

# Good News

Reaching into communities, sharing good news and making a difference

## FROM RAGS TO ETERNITY ONE MAN'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

By Martin Gribby

I started life in a place you've probably heard of. It begins with a "B". No, not Bethlehem... Bulwell. When I came into the world, there was Mum, Dad, my older brother, and myself. We lived in an end-terrace, 3-storey, 3-bedroom house, that had an outside toilet, tin bath and wall-to-wall lino flooring.

My father was an ex Royal Marine bandsman, who was an extremely hard working man, providing for our family. He usually worked most Christmases in order to do so. My mother, a regular church

attende, was our backbone. She kept the house and the home together. She'd take us down to the local baptist church, where we'd play football for the Boys Brigade, sing hymns, and recite the Lord's Prayer.

Football was really important to me, and regardless of whether I was the top footballer in the team, I'd not be allowed to play unless I attended church regularly. If I could sum up my experience at that time in one word, it would be discipline.

I found out a lot about God in the form of discipline at that time. However, in the home, I was constantly surrounded by

laughter and music. Later on, when two sisters came along, I discovered the meaning of younger sibling protectiveness! It is safe to say that I came from humble beginnings.

We were blessed, not with material possessions, but with things that truly mattered - safety, love, and food on the table. Mother used to quote a verse right out of the Bible (Psalm 46:10) that said "Be still, and know that I am God". What a security to live under!

I remember walking to school in my favourite shoes (my brothers hand-me-downs), complete with cardboard linings to cover the holes. One thing I remember well is the day that my mother finally realised the difference between leasehold and freehold. That was the day we were evicted from our house without notice, given a compulsory purchase order, and £52 in our pockets. Those were the days!

Christmas time can hold mixed feelings for many. It can be a time of warmth for some, and a time of hurt for others. I never take for granted that I was blessed with the former. But either way, Christmas can be a time to break down barriers, bring people together, make memories, and wish for presents you'd never normally get. My parents had the heart to give me everything, but the resources weren't there. I am still waiting for my Johnny 7 OMA and Raleigh Chopper bike to this day! It always baffled me why I never received the Chopper as they were made just round the corner from me! However, as the saying goes:

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#### IT'S CHRISTMAS!



#### MONEY, MONEY, MONEY Budgeting Tips for Christmas



#### TRUE FAITH?



'The Lord is Good, a refuge in times of trouble, He cares for those who trust in Him' - NAHUM 1:7 #12promises

'nothing in life is free', right?

"Mum, one day I'll be a businessman like Uncle John!"

The day my parents sat me down to talk about my career after school was the day I made this bold statement. I had the choice of working at Sankey's Brickyard, down the pit, or joining the army, but I chose to be a businessman. I could almost see the laughter on my Dad's face as I said this. My Mum saw the fruit of this dream four months before she passed away. But I did it. The journey wasn't as straightforward as I'd expected. I started small with a Pick'N'Mix market stall at 10, but the end result was good.

I believe everything happens for a reason. I believe I had to see the 'world of work' before I could go into business. This taught me to keep going and not give up, even in the midst of hard work and adversity.

My first real job was an apprentice hairdresser in Nottingham City Centre, with a take-home pay of £3.75, increasing to £4.75 after passing my probation period. I swept floors, cleaned toilets and mashed tea. I climbed the ladder of life, going through many jobs in retail, management, and becoming a house owner, a husband and a father, until I finally set up my own business whilst holding down a full-time job at the age of 27. I took the plunge and the leap of faith.

Success came with a gallop, and all the trappings that come with it. Nice cars, big house, expensive clothes and money in the bank. I had worked hard, like my Dad, in order to achieve things I'd always dreamed of. I could have whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted, however I wanted. The things I'd dream

of as a kid, I bought. The food I never knew existed, I tried. I'd made it! Yet something was missing... I had it all, yet I had nothing. Then came the problems...my relationships fell apart, my parents health failed, and I knew I'd gotten lost somewhere along the way. The things I had been taught that 'mattered' were now replaced with the things that didn't. They were too big in my life.

One day, I went to see my youngest daughter be baptised at her local church, now called Arena Church. I pulled up in my Porsche 4x4, with my most expensive suit on, and wads of cash in my back pocket, and my aim was to look like I had it all together. There I met the leader of the church, Eric. He had heard about me through the grapevine, yet he had the boldness to put his hands on my chest and say "Martin, it is in here that matters. Nothing else". He could see past my bravado and saw right to where I was really at. After a brief time of questions and answers, I received the best gift that anyone can receive - salvation.

This is the thing, I was bought up a 'believer' (not a 'Belieber' for you Justin fans!) in my childhood, but I never really knew God. I knew about him, but never knew him. He was always a distant 'moral figure' in my life that I'd inherited from my mother. That day, I entered a relationship with a God who loves me, and I let go of the surface level knowledge about Him that I'd relied on. It was an amazing feeling that felt like a blanket had been put over my head, surrounding me with love and warmth.

You know the greatest thing I couldn't get my head around was that I'd been in business for



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years and I knew 'nothing in life is free', because I'd been paying the 6-figure invoices, bills, and wages. But what I received that day cost me absolutely nothing - not a penny. I'm still waiting for the invoice today! I've been given something for nothing. And that something is everything! Though it cost me nothing, it cost God everything, and he'd do it all over again if He had to. And that gift He is wanting to give to you too.

The rest is history. I've been given the second best gift after salvation, and that is a godly wife. I'm now in a position of being able to give away my life, not scramble to get. The Bible verse I try to live by is this - Proverbs 3:27 "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act". I've got purpose and real wealth, not just material wealth. I am currently living in the best period of my life so far!

The best Christmas present you can receive is one you don't have to wrap up, purchase, or scramble around for. It is completely free - eternity in Jesus!

This is my story - keep your eyes on the prize! While you are

resting, enjoying family time, or even the opposite, I want you to know this right out of the Bible. Deuteronomy 31:8 - "God is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you. Don't be intimidated. Don't worry."

Happy Christmas and a wonderful new year to you all!

*Martin & Sharon Gribby (Believers...not Beliebers) are proud members of Arena Church and would like to invite you to visit us during the Christmas season to any or all of the events we have planned.*

You can find full details on page 5.

**'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint' - ISAIAH 40:31 #12promises**

Founded in 1929, Arena Church Ilkeston has been pioneered and guided by many faithful leaders.

We plant and repurpose new churches both locally and further afield. Hundreds of people serve on our Dream Teams, impacting and serving thousands of people every month throughout local communities. We have outstanding connections with local charities, business owners, Government leaders, MPs and the Police. Everybody is somebody at Arena Church, and all are welcome to connect through our Small Groups, where strong relationships are formed and discipleship is nurtured. Come and see how exciting and vibrant church can be when the focus is clear and people are free to seek God with passion.

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to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. (10) But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. (11) Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.(12) This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Good news and great joy!

This good news will cause great joy for ALL PEOPLE!

The Saviour Jesus has come into the world. Why is this good news?

1. Jesus came for all people, this includes YOU. Remember baby Jesus met with the wealthy and educated (the Wise Men) and also the lowly (Shepherds) and everyone in-between.
2. Jesus is the ONLY ONE who can save the world. Only through him can we find the Way, Truth and Life. Only through Jesus.
3. Those who accept this free gift of forgiveness of

sins through Jesus will find unending peace, joy, freedom and love.

