that are devastated by unemployment and a sense of feeling forgotten. What is the gospel for these people? The churches in the area are small, there's a shortage of clergy and churches aren't by and large seen as having a significant role in the community. It has to start with a presence.

Ruth is a member of the support team St Aubyn's work club and is there every week. The club helps unemployed people with their CVs, job searches and general employment advice. The team members also help jobseekers get access to training, and things like maths and English support.



For Ruth, it's a far cry from her previous nine years of mission in the Middle East and North Africa. But she believes her experience gained overseas was part of God's plan to prepare her for Plymouth – which she describes as her hardest mission field so far.

A lot of government money is being invested in Devonport (and Plymouth as a whole) but so far it hasn't really benefited local people. New housing is being developed but local people cannot afford to buy – many of them are workers who lost their jobs when Devonport dockyard scaled back.

Find out more about Ruth's work and other news from the Church Mission Society, visit: <https://www.churchmissionsociety.org/people-in-mission/ruth-sayers>

Embrace the Middle East

History

In 1854 the Turkish Missions Aid Society was established to support missionary work among Armenian Christians in Turkey. In 1893, it became the Bible Lands Missions Aid Society. This was shortened to Biblelands in 1996. Many of us will know of the Christmas Carol Sheets which they still publish and distribute free of charge. In 2012, the organisation changed its name to Embrace the Middle East, with a new vision and strategic plan to transform even more lives in the Middle East.

Today

[Embrace the Middle East](#) is a Christian charity with over 160 years' experience helping people of all faiths and none to free themselves from a life of poverty and injustice.

Together with local Christian communities they bring lasting change to the Middle East through healthcare, education and community development projects.

So what exactly does The Children's Society do?

The Vision:

Lives and communities in the Middle East transformed by the compassion of Christ.

The Mission:

To partner with Middle East Christians as they bring healing and hope to all who face poverty and injustice.

The Strategy:

The strategy is called "[Faith in Action](#)". It outlines how Embrace the Middle East works to build stronger relationships with their Christian partners, expand into new countries, help more disadvantaged people, challenge poverty and injustice and inspire churches, volunteers and supporters to:

Transform the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people across the Middle East, enabling them to live life in all its fullness

Strengthen and encourage Middle East Christians as they bring about positive change in their communities

Challenge injustice, poverty and exclusion in the Middle East through targeted advocacy and campaigning.

How can you help?

If you would like to know more about Embrace the Middle East then please:

- Check out their website www.embraceme.org
- Have a look at the Embrace ME newsletter on the bookcase in the Church vestibule
- Shop with Embrace - they have some wonderful seasonal gifts and cards, foods and craft items made in the Middle East, as well as alternative gifts
- Give to the crisis appeals. Such as the one we are supporting at Church for Gaza this Christmas
- Get a copy of the Embrace prayer diary and pray each week for the Middle East
- Speak to St John's representative for Embrace, Ken Perrett.

Hopezone

What is Hope Zone?

Hope Zone was set up as an after-school safe place for children of secondary school age. The Drop-In centre opened on Wednesday 9th September 2009 under the auspices of Churches Together in Crowthorne. Hope Zone subsequently became a Charity in its own right and St John the Baptist Church is one of the foundation trustees of this charity. Louise Truscott was appointed as Youth worker to oversee the running of the centre and liaise with the schools.

The Drop-In Centre is held in the Baptist Church foyer and Church in Crowthorne High Street and caters for any secondary school pupils who wish to call in.

Zone Six was set up in 2013 for year 6 pupils from all the primary schools to aid them in the transition from primary to secondary school, enabling children to meet and make friends with children from other schools in their catchment area.

Both drop-in centres are staffed by at least two adults, volunteers from all the Crowthorne churches, who are checked for work with minors. More volunteers are always needed especially male role models!

What goes on?

Hall and foyer are converted into a games area for young people with four stations providing computer games for up to four players each. There is also a tuck shop, table football, table tennis, board games and lounging cushions with additional activities laid on for special occasions – pancake making, Easter egg hunts etc.

