

# ENGAGE

Edition 24

M A G A Z I N E

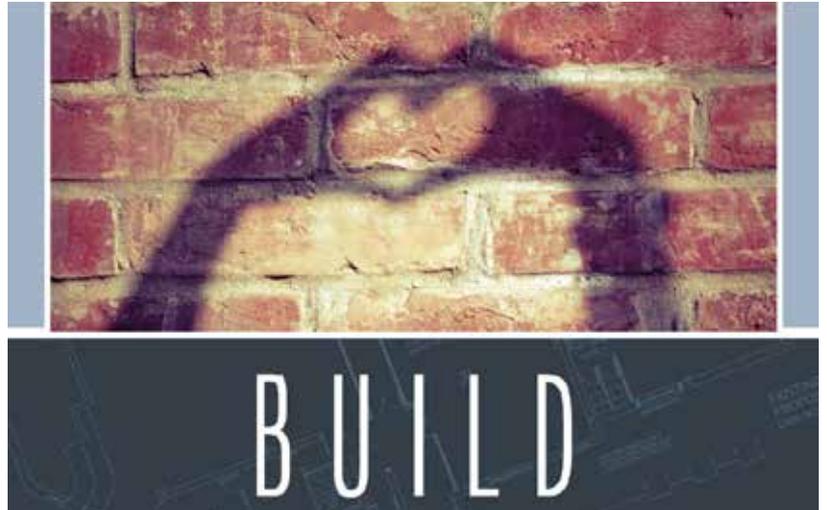
NOV '18 - JAN '19

BUILD  
'PUSH STARTING  
A JUGGERNAUT'

SMALL GROUPS  
UP | IN | OUT

CONNECT  
KITCHEN TABLE  
PROJECT





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# UNTIL

I want to talk about golf, greatness  
and Christmas.

I started playing golf when I was 14. It was an option for sports lessons at school and seemed a little less energetic and physically damaging than rugby, cross-country running or basketball. Over the last 40 years, my golf hasn't improved much but I have had some great walks, fascinating explorations of various forests in search of the illusive

lost ball and enjoyed the company of some fantastic people who haven't laughed at my golf too much either. What is there not to like about it?

But, I had never won a golf competition in my life. Until...

Until the round of my life started to unfold on Friday 14 September at the latest LHFC Golf Day. The drive off the first tee was safe and straight, the second was okay, but on the third hole, a 180-yard par 3 (some of you have stopped reading already), the green I had never landed on before, received my ball with joy and close enough to two-putt and get a par. And the rest of the round...made history – for me at least.

As I finished at the 18th and added up my score, it was the best score I had ever had in my life, but was it enough to beat the rest of the players that day?

As the presentations were made, I hadn't come third, I hadn't come second, I HAD WON!

As I raised the trophy above my head and received the adulation of my fellow golfers (well, some gentle applause) I didn't know what else to do. I hadn't won before – other than the prize for the most improved member of the class when I was 6 years old – should I thank my mum and dad, my golf teacher, should I cry or smile? I wondered if it would change my life for ever? I felt great. Well, until the next round of golf when I will probably win the prize for coming last – yes we really do have a prize for the person who comes last (and it is worth winning!).

Golf is like that; good one day, average most of the time, great once, there will be a next time and my feeling of greatness will quickly fade away.

The word 'great' is attached to people and performances a little too often and indiscriminately, but Jesus defined greatness very differently.

He said that, 'whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave to all.' (Mark 10:43)

And that brings me to Christmas!

Paul tells us what lies at the heart of Christmas, a redefinition of greatness that needs to be part of a Jesus follower's dictionary and attitude, the same attitude of mind that Jesus had.

Jesus, 'Who, being in nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.' (Philippians 2: 6-7)

Greatness was wrapped up as a baby, born in humility, visited by Shepherds and Magi, all bowing the knee in honour of the greatest gift anyone could receive.

I'm not going to get carried away by my great victory, the greatest performance of my life, it doesn't make me great (the next round of golf will prove that). I want to learn from Jesus what true greatness looks like and give thanks to God for Jesus, the greatest gift beyond words.

Have a truly GREAT Christmas, one where Jesus is the focus and learn from Him where true greatness lies.

Oh, and a very Happy New Year.

*~ Tim Hancock*



# BUILD



A couple of years ago I was told that building projects were like push starting a juggernaut – in the early days it is hard work to get things moving, but once they start moving you need to hang on with both hands!

If you check out our once empty field you will see that our BUILD project juggernaut is definitely moving – and it is big!

