

## Community Chaplaincy in Lockdown

This past few months the world has shifted and everyone's daily rhythms have been impacted in a myriad of large and small ways. Nevertheless, we have still been busy supporting many clients.

Our biggest change has been the work we do in prisons. Prisons are an enclosed population and because of the risk of importing infection, visiting was quite understandably put on hold for most charities, including Community Chaplaincy. Hence, we have not seen the inside of our local prisons for several months now. It is frustrating, but we fully support the prison staff in these special measures. We keep in touch with people by letter for the time being and hope to be able to return to visiting again very soon.

Meanwhile, much of our focus has been on those clients outside prison. Many have real struggles with the restrictions and the isolation that lockdown has caused. Some went from having their weeks full of courses and social activities, to long empty days of nothing. We've sent small care packages to some—books, paper, activities and even an Android tablet or two, but our main support has been through regular mentoring phone calls.

In some ways, it is harder to mentor by phone. We miss out on the body language and the natural pauses that meeting over a coffee brings. But in other ways it is more flexible—we can call more often, or change times easily, and of course location is no issue. As the restrictions have eased, we have been able to reinstate some meetings in person, working through a series of steps to carefully consider and manage the risks. This has kept everyone safe and we have really valued these deliberate times together.

Our mentoring activities do not look quite the same as before, but we do still see them making a real difference in this unpredictable world.

**Rachel, Community Chaplain**

### CLIENT CREATIVITY IN LOCKDOWN

"Fractal" by Steve



"Leaves" by Patrick



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# Chaplain's Chat

## 'What's my role in life?'

This is a question that one of my clients asked in a recent mentoring session and to which I thought, 'what a great question to be asking!'

We've a long way to go in exploring this but the foundation for him seems to be built around relationships.

Having spent several years in custody, he now finds himself having to reconnect with his family as a father, father in law and grandad in a much different way than before. He's also wondering where he might fit into his new local community. I have to say that I'm excited at the prospect of journeying with him over the coming weeks and months as he seeks to put some 'flesh on these bones.'

This question is, I believe, good for us all to reflect upon, at whatever stage of life we may be in. Do we just assume a role in life? Has it been thrust upon us through circumstances outside of our control? Do we wish it could be different?

Whatever our answers may be to these questions, being intentional in the way we live should surely be something we all aspire to.

For me personally, the example of Jesus is my inspiration. In the bible we read that just prior to the start of his work on earth, he clearly outlined his role and purpose to a watching world (Luke 4:18-19).

Do you know your role and purpose in life? Are you fulfilling it to the best of your ability so that others can benefit from your character, skills and wisdom?

**Rowland – Community Chaplain**



## In brief...

### Covid-19 remains a challenge for us all:

- Currently, Community Chaplains cannot yet go back into prisons, some prisoners are locked in cells for 23 hrs a day, and incidents of self-harm have increased.
- Lockdown restrictions in the community affect our clients – impacting on travel, work, social isolation and mental health.
- Probation reforms and pressures continue amidst added strain of lockdown measures.
- The police and the court system face resourcing challenges.
- Local churches and communities continue to find the 'new normal' in how best to support people.

*If you are a person of faith please hold these concerns and other items included in this newsletter in prayer.*

## Finance News

We are very pleased to let you know that recently we have been awarded three new grants for our work:

The Jamieson-Bystock Trust, for work in Devon.

The Norman Family Charitable Trust, for our core work.

Lloyds Bank Foundation Covid-19 Fund, to enable us to purchase technological solutions to address issues that have arisen from Covid-19, including; phones top-ups, tablets and data packages for isolated clients affected by lockdown restrictions; and transferring some of our training to online platforms.

Fulmer Charitable Trust, for core costs.

**We are so grateful to these funders for their support!**

## Hot off the Press!

We are delighted to announce the appointment of our new Supporter and Volunteer Co-ordinator. We are very much enjoying having Alli as part of the team!

Give us a 'like' on our Facebook page – just search for 'south west community chaplaincy' on Facebook and keep up with our news on your phone!



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