This good news will cause great joy 2000 years later. The coming of Jesus into the world has not lost any of its relevance or power. Christmas has become a season for singing, parties, holidays, presents, tinsel and trees BUT let's not lose the POWERFUL AND TRUE message of Christmas:- "That God in his grace offers to ALL, Good News that will cause great joy for all people through the coming of his Son Jesus."

Our prayer at Arena Church is that you and your family will experience the peace and love of God through Jesus that is unrivalled and has no equal.

We welcome you to any and all of our Christmas services.

Come and see for yourself - YOU ARE WELCOME!

Kristian and Caroline

## GOOD NEWS

By Kristian Thorpe

Christmas Greetings!

This newspaper is called Good News and for good reason! In a world of bad news, we wanted to produce a local publication with uplifting, encouraging and inspiring stories predominantly from local people - Good news!

Interestingly this phrase "Good news" is used in the Christmas story when the angels announced to a lowly group of shepherds that Jesus is about to be born. Luke 2 reads:

"(8) And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. (9) An angel of the Lord appeared

## **A** ARENACOMMUNITY

2018 Meals - 4735

2019 Meals - 5194

2018 Food Parcels - 1594

2019 Food Parcels - 1527

2018 Referrals - 13

2019 Referrals - 481

2018 New Clients - 66

2019 New Clients - 67

In the last 12 months we have given out 5194 hot meals and 1,527 food parcels, and usage of the foodbank shows no sign of slowing down.

Referrals to our service have increased, as have the number of parcels given to people who are homeless.



## GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR

By Pastor Phil Pye

'For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. That though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor. So that through His poverty you might become rich'

The above statement is found in the New Testament of the Bible, it drives to the very heart of what we know as 'The Christmas Story' (Nativity), and really is a message of hope and fulfilment for everyone.

That story is often skewed in a modern day by materialism, secularism and indulgence. Yet reminding us of the central message and mission of God's love in Jesus, becoming poor, to attack every expression of poverty, so we might be truly rich, is the great passion of this publication.

Of course, there are a whole gamut of issues that reflect poverty, let us consider a few in turn:

**Material** - As far back as the 1960's the then American President Lyndon B Johnson proposed legislation that declared 'a war on poverty'. Whilst great strides have been made through faith organisations such as World Vision and Compassion. Humanitarian charities such as the Red Cross and Save the Children, and wealthy altruistic entrepreneurs such as a Bill Gates, with his Foundation, there is still much to do!

Recent well researched figures confirm that over 730 million people still live on less than two dollars a day. Over 780 million have no access to safe water and decent sanitary conditions. Bringing it closer to home, again a recent report on Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI), revealed Nottingham to be one of the lowest in the country. At one fifth of the affluent London borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Over a decade ago Arena Church could not ignore the discomfiture of the material

challenges on the doorstep of its context as the first throws of austerity began to bite. Responding to this in a proactive way has seen a Community Project continue to grow until this day, with many helped. In a perfect world, we wish it was not so.

**Educational** - There are still too many kids in the world with no appropriate access to education. Let's not taken for granted what we have in the UK, and encourage every child to get the best life start possible from a good stable educational platform. Remember the inspirational teenager Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by The Taliban for standing up for the rights of young woman in her own nation to an education. In an address to the United Nations, she was quoted as saying 'One child, one teacher, one pen, one book, can change the world!'

**Moral** - The choice to do right or wrong. A poverty of consideration to others still means far too many men and woman being trafficked for exploitative purposes. A poverty of respect for human life has, for example, seen knife crime steeple in recent years. We could go on, but there is no doubt poor choices and decisions have the potential for destructive consequence to others

**Relational** - Courtesy of social media, people claim to have many 'friends'. But is this so? The poverty of true relationships seems to have an increasingly corrosive effect on family, society and community. Age UK estimate over half a million people in our nation over sixty-five years of age will be lonely at Christmas.

As you can see there are many layers to this challenge of poverty, and we cannot address them all now. Perhaps we are all more poor than we would care to admit. Because what we all must face up to is our SPIRITUAL poverty. This is where the statement I began with drives a deep challenge to the causes and consequences of poverty in everyone. God knew we were powerless to



effect appropriate changes in our own effort, we needed help- The writer of the Psalms said 'This poor man called and The Lord answered him'- It is not without significance that at His miraculous birth into this world, what is known as The Incarnation, Jesus identified with poverty, born in a stable, his earthly parents two very ordinary young people. Jesus' common touch never left Him. In His early ministry ordinary people flocked to see him and 'hung on to His Words'.

So as we have sought to address in a small way the impact of poverty. What is true wealth? Remember Jesus came to poverty so that we might be rich. Well sadly some of interpreted this as simply material, roll out your next prayer for the car or house of your dreams. As we have observed material poverty serves no favours, and God promises to take care of 'all these other things'. But the wealth alluded to here is far greater than passing transient possessions, indeed it lasts forever.

In another part of the Bible this wealth is described as 'every spiritual blessing' - Forgiveness from the mess of our past. Adoption into the family of God with all its rights and privileges. Knowing the price has been paid by the only one who could have paid it. Finding our true purpose and identity for life on earth. This indeed is true wealth, and those who have experienced it never want to return to the poverty of worthless and fruitless earthly

accumulation.

The result of all this is a 'dagger to the heart' of true richness. It inevitably begins to shape us in our attitudes to others, be that in our local community or needy contexts across the face of the planet. We are challenged to be generous and just. Moved to be sacrificial and inconvenienced.

Motivated to be more respectful of others, fair and practical in our help and assistance.

For some the call to 'live rich' has brought great consequences, living out what is called the 'ministry of identification' literally amongst the poorest in the earth. That may not be for all of us, but make no mistake, you, I, can make a difference, be that where poverty is material, educational, moral or relational - In the words of Jesus 'As much as you did this to one of the least of these you did it to me'

In this wonderful season of the giving and receiving of gifts, let us not miss the greatest gift of all, it came with great price-tag too. A holy God enjoying all the wealth of heaven coming in lowliness to a poverty stricken world to make a difference that still lives on today. May each of us answer the question well, 'What does it mean to be truly rich?'

Happy Christmas.

'I am come that you might have life, and life in all of its fulness' - JOHN 10:10 #12promises



## CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT ARENA

EVERYONE WELCOME, FREE ENTRY, WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU.

### Ilkeston

#### SENIORS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday 6th December 12 noon to 2.30pm  
 Tickets £3 - Admission by ticket only.  
 Everyone welcome to join us for festive food and entertainment.

#### COMMUNITY CONCERT

Sunday 8th December at 10.30am  
 With our local dignitaries and performances from schools.

#### ARENA KIDS' CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION

Sunday 15th December at 10.30am  
 The little stars of Arena breathe life into the season with their Christmas presentation.

#### SENIOR'S CAROL SERVICE & AFTERNOON TEA

Friday 20th December 2pm  
 Free admission for service and afternoon tea.  
 Everyone welcome to join us for traditional Christmas carols and readings.

#### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday 22nd December  
 Two services 4pm-5pm and 7-8pm  
 Our traditional carol service (no service Sunday morning). Christmas Fayre 5pm-6.45pm with festive treats and drinks, mince pies, donuts, hog roast, Santa's Grotto and kids' fair ride, market stalls.

#### UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS

Wednesday 25th December at 10am  
 Our Christmas day service with Christmas carols, a short message and a chance for kids to come and show their new toys.

### Mansfield

#### ARENA KIDS' CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION

Sunday 8th December at 10.30am  
 The little stars of Arena breathe life into the season with their Christmas presentation.