By January the building should be weather-proof and by mid-summer ready for us to occupy. This will be a very exciting time, but also a complex time as we will then need to completely empty our present building to allow the builders to start modifying it. Lots of juggling and planning ahead!

(A quick aside – the BUILD team have been chatting about how to refer to our two buildings. Calling them 'new' and 'old' or 'one' and 'two' or even 'big' and 'small' seems to value one more than the other – when both buildings will be essential for different purposes. The unofficial names we are currently giving them are 'north' and 'south' (grab a compass and you will see that the present building is north and

the new building is south.) Any thoughts?)

Back to the juggernaut. As the building work progresses the financial gap between what we have raised and what we need to raise also becomes more pressing. The good news is that if giving continues at its current rate we are on track to afford the building – HOWEVER we need to remember that we still need to raise funds for the fit-out (PA, screens for words, stage lighting, etc.)

The new buildings will be incredible, but to make our facility fully useable and a place where we can develop new ministries, we will need to raise further funds for the 'fit-out'.

Please pray, give, ask, invite others to give – and hang on with both hands!

~ Mark Madavan



With the changing face of communication it is easy to make connections with many other people. People we know, people we once knew and people we'd love to know. But does connection bring community?

With billions of people in the world, someone should be able to find a system where no one is lonely, everyone is connected and is embraced in community. And somebody did; it's called the church.

Here at LHFC, the best and simplest and clearest way, and we feel, the best strategy we have to get people into significant relationships with the family of God where we can encounter Jesus together, follow Him together, grow like Him together, be held accountable, find comfort and strength, we call Small Groups – pockets of community.

A group of people who commit to meeting regularly and where everyone can feel needed and known. Connected AND in community! We believe that Small Groups are the key to making a large church personal.

That's why we want to see everyone at LHFC connected to a healthy small group so we can all "do life together" with other people and grow as followers of Jesus – disciples.

So, if you've just come to LHFC or you've been here a long time, we would love you

to get connected to a Small Group; 8-10 people who meet regularly to bring faith, hope and love to one another and to the world.

There are 21 LHFC SMALL GROUPS which meet in various locations on various days at various times, daytime and evenings.

**Every Small Group has three dimensions:**

**UPWARDS** – a growing love for God through prayer, worship and exploring the Bible

**INWARDS** – a growing love for one another through care, accountability and practical help

**OUTWARDS** – a growing love for our 'neighbour' through serving, sharing faith and praying

And each one has a distinctive flavour or focus that will help everyone find just the right place to get connected and flourish.

We want to have a pocket of community where everyone can be needed and known and where together we can regularly welcome more people to share the journey with us.

**If you want to get connected to a Small Group, or just learn more:**

e-mail [smallgroups@lhfc.org.uk](mailto:smallgroups@lhfc.org.uk) or call Tim Hancock (01489) 579669

We'd also love to hear from you if you want to start a new group. Whether you want to meet in a coffee shop, running, cycling, walking, sailing, singing, knitting and nattering, in a front room opening the Bible, around a table eating together, serving others together, there are endless possibilities because Jesus is not confined by a building, He is present wherever 2 or 3 meet together IN HIS NAME.

Many people, when they hear the word church, think of a place you go or a service you attend, but Jesus had much, much, much more than that in mind. He was thinking about a gathering of people - ekklesia - people called out to be His light in the world, growing brighter so that others will see Jesus and be drawn to Him.

We can all find a place to meet in Jesus' name and be His people. There's a pocket for everyone!

LISTEN to the Sunday sermon series – POCKETS OF COMMUNITY – [www.lhfc.org.uk](http://www.lhfc.org.uk)

# WHAT IS GOD SAYING?

Over the last few months God has been speaking to us through some guest speakers. It is important for us to listen to what God has been saying.

## MAY

On Pentecost Sunday, Amy Walker challenged us to be ready for God to do some things **SUDDENLY** and to be ready to respond when He does. At Pentecost the disciples were waiting and *'suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.'* (Acts 2:2) Their willingness to be ready to listen compelled them to go out and talk about Jesus, and 3000 were added to their number that day!



LISTEN AGAIN: Visit our podcast page at [www.lhfc.org.uk](http://www.lhfc.org.uk)  
20 May 2018

## JUNE

In June, Malc and Trish Morgan were our guests from Elpitha Community in Greece. They challenged us about **SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKES** (another 'suddenly' moment) and how we react when they happen – do we look towards God or away from God when they happen in our lives? Speaking from James 1:1-12 they encouraged us to embrace God's divine purpose and power in these moments.



