

Thank you for your involvement with Good Friday 2024 in Chelmsford. It was an incredible day gathering hundreds of believers from many churches for our annual morning gathering followed by the afternoon of outreach to the passers by visiting the City Centre.

It was such a joy to see so many believers coming together from various churches, many who knew each other as well as some who were meeting for the first time with the same aims of lifting up the name of Jesus and sharing His love with the City.

I have heard many stories of memorable encounters and wanted to share some of the highlights as an encouragement to us all.

Pete Bardwell

**From Chris (Chelmsford Community Church) on the Arts and Crafts tent:**

We have positive feedback from the crafts - simply the level of engagement was so encouraging. The extent to which Muslim families felt able to engage was particularly good. We had crafts which were not overtly Christian, but we had a couple which really were. Mothers and children from Muslim families were happily engaging with them all.

We also have feedback from the rough sleepers in Chelmsford - who clearly felt able to take advantage of the free food on the day! But we have a team who go out and work with them on a weekly basis - and since Good Friday they have found conversations have hit a depth they haven't seen before. Good Friday triggered curiosity and has allowed the team to explain more about **why** they help - bringing Jesus into their conversation far more than previously.

One of the girls helping with the crafts had brought a friend along to the service, only for her friend to make a commitment. Awesome.



**From Linda - Word on the Street**

A young teenager prayed with someone and gave her life to Jesus.

I saw a young man standing alone listening to the music. I approached him and asked if he knew Jesus. He explained he was raised as a Hindu and that he had been visiting the Cathedral. I offered him a Gospel and was prompted to introduce him to Raj. He became a Christian on his birthday, but God really used Raj and the outreach to bless him.

A lady from Iran. A Christian but missing her family. We prayed for her and gave her a Gospel and other literature.

A married couple were walking past and I got into conversation with them. I asked if they knew Jesus and offered them a Gospel. The man took the Gospel and I blessed them. About 10 minutes later, the wife approached me and said her husband had some questions about the Gospel and would I speak with him. The man asked me some questions. I really felt this was a significant moment on his journey to knowing Jesus.

I approached a lady standing alone listening to the music, I asked if she was a Christian and whether she knew Jesus. She said 'no'. I offered her a Gospel and felt led to look into her eyes and tell her that she was deeply loved by Him. It felt right to leave it at that.

We gave away 119 Gospels and well over 80 Christian children's books. We give them away as a love gift often after praying for people and talking about Jesus.



## From Nigel Bolitho – Guest Speaker

A couple of stories:

A Christian teenager from Life Church has been praying for her friend for years and talking to her about Jesus but her friend has never shown much interest. She asked her if she wanted to pop down on Good Friday morning to the High Street as there was 'Christian stuff' happening without it being church. Much to her surprise the friend said she would like to come. She came and straight away got into what was happening and what was being said and then turned around and said she wanted to speak to someone. She spoke to a steward and said that she wanted to become a Christian. Praise God - we are always surprised when He works in peoples' lives!

A second story: I spoke to a man who said that he was once ill, went to hospital and was later told he died for a short time there. He spoke about seeing a vision of Heaven so now goes to the Cathedral but doesn't know what God wants him to do with his life. I encouraged him that God definitely has a plan for him, to get a Bible app to listen to God's Word as he can't read and to meet with mature Christians to talk about it. We prayed together.



## From Raj Hare – Spiritual Spa

Raj had many memorable encounters with people searching for something more. There were three salvations, many healings, prophecies, and encouragements. Raj was amazed at how individuals immediately opened their hearts, being willing to share life situations.

She says that the most precious thing when doing the spiritual insights, was seeing people moved as they sensed His love for them in the words shared, that touched their hearts. She had a few people that when she sensed something, it built them up and one lady who nearly cried as she realised something of the Father's love for her.



## Prayer for the City of Chelmsford – Ruth Leverett (Foodbank)

I've based the prayers around a passage in the Bible, Isaiah 61. This passage is at the heart of all we do at Chelmsford Foodbank.

*'the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor'*

Thank you, Father, for your Good News, for the Gospel! Thank you for the good news of your son, Jesus, for his life, death and resurrection for us. Thank you for all that means to us in our every day lives as believers, that we get to know you and have friendship and relationship with you through all things, no matter what. Thank you that this good news means we can know great joy, amazing love, acceptance, healing and freedom! You are so good!

We pray for all those in our city who need to hear the good news. We pray that our friends, families, neighbours, and colleagues would have open hearts and minds and be impacted by your incredible love and grace towards them. We pray for salvation and life transformation in our city!

*'he sent me to bind up the broken hearted'*

Thank you, Jesus, that you came to bind up the broken hearted; that your gospel of good news brings healing. Father, we pray for all those amongst us in our families, churches, communities and in our city, who are broken hearted, who are dealing with loss, disappointment, grief, who are struggling with the breakdown of a relationship, or are in any way feeling the pain of a broken heart. We pray that they would know your comfort, healing, strength and reassurance and that we would be able to bring healing and wholeness as we come alongside and journey with those in pain. Thank you, Jesus, that you are the one who both identifies with us in our struggles and suffering and offers us healing and a way through.

*'to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners'*

Thank you Jesus that your good news brings freedom! Father, we pray for all those in our contexts and in our city that are in captivity; for those who are trapped in addiction, that you and your light would break in; for those trapped in debt, that a way through to freedom will be found; for those trapped by the effects of theirs or others guilt, fear or shame, that your love, freedom and breakthrough would come. We pray for those living with long term mental and/ or physical illness, for your healing and release to come. We pray for those whose financial situations mean that they are stuck in a cycle of having to make impossible decisions in order to put food on the table daily; for those who are stuck and struggling to find somewhere safe to live, and we pray for your solutions and your provision in this area. And we think of those who are in a literal prison in our city and we pray for those who minister to them, that they might come to an awareness of your love and forgiveness that is available to all who believe, and that their lives may be transformed.

We proclaim freedom!

*'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'*

Father, we thank you for your favour on us. In a world full of fear, confusion and conflict, you bring love, hope and peace. We thank you so much for your goodness and your grace towards us. We proclaim your favour on our city. We speak your blessing and favour over our friends and neighbours, families, our schools, the university, our children, our businesses, our governmental structures and civic leaders our churches, our hospitals and doctors surgeries, our music, arts and theatre, over every aspect of our communities. We proclaim your favour, Lord!

Amen!

I want to thank everyone who attended, served, prayed and specifically helped to finance the day. The generosity of churches and individuals across Chelmsford each year is humbling and something we certainly don't take for granted. 100% of the money given is spent on facilitating the events, principally the Good Friday event this year. We steward all money given wisely, not for our own expenses, but only to cover the costs of hiring equipment, purchasing and producing resources and covering the costs of contributing ministries. Without your generosity we could not have blessed the city with this event.

Many thanks

Pete Bardwell (Vice chair CTiC)