#### COMMUNITY CONCERT

Sunday 15th December at 10.30am  
 Free food and festive treats after the service.

#### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday 22nd December 5pm - 6pm  
 Our traditional carol service (no service Sunday morning). Christmas Fayre after the Service with festive treats and drinks, food available, Santa's Grotto, snow machine and kid's crafts, market stalls.

#### UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS

Wednesday 25th December at 10am  
 Our Christmas day service with Christmas carols, a short message and a chance for kids to come and show their new toys.

### Ilkeston Hub

#### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Monday 23rd December at 11am - 12noon  
 Our traditional carol service.  
 After the Service  
 Food, festive treats and drinks.

### Nottingham

#### ARENA STUDENTS 101

Thursday 21st November at 8-11pm  
 Totally free, live music, table tennis and arcade games with a Christmas twist.

#### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday 8th December at 5pm  
 Our traditional carol service.  
 After the Service  
 Festive treats and drinks.

#### Christmas Carols

Sunday 15th December at 5pm  
 Christmas Carols and mince pies.

### Belper

#### KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday 21st December at 4pm - 5pm  
 With kids' entertainer ages 4-11yrs.

#### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Saturday 21st December at 5pm - 6pm  
 Our traditional carol service.  
 After the Service  
 Food, festive treats, drinks and mince pies, Santas' Grotto and gift for every child.

'Draw near to God and He will draw near to you' - JAMES 4:8  
 #12promises

## FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION

By David Blyth

I have long held a desire to help families who are faced with what parents have termed "their worst nightmare" - discovering that their child may have abused drugs or alcohol and become addicted.

More and more parents are trying to cope with the current epidemic of binge drinking and drugs.

Let me tell you a story. It was a wet afternoon and a young man wandered into the office. He looked haggard and thin. He sat down with his parents who looked just as anxious as he was...another young man using drugs.

They asked that I tell him to stop using drugs. I looked into troubled blue eyes momentarily glimpsing his world of fear and despair before he dropped his gaze to break the connection... another family, another casualty of heroin...how long had he been using? Three years, five years or just six months? The sad story unfolded; I have heard it a thousand times in the

course of the years I have been involved in drug counselling.

The family were desperate and didn't know what to do, and the truth is that mostly there isn't anything we can do quickly to separate our children from the drugs or alcohol they are taking. But this doesn't mean that we can do nothing.

We can find ways of coming to terms with our own emotions. We can work out how not to let this evil canker destroy our marriages, our homes, our finances and our lives. We can try to communicate with one another. We can work towards better information to be made available to young people. We can have a voice. We can fight this together.

We regularly see pictures in the media of young people looking so grey and sick. We read tragic stories of fatal overdoses of promising young actors, highly talented singers with the world at their feet, beautiful models and ordinary hard-working youngsters with everything to live for...cut off from their bright future by drug or alcohol abuse.

It's a familiar pattern... he started abusing drugs at school...kids looking for a

buzz...he had felt life to be not too exciting...he hung around with kids drinking on his estate...they would get paralytic and mess about...an adult gave them drugs for babysitting...it was affordable...

There's no single answer to the question of "why do they do it?", but it doesn't stop the question continually being asked by parents, social workers, government, doctors, ministers and people desperate to bring a change in our society. Is it boredom? Is it unhappiness? Is it peer group pressures? Is it disillusionment? Is it exploitation? Is it the meaninglessness of life? Is it the emptiness that we feel when we don't have a faith we can believe in? Is it the loss of hope? Is it the break-up of family life?

If your family or friend is battling with an addiction problem, I would urge you not to give in to despair. I believe if we can work together - as families, friends, neighbours and other groups - we can empower ourselves and come up with ways of helping lost children find their way home.

We will be working with families who are affected by



their children's drug misuse in the New Year in Belper using a book called A Parent's Worst Nightmare. If you'd like to know more about our Belper campus, please check our website ([arenachurch.co.uk/belper](http://arenachurch.co.uk/belper)) for more information about when the course will begin.

We'd love to meet you and help you and your family be free from the addictions you are facing together.

'We know all things work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose' - ROMANS 8:28 #12promises

## FAMOUS FAITH

Christians don't always receive great attention in the media, and followers of God are often looked down on for no good reason. That said, many famous people have a foundation in faith, some of whom we've featured in previous editions of Good News. Names such as Justin Bieber, Denzel Washington, and Lucas Moura have graced our pages.

Many keep their faith as an aspect of their lives, rather than putting it to the forefront of what they do. Parks and Recreation actor Chris Pratt, who may be better known as Star-Lord in Guardians of the Galaxy, often mentions his Christianity through his social media accounts. He has stated that the birth of his son "really defined" his faith in God, and that both he and his wife "prayed a lot" for the health of their child.

Love him or hate him, Kanye West is certainly a well-known figure in the entertainment world. He's recently caused a whirlwind of press coverage over his acceptance of Christ and the



release (after multiple delays) of his new album, "Jesus is King". The gospel-inspired album has divided critics, some saying it is a breath of fresh air, while others don't like his new direction.

Undeterred, West has announced a Christmas album, "Jesus is Born", should be out in December - based on previous release schedules, the perfectionist may not allow the album to reach the public until December 2022!

UFC fighters including Stipe Miocic, Jon Jones, and Anderson Silva are known as Christians, which just goes to show that even when your job involves beating people up it pays to have God on your side.

Recently, music legends Eric

Clapton and Mick Jagger have contributed to a fund to help a church local to them. Chelsea Old Church in London needed to replace their 70-year-old organ - at a cost of £650,000 - and both artists responded quickly and generously when asked.

Eric Clapton has previously stated of his belief in God and first made a commitment to Christianity in 1969, writing the song 'Presence of the Lord'. Mick Jagger, on the other hand, is a little more tricky.

Famed for singing "Sympathy



for the Devil", Mick has spent a lifetime looking for the next thing to keep him entertained. Now, well in to his 70s, he's still looking for "Satisfaction"...but bandmate Keith Richards may be closer to finding real satisfaction.

In recent years, Keith has seemed to become more reliant on faith, and has said in interviews that while he was growing up his family weren't religious people and that he didn't go to church on Sundays.

However, he went on to say, "Spirit is all around me. Very much. That's why I did the 'Wingless Angels' album: very spiritual music. But mine is a very nebulous spirituality. I wouldn't care to put a name on it."

And that's how many people begin their journey of faith - by having a feeling that there is something more, but not being able to name it. Wherever you are with your faith and beliefs, we'd love to meet you at Arena Church.

Come along to any of our Christmas events where we'll combine Christmas, Christianity, and entertainment - everyone is welcome, and it's sure to be a great time.

## THE PROJECT

The Project on Bath Street in Ilkeston is one of the focal points of Arena Community. As local residents may know, the lower part of Bath Street gradually fell into disuse with shops shutting down, and the whole area was in need of regeneration.

When Woolworths closed, a part of the history of Ilkeston was gone forever. At various times, the store sold almost anything you could imagine, from clothes and housewares to CDs and pick & mix sweets. The closure of Woolworths changed Ilkeston in many ways, including jobs being lost and Bath Street becoming a little quieter still.

As we've said in this newspaper several times before, when Arena Community gained the use of the building, it was hoped that the regeneration of Bath Street and the local community could begin in earnest. There are signs that this is coming to fruition, and the changes are becoming clear.



