

## Prayer points...

### We give thanks for:

- The welcome we have been given on the streets and the value placed on us by the night-time economy and those who work there.
- The sterling yet difficult work of the emergency services and the door staff who go the extra mile in supporting the injured or hurting.
- All our interactions with folk on the streets.

### We pray for:

- All those who seek solace in alcohol and drugs, that their dependence on them may end.
- All those hurting in relationships, struggling in their workplaces or trying to find a job
- All those who cause aggression on the streets, and their victims.

### We pray for our teams:

- We thank God for new Street Pastors who bring different experience to our patrols.
- We give thanks for Prayer Partners and Street Pastors who, having served well for most of eight years, have resigned.
- We praise God for those members of our teams who have found Street Pastors as, at least partly, a launch into new training and areas of ministry.
- We pray God's continued rich blessing on the work of Street Pastors in Evesham, that more friends will hear His call to this important work.
- We pray that as Street Pastors we will have the wisdom to know how to respond to each and every situation and to each and every individual we meet – and show the love of God.

**Evesham Street Pastors is a Registered Charity in England & Wales number 1156750**

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**Donate:** Via web site or contact the Co-ordinator

Street Pastors is an initiative of Ascension Trust and Churches Together in Evesham & District

# Evesham Street Pastors

Prayer Letter 16 — December 2021



These past twenty months have been a difficult and challenging time. We invite your prayers as we reflect on this period and the recommencement of patrols in Evesham.

### Challenges to our way of life – Chris Sheehan writes:

The word 'pandemic' as well as many new expressions like 'social distancing', 'Test and Trace' and 'being pinged' have all become part of our vocabulary over this time.

The Street Pastors group of both Street Pastors and Prayer Partners have also reflected these changes with patrols now resuming in careful Covid-safe ways, initially with prayer teams praying from home. The experiences of our teams on the streets in conversation with those able to socialise and work during the night-time also reflect some of these changes, whether it is delayed personal celebrations or continuing grief of the loss of a loved one. Listening, caring and helping, the Street Pastors' mantra, has been in evidence in streets and neighbourhoods during the pandemic but, sadly, aggression and violence are also still very much present in some situations, as our patrol teams report. Being Christ's presence in the world on the streets and through Spirit-inspired prayer are needed more than ever as we head into a winter, with rising deaths, hospitalisations and infection rates.

### That our sending churches have also changed over the past year or so –

#### Bishop Robert Paterson writes:

The pandemic has changed the expression of 'Church' everywhere. In developing countries, and in particular those with minimal access to vaccines, the effect has been more dramatic than in these islands. Here, churches have had to learn 'on the hoof' how to communicate online, often with surprisingly good results – occasionally not! What we have missed most is the presence of other people in church and the familiar anchors of worship that we can take for granted.

We have been learning that being called together as ‘the body of Christ’ means more than getting together on Sunday for a gathered body ministering to itself. Much more: I am certain that Paul was describing the great diversity of life and witness of the Christian community during all 168 hours of the week. John is in the factory, Jane is in the hospital, Joe is in school, Arun is Street Pastoring, Maria is opening her shop, Clare is looking for a job, and so on. That’s what the body of Christ looks like for almost all the week, most of the time turned outwards, explosively diverse in mission, witness and discipleship; it’s ‘making Christ visible’. I hope Covid is teaching us that we are called to be with him, like the first disciples, doing what he is doing, learning to be like him, bringing the kingdom into the here and now and making it available.

**Prayer partners have been praying – Sheila Himsworth writes:**

During the pandemic and up until September, the designated Prayer Partners prayed from their homes when there was a patrol. Their telephone number was given to the Patrol Leader and specific requests for prayer were phoned through as before. This was very much a ‘better than nothing’ and most felt it worked quite well.

We all missed the time together with the Street Pastors in which we caught up with their news and prayed together before they went out. However, one of the Prayer Partners felt that praying from home had enabled her to widen the scope of her prayers to include the whole problem of lockdown as an answer to the spread of infection, the distressing ravages of the coronavirus and the effect it is having on the whole world.

**The interactions we have seen – Graham Wells writes:**

So, after over a year of not being on the streets of Evesham, what was it like when we came back in May? Some wariness on our part about feeling safe, the need for protocols on picking up cans and bottles, wearing masks, initially not meeting in Church House, shorter patrols and no hugging. Maybe some trepidation as well, understandable after such a long time with no patrols – about what we are supposed to do – ‘What happens if...’ in this or that situation. So, nervousness, yes. Will they have forgotten who we are? NO, a definite NO, to that. Welcomed with open arms and plenty of affirmations.

The door staff of establishments in the night economy who have tried hard to make the protocols work – and successfully too, and the transition to the more relaxed approach now. The door staff themselves who are glad to be back to the relative certainties and security of employment after having been furloughed – they all have their stories to tell.

Yes, it’s business as usual – but it’s God’s business... and He’s in charge!



*At our Thanksgiving service at the Vale of Evesham Christian Centre on 27<sup>th</sup> November, Chiara and Silvie led our worship, John Darby reflected on the past year and two new Street Pastors were commissioned. A third new Street Pastor, Simon Browning, was also welcomed but unable to attend.*

*Left to right: Councillor Robert Raphael (Chair, WDC), Sue Amor (Mayor), John Nicholls and Jim Slimmon, our new Street Pastors, Revd Christopher Collins (Minister, Evesham Methodist Church) and Revd Dr Edward Pillar (Chair of Trustees and Minister, Evesham Baptist Church)*