The Centres are open from 3.30 – 5.00p.m. on a Monday for Zone Six and from 3 to 6pm on Wednesdays for the Secondary school pupils during term time. Children attending Zone Six need to be registered by their parents/guardians who also arrange for them to be collected or give permission for them to walk home at the end of each session. Hope Zone is purely a drop-in centre. Attendance is usually between 20 and 45 children. Lots of noise, lots of laughs and much tuck!

The Children's Society

History

The Children's Society was established in 1881 when a young Sunday school teacher Edward Rudolf, found two of his pupils begging for food on the streets. In those days, the children faced going into a large institutionalised children's home. But Rudolf didn't want that for them.

By 1919, with support from parishes and individuals across the country, Edward Rudolf had set up 113 caring children's homes throughout England and Wales. The partnership with the Church of England helped these to be radical in their day as they provided accommodation for just a handful of children, ensuring a family-centred upbringing.

Today

In recent times the work of The Children's Society has kept pace with the changing needs of children. Today it focuses on working in communities, with projects and centres around the country. The Children's Society helps children of all faiths and none, their work being based on the Christian values of love, justice and forgiveness.

So what exactly does The Children's Society do?

They fight child poverty on several fronts:

- By nurturing children in their early years through children's centres and other services.
- By strengthening families through providing advice, information and family support.
- By providing a lifeline for destitute families, including the very basics for survival.
- By running a major campaign to expose the damage that debt causes to children's lives.
- By supporting families out of the debt trap by providing practical debt advice in their children's centres.
- By supporting young people on The Children's Commission on Poverty.
- By forging major alliances with many other groups, to increase their influence and expertise to bring about even greater change.

- By lobbying local and national decision-makers around poverty, destitution and welfare reform.
- They tackle neglect and support victims directly:
- By helping hundreds of thousands of young carers have a proper childhood.
- By providing support for young runaways and victims of sexual exploitation.
- By supporting and speaking out for unaccompanied asylum-seekers and victims of trafficking.
- By supporting families to support teenagers at risk of harm.
- By providing immediate help to tackle parental and teenage substance misuse.
- By providing life-changing therapy and counselling for teenagers and young adults struggling with mental and emotional health issues.

How can you help?

Unlike those that receive a fixed share of the church's annual income, money is raised for The Children's Society here at St John's in several ways:

- through the annual Christingle Service
- sale of Christmas Cards
- house collection boxes
- community boxes
- ad-hoc fundraising activities

If you would like to support The Children's Society then please do speak to St John's representative, Tracy Perrett.

The Corrymeela Community

History

Ray Davey was the founder and first community leader of Corrymeela. During World War II he joined the YMCA to provide spiritual and physical support for troops. Ray was captured and incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp in Dresden and there bore witness to the bombing of that city.

This experience profoundly changed him. The bombing of Dresden affected Ray deeply, underscoring the futility and destructiveness of all conflict. While a prisoner, Ray thought about building community amidst conflict.

After the war, he was appointed the first Presbyterian Dean of Residence at Queen's University. Ray and his students, became concerned at the sectarian tensions that were brewing in Northern Ireland during the 60s and wished to establish a place of gathering, an "open village where all people of good will" could come together and learn to live in community.

Corrymeela is Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation organisation. We began before "The Troubles" and continue on in Northern Ireland's changing post-conflict society. The organisation grew organically from the original Community members.

Today

The centre at Ballycastle is in Northern Ireland and is in an idyllic position on the North Antrim coast. There are options to visit the centre for a day to engage in activities or spend time on a residential course.

Almost 40 full-time staff and dozens of volunteers work alongside the eleven thousand people who spend time in our residential centre every year.

Ballycastle staff have fifty years of experience working alongside fractured communities, groups who are finding their relationships difficult, addressing relational, societal, structural and power dynamics.

