



Steve & Debs serving with The Navigators in Southampton and beyond...Jan 2014 Edition



New Year Blessings...

"Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life." Isaiah 43:4

For us and our family 2013 was a deeply challenging year. The tragedy we experienced in Norway (in which James Witham was killed in a hiking incident) continues to be a key moment as we experience God and live out our lives for Him. Amidst the pain we felt God promise to give us others in exchange for his life (as per the verse above). Our expectation was that this would be primarily new students joining our ministry but much to our surprise God had other plans. We are therefore thrilled to announce we are expecting another boy in May 2014. Please do pray for Debs in these final months of pregnancy and for the whole family as we adapt to the changes that this will bring.

We give thanks that Benjamin (who has just turned 5 years old) has settled so well into school and that Naomi (3¼ years old) is enjoying her time at pre-school and ballet. Samuel (1¼ years old) also seems to have grown up considerably and all of a sudden has become quite the grown up little boy. He did however suffer over Christmas and was taken into hospital at 5am on Christmas day with Bronchiolitis. Though he missed out on the turkey, thankfully the hospital discharged him later that afternoon and he has now made a full recovery.

In terms of ministry we look forward to the new year with excitement. We remain very grateful for the fantastic group of leaders God has given us and it has been great fun working alongside them in the lives of some new and returning students. Do pray for them as a number have some big decisions coming up about where God is leading them to minister during the coming years. We ourselves have worked hard this term to find a better blend of family and ministry life this past term. Debs joined the Christmas choir at church and has been meeting regularly with a long standing friend for mutual encouragement. Steve has been undertaking a number of building and maintenance projects in the garden and has really enjoyed getting his teeth into that. Our main hope and desire for 2014 is to continue with this more sustainable pace of life in the midst of the opportunities God is giving us for ministry here in Southampton and beyond.

"To encourage students to know, love and share Jesus Christ through purposeful, intentional and reproducible disciple-making as we share our lives together in community." SOTON NAVS Vision statement, Sept 2011
"To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of labourers living and discipling among the lost" Worldwide Navigator Calling Statement



NAVS Southampton
Weekend away 2013



NAVS Team
Christmas Party

Developments in the ministry...

Southampton Student Ministry – The thing about student ministry is that there is constant change. By nature most students come and go on a fairly frequent basis (approx. 3-4 years). Last summer a significant number of the group graduated while another significant proportion (all language students) left for a year abroad. This has had a big impact on the make-up of the group and while we have had new people to both the Wednesday and Thursday groups the ministry feels very different this year. Our Bible study groups have been studying Mark's gospel together and will soon be moving on to study some themes under the title of "Freedom in Christ" including Knowing God, idolatry, Understanding our Identity, Relationships, Struggling with sin and Spiritual warfare. Please pray for Steve as he puts the materials together over the next couple of weeks. Please also continue to pray for the development of the various Bible study groups. Please pray too for our Thursday IGNITE group as this has struggled to recruit new people this year. We do however give thanks for a Mexican student who has been coming most weeks and is working through a number of big questions about faith that arose for him last summer.

Summer Trip (Jul to Aug 2014) – Despite the sadness of last summer we are eager to continue taking teams on short term mission trips and are currently working on the specifics of the trip. We are sad to report that we have stepped down from our role at Zosna camp in Latvia. A number of factors contributed to this decision including a sense of God leading us on, timings associated with Ben being at school and a sense of others having taken things forward in our absence last year. We are grateful for the 7 years we served at Zosna camp and we ourselves and all those we have taken have been so blessed by the experiences we have had there.

In thinking about the coming year we are very eager to return to Norway. Yes there are some sad memories there but over the years it has been a hugely special and restorative place. We are also part of the group that own the Youth Hostel (Elvheim) and last summer Steve joined the hostel's Board. We are therefore planning on running another discipleship week at the end of July which would be open to students and recent graduates from across Europe. We have also been invited by a dear friend to bring a team to Strasbourg, France earlier in July and so we are working on the details of a France-Norway trip from approximately mid-July to mid-August. Please do pray that we would plan wisely and that God would provide students to be part of the team.

Please pray for us over the coming months:

We are so grateful for your prayers for us in all that we are doing; it really does make a huge difference and we have been so thankful of those prayers over the past 6 months especially. Please do keep on praying for us; for us and our family and for God's ministry amongst students that he has given us here in Southampton. There are a number of prayer points contained within this letter as well as some key dates of what is happening over the coming term that you could pray through. If you have time we would also love to hear your news so do get in touch with us at the details below.

Key dates:

Mon 13 to Fri 24 Jan
Student Exam weeks
Mon 3 to Fri 7 Feb
SUCU Events Week
26 Jan, 23 Feb & 23 Mar
Sunday Lunches
Sat 1 Mar
NAVS Day Away
Sat 22 Mar
Regional Day in Cardiff
Fri 28 Mar
End of Term

To God be the Glory, All our love Steve, Debs, Benjamin, Naomi and Samuel

The Navigators, Turner House, 54 The Avenue, Southampton, SO17 1XQ
Tel: 02380-558800. Website: www.navigators.co.uk / www.sotonnavs.org

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Our Address: 53 Harefield Road, Hampton Park, Southampton, Hants, SO17 3TG
Tel: 023-80677557, E-mail: steveanddebs@the-mcclures.co.uk, Web: www.the-mcclures.co.uk