LISTEN AGAIN: Visit our podcast page at [www.lhfc.org.uk](http://www.lhfc.org.uk)  
24 June 2018

## SEPTEMBER

In September, Bev Murrill called us to THE FIGHT OF FAITH and invited us all not to settle for anything less than a growing faith which means that as we get older we will become more radical. She highlighted the heroes of the faith (Hebrews 11) who had faith when taking ground, faith when under pressure, faith when weak, faith when strong and reminded us that God is never ashamed to be called our God when we keep pressing on towards the goal we have been called to (Hebrews 11:16).

*'Faith is not a journey for the faint hearted.' 'You can lose some battles of faith, but don't lose faith.' 'Faith that doesn't grow will lead to cynicism, individualism and selfishness.'*

Where we settle is where we will live. You can turn back at any point, but faith drives us on. The saints are not stopping until they enter the city.



LISTEN AGAIN: Visit our podcast page at [www.lhfc.org.uk](http://www.lhfc.org.uk)  
16 September 2018

At our 12 Hours of Prayer on Saturday 8 September, God spoke:

*'We have a joy that allows God's abundance of goodness to be encountered and shared among everyone. This is a celebration that leads to worship which leads to us drawing near and allowing God to work. It is through this joy and faith that God will provide immeasurably more.'*

*'I have a picture of a large treasure chest but the lid is closed. I feel the Lord is saying to His church, 'Lift the lid my people and you will see the abundance of treasure I have for you!''*

*'God has so much more in store for each of us...but we need to ask.'*

*Jeremiah 29:11 – 'God has plans to prosper our church and not to harm us and plans to give us hope and a future!'*

God has been speaking – to you, for you, for the church. Are we listening?



If you were to walk into LHFC on a Thursday evening you would find lots of noisy, hot, sweaty, happy boys enjoying Academy – our fast-paced sports activity for primary school aged boys.

Four years ago we merged two of our kids' outreach sports ministries - Faith + Football and Academy – both of which were struggling at the time for team and having lost their purpose.

The boys register at the beginning of each Term. Academy is so popular that families start queueing up 30 mins before the door

opens to be sure of getting a place. We have space for 48 boys each Term and often have a waiting list in case a place becomes available – especially for the older group.

We run 2 sessions each week – one for 5-7 year olds and one for 8-11 year olds. The boys are divided into small Teams



of mixed ages and abilities for the Term – each with their own coach. All of our coaches are men – often being the only positive male role-model for many boys growing up without one in their family.

We play a different sport each Term – Basketball, Hockey, Football - now Futsal as we no longer have a field. The first 3 weeks focus on skills training and Team building followed by a mini league played between the teams over the remaining 4 weeks.

A great addition to each Term has been the Dads & Lads Evening. The boys come with their Dad (or male father figure) for an evening of fun, food and outdoor activities. Favourite evenings which we now repeat each year are: Beach night - Fire night - Torch lit treasure hunt and Challenge night. Some Dads' arrange to finish work early or to work from home to be there.

Academy isn't just a sports activity – the coaches explore Bible stories with their team – sharing their faith with them. Over the last year we have been teaching the boys Bible memory verses. Only around 15% of the boys attend LHFC on a Sunday morning.

Every Term ends with an Awards Evening for all the family. All the boys are presented with a medal and certificate – with trophies as well for the winning Teams. The evening starts with refreshments and includes a short presentation of the Gospel message. There is always a real buzz and air of celebration at these evenings.

"I wanted to say a huge thank you for all your help over the years – my son has thoroughly enjoyed Academy and I often recommend it to parents. You have a fabulous setup and the kids respond really well to your helpers. My son has always been really keen to attend Academy and I've had to change his cubs/scouts to fit in."

*~ Mum of a Year 6 who left us in July*

Can you remember who told you about Jesus as a child? As part of the Academy Team you could be that person for boys from our community.

In the last 4 years we have connected with hundreds of boys and their families from our local community and are looking for more men to join us in building relationships and sharing our faith with them. Speak to Claire Johnson or Tim Hancock to find out more

*~ Claire Johnson*



# KITCHEN TABLE PROJECT

inspire a faith that lasts

Research shows that 50% of children growing up in Christian homes will keep their faith as adults.

## What is the Kitchen Table Project?

It's a campaign that aims to raise awareness of the importance of parents in building faith in their children. It's about mums and dads supporting one another in inspiring their children's faith. The project is producing ideas and resources to equip parents to nurture faith at home. It's a conversation starter!

## Who is it for?

All mums, dads, grandparents, step parents, or carers. If you care for a child under the age of 11 years then you have a fantastic opportunity to share your faith with them in all sorts of different ways. Parents are the ones that spend most time with children and have the greatest influence on their children. The research that Care for the Family carried

out showed that there are a number of issues that stop parents focussing on building faith at home, with the main barrier being that family time is spent on other activities. Other issues were about needing help to know what to do, not enough time spent with children, worrying they'll do it wrong or put them off, or that they are not a good enough example.