Downstairs you'll find the Workshop Cafe along with a retail area selling furniture, pre-loved clothing, and an assortment of bits and bobs such as candles and toiletries. We want The Project to be a place that can serve everyone in the community, no matter what their background, no matter what their destination.

Everyone from every walk of life is welcome, because as it says on the sign on our wall: "Everybody is somebody at The Project"

Our customers understand this and become part of this culture. There is a tradition

of "paying it forward" where people will place an order in the Workshop Cafe, and pay for two meals instead of one. Sometimes they'll just leave money behind the counter. This allows us to offer people who use our foodbank and can't afford a meal or a drink to choose something from the menu to enjoy - it's a wonderful expression of how people in the community care for others.

The Project does of course generate an income from sales of both food and furniture, and this is put straight back into use for the benefit of the community. We've been able to take on staff and even apprentices, training them, helping them get into the world of work.

Much of the furniture for sale at The Project has been restored or upcycled by our team, and when the renovations are completed in the upstairs area, a full training environment will be available to give even more people skills that can help them gain employment.

But why do we restore and upcycle furniture? As a large proportion of the furniture is donated, we could just sell it on as any charity shop would. The difference is, at The Project, we want to give people skills, we want people to be able to take pride in what they do. We want to create jobs for people who are seeking employment - not just the ex-offender or recovering addict, but those who have lived "ordinary" lives and are just looking for work.

We also want to give people the opportunity to purchase higher end furniture at affordable prices.

Everything we do is for



the ultimate benefit of the local community, and we'd appreciate it if you would visit and give us your support. We have some excellent offers on in the Workshop Cafe over the Christmas period, and you never know - you might just find a gift for a loved one on our shelves.

So please, come on down and enjoy Christmas at The Project.

The Project, Arena Hope and Open Door will be open on Friday, 27th December. All shops will be having a £1 clothing sale and Hope and the Project will have 40% off furniture.

At the Project we will have some winter specials, including pork and stuffing cob/baguette, chicken and cranberry cob/baguette, hot mince pies and cream.

'My grace is sufficient for you, My power is made perfect in weakness' - 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 #12promises

**THE PROJECT**

Enjoy a homemade festive treat all through December at the Project with our new range of cakes for the season. Why not try a hot mince pie with cream or a cinnamon shortcake cookie? Here's a 10% off coupon to tempt you!




 FOLLOW THE PROJECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA @theprojectarena

[www.theprojectilkeston.co.uk](http://www.theprojectilkeston.co.uk)

THE Workshop CAFÉ

Cut out and present this coupon for  
10% off food and drink at  
Workshop Cafe

Cannot be used in conjunction with our loyalty card or any meal deal offers. Valid until 30th June 2020.

# CALM DOWN AND HAVE A CUPPA!

By Paul Stokes

I bet almost everyone at some time has heard the expression, "Calm down and have a cuppa!" I know when I was a Police Officer, I used to say that quite often, but I wonder if you have ever been offered a cup of tea in a washed-out baked bean can or a jam jar?

I remember one Christmas time in the late 1970's as a very young "bobby" being called to a domestic dispute between a young couple who had been arguing furiously in their home. I turned up and tried to sort things out and suggested we had a cuppa in order to calm down.

It was then discovered that all the plates, cups and saucers had been smashed during the argument and the only things they had left to drink out of were washed out baked bean tins! Still a cuppa is a cuppa!

The argument was born out of frustration due to lack of finances because of the way that each of them had "spent" money which was meant for Christmas, a time of joy! I tried my best to give some advice and as things had calmed down, I left the couple to face a Christmas without any plates or cups. I never did have to go back to see them and often wonder what effect my "advice" had on their lives.

Sadly, I often had occasion to

enter people's private lives due to lack of finances as poverty causes people to do things which perhaps they would not usually do or even think of doing. On another occasion I had to search the flat of a 17 year old youth for stolen goods. The flat was empty apart from a mattress on the floor, no bedding, no furniture at all in the lounge, in the kitchen was an old microwave, one fork, one butter knife, one spoon, one bowl and a washed out jam jar to drink out of.

The cupboards held one packet of noodles! I was lost for words and the look of helplessness on this young man's face haunted me for many months. Although I was a Christian at that time, I went to a church that did not have an outreach programme leaving me feeling helpless to offer any support.

I am so, so glad that God found me and placed me in a church that understands the price that people have to pay when they are trapped in poverty!

A church that believes in the second, fourth or seventh chance because some people need it to escape their current situation. I am proud that Arena Church is a church that goes the extra mile to help the lost, hurting and homeless and I know that sometimes if we are unable to assist for any reason at least we can always supply a nice hot warming "cuppa" made with love.

God bless and I pray that you will have a great memorable Christmas.



FOOD SERVED UNTIL 1.45PM

- BREAKFAST -

BACON SANDWICH	£1.85
<small>Served with 3 rashers of bacon</small>	
BACON BAGUETTE	£2.10
<small>Served with 3 rashers of bacon</small>	
BACON, MUSHROOM & MELTED CHEESE BAGUETTE	£2.60
BEANS ON TOAST	£1.80
TOAST	£1.10
<small>2 slices served with butter</small>	
JAM OR MARMALADE	£0.20

- TOASTED SANDWICHES -

CHEESE	£2.30
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	
2 FILLINGS	£2.60
<small>CHOOSE FROM: HAM - MUSHROOM - ONION - TOMATO - TUNA</small>	
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	

- SANDWICHES -

CHOOSE FROM:	
EGG, TUNA, HAM OR CHEESE	£2.20
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	
PRAWNS IN ROSE MARIE SAUCE	£2.85
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	

- BAGUETTES -

CHOOSE FROM:	
EGG, TUNA, HAM OR CHEESE	£2.60
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	
PRAWNS IN ROSE MARIE SAUCE	£3.00
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	

- JACKET POTATOES -

WITH BUTTER	£2.50
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	
CHEESE, TUNA, COLESLAW, BEANS	£0.50 EACH
CHILL, CHICKEN, CURRY OR PRAWNS	£3.85
<small>Served with salad garnish</small>	

- SALADS -

CHOOSE FROM A VARIETY OF TOPPINGS:	
EGG, TUNA, HAM OR CHEESE	£4.00
<small>Served with half a baguette and butter</small>	
PRAWNS IN ROSE MARIE SAUCE	£4.35
<small>Served with half a baguette and butter</small>	

- DRINKS -

YORKSHIRE TEAS	£1.10
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CAPPUCCINO	£1.90
LATTE	£1.90
WITH SYRUP	£2.25
MOCHA	£2.20
HOT CHOCOLATE	£1.85
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- JEREMIAH 29:11 #12promises



## UNCERTAINTY AT CHRISTMAS

By Louise Richardson

It's not a headline we want to read but it's a fact that some people will face uncertainty this Christmas.

A recent report said Mansfield is the 4th most deprived area in the East Midlands. An average of 30% of children are living in poverty, in some estates this is up to 50%. This is up from 20% in 2016. The effects of poverty are not only financial, but also social, physical and emotional.

Here are 3 "Life stories of Hope" from ladies who are part of Arena Church Mansfield.

### Lesley

Hi, I'm Lesley and I can speak first hand about poverty in my life and I can completely understand anyone who struggles to make ends meet.

Once my rent, child maintenance, council tax and utility bills are paid I am left more than £30 below the minimum amount the government says a person needs to live on. I, like

many others in Mansfield work full time hours. Some have the tough decision of whether they should heat their property or buy food, "heat or eat?" During the school holidays many children won't get enough to eat. More and more people are living in debt, accessing food banks and soup kitchens but they are still never free from their debts.

