



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.



Bringing hope where people have given up on God and the church

Dear friends,

Life as a church worker in Devonport, Plymouth, is always challenging. Over the last few years there have been many events, both good and tragic, that have made the headlines in both local and national press. The last major incident that touched the city was the discovery of an unexploded bomb that was covered by the national and local press. Plymouth is known for its connection with the navy and the community of service that is attached to it. The dockyard is a significant employer, alongside the university, and now it has been designated a free port to encourage trade. This is part of the background that has created opportunities for me as a CMS mission partner.

One of the regular projects I have been involved in is with the local housing association. One of the first buildings that emerged from the Devonport regeneration project was Devonport Views, a sheltered housing facility that accommodates at least 50 residents. I have been able to go in and hold a short service of worship and prayer once every two weeks. I have reported on this before so forgive the repetition, but I want to share with you the encouragement I receive when I visit to take the service and hold Ask Ruth sessions.

Ask Ruth sessions came about because it became apparent over the months that many of the residents had questions. Not just about the Bible passages we looked at but also about God, creation and about religion in general. During the sessions I have opened the floor for people to ask anything, hence Ask Ruth! Spontaneous questions require a bit of thinking on my feet, but it has been so rewarding to have the opportunity to engage with issues that concern those who come along. I have been able to use Bible passages to help clarify and inform and answer some of those questions in the services. We have had questions about Moses, John the Baptist and one that particularly moved me was a question about God's love for us all.

Chaplaincy at City College

Since the beginning of the academic year, the connection with City College has developed. The lead chaplain has moved to another position, so I have been able to step up and get more involved. The major event of the autumn term is Remembrance. This year 30 veterans from Plymouth were invited to attend our Remembrance service and in total there were over 300 attendees, mostly students and staff. The public service students were tasked with organising the event and students took part by reading and also serving



From Devonport, looking across to Cornwall

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



refreshments. The special needs students created a wonderful display using poppies and flags as a theme.

In recent days, since Christmas, the college has been dealing with the death of two students. This is teaching me a lot about how young people view the passing of a friend and I have been asked to lead a short vigil to remember the life of a young girl who passed away suddenly. I would appreciate prayers for opportunities to help young people deal with loss and grief.

Just after the Remembrance service, the college received a call from Ofsted. Hasty preparation and a bit of apprehension followed but the inspection went well. The college offers much for students and I have been particularly impressed with the individual support and welfare concern.

Activities at St Aubyn's

We are continuing the Feast of Fun activity that happens during the school holidays. This half term we had 36 children and 20 adults. Lots of hard work for the volunteers but it is rewarding and we find that relationships grow and develop. More sessions have been planned for Easter, the summer holidays and half terms. This is a Churches Together in Devonport activity, so the volunteers come from various churches in the area. It is good to work together and support each other in this way.

Food Club

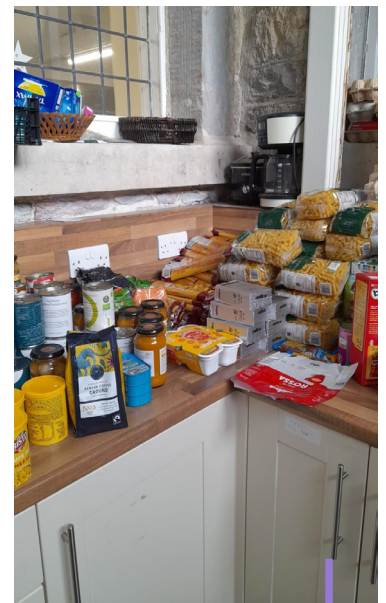
Food Club continues every Wednesday. Last week we had another eight new members who accessed bags of food as well as taking advantage of the Plymouth Energy Community staff who came to provide help and support with energy bills. The cost of living crisis is still ongoing and any help we can offer is greatly appreciated. Energy support is offered to all regardless of benefit status and for us this is another contact opportunity. We can provide a safe and comfortable space serving refreshments and plenty of chat. Many of the Food Club families come to our Messy Church and Feast of Fun activities.

Please pray for all these opportunities and for good use of my time, particularly at City College. Thank you for all your continued support.

Retirement

From the end of May 2025 I will be moving on from CMS. After nearly 22 years, it is time to retire and move into a new phase of my life. I would like to thank you all for your support both financially and prayerfully, for all the kind emails and words of encouragement. There will be more details later but meanwhile please pray for me as I look forward and enjoy all that God has for me.

Ruth



Photos from top to bottom: City College Remembrance display; food ready to be collected at Food Club in November; Food Club donations



Bringing hope where people have given up on God and church

I've been encouraged to hear stories from others who are part of my wider area of work. In Honduras, Carlos had a change of heart working with a Christian ministry, and in the UK Garry Ion reports on how Carlisle's Community Shed is sharing skills, community and Jesus. Read more at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope

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