## What are we doing now?

In 2017 Locks Heath Free Church, led by Care for the Family, piloted the beginning of the Kitchen Table Project, resources were advertised and distributed to parents encouraging them to start using them or add to what they already do. This year, I led some 'Inspire' sessions with Jenny Davies' Small Group of mums. 'Inspire' is a Kitchen Table Project small group resource designed to be led in family homes or in Church. It's the start of a conversation between Christian parents about the influence they have in this, to encourage each other and share ideas.

We talked about why our faith is important to us and why it's important to share with our children. We looked at what gets in the way and that it's not always easy. We talked about being real and intentional. In the group we shared ideas about how we prayed with our children, what Bibles we used and when we read them – there was such an encouraging creative variety of ideas and suggestions.

## What you can do?

You are probably already doing lots without even realising it. Keep going!

No doubt you tell your children you love them and encourage them to build strong

relationships with others; you just need to include God. We can't solely rely on great Church children's work to teach our children about Jesus. We need to be intentional about growing our children's love for God.

The Kitchen Table Project suggests easy things to do at home starting with – play with your kids, eat meals together, say sorry when you are wrong, point to God in the everyday – make God a natural part of the conversation and everyday life. Pray together, start with one simple sentence and gradually build on it. Share Bible stories, get an age appropriate children's Bible. Listen and sing to Christian music. Start talking about faith simply.

Take a look at Kitchen Table Project's website, sign up to their newsletter and follow on social media.

[www.careforthefamily.org.uk/faith-in-the-family/parenting-and-faith/kitchen-table-project](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/faith-in-the-family/parenting-and-faith/kitchen-table-project)

Get a group of friends with children together and host an 'Inspire' session. Anyone can run it; you don't have to be an expert just someone who wants to start the conversation. I would love to help you.

Seize the moment, it's never too late to share Jesus!

*~ Sarah Sawyers  
Family Life Team Leader*



Inspire a faith that lasts

# LHFC DEBT ADVICE



The LHFC **Debt Advice** has now closed. Increased administration and regulation has left our volunteers feeling that the requirements and responsibilities are now too much and so regrettably we have had to take this decision. All our current cases have now been closed or been passed on to other agencies. We celebrate all that has been achieved and remember the people who have been helped to become debt-free.

Most of our contacts came from beyond the Western Wards – most from Fareham and Gosport – and the increasing complexity of the cases, the increasing needs of the clients, the challenges we currently have with no dedicated space and availability of time has made the provision of this service very difficult.

Emma Boorn and all the LHFC Advisers have done an incredible job and it is with mixed feelings that this decision has had to be made.

For eight years we have been able to help people from inside and outside Locks Heath Free Church and in that time, we have seen lives changed through the work of our volunteer advisors. We have had the privilege of stepping into people's lives when they were at their most vulnerable and walked with

them, in most cases, for a number of years.

The LHFC Debt Advice Team has:

- managed client debts of £352K and worked with over 60 different creditors
- negotiated payment plans to help clients create a workable budget based on their individual circumstances; helping them get to grips with their money
- read water meters, picked up from the food bank, shared meals together, opened bin bags full of letters, prayed with and for clients, talked about faith and the daily impact Jesus has in our lives, worked with 'Acts of Kindness' to deliver items to help the clients with general living.

Emma's passion and the commitment of the team has helped many people and reflected the love of Jesus to everyone they have had contact with.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved, praying, serving, encouraging.

*'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'* (1 Corinthians 15:58)

*Christmas  
Explored*  
AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE

SUNDAY 9TH DECEMBER  
BETWEEN 10AM - 2PM  
AN UNMISSABLE EVENT

# 60 SECONDS WITH: SHARON BRACKSTONE

Sharon was born in Portsmouth ('a Pompey girl with no accent') and first went to church at St Jude's in Southsea whilst attending their infant school. Later the family moved to North End, Portsmouth to be with her maternal grandmother. She was educated at St Theresa's Convent School and taught by nuns, although her family were not of that denomination.



Sharon maintains that the nuns at the Catholic school did not force Catholicism on the children but gave them a chance to form their own opinions. It was where she found peace and looks back on that schooling as a 'huge influence' on her life, bringing a valuable grounding in right and wrong.

As a teenager, Sharon was confirmed at St Mark's Church in North End but also attended St Andrew's (the Royal Marine Artillery Church) in Eastney Barracks where her father was serving in The Royal Marines. Her parents were happy for her and her brother to attend church but did not attend themselves.