At Care for a Coffee on Tuesday and Wednesday the team welcome people from Mansfield by serving refreshments and providing a warm space for social interaction at no cost to them.

By offering friendship to all we are showing everyone God's love. We pray that more will come to know the Lord and can again find joy in their lives.

### Glenys

Several years ago, I went on a factfinding mission to Russia, delivering humanitarian aid to the poor and children's orphanages. What I found there were great extremes on the one hand great wealth, massive statues to past leaders, space exploration, enormous houses of the Russian mafia, even the weather was

extreme 22 below freezing.

Now I'm not saying that Mansfield is anything like that, but I can see poverty here.

Mansfield was a mining town and many of the men on our street worked in the pits. Women worked in the hosiery factories, all of this employment has sadly gone leaving the next generations still facing great hardship and struggling to feed their families.

When I was a girl, I don't remember ever seeing anyone sleeping in shop doorways or on a park bench but now this happens every night. Homelessness can affect anyone, and people can feel like they have lost hope and have no future. At Arena we want give homeless people and anyone facing hard times HOPE. The Bible talks about poverty and in Matthew 25v36 Jesus encourages us to feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, take care of the sick and clothe those who are naked.

### Nimllh

In 2017, I found myself in a situation that almost rendered me homeless but the Lord sent

help.

The word of God was all I could depend on and the word came real for me. I could not afford to feed my child, and neither was I able to pay my household bills. I got help from the Red Cross where I was then referred to the Trussell Trust foodbank. That is where God sent me friends.

During my visit to the foodbank, I realised there are many that are homeless or lacking due to different reasons, the Lord has spared me from being one. I forgot about my situation and was so keen to do as much as I could to support the group that is helping the community. I didn't want to be just a receiver but to be a giver. I later joined to serve at the soup kitchen.

At the foodbank, they always made sure my daughter and I had something to eat even when I said we are fine. I made new friends with the families in the community.

I am thankful as God's word says, "he will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory" and He did it.

## WARD

By Lisa Harrison

Ward Recycling is a large recycling company with a site located in Ilkeston. The owner, David Ward, first approached us several years ago to see how they could help.

We discussed various projects but the priority at the time was a mini-bus to facilitate an after school programme. They generously provided one that served us well for several years.

They did not stop there as they have continued to support us in numerous ways ranging from food donations to supplying us with skips for various sites and projects. Their support has been and continues to be outstanding.

Dennis Bell, who is a director of the company, also goes above and beyond in his help. He will contact other businesses and encourage them to get involved. As a consequence of this we have received extremely generous monetary gifts. Dennis and these other companies have supplied construction materials ranging from concrete slabs to tons of soil and sand for

school projects and many other initiatives.

Dennis has been known to source windows and window frames to size through his various contacts.

He is, like David Ward, an extremely generous man with a large heart and a love for people.

They take care of their employees with the same commitment and heart - we know this to be true as they contact us to provide furniture for any employee who suddenly finds themselves in financial difficulty.

They are never too busy to take a call, and a person is never insignificant or a charity too small not to warrant their full attention.

Both men have a humility that given their positions is breathtaking. Without Wards, without Dennis Bell and all the other people and companies we could not do what we do at Arena Community.

On behalf of the service users of our wide range of programmes we say, "Thank you".

Thank you for your time, resource, finance, but most of all your love of our community.

Your promises preserve my life! - PSALM 119:50



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# BE KIND, STAY SAFE, WORK HARD – NO EXCUSES

By Simon Robinson  
Head Teacher, Cotmanhay Junior School

I may not be the best-qualified person to write about poverty in the community. On the one hand, it's a little bit like being asked to stare at the surface of a fish pond and describe exactly what's going on under the surface. On the

other hand, I have worked as Head Teacher of Cotmanhay Junior School for seven years and everyone associated with this community will know that it is often described as an area of 'high social deprivation'. A quick online glance at the definition of this term reveals a host of social challenges – young parenthood, adult homelessness, residence of social housing and a lack of qualifications to name but a few.

However, in spite of what some commentators might think, not everyone in the community is 'socially deprived'. Not everyone in the community

suffers the daily, grinding reminders that poverty brings. Cotmanhay is a balanced community with equal and opposite measures of upward social mobility and more than a sprinkling of hope.

For hundreds of years countless governments have failed the poor. The abject failure of Stanley Baldwin to answer the door of Number 10 to the Jarrow 'Crusaders' epitomised the disdain the ruling classes have historically shown to the neediest members of society. More recently, the government ripped the soul from communities like Cotmanhay by forcing the closure of the pits. History has made it clear that if anyone is going to help break the grip of poverty, it has to be a case of helping yourself, impossible though it may sometimes seem.

Thus, it is important to analyse which aspects of poverty can be affected through our own thinking and action. If poverty is having a negative effect upon an individual, upon their quality of life, how can they take action to mitigate this? Poverty is a human experience – affecting people socially, psychologically, politically and emotionally. Short of the frankly unhelpful

'Get a job / Get a better job' how can a community be the catalyst for change for those who are fighting against poverty's quicksand grip?

The first step, strange though it may seem, might be to walk into a library. The library is often at the centre of a community – alive with social groups, access to the World Wide Web and abundant knowledge for the literate. In saying this, perhaps greater connectedness could be achieved through walking into a place of worship, possibly the true heart of a community. As we approach Christmas, an act as simple as connecting with family and friends could be the most important first step of a redemptive journey.

People need support being more active, engaged and resilient if they are to aspire to the values core to Cotmanhay Junior School. It might be over simplified but if people could get the help they need to Be Kind, Stay Safe and Work Hard then the community, any community, really would be an inspiring place to live and work.

And for the watching government, whoever they may be, if they fail to offer effective support, there really are No Excuses.



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# MY TOP 10 CHRISTMAS MONEY SAVING TIPS

## A Money Saving Guide to Handling your finances well this Christmas time

By Julie Turner

I was in the gym earlier this year, one of those very first few weeks of January with an influx of new people all with good intentions, when I overheard a conversation regarding how this family had completely lost track of how much money they had spent and were now struggling to pay it all off. I would imagine this discussion is a fairly common one in many homes around the Country.

In our early years of marriage my husband and I didn't always handle our money as wisely as we should but now 30 years later we make wiser decisions that are helping us to live freer, to be more generous and without that sinking feeling when you open the credit card statement.

Overindulging in food and drink is so often matched by overdoing our spending, with the result that the first part of the New Year turns into a damage repair exercise for our budgets.

Of course, there are a range of things we can do to help turn Christmas into a financial success rather than financial excess. Here are a few tips:-

### 1. Start early

Whether it's jotting down gift

ideas months ahead or buying the perfect pressie for mum weeks before the big day, it's never too early to start thinking about Christmas.

The sooner you start, the more time you have to spread the cost, rather than paying for it all at once in December (or repaying it all in January).

### 2. Set a budget

Don't plan the perfect Christmas - first work out what you can afford. Christmas is one day - don't ruin the whole of the next year for it. Work out how much you can afford and then make your Christmas as special as you can on that budget.

The easiest way to stay within your budget is to be organised. Start by working out what your current financial situation is. Whether you like using pen and paper, or prefer an app you need to be honest about your spending and budget. The Budget Planner at [moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://moneyadvice.service.org.uk) is great as it breaks down your finances into graphs to help show your overspending.

