

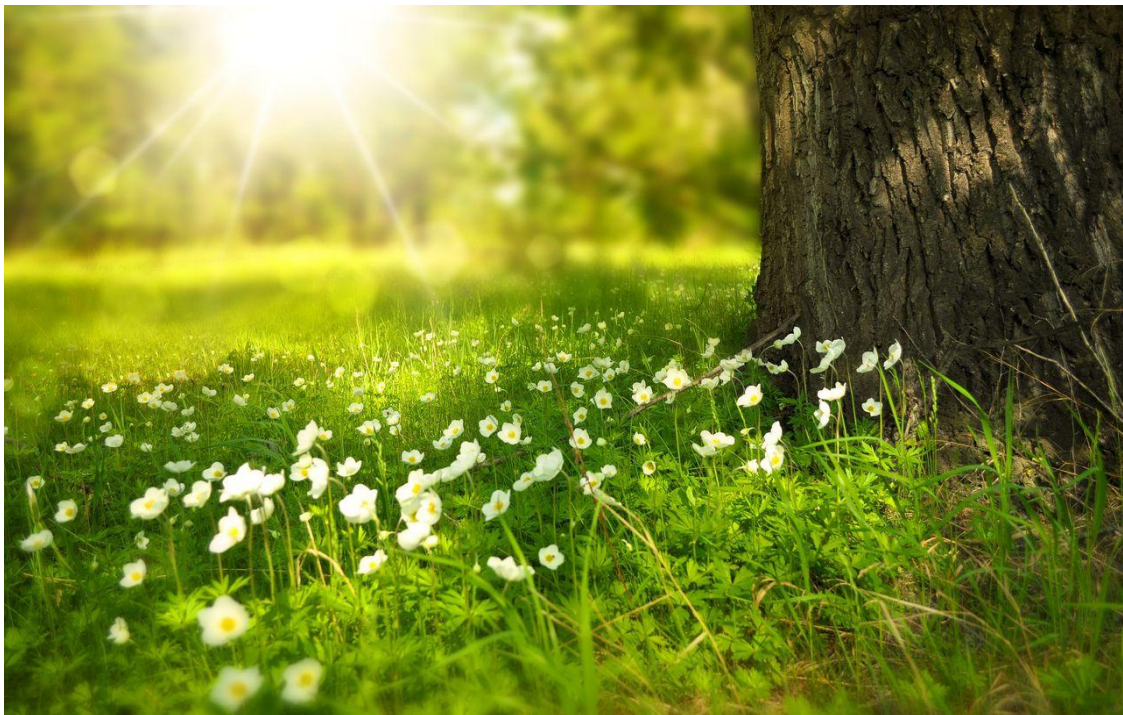


**FAITH AND SOCIAL ACTION AT ST ANDREW'S
MAGAZINE**

WITH UPDATES ON THE CHARITIES WE SUPPORT

SPRING ISSUE

APRIL 2025



**To be a Christian means being
a prisoner of hope.**

Cathrine Fungai Ngangira

Dear Friends

Are you a prisoner of hope?

I must admit, I paused when I first read this expression in our Lent group book 'Wild Bright Hope'. The writer, drawing on the theologian Jürgen Moltmann, explains that God has promised us a future that is still in the process of being realized, and hope is the force that drives us towards that future. Hope is not an escape from reality but a response to it.

As Christians, we really are prisoners of hope. We cannot escape the steadfastness and vigilance asked of us – steadfastness in our trust that God is indeed establishing His kingdom, even when it doesn't much look like it, and vigilance in watching for what God is doing in and around us so that we can go in the same direction.

At St Andrew's, our commitment to the charities we support locally and abroad is part of our being prisoners of hope. Our Project Champions report below. If I may highlight one terrific effort, it is the OM Quiz Night in January, arranged by Peter Kelly and Simon Bray. It was an evening of great fun, with generous gifts from the unfailingly generous Cobham High Street. ***Special thanks go to ABC Dental, Del Posto Restaurant, Academy Salons and Painshill Park.*** The evening raised about £1,500 for our charities. Same time next year, Peter and Simon?

May God bless us all, prisoners of His hope.