On leaving school at 15, Sharon was keen to pursue a creative course, although her parents would have liked her to go into teaching. She beat off almost 200 applicants to secure a hairdressing apprenticeship at Handley's Department Store which housed a fashionable salon with a distinguished clientele.

Now qualified as a hairdresser, and married at 18, Sharon went on to manage a salon at Horndean where they were now living. Despite some resistance from her husband, she continued going to church at Holy Trinity, Blendworth. After the couple had moved to Warsash, and after 12 years of marriage and with two sons David and Mark, the marriage broke up.

Sharon subsequently met Pete when they were both members of the Warsash Carnival Committee. They were married at Petersfield Registry Office and initially settled down together just outside Waterlooville. The couple had two more sons, Simon and Steven, and all four boys were brought up by Sharon and Pete in a very happy, lovely home and eventually moved back to Locks Heath.

After a period of non-churchgoing, the Brackstone family eventually developed a relationship with Locks Heath Free Church in the mid-80's through son Mark's involvement with the Boys Brigade and their church parades. The then Minister Gordon Skipp visited the family and Sharon found herself 'drawn in'.

It was a mission from Spurgeon's College to the church in 1986 that Sharon describes as her 'wow moment'. She remembers being asked if she 'thought she would go to heaven?' to which she replied in the affirmative. That Sunday, with tears rolling down her cheeks, Sharon gave her life to the Lord, and a year later she was baptised.

Husband Pete's original reaction to his wife's church attendance was derogatory, telling her she had 'gone mad'. Sharon recalls that "he did everything to stop me going". Eventually however, Pete became very involved in the Boys Brigade but was still very questioning of

every facet of Christianity. Pete followed on to be baptised at an Easter service in 1989 at the old church as recognition that he had come to faith. Since then he ran the Boys Brigade for many years and has worked with youth groups at their home and they serve at Alpha.

Pete has suffered from a serious life-threatening illness over the last few years involving several hospital stays, a bone marrow transplant and long periods of chemotherapy treatment but Sharon reflects that 'the last 6-7 years have been monumental in our faith'. Initially Pete was given 3-6 years to live but now, after 3 and a half years, they have been given the news that the transplant has failed and on return from Southampton last November the cancer had spiralled and he had to immediately go back on Chemotherapy to contain the disease. Sharon reflects that "we are blessed abundantly and beyond belief in our mess and we hang on to that which gives us peace. We know what we are facing but we are full of hope".

What also gives Sharon peace is that during his original stay in hospital at the time of his diagnosis, Pete testified that "I felt God beside me in hospital and know that God had hold of me."

Despite his low immunity and the need for continuous chemotherapy for the rest of his life, Pete is determined to carry on playing golf and working in the office of his garage business. Sharon says that he 'suffers quietly' and 'won't give in'. Pete and Sharon have been married for 38 years and are clearly very much in love. For Sharon, Pete is simply "the most inspirational man I know" and admits that "you would never know how he is suffering".

Sharon fulfilled a strong desire to serve on a mission through her visit to Belfast in South Africa in 2012. It was the first time that she

had left Pete but felt that "God had told me to go". Sharon says that she "came back a different person" with a renewed passion to serve more and go on missions with a belief that such 'serving releases blessing'.

Since then she has been on the LHFC mission earlier this year that visited the Ritsona Refugee Camp in Greece. During that trip, described by Sharon as 'mind-blowing', she maintains that "God breathed into her and spoke to her" during the times when she was "still and stopping to listen". She aims to return to both South Africa and Greece and reflects that "if anything happened to Pete a mission trip would give me that strength to carry on".

Sharon acknowledges that she has 'such an amazing family' (including 7 grandchildren) but pays tribute to friends Alan and Celia Baker who have been 'their rocks' throughout with a deep friendship shown by accompanying them to every medical appointment.

Sharon and Pete attend our 9am Sunday service and Sharon regularly stays on to teach with the children in our 11am 'Kids for Jesus' ministry.

### **Favourite holiday destination**

Australia, to visit our son Simon, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren.  
South Africa, which I have fallen in love with.

### **Favourite music**

ABBA

### **Favourite TV shows**

'Escape to the Country' – could watch them back to back.

### **Favourite Bible verse**

1 Peter 5.7 '*Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you*'.

Giving	Sharing	Being
Building	<b>FAITH</b>	Knowing
Growing	<b>HOPE</b>	Seeing
Living	<b>LOVE</b>	Choosing
Finding		Seeking
Trusting	<i>1 CORINTHIANS 13:13</i>	Showing
Bringing		Investing

## LHFC Motto Text 2018

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