

# Newsletter 2011



# FAITH

## Christian Group

Working among the homeless, poor and needy of Reading

**2010 was a year of great change for FAITH**, not least in that we have moved premises and took on completely new staff.

We have settled into new premises on **Silver Street** which have proven to be ideal for us.

### "ReadiFood"

The Warehouse is large enough to house the brilliant influx of food from school Harvest Festival collections. The larger space makes life so much easier for ReadiFood parcel packing.



### "ReadiStreet"

Relocating our Soup Runs and the Tea Bar in the same place and all on ground level has made life infinitely easier for our volunteer teams. Our team of volunteers grows steadily. 2010 saw us introduce a new training programme.

### Stepping Stone

Our first house for the homeless, now named McConnell after the founder of FAITH, is well and truly operational. We are now looking to Add to it with further properties, support permitting.



### The Office

Our 'new' office is much larger and we are enjoying the space it gives us. We are now able to let each member of staff have their own desk.

**ReadiFood**  
Reading's Food Bank  
Food Parcels for those in Need

Malcolm Peirce  
Director  
0793 684 5300



## **Introducing: new FAITH support workers**

*Since our last newsletter, FAITH has acquired three new Support Workers. Here, they introduce themselves in their own words.*

**Alison Peyton**

FAITH Support Worker with responsibility for  
**0793 684 5303** [alison@fcg.org.uk](mailto:alison@fcg.org.uk)

**ReadiFood**  
Reading's Food Bank  
Food Parcels for those in Need



I was asked recently in a church service what my highlight of 2010 was, without much thought I answered, "Getting my job at FAITH". It was much more than getting a job, it was finding the call that God has on my life at this time.

I come from a mixture of jobs, personnel in social services; advisor at Citizens Advice Bureau; Christian Bookshop worker and the wide and varied work of being a Mum for 16 years! Most recently I had for 18 months been involved in a community cafe run at the church I attend, 'St John and St Stephens'.

So by Easter 2010, I found myself, needing a job, and asking God, where He wanted me to serve Him and how on earth He could use me?! A couple of months later, I started volunteering with ReadiFood. From that very first day ReadiFood seemed to be ticking all the boxes I had for a job that was in tune with what God was saying to me about caring for vulnerable and needy people in the community. It was an answer to many prayers and so it was that by the end of last August I found myself working for FAITH.

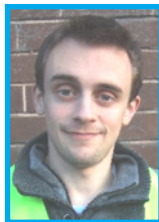
The first four months were a huge learning curve, with Harvest collections, Christmas parcels and the freezing conditions all making me very grateful for the many fantastic volunteers who helped sort and check food and those who have given so generously. Your support is humbling and I'm looking forward to the year ahead.

I hope to promote ReadiFood, both as a resource for many agencies, and also as a practical way we as churches and individuals, can respond to God's compassion and love for all.

**Richard Caldicott**

FAITH Support Worker with responsibility for  
**0793 684 5302** [richard@fcg.org.uk](mailto:richard@fcg.org.uk)

**Stepping Stones**  
Housing the Homeless



I started work with FAITH from a background in Building Surveying. I was nearly a year through an RICS training contract with a surveying consultancy in April 2009 when I was made redundant as a result of the recession. Following this, I worked on a voluntary basis as a debt advisor for Reading Frontline in between stints of working in telesales, data entry, accounts and gardening, in and around Basingstoke.

I started my part-time role as a support worker with FAITH in August of this year with the remit of providing pastoral support to the tenants of the Stepping Stones project as well as dealing with the administration that it entails. Stepping Stones is a housing project that seeks to provide a house to those who were previously homeless with the intention of moving them towards employment and an independent life.

**Jonathan Langley**

**FAITH Support Worker with responsibility for**  
**0793 684 5301**      [jonty@fcg.org.uk](mailto:jonty@fcg.org.uk)

**Readistreet:**

Like Alison and Richard, I come to FAITH from a varied background of previous and current jobs. For many years I worked as a radio and nightclub DJ and did publicity work for an independent record company in South Africa. Since moving to the UK in 2004, I have worked for BMS World Mission (formerly the Baptist Missionary Society) as a writer and audio producer, and that is where I spend most of my time when not working with FAITH. In my free time I run a few Bible studies and work as a freelance journalist, mainly with *Christianity* magazine and the *Baptist Times*.



Over the last few years, my exposure through BMS to the realities of life on the ground for the developing world's poor and my growing awareness of societal inequalities in this country has been used by God to draw my attention to what his word says about how we should treat the poor and the needy. Matthew 25 kept coming back to me, and when I learned of an opportunity to work part-time for FAITH doing something more direct to ease the suffering of those in need, I jumped at the chance.

So far, the work has been hard, but immensely fulfilling and very different from the communications-oriented work I have been used to. I am constantly pleased and impressed by the dedication of our volunteers and the God-given value inherent in every one of our 'clients'.



### **Reading Festival**

FAITH once again had a presence at Reading Festival. It is such a fantastic opportunity to share the love of Jesus with a large number of younger people who might otherwise have little or no positive contact with Christians. It is a valuable outreach, but expensive to run. In previous years we have had specific donations to finance it. In 2010 that didn't happen. Please pray that next year someone does come forward.

### **Christmas**

We are again grateful to Blessed Hugh Faringdon School for doing a special Christmas food collection. That, along with some of the donations from around 20 Primary Schools at Harvest time, meant that we were able to deliver 100 special Christmas Hampers to people in need in the Reading area.



### **A Personal note from the Director**

For those familiar with FAITH it would seem strange if I didn't add a personal note to recognise that 2010 was a tough year. My wife gave up a year long fight against cancer in May. Coming to terms with her dying and her death has taken and is taking time. Such events do have a profound effect. It is at such times that our faith is truly tested and I am so grateful that I know that she has an assured eternity. Helping others to find that assurance is as important a part of the work of FAITH as is ensuring that they have food to eat.

# VOLUNTEERING

Despite having over 100 volunteers serving in different capacities we still need more. Retired people would really find daytime volunteering very rewarding.

**Daytimes** Assist with food sorting, packing and delivery  
( We need at least one more driver )  
Assist staff in visiting tenants of Stepping Stones  
Cleaning the Tea Bar  
Sandwich collections from Pret a Manger

**Evenings** Soup Runs - Tuesday to Friday 7.30 till 9.00  
(even once a month helps us)

**Sundays** Tea Bar - 4.00 or 5.00 till 6.00

# GIVING

With the ongoing expansion of the work of FAITH we need an increase in both general and specific funding.

Monthly gift-aided payments help us to budget responsibly.  
One-off gifts enable us to invest in specific items such as **Stepping Stones** and **ReadiFood**.

We are grateful to a number of commercial sponsors, especially

★ **PRET A MANGER** ★

and **PICNIC** (Buttermarket, Reading) for daily supplies of sandwiches, also

*Curves*

**SFL**  
Furniture in Bookcases

**COPY CENTRE**

**FASTSIGNS**



**FAITH**  
Christian Group

Working with the Homeless and Poor of Reading

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