Charleen

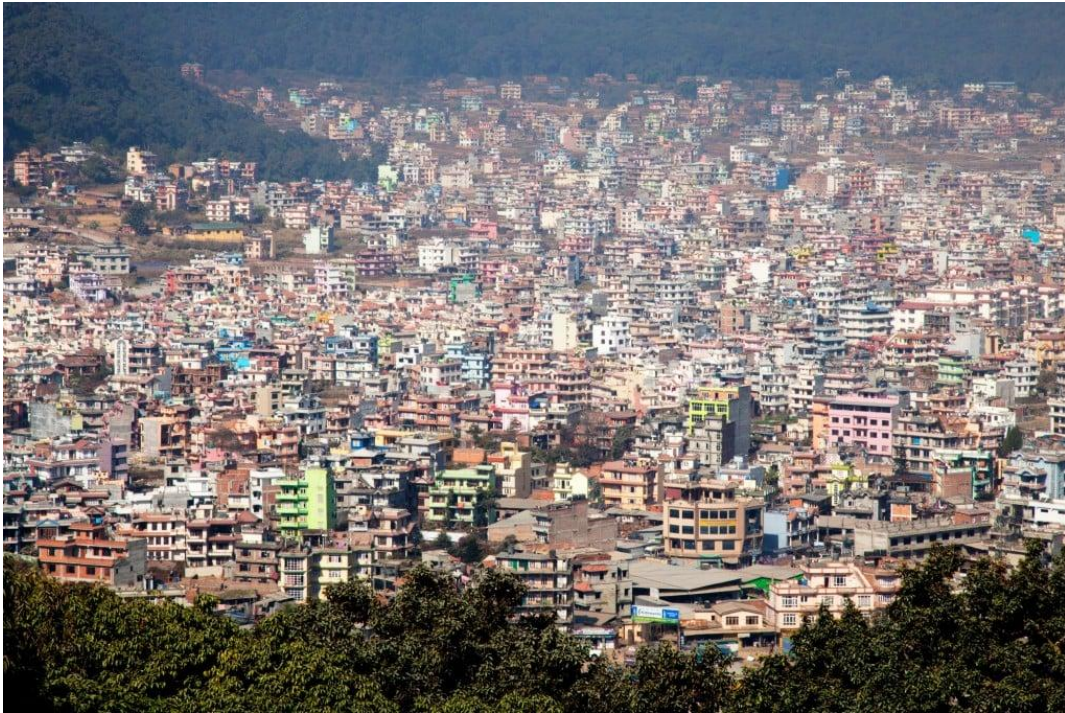
Rev. Charleen Hollington

Associate Minister

Chairperson, Faith and Social Action Committee

OPERATION MOBILISATION HIMALAYAS

Report from Peter Kelly, champion for OM Himalayas



Picture: Kathmandu

We hear from OM in Nepal that with the favourable weather, the OM ministry and outreach activities and training are in full swing. The teams throughout the Nepal countryside are very active right now, delivering healthy family training, with a big focus on family nutrition plus well-baby care. Additionally, local OM community members are assisting people who need to be aware of, or who need transportation to, drug and alcohol abuse treatment programmes. There are very good programmes available from the government, but many people are not aware of how they can access these services. In addition to this, OM teams are providing support to help patients access other medical treatments, such as eye surgeries. Lastly, OM is assisting remote villagers who need help accessing the country's education system, which includes tuition and grant supplement for some of the poorest villages.

The OM team are very excited to welcome a new class of candidates seeking to become OM Community workers. The training programmes for new community workers are now happening in multiple sites and the local leadership team sends thanks to St. Andrew's for the faithful and longstanding prayer and financial commitment which enables the day-to-day ministries as well as their plans for growth. The local teams there pray for St. Andrew's regularly and they hope to welcome us back if that is possible in a few years' time.

Prayer points

Please pray for -

- ✓ *The fruitfulness of all the projects, programmes, activities, outreach and mission and community work by OM described in this report;*
- ✓ *The protection of women and all workers and people of faith and for a lessening of tensions between various faiths (and between religious and secular) in the society of Nepal.*

If you would like to learn more, connect directly with the ministry or make a financial contribution to OM, please contact Peter Kelly at pjk207@me.com.

TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR GOOD

Report from Carrie Taylor, St Andrew's project champion for TLG

*Why was the maths book sad?
Because it had so many problems!*

We hear so much at the moment about the mental health problems that proliferate in schools. We know that many children are still suffering from the effects of the lockdown, and anxiety and stress are common terms we hear quite young children speaking about. It's therefore especially heartwarming to read the latest OFSTED report from St. Andrew's school that says: *This is a warm and friendly school at the heart of the local community. The school has high ambition for all pupils. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well. Pupils are happy and well cared for by a team of dedicated staff.*

The TLG team feels immensely privileged to be a small part of the team that cares for these children. We continue to build friendships with both children and parents/carers as we journey with our individual TLG pupils through the year. This can be a particularly stressful time as some year 6 children find that they have not been awarded the place in the secondary school of their choice, and stress levels rise as they prepare for the Year 6 SATs tests. TLG coaching sessions give children a safe space to talk about their worries and to engage with activities that help build resilience.

