

- 1. We have been really encouraged by the way that everyone has got on board and supported the project since we started in June. We have been delighted by the sheer amount of people who have volunteered to help both from within our church fellowship and outside in all sorts of ways, that has been really great and enabled us to deliver over 730 Boxes of Hope so far.**
- 2. The sheer amount of donations of money and goods has been overwhelming both from within our church family, friends, colleagues and from many people from around Swindon that have never had any contact with our church previously.**
- 3. We have also received so many Thank you messages , cards, e-mails and requests for prayer and have been privileged to build relationships with many people.**

We have really seen God at work in so many ways and it has been amazing.

- **we have still been able to share in sung worship since the very early stages of Lockdown!**
- **that there has been opportunity to reflect during our sung worship as well as being part of it.**
- **that we have been able to share (although as a small group) the wonderful privilege of singing together in the Church for recordings!**
- **that some have learnt new instruments during lockdown and are encouraging us with their involvement**
- **we've been able to experiment with solo verses and new songs, hopefully to encourage the fellowship**

- **having had a 6 month break from Pram Club and only telephone contact, last month we delivered our first 'Toddler Group in a bag' to 20 of our regular attendees. This included a couple of crafts, colouring sheets and topic related items.**
- **the following week we held a zoom song/ story time. We aim at the moment to run these each month to be reviewed in the new year depending on restrictions.**

- **we've started up again on Zoom on Fridays. We've been delivering activity packs in lockdown**
- **Jacob has begun an online retelling of Noah's Ark Story**
- **we're planning an online Advent with Crafts & stories, linking to theme of Angels & God's Message**
- **working on Nativity & Christingle, together with Community Carols**
- **please pray that the team can continue to adjust and maintain our work despite not being able to meet face to face**

- **we are pleased that we have managed to keep cooking**
- **thank God for the team of cooks and drivers. Thanks for the relationships built up between driver and recipient, between drivers & cooks. Thank you that we can support each other**
- **thank God for His provision**
- **please pray for those who have walked in off the street as we have been able to support them through meals or bags of hope, may they see God and a saviour who loves them**
- **please pray for the messages that go out over Christmas**

- **I try to keep up with as many people as possible. Last month when I sent out my Thoughts for Remembrance Day I wrote a personal message on each of the letters.**
- **a few people have contacted me by phone or letter and all appreciate keeping up the contact and longing for the time when we can meet up again as they miss it so much**
- **they enjoy the activities I enclose and one couple sent me a photo with the colouring of the poppy attached to their window for people to see.**

I think from a whole church perspective the fact that we have never fully "closed" is a huge encouragement. We have been serving God and our community throughout. We have all risen to the challenge!

Every Sunday since before lockdown even started has been broadcast and Kidzone has met on zoom all but 1 week (the first week back in the building when KZ was on). we've had some great KZ zoom sessions.

The children have adapted well, we've learnt about so many aspects of faith together and last week several of them (age 3 to 9) shared what they believe and how they would tell others!

It has been wonderful to see everyone pulling together and looking out for each other during the Corona Virus crisis.

Pastoral care has been managed by 3 groups :

Thankyou to the **Homegroup leaders** who have not only kept the home groups meeting via Zoom but also made sure that everyone in their group has been well cared for

Thankyou to the new **care group** leaders who each have a small (or not quite so small in some cases) group of people who they check on. This is a big move forward for the church because we now have a way of making sure that people who we don't see often because of the new restrictions still feel part of the church and no one is missed

Thankyou to the leaders of different **departments** within the church who are continuing to watch out for each other eg Steve and the Deacons , Mark and the music group etc

It has also been great to see the church extending our pastoral care into the community via the "Bags of Hope" and for the opportunity for the church and congregation to join together for Steve's Zoom Drop in Sessions

A final message

In our world where we are surrounded by COVID-19 restrictions, I can't stop thinking how God transcends all and is with us when we put God first.

We are told to keep 2 meters apart, but God is right next to us.

When we hide our faces behind masks, God not only sees us as we are but knows our hearts.

When we are kept apart by circumstance, the Church keeps us connected as a family.

Technology has been a gift, and the most common saying of 2020 is probably "We can't hear you, you are on mute", but God always hears us in our prayers and we can hear him, we will never need to say those words to God.

When we become upset because we cannot connect to a meeting, we are reassured that we are always connected with God.

When we are frustrated by software updates, so our system works, we are reminded that God is Glorious and immutable, and we can take comfort in His unchanging Word.

When I see the 'Bags of Hope' I am reminded of the fragility of life and the gift of compassion and strength God has bestowed on us to persevere and that we can do all things through Christ.

I pray that maybe some of the above helps or provides inspiration.

We are not on the back foot with this pandemic. We are back in church, ministries are continuing and new ministries have started.

We are still on the attack for God's Kingdom, we haven't dropped the ball and we are still moving forward. (David Mildenhall)

What are we going to do?

What do we need?