

AUTUMN 2025

SPARKFISH Newsletter

Inspiring young people in faith, hope and love!

Message from the Director

Anyone who knows me well knows that I love Autumn! Probably a little bit too much... I have a deep love for pumpkins and my house in September becomes adorned with all things 'pumpkin' - pumpkin mugs, pumpkin cushions, pumpkins on the doorstep!

As a family we don't celebrate Halloween (so no scary Halloween decorations or gruesome pumpkins for us) and now my son is 6 I have loved having the conversation with him about how as Christians we celebrate the beautiful things, not the dark scary things. We celebrate hope and life!

"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness..." John 12:46

At SparkFish our vision is to 'inspire young people in faith, hope and love'. As I write this newsletter piece our staff team are in the depths of renewing our safeguarding training, reading policies and documents about how to safeguard and protect the vulnerable in our society. Some of what we see and hear in our work can feel incredibly dark and scary. A lot of what we see in the news- both locally and nationally, can feel dark and scary. But as Christians we want to 'inspire in faith, hope and love.'

In Psalm 32:10b-11 (NLT) it says, 'Unfailing love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!'

Across the UK, churches are noticing a growing spiritual hunger, especially among young people. Recent research shows that 37% are curious to know more about the Bible and God.

We are seeing this in our Christian Unions. Before the summer holidays we had the joy of giving out Bibles to young people from non-faith families (or in some cases inter-faith families) who were interested in learning more about Christianity and in reading the Bible.

The young people took these new Bibles and excitedly started flicking through them, writing their names at the front and discussing which book they were going to start reading first. We even gave out Bible highlighters which were a huge hit as young people highlighted their favourite passages of scripture.

Over the summer holidays one of the young people shared that she had already read the book of Matthew and was now going through the Psalms. And they even discussed setting up a WhatsApp group to discuss what they were discovering.

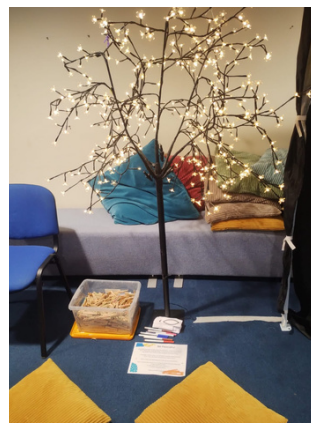
In another school we had a new young man come to our Christian Union and he shared that he had discovered Christianity through watching YouTube videos and now he wanted to know more and practise his new faith.

We are so excited to continue inspiring these young people to discover more about God, to learn about prayer and the joy of the Bible. We want to continue to be a light in dark places, to share the love of God, the hope of the Gospel and inspire young people in faith.

I love this prayer of Mother Teresa,
'Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine.'

Please do be praying for us as we go into schools this term and for the young people and staff we meet each week.

Harriet Pearce, Director of SparkFish



Learn

It has been an exciting start to the new term here at SparkFish. One of our main RE projects this term is our Christmas Journey for school year 2. Children visit the journey one class at a time to explore different aspects of the Christmas story, and they explore why it is so important to Christians. This year we continue with our three weeks at three venues:

19th - 21st November at St Bartholomew's Church, Horley
24th, 25th, 27th and 28th November at Redhill Methodist Church
1st - 5th December at Reigate Park Church

We are very grateful to the three churches for hosting us, and we are excited to have already received bookings from 17 local schools! The Christmas Journey would not be possible without our committed team of over 50 volunteers to help us in various roles including acting, storytelling, journey guiding, craft supervising and serving refreshments. We also need people to help us with the setting up and packing away at our three venues which will be on the following dates:

Horley set up on Tuesday 18th November 5pm, pack down 2:45pm on the Friday 21st November
Redhill set up on Sunday 23rd November at 2pm, pack up on Friday 28th November at 2:45pm
Reigate set up on Sunday 30th November at 2pm, pack down 11:45am on Friday 5th December

If you would like to volunteer in any of these roles, please do let us know!

We also have had bookings and enquiries from schools for assemblies and RE lessons which is very encouraging, and we will be continuing to support our local Open the Book assembly teams who will be visiting Wray Common and St Matthew's schools this term.

I am also involved in supporting new year 7 students settling into their new schools. I will be working with some students at Merstham Park School and also leading some workshops for Carrington year 7 students. As well as this I am busy continuing to support Primary School students at St Matthew's and Furzefield Schools this term.

Please do pray for us as we start a busy term with many exciting opportunities.

- Lindsey Hardwick, Deputy Director & Learn Coordinator



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Think!