Members from our church continue to visit our students at St. Andrew's School once a week, to give them an hour away from any sense of having to perform, achieve or 'keep up'. We and they look forward to our sessions where we open a space for children to chat as they have fun.

We are so glad that Nigel Goddard has completed his training and has started coaching his first pupil, bringing our team to 4 members. However, there is always room for more! It's also a joy to learn that Esher Green Baptist Church just down the road is starting their TLG journey, hoping to bring hope and God's transforming love to pupils and families in the Esher area.

Please continue to pray that the children and families will become involved with our church family and find faith and for God to bless and encourage our new coach and indeed all of us as we seek to show his love to others.

Prayer points:

Please pray for-

- ✓ *Children at the school who are experiencing problems, at home or at school;*
- ✓ *More coaches to come forward*

If you are interested in becoming a coach please speak to Carrie. via parishoffice@sac.church.

OASIS CHILD CARE TRUST

Report from David Taylor, project champion for Oasis

St Andrew's Faith & Social Action supports Oasis in its Freedom Programme which deals with issue of Domestic Abuse. The following are just a few of the very positive quotes from a recently published "Full Survey Report from Clients, Community Partners & Stakeholders".

"Oasis has given us the support and funding to fight a battle of domestic abuse. My family and I are safe and recovering well."

"Oasis has supported me in so many ways- from legal advice, emotional support, counselling, therapy courses, to days out with my children, clothing, fresh food and hampers. The food bank takes a lot of financial pressure away, and the vouchers for activities have meant that I can treat my children when I otherwise wouldn't have been able to. Oasis is truly a lifeline for some people."

"Where do I start... I got help to allow us to see family abroad via court, the freedom programme has made me so much more prepared and equipped to defend myself and my daughter... The summer fresh foodbank blew my mind! I'm still eating the dishes I made and froze down. It made me feel like I was valuable enough to be gifted fresh food (which is all we like to eat) and have amazing access to clothes too. I felt rich with love."

"In our darkest moments over the last few years, they have given us support in so many ways without any question. They have helped us when we wouldn't have had any food for Christmas or presents. They have put us in touch with local support and networks to help with various difficulties we have faced over the years, and even now several years later I know we would always be welcome there without hesitation with a kindness and will help wherever they can."

"Oasis felt like an angel sent from above."

There will be an opportunity to learn more about Oasis at the 10am service on 15th June at which David Taylor will speak and interview Caroline Edwards, Director of Oasis.

Prayer points:

Please pray for-

- ✓ *Energy and vision for the Oasis team;*
- ✓ *The very many Cobham families requiring assistance in these difficult days, whether this is through the Fresh Food Programme or where there is domestic abuse and other areas of social concern.*

If you would like to make a donation or get involved in the Oasis Freedom project or any other work of Oasis, please contact David Taylor via parishoffice@sac.church.

FOODBANK

Report from Alison Greenwood, project champion for the Foodbank

How did we do in 2024?

Since April 2024, at the start of the financial year, Cobham Area Foodbank has provided food for **1,668** people in our community – **1,029 adults and 639 children**. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we received **22,854 kg** of food through various donation points and distributed **22,116 kg** during this period.

In addition, we delivered 51 Christmas hampers and provided bags filled with fresh vegetables, fruit, eggs, and meats. Your support, especially during the festive season, ensured that many local families in need were able to enjoy a wonderful Christmas. Thank you for standing with us and making a real difference in the lives of so many.

Our volunteers and supporters

We are very fortunate to have a dedicated team of cheerful and flexible volunteers to keep our operation running smoothly throughout the year. Their hard work ensures our supplies are well managed, even as the needs of local families continue to grow. We are also incredibly grateful to the agencies and organisations that help us identify families in crisis and issue food vouchers for distribution. Among them are the **Cobham Centre for the Community, PA Housing, Oasis, Esher Citizens Advice Bureau, Weybridge Job Centre Plus**, and many others who work tirelessly to ensure that no one in our community is left behind.

Your ongoing support, combined with these vital partnerships, plays a crucial role in making a positive impact on so many lives.