### 3. Don't go overboard on food

Anyone who's hosted Christmas will be familiar with the act of panic-buying food that ends up going to waste. Buy food items that can be frozen where possible, so you're not left with a fridge full of festive food when the January diets kick off. Food waste is,

quite literally, money in the bin.

### 4. Be Thankful

At Arena Church we believe it's important to be thankful; the bible encourages us to be thankful in all things. I know this isn't always easy when we hit hard times, when others may have something we just don't believe we can achieve but over the years I have found that no matter what the situation that being thankful for what I actually do have and not looking to what I don't have has made a tremendous difference.

### 5. Make a list - and check it twice

The best way to manage your holiday shopping budget is to break it down. Write down everyone who you plan on buying a gift for - even if it's just a box of sweets for your children's teacher. Next to everyone's name on your list, jot down the maximum amount that you'd like to spend so you can work out your budgets and whether they're feasible.

### 6. Help someone in need

Throughout the year many at Arena Church support children in Kenya, through the great work of Compassion International. Each Christmas time my husband and I like to send a special message and gift to the child that we support. The bible encourages us to be a blessing to others and in so doing we too are blessed.

### 7. Keep a running total

Keep a close check on your spending - maybe by compiling the running total on your mobile phone or tablet.

The bills will come in after Christmas as surely as night follows day, but you'll be better placed to manage them, if you know what the bottom line of your spend amounts on each card.

### 8. Pay in Cash

One way to force yourself to stick to your Christmas budget is to pay for all your gifts with cash. Simply withdraw the amount that you can afford to spend on your holiday gifts. Statistics tells us that those who pay in cash are



likely to spend 10-15% less than those who use a debit or credit card.

### 9. Pay off credit cards quickly

If you do use a credit card, try to ensure that you pay off the balance in full when the bill arrives in the New Year. Generally, credit cards are an expensive way to borrow money - and store cards are even worse, given that they generally have higher interest rates.

If you're taking advantage of credit card deals that offer 0% rates on balance transfers, make sure you know the date at which this introductory "teaser" rate comes to an end and pay off the balance before then.

### 10. Have Fun and Enjoy time with loved ones

Good financial planning will help you enjoy not only the festive season's celebrations, but the New Year too.

This Christmas time we feel should be more than just gifts but about loving and sharing, spending time with loved ones and being thankful for what we do have. Make sure that in the busyness of the season you plan to be with family, friends and have time to relax, have fun and cuddle up with your hot chocolate and mince pies.

We do hope that you have a wonderful Christmas time, that is blessed in every way.

'The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit'  
- PSALM 34:18 #12promises



# REACHING THE PARTS...

by Adam Newton

Arena Church is open to anyone and everyone, but we know we're not everyone's cup of tea. Every person is unique, an individual, and what works for one person won't necessarily work for another.

Different hobbies, different interests, different circumstances, different life stories, they all make a rich tapestry of life – but we should never assume that another person has had the same experiences that we ourselves have had.

Earlier in the year, a London church known as SPAC Nation was featured by the BBC and continues to pop up in the news headlines every couple of months. Now, if you watch the BBC regularly, you'll be aware that they have Songs of Praise on most Sundays throughout the year, so church-based programming is nothing new – but the story around SPAC Nation certainly drew interest.

The church is headed by

Pastor Tobi Adegboyega, who is a cousin to actor John Boyega (Star Wars, Attack The Block). Pastor Tobi lives in a mansion, drives a number of luxury cars, and allegedly parties late into the night with loud music, much to the annoyance of his neighbours.

From the outside, it seems that his church is wealthy – the seats are occupied by high-flying stockbrokers, businesspeople, property developers, lawyers, with the main demographic being between 16 and 35 years of age – and that the pastor has taken his share of the wealth for personal gain.

However, it is not the source of the money that needs to be examined, nor the lifestyle of the pastor. What is important is the reason behind what is happening.

The church reaches out to many young people who have ended up in a life of deprivation and/or crime. In order to reach people in these situations, you must enter those places. Because of the culture, which is pervaded by knife crime and drug dealing, if you turn up in



a Citroen 2CV wearing trainers from Tesco and a plastic necklace, you won't be taken seriously. Roll up in a Range Rover wearing Gucci and dripping in gold, and people will instantly sit up and take notice.

In the same way, the Bible says that Jesus spent time among the less fortunate, the sinners, the sick, and that he was able to communicate with them effectively because he made the time for them.

In a way, it's a simple marketing strategy – get yourself in front of the people you want to reach. Jesus didn't

need to spend time with people who were already on the right path.

Many will disagree with the motives and methods behind Pastor Tobi and SPAC Nation, but with a weekly congregation of more than 1000 people, he must be doing something right.

The congregation includes some people who have been reached in this way, and are now mentoring and leading other young people, lifting them out of a life of crime and onwards to a better future, and that's certainly a good thing.



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'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus' - PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 #12promises



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7:30pm

Julianne  
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&  
7:00pm



# THE EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS

By Christine Austin

At a time when it would appear technology is connecting people together, statistics show that there is an epidemic of loneliness sweeping across our nation. Social media can tell us how many "friends" we have but unfortunately this doesn't always translate into real, meaningful friendships, where people interact face to face sharing times of both joy and sadness together. Loneliness has so escalated that Theresa May, when she was our Prime minister, felt the need to appoint a Minister for Loneliness, to lead a cross party campaign to tackle the issue.

Surveys show that people of all ages and from all backgrounds report being lonely. However, it can be particularly difficult for older people, who have grown up in a world that did connect and interact face to face, to navigate being on their own due to bereavement, ill health or the circumstances of life that take family members to other parts of the country or world. Due to the fast pace of life today, we don't always get to know the neighbours who live around us and that sense

of community, with everyone looking out for each other.

## It's Not All Doom and Gloom!

Across our communities, there are initiatives and organisations who are doing fantastic work in reaching out to lonely people. At Arena Church, we welcome people of all ages and backgrounds endeavouring to create an environment where authentic friendships can be made and where everyone finds their identity and purpose, with one of our mottos being "Everyone is someone at Arena".

Over the past four years, we have been expanding our work with Senior Citizens to try and tackle the challenge of loneliness in this sometimes forgotten generation. Initially we launched with a quarterly lunch which included not only food, but entertainment, quizzes, dancing and singing. This has built momentum with an average of 95 people attending. These lunches have brought people together giving opportunities to talk and build friendships.

Out of these lunches we have now launched our Buddies friendship group which meets every Wednesday between 10am and 12 noon at Blend & Brew, the coffee shop at The Arena in

Ilkeston.

In October we held our first church service, specifically geared towards older people, a Harvest Festival followed by afternoon tea. There was a lovely atmosphere as we joined in singing some of the more traditional hymns and in line with the harvest theme, considered the different seasons of life.

I have had the pleasure of spending time with numerous older people in these various settings. It is humbling to hear their stories and experiences of how they have navigated the ups and downs of life...not only do we share tears of sadness but on many occasions, tears of laughter as we recount the antics of not only the past but also the present!

Another thing that has been so evident during time spent getting to know these older people is that they still have so much to contribute to our communities. They are running various clubs, knitting for premature babies and the homeless, visiting nursing homes and hospitals and raising funds for all kinds of charities, to name but a few...I'm not sure how some of them fit it all in!

