



SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER



WELCOME!

Welcome to all our friends and supporters.

The last two years have been a time when Covid 19 has affected all our lives and changed the way we live. The greatest impact, however, has been on the lives of our young people. This impact may have been through the death or extended separation from a loved one, a parent or carer losing their job or staying at home to provide childcare, or the young person themselves taking on childcare responsibilities.

In addition to, and sometimes as a direct result of these practical considerations, children's and young people's mental health has been suffering too, as confirmed in the March 2021 in the British Medical Journal: "Although children are at lowest risk of death from Covid 19, concerning signals remain about the pandemic's effects on their mental health, which are unevenly experienced across different age groups and socioeconomic circumstances".

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Can you help? We need a new Treasurer.

Since the reopening of schools, our workers have been providing support for young people in our schools and for their teachers, so that they have someone they can talk to. Listening without judgement, without criticism or condemnation is one way in which we can express God's love to the young people in our care. To be heard, to be listened to, is to be accepted.

Our aim is to share the love of God through attitudes and actions, so that our young people can know that through all the changes in life, they too have a God who is loving and faithful and always listening.

Thank you for your faithfulness in prayer and support.

Psalm 89 v.1

I will sing of the Lord's great love for ever, with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever.

Janet Sutherland (Trustee)



UPDATE FROM Kt

This term has brought many changes, the sadness of saying goodbye to Andrea, equally sad has been saying farewell for now to Nicola, as she goes onto well deserved maternity leave and of course the ongoing hurdle of covid and all that it has meant and is meaning for so many in schools. However, the work goes on and as we have been saying throughout, for as long as schools and staff are still going we will continue serving them in every way we can.



The work of mentoring in schools brings with it many challenges, joys and heartaches. Young people carry so much from past traumas and upsets, to low self-esteem, anxiety and self-loathing. Most of which has been exacerbated by covid, if indeed covid has not itself been the trigger point.

I see young people who have been affected by a range of things and their tears and anger are genuine and painful as is their need to be heard and to share it with someone committed to listening to them. It is our absolute pleasure to be that person for them and for staff in schools. Someone they know will be there for them week in week out. Someone who is not a teacher or a colleague but who bridges a gap. Someone who

demonstrates how valuable they are by showing up, by remembering, by asking, by caring. It is an honour to impart something of who Jesus is to them through these actions, to be the gentle difference in an increasingly harsh world. To be an advocate for them. To help them ask questions and wonder.

This week I say goodbye to one of my longest running mentees, we'll call her "Emma". She's leaving because she now feels ready, the double edge of the work, the joy of seeing a young person ready and the sadness of saying goodbye. "Emma" has been meeting with me for 18 months once a week, even through covid, it's a long time but for her it's been a life line. When we first met, "Emma" was nervous, tentative, and anxious. She was unsure of her place in the world. Lacking in friends, low in esteem and frightened of the future. Roll forward 18 months and "Emma" has transformed. She's used her sessions to unpack much of her past, to acknowledge it, talk it through and put it in its right place. She's sought advice and we've wrestled with things together. Through building her up and edifying her she's grown in confidence, become more aware of her deep worth and been able to rebuild and make new friendships. It is all a testimony to her, and I believe to the Spirit at work and to the power of listening. She now has clear plans for her future and I know she'll face whatever comes her way, knowing she matters. When I asked her how the sessions have been of use to her, she replied "they've been so important, invaluable. I've known you'd be there cheering me on and encouraging me. Also, if you don't mind me saying, you're the first Christian I've met who is just normal, not that I've met many and I don't mean to be rude, I just thought maybe you'd preach at me or judge me but you haven't. You've listened and been kind".



Other work in school continues as well. Our Rooted courses are coming to an end and have been an enormous success. The students have really explored their value, worth, potential and purpose. It has involved exploring aspects of faith and Gods love together.



We've started SPACE, a new lunch club, offering possibly a different and wider group of young people the opportunity to consider moral and ethical questions, to think big thoughts, to question, to listen and to learn to disagree well.

Planning is underway for Easter reflection zones. It's my privilege this time to work in partnership with Matt Williamson, youth worker at St Mary's C of E Church, Saffron Walden. Matt and I are offering options to schools either for us to work with a team of KS2 students to plan and lead the stations or to provide them ourselves. However, in the past working in collaboration with the students has been really successful.

We also continue looking for committed, enthusiastic and passionate individuals to join our team. Whether that be for half a day or 3 days, if there's a school near you that you're keen to love and support, where you have an established relationship on which you could build through service, then please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you and talk through potential opportunities.

Kt Haynes – Team Leader
kt.stortvalley@gmail.com

Please continue to pray for new workers to cover the vacancies we have. Luke 10:2 "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest".



Interview with Susan Smith

As part of our 30th Anniversary celebrations, we're keen to hear from those who have been involved with the Trust over the years. Susan is a longstanding supporter and Nicola caught up with her to find out more about her experience and involvement.

How long have you been a supporter of the work of SVST?

