



Ruth Sayers

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Location: Britain



What I do: Church worker showing Christ in the community through helping people get back into work, assisting with Bible studies, pastoral care and more.

Dear friends,

It's time for another newsletter. Once more the summer holidays offer many opportunities for the families and children of Devonport. There are free activities in the local parks as well as free swimming in the open-air pool, which is always popular. As Churches Together in Devonport, we run our own programme during the holidays. I am part of the team that is running Feast of Fun activities at the church. Every Monday in the school holidays we provide a sandwich lunch and activities and games for families.

Hot off the press! 53 kids, 30 adults for the Feast of Fun last Monday. This is the most we have ever had. Praise God that we are reaching so many families. It also highlighted the need to look at our numbers as the noise level was high, and some children found it difficult. Please pray too that we have enough helpers and that we find a balance between the activities and the numbers. The food, as always, goes down very well.

Food Club news – numbers for the Food Club increase every week. Most members do not come every week but there is food and fellowship for them when needed. We are able to have good conversations with members over refreshments and we are able to offer a play area for children. Often the numbers are lower in the summer months, but we are still there every Wednesday supporting where we can.

I attended the end of term assembly for the children at Riverside School. It is a proud moment for many parents as prizes are received and awards given for achievement during the past year. Year 6 children are moving on to new schools and leaving behind being a primary pupil. The adult world begins for them and as usual there is a mixture of trepidation and excitement. The headteacher has completed her second year, which has been a challenging year for her and for the school. Once more we have reduced numbers for the coming academic year. This issue is not just for Riverside but also for schools across Plymouth and I suspect across many areas of the country. We have had to close our nursery temporarily as so few parents have applied for places for their children. We will open it up again when the numbers increase. This has meant



Trusted helpers from the summer activities.

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that we have had to look at staff deployment and terminate temporary contracts. It has been a concern for staff, but we have had to make some difficult decisions. One of the factors we have had to consider is the building of new houses on the estate. Many families were moved to suitable housing across Plymouth while houses and flats were taken down with “new builds” being built as replacement. This project has taken many years but at last there seems to be significant progress.

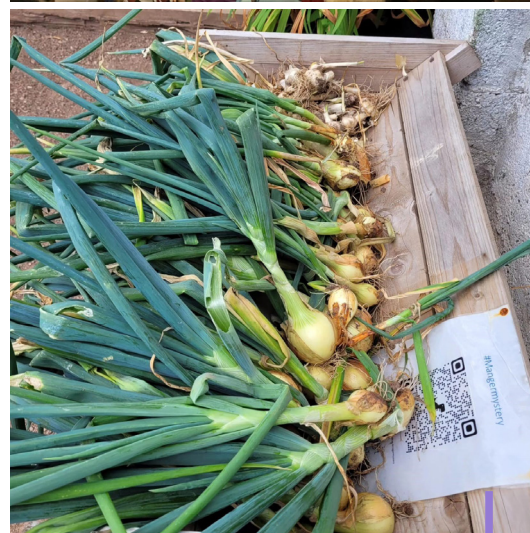
The July 2024 CMS People in Mission conference gave me the opportunity to give a short presentation about Devonport. I was able to attend alongside many others from all over the world at All Nations College in Hertfordshire. It was lovely to meet friends both old and new and to meet several new CMS staff. Putting names with faces helps to aid communication with the office staff of CMS. Giving the presentation made me realise how far we have come over the last few years in supporting Devonport, especially since the end of Covid.

I am still able to take a short service in Devonport Views, the local facility for those in later life. In recent months we have had an additional opportunity after the service. Perhaps with a bit of a challenge and a risk for me, I opened it up to allow those attending to ask any question they liked and they were happy to do this. This open session went well, and I was able to help them with some difficult issues. We have created this opportunity at least three times and look forward to continuing this in the coming months. The group enjoy singing and sometimes it is very moving to hear them sing familiar hymns.

I have attached a photo of some of the produce from the Community Garden. The local Baptist church supervise the growing and planting of the Community Garden and use the space for community services several times a year. The produce is also sent to the Food Club and is gratefully received. Various volunteers use this garden to grow produce with varying degrees of success. Both the Food Club and the Community Garden help to encourage people to live healthily.

I do pray that you have a good summer. Thank you for continued support both financially and prayerfully. Please pray for the work in Devonport and for Plymouth as a whole. Thank you.

Ruth



Photos: World Book Day at school; produce from the Community Garden.



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