Squires Garden Centres

We're delighted to have been chosen once again as [Squires Garden Centre Cobham](#)'s **Charity of the Year**, and we really appreciate their continued support. This year, we've had the pleasure of participating in their charity plantation and the festive Christmas shopping event. Keep an eye out

for more exciting activities and collaborations in the coming year!



Cobham United Church

A big thank you to our amazing volunteer, Philly, for crafting the incredibly artistic and inventive Christmas tree displayed in the hall of [Cobham United Church](#), our Distribution Centre. Philly's creation was made entirely from recycled materials – from washed, out-of-date tins to reused ribbons, a biscuit box repurposed with lights, and a donated recycled Christmas star. The tree was part of the church's 'Christmas Tree Celebration,' where groups who use the church facilities have contributed their own festive displays.

How can you help us in 2025?

We couldn't do this without the generosity of our community so thank you for your continued support. In the coming months, we are focusing on:

- **Expanding Our Reach:** We're looking at how we can provide additional support to more families, particularly those impacted by the rising cost of living.
- **Urgent Appeals:** We are currently in need of 1L long-life fruit juice and milk, tinned meats, and basic toiletries. Any donations of these essential items would be greatly appreciated.
- **Community Events:** We'll be collecting donations outside Waitrose on 26th April

For those that would like to make financial contributions, you can donate directly into our [bank account](#). Details can be found on the website.

Prayer points

Please pray that -

✓Our community will continue to be generous financially and especially with food donations.

✓We find an accessible community space from which the warehouse and distribution centre can operate on the same site.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Report from Helen Goddard, champion for Christian Aid Week



Christian Aid Week 2025 is fast approaching- May 11th – 17th. The focus of this year's appeal is on the Q'eqchi community of the Alta Veropas region of Guatemala where global warming is causing intense heatwaves and storms, killing crops people grow for food and for income to pay for health care and education. Even drought-resistant crops like cacao and banana trees are dying. Through Christian Aid's partner Congcoop, indigenous farmers are able to learn to adapt to the changing conditions and grow more resilient crops, conserve water and make organic fertilisers, then share their knowledge with their whole community.

This year, we will again be marking C.A.Week with daily messages and videos, offering a chance to make an online donation. Please share the links with family and friends. Some people will also be making house-to- house collections among their friends and neighbours.

Perhaps you would like to hold a small coffee morning at home for friends; do a sponsored event or take part in the "70k in May" sponsored challenge (to cover 70km cycling, running, walking, skating, rowing, swimming...on your own or as a group); or to do an envelope collection among family and friends.

Contact helen@sac.church for more info and resources.

Prayer points:

Please pray for –

- ✓ *a generous response to CA Week;*
- ✓ *concerted government action to combat climate change;*
- ✓ *the people of Guatamala, especially the indigenous communities pushed to the edges of society;*
- ✓ *governments worldwide to work for justice and to prioritize tackling poverty;*

GARDEN ROUTE CHILDREN'S TRUST

Report from Paul Hurrell, project champion for the GRCT



In 2024 the trustees of the GRCT agreed to end its relationship with the Laingsburg project with effect from 31st December last year. This will enable the charity to focus on its 12 core projects in Eastern and Western Cape, and prevent its limited resources being spread too thinly. Although the number of projects has been reduced from 14 to 12 over the past 18 months, the number of children being fed each day has risen to approximately 9,000 due to expansion in the George area of the W.Cape in particular.

The decision taken by the UK and USA governments in February 2025 to significantly cut aid to South Africa has had a catastrophic effect on the poor communities in which the GRCT operates, and where unemployment is rife and the socio-economic outlook is already very bleak. The work of the GRCT is now more critical than ever, and raising enough funds to feed 9,000 children a nutritious breakfast each day will be the top priority in 2025. The charity needs to raise £100,000 per year to sustain its programmes.

In 2025, the GRCT plans to roll out its Breakfast for Breakfasts campaign to areas beyond Oxshott and Cobham. Achieving this will require broader involvement of its supporters who will be encouraged to hold their own breakfasts and create wider awareness of the charity's mission.

If you wish to learn more about the GRCT or you wish to hold a Breakfast for Breakfasts of your own, please do contact me by email at paulh@sac.church.

Prayer Points

✓ Lord, we pray for all the aid and social care workers in poverty-stricken townships during this difficult time. We ask that through your holy spirit you will guide them and give them the courage to continue performing their life-saving and life-building work.

If you would like to make a financial contribution to the GRCT, please contact Paul Hurrell (paulh@sac.church).

