

**Isaiah 43:19 says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert".**

We give thanks for what God is doing.

The Times Jan 2025 reported that there is a thirst for spiritual amongst the teens and 20 year olds. Poll of 10,000 people was conducted by OnePoll

People aged between 45 and 60, are the most irreligious generation, with 25 per cent identifying as atheists.

Those aged over 65 - 20% for identify as atheists

those aged between 25 and 44 - 20% as atheists.

The least likely group to call themselves atheists, are those aged under 25, at only 13%.

62 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds said they are "very" or "fairly" spiritual, compared to just 35 per cent of those aged over 65, 36 per cent of those aged 55 to 64, and 52 per cent of those aged 35 to 44. (Spiritual does not mean considering themselves a Christian)

Bible sales have also gone up significantly in the UK, particularly the Youth Good News Bible, according to the Times – Up 87% 2019 – 2024 when sales of books are generally going down. Sales doubled in the last 3 years.

We have noticed a greater interest in church and questioning about faith at St Mary's Churchgate Street, with more enquiries about baptism and confirmation. Also, with more people actively reading their Bibles and seeking God, a countrywide trend that was being highlighted at the New Wine Leader's Conference lately.

We thank God for each individual life He is touching and pray that these individuals continue to search and find God.

### **Prayer Focus:**

In the past, we have consistently prayed sometimes over years for God to move in what seemed like impossible situations. E.g. A lot of the schools were struggling and classed as inadequate or poor within the town - A situation that was turned around and now the schools in Harlow are doing well. We also prayed about the Enterprise Zone Development, a status which was granted, and Harlow is now the Number One Tech Hub in the country!

With this in mind - we have a focus to pray for **Princess Alexandra Hospital**, which in the latest CQC was found to be 'good' for caring; but needs improvement in all other areas. You can view the CQC report [here](#). (This report is 2 years old, so things have moved on since then, but it is a starting point for our prayers) (Press control and left click the mouse button to access the information)

Please find attached an invitation to an informal communications event hosted by the PAH Patient Panel on the 15th April.

Please pray for:

- Wisdom for the Chief Executive Thom Lafferty who joined PAH in Nov 2024 and for an efficient team to work together for the best of staff and patients.
- The new electronic health record system called 'Alex Health' which integrates patient data from various systems, aiming to improve efficiency for clinicians and patients. Pray for the staff as they adjust to the new system; that it works effectively and that the correct support is forthcoming so that efficiency is increased.
- Recruitment and retention of staff.
- Good working relationship of hospital staff with GPs; social care; pharmacies; community services; mental health support and local charities.

### **Harlow Dementia Friendly Community**

Works to support people with dementia and their Carers and to increase Dementia Awareness in Harlow.

The work is growing - there is great need and the service is being run on a shoestring. The focus is people living well with dementia. There are a number of activities around the town organised by various groups.

Pray for organisations to have greater awareness of the needs of those living with dementia, not least because 'dementia friendly' services are also more friendly for everyone else. More information can be found [here](#). (Press control and left click the mouse button to access the information)

### **St Clare's Hospice**

The service is very stretched as there are only 8 beds available and the hospice covers a huge area, including into north London.

Please pray for the new chaplain Becky - who is trying to organise increased pastoral support for people within their own homes, whilst also training people up to help.

### **MRCT (Michael Robert's Charitable Trust)**

**This charity is now financially 5x bigger than it was 4 years ago.**

They are now established in what was the Wilko's site in the Harvey Centre. The work there includes:

Foodbank – distributed 4,300 food parcels last year

Bounty Club (supermarket with cheaper prices for those who require additional help financially) – with 2,600 members

School uniform shop – low-cost second hand uniform

Bump - 5 - providing free clothes and equipment for children up to the age of 5, for those who cannot buy equipment for themselves. Gave 1,000+ parcels last year

The charity are adding parenting support to the work of Bump to Five - as it has been shown that children are increasingly not ready for starting school

The charity have storage space above the old Wilko's Shop. Essex County Council want the charity to roll out what they are doing with Bounty Club throughout Essex, and have provided a grant to assist. Harlow Council have also provided another premises within the Harvey Centre for an activity venue.

Please pray for Andy Thornton - CEO of MRCT; for wisdom for how to manage all of this work and how to develop it; for the trustees; workers and volunteers to all work well and effectively together and to shine with Jesus love and light to those they meet.

To enable the clients to know their sense of worth and to be able to give back to the community in some way.

Whilst ECC are providing a grant to help develop some services, funds are still needed to keep the rest of the charity going. MRCT are about to deliver leaflets to houses around Harlow asking for further support. Please pray that recipients see the need and grasp the vision of the charity - to show God's love and care to the most vulnerable in society. Please pray for people to commit to giving to the charity on a regular basis.

### **Developments around Harlow**

Please pray for these to be developed well, with good infrastructure and for us as Christ's people to be open to His leading in how to engage with people in these new areas. Please pray for the schools in the Old Harlow area - we have 6 within the parish and are working actively with five presently. Please pray for God's favour to continue to rest on this work and for him to go ahead of us in all of our contacts and interaction with staff, children and parents. We have contact with 3 schools in the next 2 weeks - pray for wisdom for what is covered in each of the sessions.

### **Next H4H Service**

Will be on April 27<sup>th</sup> at Bridge Church, Purford Green, Harlow CM18 6HP - refreshments from 6:10; Service 6:30

The fellowship at Bridge Church have requested prayer for God's favour. They have put in a bid for the former Harlow Court Building and will know later this week if they have been successful.

Please also continue to hold Sharon, her family, friends and Harefield Church fellowship in prayer as they come to terms with the death of Pastor Dave Evans. Dave will be sadly missed by so many people - a real man of God. Please Lord, bring your comfort and strength to those who mourn the loss of Dave. We rejoice that he now has a new body and is with You, his Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Please pray for the Walk with the Cross on Good Friday and consider going if you are able.

### **Walk with the Cross + Good Friday + 18th April**

Starting at 10 am with prayers at St Paul's, then follow the cross through the town centre and assemble at BB's coffee shop in the Harvey Centre.



Please find attached a flyer for circulation among your congregations, families and friends.

### [Walk with the Cross - Heart 4 Harlow](#)

Prayer is vital - and whilst numbers are not important necessarily, I was very encouraged by the 38 people who attended the meeting at St Mary's on Sunday. God blesses when we come together in unity.

'How good and how pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! ....For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life evermore' (Psalm 133: 1.3b)

'brothers and sisters, **23** Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' (Hebrews 10:19-23-25)