I honestly can't remember how long I have been a supporter of SVST. I think about 25 - 30 years ago, soon after its inception!

How did you come to be involved?

My 4 children were at 4 different schools, (primary and secondary) so I had a good idea of what was happening in the way of teaching, children's needs and worries, and what spiritual guidance was available.

In what ways do you support the work?

Because SVST is such an important ministry and as a Christian mum and my 14th Grandchild is on the way, I like to pray effectively so value the prayer letters emailed regularly, but also SVST comes to mind during my personal prayer times. It's good to meet with other Supporters for focused prayers and encouragement. I have also enjoyed volunteering with 'It's Your Move', 'Christmas Unwrapped' and 'Easter Cracked' in our local primary schools. Those sessions are hugely rewarding for us Volunteers when we watch the faces and see the reactions of those precious growing individuals having fun learning about their Saviour Jesus And it's fun working with other volunteers.

What motivates you to support us?

Of course Christians are led by God's Holy Spirit to love and support various ministries, but I do feel that SVST is worthy of our attention because I think that Jesus has a special heart for children and we can do something about the needs, fears, and spiritual welfare of local children and their school staff.

What would you say to other people who are considering supporting us?

I would say to any Christian who has learnt about SVST, pray for the local primary and secondary school children, for the work and workers of the Trust and ask God if He wants you to be involved in any way in His work. Our age doesn't matter either!

Over the last thirty-two years lots of people have made amazing contributions to the work in many different ways. We would like to pull together some memories and thoughts from current and former Committee members, workers, volunteers, supporters and beneficiaries, ready for our Celebration in June. If you have any thoughts or stories that you would like to share, please send them to us via enquiries@svst.org.uk



DON'T FORGET OUR CELEBRATION!



We'd love you to join us on 12th June to mark our belated 30th anniversary! We are excited to come together for an afternoon of fun for all the family, to celebrate all that has been achieved in schools ministry over the past thirty two years.

There will be BBQ food, ice cream and other treats as well as a bouncy castle, children's craft and much more. There will also be the opportunity to find out more about what's currently happening in schools and how you can get involved.

Please do save the date and invite your friends and family too!

Nicola

We said a temporary farewell to Nicola at the end of January as she takes her maternity leave. She will be sorely missed as we are all amazed by the amount of work she squeezed into 2 days a week. She has left us with lots of lists and guidance to help us over the next few months. We still hope that the Lord will send someone to help fill this gap and we are continuing to advertise for temporary cover.

May God bless Nicola, Matt and Joshua as they await this "special delivery" and we look forward to news of the little one!

STOP PRESS!!!!!! – Congratulations to Matt & Nicola (and of course big brother Joshua!), on the safe arrival of Emilia Louise who was born on the 15th Feb at 2am and weighed 9lb 13ozs. All are doing well.



PRAYER

A group of us have been meeting at Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church to pray for local schools, staff and pupils. It's a real encouragement to come together in prayer and to spend time seeking God's heart and will for our ministry and also an opportunity to hear more about what's happening on the frontline in schools. We would love for more people to join us in this venture, whether it be occasionally or regularly, so please do consider coming along to one of our next gatherings. The dates for our next meetings are as follows;

Monday 28th March 2022, 10.30am to 11.30am

Monday 9th May 2022, 10.30am to 11.30am

We meet upstairs at Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church and all are welcome. Refreshments are also provided.

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement calling all Christians to pray between Ascension and Pentecost, for more people to come to know the love and peace of Jesus Christ. This year TKC runs from 26th May to 5th June and we would love for you to join us in praying particularly for our local communities, schools, staff and pupils during this time.



You can find out more about the wave of prayer by visiting their website - thykingdomcome.global where you can also download resources and add your 'light' to their global map. Do also keep an eye on the News & Events section of our website for all the latest prayer needs and information on what's happening in schools.

NEW TREASURER NEEDED

Just over three years ago my husband and I moved from Sawbridgeworth to Cheshire to be closer to our son and his family. I continued as the Treasurer for SVST and, during the pandemic, my location was not really an issue as so many people were meeting and working remotely. It is now time for me to hand over the financial reins to someone in the Saffron Walden to Sawbridgeworth catchment area who can provide the support the charity needs.

Some basic experience of keeping financial records on a computer and an ability to use online banking is all that is required. On average there are about 20 donations received by standing order, 6 donations received by cheques and 6 payments made by direct debit or through online banking each month. Gift Aid repayment claims are submitted twice a year. Salaries and pension contributions are dealt with by a local accountant. Simple receipts and payments statements are prepared for the Trustees each quarter and these make up the annual accounts which are then reviewed by an Independent Examiner before submission to the Charity Commission.

The role is not onerous and historical records are all available and up to date to enable a smooth handover. If you can spare an hour or two each month and would be willing to find out more please contact me by email:

lpsvst@btinternet.com

Many thanks,

Lynn

Stort Valley Schools Trust is a Registered Charity No. 1001619