Many of our volunteers have been working on the site for decades, generously giving time and service to the work. The Community of

Corrymeela has grown too, with 150 members, 50 associate members and thousands of friends around the globe. Together they make commitments to be engaged with the world at its points of fracture, faith and potential.

What do they do:

Corrymeela offer a series of programmes

- Family - supporting families through difficulty, change and transition
- Community - support communities restore belief in a connected society
- Youth programmes - bespoke using art, drama & discussion to help teens
- Schools - a vital element where children from separate traditions meet
- Faith & Life - runs and organise regular retreats to refresh & renew
- International Ed - Universities learn from their theories on conflict resolution

Within these programmes the staff at Corrymeela work alongside people from youth and school groups, family and community organisations, faith communities and political parties.

They run group sessions, use experiential play, art, dialogue, work, meal times and shared community to help groups to embrace difference and learn how to have difficult conversations.

They work alongside visiting university groups as well as groups from other parts of the world who wish to learn from their valuable experience and learn how to apply the Corrymeela lens to the other aspects of fracture in our societies and world.

The residential centre in Ballycastle hosts over 11,000 people a year and our programme staff also travel to work with school and community groups off site.

As unfortunately communities are still educated separately a great deal of work still needs to be done to avoid tensions in Northern Irish society.

How can you help?

Sophie Rance, has volunteered at Corrymeela and we are very grateful for her insight into Corrymeela from that perspective. If anyone would like to consider volunteering on this valuable project in a beautiful location please contact David Rance or Diana Gray to discuss.

If you are considering working with children or young people this could be a useful way of gaining some experience prior to college or university entrance.

Corrymeela receives a fixed share of the church's annual income for which they are very grateful.

However, if you would like to provide additional support to Corrymeela by giving a separate donation then please do speak to St John's representative, Diana Gray.

The Leprosy Mission

The Leprosy Mission is an international Christian development organisation that diagnoses, treats and offers specialist care, including reconstructive surgery, to leprosy patients. The aim is to transform and empower the lives of people affected by leprosy.

Leprosy is a disease of poverty and as well as providing healthcare, the Mission offers rehabilitation, education, vocational training, small business loans, housing and fresh water supplies and sanitation to tens of thousands of people each year providing a springboard to restored health, self-sufficiency and renewed hope. Their services are provided regardless of religion or ethnicity, promoting equality and social justice.

Stigma

Widely believed to be the world's oldest disease, leprosy is also one of the world's most stigmatised. A specialist approach is required to educate, encourage and empower people to stand up for their human rights. Age-old stigma surrounding leprosy sees entire families robbed of their job opportunities, education, marriage prospects and their dreams shattered.

Fear and misunderstandings surrounding leprosy, such as the disease being a curse for some alleged misdeed, are widespread. In turn they fuel a vicious circle that begins with those affected hiding the first suspect skin patches in order to avoid being shunned by their families and becoming a social outcast.

Some facts and figures:

- In 2017, 279 children in Mozambique attended school for the first time, 153 Village Saving Groups were set up and communities are now saving together and 1,220 people were practising self-care.
- People with leprosy-related disabilities are being equipped with high-quality prostheses and disability aids, to help them through physiotherapy.

- In 2017, 35,000 people in churches, temples, monasteries and mosques received leprosy awareness training in Sri Lanka.
- Leprosy is curable with multidrug therapy (MDT), which was developed in the early 1980s.
- The most recent World Health Organisation (WHO) figures state that in 2017 there were 210,671 new cases of leprosy diagnosed. That is approximately one every two minutes. Around 60 per cent were found in India.
- Leprosy is commonly diagnosed in a person's 20s or 30s. Six to eight per cent of new diagnoses, however, are in children aged 15 and under.
- **489** patients received reconstructive surgery across Nepal and **2,697** assistive devices were provided for people with disabilities, in 2017.

With the continued support of St John's Missions giving, we can really make a difference to the lives of people affected by this disease.