

The Lighthouse and Social Action - Erik and Rebecca Jespersen

“The river of God’s love flows out from the gates of the temple into the streets, into the dry and desolate places and brings life.”

This week we heard from Erik and Rebecca an update on ‘the Lighthouse’ and the ways our church is reaching and aiming to reach the people in need around us. As Erik so wonderfully put, “It’s really about us stepping into the flow of that river.”

What does this picture mean to you? What role do we have in it, both as the church collectively and individually?

The first piece of wonderful news they shared, was that planning permission has been granted for the high street in Woking, where the Lighthouse building is, and the developers are providing generous space in this new development for the lighthouse in their plans! Many professionals have said that this level of provision in a development is completely unprecedented and we are so grateful to God for his favour. Erik and Rebecca have spent this last year planning and negotiating with architects, so as well as the space for the lighthouse, “the Cosy”, our social enterprise coffee house, will be at the base of a building housing 320 residents in a co-living space. Funds made by the Cosy will then go back into the lighthouse. There are just 6 months until the re-development starts.

Erik and Rebecca have found a new space over 2 floors just 50 yards away from their current location to use in the interim while the development is happening. The developers are going to fit it out for our use and pay for the fit out. This means the Lighthouse team will be able to provide continuity of service, which is amazing news and another example in a very long list of God’s provision.

Spend time praying for the transition, for the people in the Lighthouse family, those alone and marginalised who will see the building they call ‘home’ about to be demolished, who can’t see how wonderful it will be in the future. Help them to process the grief and loss, as well as have a hope for what is yet to come. Please also pray for the changes that are happening practically for the Lighthouse team.

Over the course of 2023 Erik and Rebecca were in conversation with the owner of a building in Guildford to see if they could acquire the ground floor space for the Lighthouse in Guildford. They were ready to sign the lease when the owner received planning permission to turn the floors above it into residential living. Seeing as a building site wouldn’t be conducive to creating a calm and peaceful space for the vulnerable, this wouldn’t be suitable. The owner then offered for us to buy the whole building, but the deal they were offering was so complex that after journeying with God and as a church, they reached a unanimous decision that it was the right time to step away.

**How do you discern God’s will and his voice when making difficult decisions?
How do you process disappointment like this alongside His abundant provision, like over the Woking Lighthouse site?**

What will we do to keep momentum going in Guildford?

Jigsaw is coming to Guildford! This is a project that runs from Lighthouse and helps families experiencing financial hardship to receive toys, clothing and equipment. As there won’t be a building for this in 2024, Jigsaw will be running from Founders on a weekly basis, on Tuesday mornings. There are already 10 schools in Guildford that refer into Jigsaw in Woking, over 300 children in Guildford that received help this last summer, and already 277 children referred for Christmas kindness from Guildford.

Christmas Kindness aims to lift anxiety and loneliness around Christmas time, and provide parties, food, hot meals and presents to people that otherwise wouldn’t have these things. Last year Christmas Kindness raised £27,000 and helped over 1000 local people. This year, by the first week of November there were already 1100 referrals, and that number is expected to grow even more in the run up to Christmas. HTB will match up to £20,000 of any funding we raise, so if we can raise that much in the next couple of weeks we’ll be able

12th November 2023. Emmaus Rd., Yvonne Arnaud, Guildford

to help even more people than we could on our own. There are also more spaces for volunteers on the 23rd of November.

Times are hard for a lot of us at the moment, so there is no pressure to give, but if you'd like to do so you can find the Christmas Kindness Appeal on the Emmaus Rd website. There you can also see information about volunteering.

How can you invest in or support the Lighthouse team and all they're doing?

One of the best questions a church can ask itself is "Would the people of this town notice if we disappeared tomorrow?" How does your faith impact the people in need around you?

Pray for the Lighthouse team, thanking God for his provision.

Pray for each other, whether that's in outworking God's love and care or receiving it.