

ReadiFood We now benefit from permanent collection points in many supermarkets.



But we need you to **volunteer** to help when we do **weekend collections**. Go to our homepage and click on "Supermarkets" www.readifood.org.uk



We regularly have **corporate teams** in to help sort food and they always enjoy themselves doing something very different from their normal work. But we rely day to day on volunteers like yourself to come in and **sort** food and **pack** and **deliver** parcels.

Financial Support

We constantly need both general and specific funding. You can ring-fence if you only want to help a specific area of our work.

Monthly gift-aided payments help us to budget responsibly, whilst one-off gifts enable us to invest in specific items such as **ReadiFood** and **a bed for the night** which alone costs £10,000.

You can now donate online

Or if you prefer to post a gift aid form **download a form** from our website www.fcg.org.uk click on "Giving"

If you are an **existing donor** but haven't yet changed your **standing order** to our new CAF account and still pay to our old Santander/Abbey bank account, **please complete a new form**

If in doubt contact **Amanda** on 0118 9872672 or email amanda@fcg.org.uk



Thank you for reading and for your continued prayers and support of Faith Christian Group

CIO 1163355



Christmas 2017



Working among the homeless, poor and needy of Reading

Season's Greetings from the Director

Another really busy year here at "FAITH", especially **ReadiFood** the Food Bank.

I must start by thanking the many Church leaders across Reading who are so much behind the ministry of FAITH. Their support, and of course yours, is very much appreciated. The work and effect of the Church across Reading is enormous and growing.

In that regard, I am still very much involved in facilitating an association of Churches and Charities in South Reading known as "Whitley SALT" (Social Action Linked Together) aimed at meeting people's needs more effectively by coming under one "umbrella". Visit www.whitleysalt.uk



We live in challenging times. Many have a living faith, whilst others do not, but still value the work of the Christian community. Many are unsure about whether there is a God at all and some feel threatened by and/or object to those who express their faith.

Faith Christian Group walks a difficult path. As we often say, the clue is in the name! Our core calling, or what I have recently referred to as our "Prime Directive" is unashamedly **to share Jesus Christ** and His saving grace without which we will not live with Him in eternity. He calls us to love our neighbours. To do good to others, even those who don't like us. To give to any who have need.

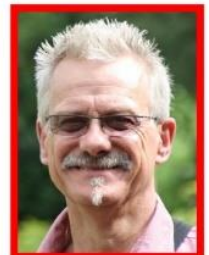


So even as we reach out to help those in need, no strings attached, we are ever prayerful, knowing that without **Hope**, not all the material possessions and wealth in the world and certainly not a food parcel, can bring real satisfaction. Only **Christ** brings **true hope of eternal life** and the assurance of the **love** and **forgiveness** of a God who asks us to call him "Abba" (Daddy) "Father".

Following Jesus is not about signing up to "Church", becoming religious, paying money to one group or another, but finding **relationship** with the one who created you. A relationship that will last **forever!** What's not to like?

Be blessed in all you do.

Malcolm Peirce B.Ed. Hons Director



ReadiStreet

Feeding the Homeless and Poor

Our distribution of food at Reading Minster continues to help up to 70 people Tuesday to Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons. We have some fantastic volunteers a couple of whom are out virtually every night, others doing once a week or once a month.

We constantly need more volunteers to enable this work to continue safely and effectively. It is rewarding and challenging, so if you can offer even one evening a month, do contact **Wendy** on 0793 684 5301. As with all our work we need funding to enable it to happen.



B4N a bed for the night

Once again the **night shelter** was a great success, involving **10 host Churches** in the town centre and over **300 volunteers**.

The uptake from guests was less this year. Sadly in conversation with other charities and the Reading Borough Council the general feeling is that many prospective guests found the need to stay out begging for money for drugs was too great a draw.

Nevertheless in all **33** guests were accommodated in January and February. Our partnership with St. Mungo's Street Services in Reading meant that **17** of our guests were found move on accommodation.

Bed for the Night is now seen by the Council as very much part of the regular provision for the homeless in the winter months. We only wish that we could extend to cover more months.



FAITH staff Alison, Amanda and Louise

One guest commented on Facebook :- *"hello, just a quick message for u because i would like to thank u for having me on b4n because if u did not then i would still be on the streets now and if it was not for the services i received from jan-feb then i would still be in the dark place i was then, the help and respect i got in that time was impeccable and i appreciate the help and quick thinking i received when i had the seizure (epileptic). Keep doing what u do because i am really appreciative of it "*

What is particularly lovely about that post is that at the time he had been most uncooperative and unthankful to volunteers and paramedics, due to his confused state. So as we often say, the work is challenging but rewarding.



Many thanks again to **Street Pastors** for helping us with door security and a friendly hello to guests. Sadly for all at FAITH, **Louise Cross** our co-ordinator left to take up a full-time post elsewhere. We wish her every blessing in her new role.

Sharn Harvey has stepped into the role and, with her previous experience as a church co-ordinator, has taken up the reins very easily and effectively.



Stepping Stones was conceived as FAITH's response to the difficulty of housing people who have a history of homelessness. Over the years we have refined this down to only housing men who have been through Rehab and are in recovery, but still need considerable support in maintaining that recovery and working towards independent living.

Stepping Stones Supported Housing



We have seen successes. We have seen disappointments. We have on occasion taken someone in through a sense of compassion and hope, when a more hard edged approach would have said no. The simple truth being that addiction is a powerful physical and mental state that is desperately hard to fight. More so for some than others of course.

This year has seen us make a very difficult decision.

As I think we have made clear before, although we can obtain enhanced housing benefit, this does not cover the cost of our support worker.

Kevin Derham has worked with enormous compassion for the men in our care. He has had his fair share of success and challenge. He has learned much and grown enormously as a support worker. However, he has had to cover almost every aspect of supporting the residents and looking after the properties. So it was that at the beginning of the year we realised that we needed to either double the number of residents so that Kevin had a co-worker, or simply end the project. Kevin



By the early summer and with considerable sadness the trustees came to the conclusion that we need to hand over the running of the properties to others and free up the fund-raising burden to allow us to concentrate on other aspects of our work. We would like to thank anyone reading this who has specifically given to Stepping Stones. We currently have residents who are well looked after and supported and we are working on passing them on into safe hands.

ReadiFood

The **Food Bank** has seen a further increase in levels of demand, going from an average of just over **100 parcels every week** in 2016 to a stretching **145** per week. Some delivery rounds have become so large that they can no longer be done in one run, which creates a logistical challenge for **Alison** our Food Bank Manager.



We are constantly looking for more volunteers:- Drivers; Delivery Escorts; Sorters; Packers. Even 2 hours per week daytimes really would help. We have many **retired people** volunteering and loving it.



And here is a timely reminder that our 5 year **lease** for the **warehouse** costs £35,000 per year. We need to increase monthly donations by £5,000 in order to afford to continue. Can you help?

We recently took delivery of a new van on a second year of free fully serviced lease from **JEMCA Toyota** Reading.