Alongside the organisations and initiatives to help tackle loneliness, we can all take responsibility for looking out for those in our world who may be on

their own. Just taking the time to engage in conversation can make a huge difference...a large number of older people don't speak to anyone from one week to the next. If we are able, why don't we invite someone for a coffee or even a meal? Why not cook an extra meal or bake an extra cake and take it to someone? As the dark nights draw in this can be the loneliest time for people who are on their own with the days seeming even longer...our smallest acts can have a big impact.

And so this is Christmas...

For most of us, Christmas is a season we look forward to and enjoy. Shopping, wrapping gifts, singing Christmas songs and carols, cooking festive treats and eating too many mince pies! Probably the highlight for most of us will be spending time with family and friends. Unfortunately this won't be the reality for everyone...for some, Christmas can be a very lonely and depressing time of year, exacerbated by media hype.

We can enter into the true spirit of Christmas and be mindful of people around us who may appreciate the gift of friendship during the festive season and beyond.

Learn, Laugh and Live!



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Ilkeston U3A welcomes new members - We meet on the first Tuesday morning of the month 10.00am till 12.00 noon in The

Arena Church, 1 Rutland Street, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8DG. Doors open at 9.40am. After a welcoming cup of tea or coffee and a chat with friends we start our meeting with a short informative talk relevant to the local area, before welcoming our main speaker of the month.

To find out more, contact Ilkeston U3A via the website, email [chair@ilkestonu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@ilkestonu3a.org.uk), or telephone 0115 9301809.



### What is Ageing Well?

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## ARENA KIDS

By Louise Bussell

I don't know about you but sometimes I wonder how equipped I am to be a parent when most of the time I don't feel much like an adult myself! I have one wonderful daughter who I wouldn't change for the world, but the organising, washing clothes, taxi driving, feeding, homework helping and navigating social media sometimes takes me to my limits. I only have one child to look after, I am in awe of anyone who parents two or more children, how you manage to feed them, get them clean clothes and arrive anywhere on time is truly beyond me - so if that's you well done, give yourself a pat on the back.

I know from experience getting children ready to go out anywhere, let alone church on a Sunday morning, can be stressful. Although you know there may be childcare for part or all of the service controlling ants might feel an easier feat to accomplish. So is it all worth it, what does it mean to have children in church?

Children should be seen and not heard - where did that come from? That person has obviously not been to Arena Kids on a Sunday morning! The Victorians believed that children were vessels that just needed filling up with knowledge - a small version of an adult. I wonder if that is what people think church will be like for children. Do churches have an old fashioned 'seen and not heard' view about children in their buildings?

When I hear this has been some people's experience of church as a child it makes me sad. Children are the church's future. They will in turn have families of their own and bring them to church. One of my greatest privileges is to lead a children's work on a Sunday,

you might think of it as Sunday School. I talk to them about God and the choices they can make in their lives. Reminding them they don't have to do what everyone else is doing and sometimes things don't always work out the way we wanted, yet God is interested in their lives and has a great plan for them.

At Arena Kids we love having children with all the noise and mess that accompanies it. I believe that church for kids should focus on three key ideas; making friends, having fun and building faith.

Giving children time to have a catch up and get to build



those friendships is how we start each week - there's always drinks and biscuits on hand too! Childhood friendships are so important, and they are often the people who know you best when you're an adult. We encourage the children to be kind to their friends and look out for those who may struggle with different things. They always amaze me with the capacity they have to show kindness.

I love having fun. Noisy, messy, outrageous fun. Playing games, sing songs, doing crafts, listening to stories, telling stories and lots lots more happen each Sunday. I don't believe God wants children to be seen and not heard. I know in the Bible it says that Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to him because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as them. Children love having fun, making noise (and mess), asking questions and when they are enthusiastic about learning they soak it up like a sponge. I have no problem being more childlike.

Finally, at Arena Kids we look to build children's faith. We guide children through some of the teachings of the Bible; to

love others, be an encourager and know that they are loved by God even when it's tricky. They find learning this through stories, video, demonstration is enjoyable. There is a promise in the Bible (Proverbs 22:6) that says: we should start children off in the right direction and then when they are old they will not turn from it. That sums up what children should be in church today - we need to start them off the best we can and trust they will have the tools to work things out for themselves as they grow up.

If it's been a while since you took your children to church, I'd like to encourage you to give it a go. Most churches will give you a warm welcome and be more than happy to have you and your children to join them. I would recommend checking the church's website before hand to see what is on offer for children. It goes without saying that you are really welcome to Arena Kids any Sunday as we love having children in church. On the first Sunday of every month we have a big celebration, we call it Unleashed, where the children's work runs for the whole of the service - why not give it a try.



By Helen Turner

Arena Toddlers is every Wednesday in term time from 9:30 to 11am. It is £2 per family which includes hot drinks for the adults and juice, fruit/ biscuits for the children. It's a great place to meet new people and make some new friends.

One mum said it had been a real lifeline for her as she was new to the area and didn't know many people.

We have lots of fun toys for your children to come and play with. Then we have a summer party and Christmas party with Santa. Come and give it a try, your first one is free!

'When I am afraid I put my trust in you' - PSALM 56:3  
#12promises

Colour and decorate the tree! Count the number of each shape and fill it in below!





## ARENA STUDENTS

By Annie Kirk

So, it's that time of year again, Christmas! In our household we love this time of year, a time for family, friends, food, and Church!

My Name is Annie, along with my husband Jono we lead Arena Students for Arena Church. We are also involved in our Nottingham campus that has just launched this Summer, which is a dream for us, as we love the city of Nottingham! I am also one of the senior members of our Worship team too (which is live music for our Church)

We love what we do, and we count it an absolute privilege to serve our Church and the area of Ilkeston and Nottingham along with supporting our other locations!

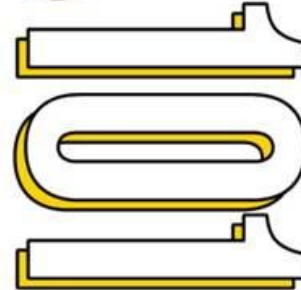
We love our church and what it stands for to 'Go and Grow and Love and Serve our World', and this is what we endeavour to do through Arena Students. Arena Students is where our young people through all our locations of Arena Church gather to Live With Jesus, have World-Class friendships, to live on purpose and for others! All we do at Arena Students is to serve others, whether you are in need or you have it all together we love to serve you. A book

in the Bible says this, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." I think we can all agree in some way shape or form we are all in need, and I love how Jesus blessed the poor. In saying this it challenges us to serve all people in every situation and need, and shows people that they can have something so much better beyond their wildest dreams! This is our driving force, to Love and Serve our towns, cities and villages! We want every person to know this! This looks like putting everything on for free, and we do this because we want to show people that we care!

We have lots of things that happen through Arena Students on a weekly basis we have our WorldChangers night where we have live music, table tennis, foosball, a message for 15 minutes, plus food!

We are wanting to communicate through this night that Jesus Loves you, and we think that EVERY young person is a WorldChanger and can achieve amazing things! We also have our Small Groups, this is where friendships are formed. We find that in this generation people need friends more than ever, and good friends to influence them to make wise and smart choices, and this is what we want for young people in this generation!

We also have something we call Arena Students Switch. This is for people who attend our Sunday services and they are in the phase of just starting secondary school and want to understand a little more about the Bible and what the message is about on Sundays and how it can apply to their lives in school and in their friendships. This runs once a month during our



A monthly hang out for students of Nottingham

We meet to hang out once a month on the last Thursday, 8-11pm.

Totally free, live music, table tennis, arcade games, and much more.

