

APRIL 2021

SPARKFISH

Newsletter

Inspiring young people in faith, hope and love!

Message from the Director

Along with the rest of the world I reflected recently on the beginning of the pandemic and the year since the first lockdown began. This time last year I was still on my maternity leave with my son Freddie and he was just a baby. This year he is a walking, talking, climbing toddler keeping me on my toes and I am back at SparkFish as Director!

So much has changed for all of us this year; we have experienced so much, felt so much and yet at times it has felt like time stood still. Never has a year felt that it has gone so quickly yet so slowly at the same time! In the Hope strand we often talk about helping young people to become more resilient – this year has definitely tested our resilience and I pray as we start this new season, we feel a sense of peace, rest and a chance to reflect on this last year before we hurry back into 'normality'.

SparkFish has gone on an incredible journey this year as well! We turned ten at the end of 2020 and celebrated our birthday virtually on YouTube in January. You can still check out our virtual service if you haven't done so already – there are messages from Reverend Liz Barnett, thank you messages from supporters old and new and birthday wishes from many of the schools we support. We loved celebrating with everyone, sharing what we have been up to and where we dream of going next.

It has certainly been a time of reflection for SparkFish over the last year. We sadly had to pause our work last year during the first lockdown and our staff went on furlough for a short period of time in the summer term. The staff team came back in the Autumn with fresh energy, fresh vision

and fresh enthusiasm though and we have been incredibly busy since – which you will hear all about from our wonderful staff!

We do ask for your prayers in this next season of our work. The referrals for our Hope strand are at an all time high as we now have a Secondary Schools Worker based in St Bede's School, Reigate School, The Warwick and Merstham Park at least one day every week. Lindsey Hardwick and Jen Smart also go back to delivering Drawing and Talking Therapy at St Matthews Church of England School and Furze Field Primary School next term. We pray for a continuation of our funding so we can continue to support students at this difficult time in the next academic year. We also pray that the staff will be provided with the energy levels, resilience and sense of peace to work with students struggling with such complex emotions at an incredibly difficult time for everyone.

We are so excited about what this year holds in store and we are so grateful for all of your support over the last ten years – we could not have done it without you!

Harriet

"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."

Isaiah 43:19

Hellos and Goodbyes

We have had a lot of goodbyes and hellos already this year as well. In January, we sadly said goodbye to our administrator of 9 years Shirley Harnett as she retired. We are so grateful for all she has brought to SparkFish and all she did to keep us running so smoothly these last 9 years. It is not an easy job keeping so many school's workers, volunteers and trustees organised and we are so grateful for all she did behind the scenes to keep SparkFish on track.

We also say goodbye to Reverend George Watt in April as he moves on to pastures new as the Moderator of Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church. George has been with SparkFish for ten years and will be greatly missed both as the Chair of Trustees and in the local community as the minister of Reigate Park Church. He has been a great support to the staff, trustees and on the front-line delivering schools work in many of the local schools. We will especially miss his portrayal of Judas in the Easter Experience!

As well as George and Shirley we also said goodbye to Viv Hawes in March as she stepped down as trustee after faithfully serving for many years. Viv has been an incredible support to SparkFish behind the scenes all these years from

being responsible for safeguarding and human resources.

We wish George, Viv and Shirley all the best for the future and we do hope to keep in touch!



As well as goodbyes we also said hello to our new trustees Reverend Alison Elson who is the Assistant Priest at St Luke's Church and to Eddie Newton who has been a long-term supporter of SparkFish. In May, we will also welcome our new administrator on board – Christine Starkey. We are so excited to have them join us as we embark on the next ten years of SparkFish.

Harriet

Message from the Trustees

Wow! What an amazing 10 years it has been for SparkFish. It has been a great privilege to be part of what has been happening as a Trustee and latterly as chair of Trustees. But even more exciting has been getting involved in the schools. For many years I was able to go into primary schools to take assemblies. It was great to use my Godly Play skills in storytelling for Christmas Journey and introducing it to others and, perhaps not to be shouted about too loudly, betraying Jesus numerous times as I played the role of Judas in Easter Experience. Thank you everyone for an amazing time and as I move on to be Moderator of

Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church I look forward to hearing what is happening back here and what God is doing in the lives of children and young people.

George



Learn

During the spring lockdown we have been focusing on producing RE resources for primary schools. We were able to produce a pre-recorded collective worship on the topic of 'Perseverance' for Reigate Parish school, and we also produced a collective worship on the topic of Easter which was received by 20 local primary schools.

Our main project this term has been the production of our Easter digital resource 'The Time Detective Agency: In The Case Of The Missing Body'. This is a 30 minute drama written by Charles Merritt where two detectives explore the first Easter story. We were able to combine some 'in person' scenes with staff members with the interviews of characters via video link to create the

drama. We are very grateful to our team of volunteer actors, Charles who edited and produced the film and Reigate Baptist church who provided us with a filming location. We have already had some lovely feedback from a school who have used the film resource, and are really pleased that we were able to provide a digital resource in place of our usual live performances this year. We look forward to the possibility of being able to return to our 'live' RE events in the next academic year.

For a sneak peek of this year's Easter production, check out the trailer on our YouTube channel!

Lindsey

Hope

I've absolutely loved leading the 'Upbeat' course for boys at the Warwick - so much so that I've started doing it at Merstham Park too! 'Upbeat' is a six-week course created by Youthscape and the Salvation Army aimed at boys aged 13-16 focussing on emotional health and what it means to be a 'man'. The course uses videos featuring interviews with men who talk about their emotional journeys and each week the interviewees suggest a song to listen to that means something to them. It's a really fun, interactive course that focuses on

such a useful and important topic - one that I'm incredibly passionate about. I can't wait to do more over the next few weeks!

Charles



Think!

Our Think! Spaces have mainly been on hold during this season but we are looking forward to bringing these back to our regular rhythm of work soon. However, we were able to support and resource The Hawthorns School in February this year with their Prayer Space at Home as part of their online RS lessons. Their pupils were asked to find or create a space at home to pause and reflect. Their teacher led them through some Think! activities helping them to reflect on the past year, their present thoughts and feelings and their hopes and dreams for the future. How wonderful that during the season of homeschooling, prayer was taken into the children's homes!

Jen

Connect with us online

[YouTube](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Instagram](#)
[Website](#)