



A Message from the South Lakes Support Group

Welcome to the NISCU South Lakes summer newsletter. We are living through such strange and difficult times but we know that God's love for us is constant. Psalm 91:4 reminds us *He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armour and protection.*

We wanted to let you know what is happening for the Schools Workers and what is planned in the months to come. Most of all we wanted to call on you to join with us in prayer. Although we are so limited in what we can do and where we can go, we have the amazing gift of prayer and God is listening. So, as you read this newsletter we hope that it will prompt and inspire you to pray.

This Adventure - An Update from the Schools Work Team

There have been days lately, where I have questioned how to journey well on 'This Adventure'! It is so good to know we do have certainty in God, especially in these uncertain times, we can look to Him for strength and wisdom.

We all returned to work for the week beginning 1st June, starting with a team zoom meeting. This week we have been contacting all our Primary and Secondary schools to find out what provision they are putting in place over the next half term. As we have phoned and emailed our schools, many have been happy and in some cases relieved to talk about the provision they are putting in place and challenges they face. Each school finds itself in a unique situation, some schools have remained open since the lockdown in March, including through the holidays, providing for children of key workers and vulnerable children. Other schools have reopened for the first time this week and are managing different numbers of children and young people returning with various challenges to manage, especially smaller schools trying to manage social distancing with little space to work with. Quite a few schools are planning towards Year 6, Reception and Year 1 children returning on the 8th or 15th June, whereas other schools have up to 65% of year 6 children back in school. We know that all schools are responding to ever-changing advice and having to re-assess the provision they can offer on a regular basis, while taking good care of staff and supporting families who are trying to make the best decision for their situation.

All South Lakes staff going on furlough was seen as the best decision to safeguard our resources for the time when schools would re-open. During this time Bee and I have been home-schooling our children while our husbands continue to work as key workers, Diana has been shielded at home, and Charlie has been working hard in Coniston in his Church role.

Please pray for us all to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, and for God's guiding light to strengthen and shine through us all in this time as we seek to serve, bless and bring hope to our schools.

What else is happening?

1. 'Moving on' Year 6 video - Debbie Green and Jonny Bayes in North Lancs have been working collaboratively with all NISCU areas to create the new video for our year 6 children to support them with moving onto Secondary school in September. This will be sent out to all our schools, including some Secondary schools who may be able to include it in their transition provision this year. The video includes fun activities, the story of Daniel from the bible, and top tips from Year 7 students, teachers and schools workers. Here is the link to our newly developing media page where you will find the Year 6 video "Moving Up" (the media page is an ongoing work, so will change over time). Please share this with any year 6 you know. <http://niscu.org.uk/media/>

2. Primary school videos - all our Primary schools are invited to make use of and share with parents the daily videos compiled by Ruth Smith in West Cumbria. These are available on the YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiZdjUChbeU> and through the new media page.

3. Vision and Prayer week: 12th to 19th July - We want to see every school covered in prayer. Please help us mobilise everyone in prayer! Could you pray from home, prayer walk, or organise a virtual prayer meet and call your Church to prayer? Please contact Rachael Sutherland, Support Group Secretary, to let us know which school you will be praying for. Email: rachaelsutherland@icloud.com Phone: 07855 386389.

Thank you for jumping on board 'This Adventure!' in prayer for our schools. <https://niscu.org.uk/this-adventure/>
God bless you all. Katy Hall (on behalf of the NISCU team)

A message from Pete Barfoot, Head of St Marks CE Primary School in Natland

5 ideas for what and how to pray for schools during the easing of the lockdown

Pray for love

God is love and his perfect love is the best antidote for fear. Everyone is fearful at the moment (whether or not they admit to it). One of the greatest fears is of the unknown. We are frightened by what we cannot see, what we do not know and by the fact that we cannot control so much of what affects us. It is this fear that dominates schools at the moment. No one really knows if it is safe to return in numbers, or the best way to organise things if and when more children do return. We all need God's **love** to deal with this fear.

Pray for wisdom

Linked to the need for love is the need of all leaders (from Presidents to Prime Ministers to Headteachers) for **wisdom**. No one knows the answers to most of the questions raised by a global pandemic and so wisdom is one of the most precious commodities we could ask for. As God gives his wisdom for free and as it is such a quality product, what a powerful and fast-acting prayer this could be.

Pray for energy

To take new guidance and instruction daily from a frenetic Government department and then re-arrange schools and re-organise learning is exhausting. School leaders need a supernatural **energy boost** !

Pray for a vision for the future

Amidst all the sadness and anxiety of the last two months there has been a palpable sense of optimism among many people. What if . . . ? What if this could lead to a change of heart, a change of life-style, a change of direction . . . the environment could continue breathing again, people could turn their lives around, eyes could look and see what they have never seen before. Please pray that schools (and maybe the entire education system) take this unique opportunity to re-evaluate and re-calibrate their **vision and values**.

Don't be shy

Tell whoever you might know in your local schools (Headteacher, staff, families) that you are praying for them. It will make their day !



Vision and Prayer Week 12th to 19th July 2020

Please put these dates in your diary and get thinking creatively...

We will have to do this is a new way this year.

Perhaps you could get together with someone else and do a prayer walk to your local school...

Could you host a Zoom prayer get-together?

Let us know your ideas.

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We are thankful that many churches and individuals have been able to continue with their regular giving and that the government's furlough scheme is ensuring that staff salaries are paid.

BUT...

Even before the Coronavirus arrived, the South Lakes budget had been running at a monthly deficit of about £400 per month. This is not sustainable.

Less than half of South Lakes' income comes from regular monthly giving; we rely on individual donations to "top us up" every month.

One off donations by individuals and churches have substantially reduced in the last few months

SO, WE NEED YOUR HELP...

Fifty new donors (individuals, businesses or churches), giving just £10 per month, would set us onto a more stable financial footing.

- If you are able, please consider making a regular donation to NISCU by setting up a regular monthly Standing Order; see the details on the NISCU website at <https://niscu.org.uk/home/giving/> if you can Gift Aid your donations we can claim an additional 25p for every £1 you donate

- please spread the word in your church and encourage others to give.

We know from speaking to Head Teachers that, as schools open up again to more children, there will be more need than ever for input and support from NISCU's schools workers. NISCU wants to be ready to meet those needs – but we can't do it without financial support.

If you would like to know more about giving, you can contact Amanda Conner, Financial Administrator by email at admin@niscu.org.uk