Clumber Hall,  
High Cross St  
Nottingham  
NG1 3AX

0115 944 2996  
arenachurch.co.uk

**YOU ARE WELCOME**



Sunday services.

We have lots of different strands to Arena Students. Arena Students 101 is where we want young people from 17-25. They are in a completely different stage of life, figuring out who they are and what they are going to do. They have a place that they can connect to and find a home when they are far away from theirs! This is a monthly event based in our Nottingham location (as Arena Church), but it is for every young person in all locations and also for people who want to get connected to people their age! We have live music, mocktails, food, and arcade games, again this is completely

free of charge. In the book of the Bible called John, it says, "We love because He first loved us".

We want to show these sometimes lonely, lost and amazing young people that they are welcome, and through what Jesus has done for us we want to love and serve them!

We love to see what is happening through Arena Students as a whole. We love to see people's lives being changed around for the better. We have a saying at Arena Students that you are made on purpose and for a purpose, and we love to see hundreds of young people realising that!



ILKESTON  
7:30-9PM  
EVERY FRIDAY

MANSFIELD  
6:30-8PM  
EVERY 1ST+3RD FRI



**ILKESTON** - Phil Pye:

One of the passions of Arena Church Ilkeston is that it would continue to reach out to all ages. We believe the good news message of Jesus carries no ageism, it's for everyone!

In our busy autumn season, there have been some great expressions of this. The Arena Kids Church did a brilliant presentation in our Sunday service in early September as pupils, students and teachers were beginning a new academic year. The Arena Students Friday night gatherings continue to be a great context for encouraging and empowering young people in their faith journey. Then, recently a team under the lead of Christine Austin held their first ever Seniors Service to celebrate Harvest held on a Friday afternoon. This too proved a great success helped by a scrumptious tea afterwards!

So our main Sunday morning gathering reflects all this. Babies and tots, children and teens, Mums, Dads, Grandparents. Those who come as a family and those who come on their own, and an array of professions and occupations represented by people's day jobs. Church is described in the Bible as a family, so this is how it is meant to be. Of course, you, whatever your age, are welcome to join us.

**MANSFIELD** - Josh Turner:

The Christmas season is upon us, how time flies! Lots has been going on in recent months in Arena Mansfield, from baby dedications to baptisms - it has been an exciting season! Our Acoustic Cafe and Light Party were a resounding success, seeing people connect with Arena for the first time, realising that the Church isn't a cold, faceless entity but a place that you can call home has been really powerful for Helen and I.

Care for a coffee continues to be a great connection point within our community, on every Tuesday and Wednesday between 10am and 2pm our doors are open for those who want to come and get a hot drink or a bite to eat, as well as being able to enjoy Pool and Table Tennis, all free of charge. It is truly a place where everyone is welcome!

Our campus continues to grow and burst with life, and we believe this is just the start. If you are reading this and haven't been to one of our Sunday services, Christmas



is a great time to come and see what we are all about. Our Carols by candlelight service is on Sunday 22nd December and this is going to get you right in to the Christmas spirit, we will be singing carols, hear a message about Jesus and after the service there will be lots of other festivities - please take this as my personal invite to you!

I know this period represents different joys and challenges, but my prayer for you is that you would find peace in this season and although life may not be perfect, you would be filled with the hope of what is to come. If I don't get the chance in person, I would love to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**NOTTINGHAM** - Jono Kirk:

I love history! There's just something about looking through old photographs and hearing stories of 'the good ol' days' from your Granny, right? I remember sitting down on Granny's sofa as a child, looking through the neatly ordered and subtitled photographs of our family history, all while nibbling on a gold bar and a glass of lemonade. Memories can bring back such warmth. I love history.

Recently Arena Church has slotted into another piece of Nottingham City Centre history, in taking on Clumber Hall on High Cross Street, Hockley, Nottingham. This building has a long line of history dating back to the early 1800s, being a church, a school, a music hall, a doctor's surgery, and was even owned by Nottingham legend and founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth. Everything you can think of has happened inside that building - yes everything - and now we take on the mantle of writing the future.

Many hours have been invested,

by a hard-working team, into revamping the building to where it is today, ready to be a multipurpose building - predominantly an outward focused church. The first event ran from the building was in the newly renovated basement for the Arena Students 101 event. This ran on the 26th September and we had live music, free food, soft drinks, arcade games, and much more. We had over 30 attendees for our launch into the local student community! Following that, on the 29th September, we held our first church gathering, with 108 in attendance. It is truly exciting!

We have many plans and dreams to reach out of the building, love and serve the local community, and make a difference. This is all fuelled by the model of Jesus, who brought light into dark places, making a difference wherever He went.

I love history. But you know what I love more - vision for the future!

**BELPER** - David Blyth:

We have started meeting in our new building on the High Street which has had a new coat of paint to smarten it up. We next meet on a Sunday afternoon at 4pm on the last Sunday in November to which we warmly invite you. We are really excited about our Carols by Candlelight being held on Saturday the 21st of December at 5pm. The evening will have a presentation for children, loads to do for the family including a children's entertainer/magician and a Santa's grotto starts at 4pm prior to the carols. Loads more to come in the New Year as we launch our Alpha course this is for anybody who wants to explore the Christian faith, running over 10 weeks with a free meal.

Families are being blighted by drug use in the home. There is a conservative estimation that 1.5

million families are affected by a loved one's drug misuse. We will be working with families who are affected by their children's drug misuse in the New Year in Belper using a book called A Parent's Worst Nightmare.

**TOULOUSE** - Patrick Nana Gassa Gonga:

Toulouse, nicknamed the Pink City, is the home of the sixth campus of Arena Church. It is located in the South-West of France, and is quite vibrant, intense and a very dynamic place to live in. Airbus is the largest company in the area and employs more than 30,000 people. Toulouse has the 3rd largest population of students in any city in France as well.

Most of time the sun is shining, and Barcelona is just a three hour drive down to Spain. Toulouse is really influenced by the Iberian Peninsula.

We felt called to plant a new church for Arena in this area. We started on 5th October 2017 with four colleagues, working from our flat. After two years we had become 16 people. We were surprised by God because some friends invited their own friends to join the house group.

On the 6th of July 2019, we ran a worship concert with the band from Arena in the UK. We rented a venue named Connexion Live in the city centre of Toulouse and we invited people through social networks and leaflets. We thank God because we did not know anyone when we first arrived in this city, and he brought approximately 200 people to the concert. Through worship God drew people in and he made His Almighty Name known.

Since September 2019, we have moved from our flat to a 40 seat venue in order to launch the first church service of Arena Toulouse. Our first service ran on the 29th of September 2019 with 25 people attending. We now run a service every two weeks on Sunday afternoon. We have started a new series about ALL THINGS NEW.

We believe that God is at work behind the scenes and we believe that some strong believers will join us soon. Let's continue to pray for all the campuses and to follow our calling from God.

The Government changes the system to change the world, but God changes people to change the world.



ARENACHURCH

1 RUTLAND STREET, ILKESTON, DERBYSHIRE, DE7 8DG - 10:30am every Sunday

66 LEEMING STREET, MANSFIELD, NG18 1NG - 10:30am every Sunday

HIGH CROSS STREET, NOTTINGHAM NG1 3AX - 5pm every Sunday

16 HIGH STREET, BELPER, DE56 1GH - 4pm on the last Sunday of the month

UNIT 1, BELFIED STREET, ILKESTON DE7 8DU - 11am every Monday

# YOU ARE INVITED