Autumn is a season of turning and transformation. As leaves change colour and the air grows crisp, we're reminded of God's promise of renewal: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). With the start of a new school year, we at SparkFish feel a renewed sense of hope and the excitement of fresh opportunities to help children and young people pause, reflect, and encounter the sacred in their everyday lives.

Last term we wrote to local Headteachers to share the vision of our Think strand - spaces for spiritual reflection that welcome children of all faiths and none. The positive responses were encouraging, and as a result we will be piloting our very first "Think in a Box" at Reigate Parish School this term.

This ready-to-use kit contains creative, interactive prayer and reflection activities, enabling schools to host their own mini- Think Space without needing a SparkFish team on site. Each box provides materials, clear instructions, and thoughtful prompts for reflective prayer, so staff can create a quiet classroom space where children can explore big questions and meet God in stillness.

The theme for this first pilot is "Belonging", a truth close to God's heart: "You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household" (Ephesians 2:19). Our prayer is that every child will come to know that they are wonderfully made and deeply loved.

Looking ahead, we are excited to host our first outdoor Think Space in the summer term at Meath Green Infant School, using their beautiful wooden classroom designed for Forest School activities. Surrounded by creation, children will be invited to pause and listen to the gentle whispers carried on rustling leaves and birdsong.

We are also preparing for our first Christmas Prayer Space at The Hawthorns Lower School, welcoming children aged 4-7. Through simple, sensory activities, pupils will explore the wonder of the Christmas story, sparking awe and gratitude.

This year we are placing special emphasis on helping young people engage in reflective prayer. Each activity will include gentle prompts and invitations to encourage children to connect with what we call a 'Relationship with the Sacred/Divine', one of the four key areas of our Think spaces.

As autumn reminds us that change can be beautiful, we step into this school year trusting the God who makes all things new. Please pray with us that every child we meet will discover that they belong - to their community, to one another, and to the God who loves them.

- Charlie Auton, Think Strand Coordinator

Hope

An Introduction to Our New Secondary School Youth Worker - Tim Hill

Tim is no stranger to SparkFish - for the last 5 years he has been working for the Church of England in the Parish of Horley where he lives with his wife Mandy and supporting the schools of Horley.

Tim has had input into the 3 churches in Horley Parish and into the community as well as keeping busy presenting Walk Through the Bible in 4 schools. Tim has spent most of his Fridays at Oakwood School. Tim has enjoyed taking part in many Christmas Journey and Easter Experience productions and has helped with Think Spaces in several schools too. Tim has taken hundreds of assemblies and has lead or assisted in hundreds of lessons.

As well as the Parish Youth Group Tim has run Bible Studies and also works with the YMCA as a Youth Worker. The YMCA work is continuing and this will sometimes cross over (in meeting young people) with his SparkFish role, which is two days a week in secondary schools.

Once fully inducted and trained he will have one day in Merstham Park School and one day in Oakwood Secondary School, Horley leading mentoring and small groups. The latter will be a welcome return as the school population know him well.

Born in Wales and with a strong Christian background, Tim has followed a pan-denominational path of serving God wherever the opportunity arises... Bournemouth, Basingstoke, Horley, and surrounding areas. He is creative-writing and performing and cites his great influences as Roy Castle and Spike Milligan - plus Jesus of course!

He is excited about working with SparkFish, "I and others have prayed for this opportunity and believe God will use this to reach youngsters and staff!"

Pray for Tim and the team, that doors will open to share wisdom and enhance the schools as they help these children and young people grow into this confusing world. Pray that the team will be tuned in to what people need to say and will know how to respond. Pray and give, so that SparkFish can continue to do this vital work.

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Administration

Some of you may have seen we had a gremlin at work in our Lloyds account this month and no donations in to the SparkFish account on the 1st or 2nd of September were collected. Some people have kindly made their payment online via Stewardship and we have recovered about half of what we were expecting this month. If you regularly donate to us and notice that your SparkFish donation wasn't taken on the 1st or 2nd September, please consider resending your donation via Stewardship using this link: <https://account.stewardship.org.uk/gift/start/20393634>.

Alternatively, you can find the link to Stewardship by visiting our website Sparkfish.org.uk. Please do get in touch if you have any questions. You can email Elizabeth at office@sparkfish.org.uk

Thank you - Elizabeth Smith, Administrator

Our Think Co-ordinator Charlie Auton, his wife Becky and their daughter Eliya welcomed baby Ezra at the end of August and we are absolutely thrilled for them! Weighing 8lbs10oz Ezra arrived on the 27th August.

Please pray for Charlie and his family as they adjust to being a family of 4 and for Charlie as he comes back from paternity leave to a very busy term at SparkFish.

