

ACROSS Newsletter

ACROSS
Sharing Faith Across Cultures

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MAHABBA
LOVING ALL MUSLIMS

Autumn Issue / September 2021

Afghanistan: 'not void of hope'



A prayer we can cry for Afghanistan, 'after the fall'

"This is a season of weeping and mourning, but it is not void of hope. Our tears are the bridge between brutality and humanity; our tears are the salty gates for seeing a different reality; our tears are facing soulless nations and a parched mentality; our tears are the dam preventing rivers of animosity. For the sake of the mourning men, cry with us to reflect your amity. For the sake of the poor children, cry with us demanding sanity. For the sake of lamenting mothers, refuse violence and stupidity. Love your enemies and cry with them is the advice of divinity. Bless those who curse is the path to genuine spirituality. Pour tears of mercy; compassion is true piety. Pray with tears, for the sake of spreading equity. Followers of Jesus: crying is now our responsibility. But don't cry for your friends only; but also for your Enemy."

Yohanna Katanacho (Bethlehem Bible College)

'They are not alone' by Jane 'Exiles'



Afghan Street Art by Shamsia Hassani

With the fall of the Afghan government and the Taliban takeover of the country, life has been full of phone calls from stricken friends, hours spent on Home Office helplines giving long lists of details of vulnerable people, and comforting as best we can, not only those left in the country, but also refugee friends in Guildford desperate to retrieve their relatives. At times it has seemed a fruitless task and so far none of the friends on any of the lists have managed to escape. Hazara, journalists, workers with foreign NGO's, and politicians are all still there, some in hiding and others running for their lives. One family narrowly escaped the ISIS-K bombing as they waited in the sewage channel by the gate. Half their group got through and safely onto a plane, but they were left to return, drenched and terrified to their home in Kabul, to an uncertain fate. Two of the young girls I teach online use the few minutes a day they have of Wi-fi to send me messages. Early morning girls football has stopped as has school, going outside and singing. "I love to dance," said one. "But it is not allowed anymore." They are all without exception depressed, tired and hopeless. I send them psalms which they love. I speak to them about a loving Heavenly Father who cares about them deeply. I urge them to put their trust in Him. I pray for them constantly and let them know we are all praying. I tell them they are not forgotten. They are not alone.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers



According to UNHCR statistics, at the end of 2020 there were 132,349 refugees, 77245 pending asylum cases and 4662 stateless people in the UK. Woking Borough Council has resettled 50 Syrian refugee families over the last few years and is now set to assist Afghan refugees.

A Christian charity "[Welcome Churches](http://www.welcomechurches.org)" (www.welcomechurches.org) is seeking to build a network of churches across the UK committed to welcoming refugees into their churches and communities. They and many other UK charities have partnered with Dr Krish Kandiah to launch "[The Hospitality Pledge](#)" on 28th June this year in response to the government's **New Plan For Immigration**. They will work with international charities and local churches to speak up for the displaced – both Refugees and Asylum Seekers. (John Wardill)



International Student Ministry – Riz Mohammed

"I'm not a Christian yet!". That is the response from a Chinese international student who has been welcomed by Friends International and discovered that there is something 'different' about the British who call themselves Christians. 6000 international students are studying at the University of Surrey representing over 143 different nations. This is an opportunity for the local church to respond to the Lord's favour of bringing the many nations to our doorstep. Check the website to find out more about this ministry and how you can get involved – www.friendsinternationalguildford.org.uk or contact Riz both Across Co-ordinator & Friends International Guildford Administrator.

<p>South Woking Food Bank (SWCFB) by Nicky Bill</p>   <p>New Life Church A charismatic Baptist Church</p>	<p>South Woking foodbank was born from a vision within New Life Church in Woking; from individuals seeing a need within the local community & using this as a way of expressing God's love. People within NLC donate food items every week and others volunteer their time to deliver food parcels. Over the past year of Covid, the need for the foodbank doubled, but God provided all that was needed & there was never a shortage of food. Delivering a food parcel to local people provides an open door to chat about their current circumstances, share faith where appropriate and to recommend other support where necessary. The vast majority of people accept prayer for their situation & often people feel blessed because of this. Two ladies in the church cover each foodbank client in prayer & usually have words of encouragement from the Lord to give them. Most clients will place this 'word' on their fridge & look at it often. So many families from different cultures are visited & a number of these have subsequently attended an Alpha or CAP course at the church. Some ongoing relationships have been developed. Praise God for this opportunity to show His love to different families of different cultures within our local community in Woking.</p>
	<p>Thank You - The work of Across has continued for over 20 years thanks to the support of the local church. During Covid, when churches have been stretched financially, we are grateful that the vision to see the Christian faith shared with the multi-cultural community of Woking has not waived. Most meetings have been on Zoom, but recently we have had the pleasure of getting together to review the book 'Sharing your Faith with a Muslim Neighbour' by Robert Scott. It has been encouraging to discuss how faith can be shared across cultures and we hope to host more in person events as the situation allows. We hope to make some church visits in the near future to share how the generosity of the church has enabled Across to continue.</p>
	<p>The annual Hindu World Prayer Focus is available now for Christians & churches worldwide to take 15 days to learn about and pray for our world's one billion plus Hindu friends. This period from late October to early November also encompasses the significant Hindu Festival of Light (Diwali). Keep an eye open for council backed activities in Woking and Order your copy of the prayer guide HERE (www.15daysprayer.org.uk)</p>
	<p>Here's what's happening ? Regular Monthly Prayer Meeting currently on Zoom (1st Friday of the month at 8pm) – so next are 1 Oct, 5 Nov, 3 Dec Across Prayer Breakfast – Sat 18 Sept 'Beyond the wind in the house'(zoom) Big Questions – with Archbishop of Canterbury on Sun 26 Sept at 3.30pm-4:30 at Woking Football stadium – BigQuestions-Woking.eventbrite.co.uk Mahabba National Prayer Zoom Event – 18 Oct 8pm for the work of Mahabba and the Afghan people. Link from Riz Please contact Riz at acrosswokingoffice@gmail.com for Zoom details & more information on any item</p>

'Sharing Faith Across Cultures'

'Cross Cultural Ministry in Woking' (Across) is a registered Charity (1106905) and exists 'to see people of all backgrounds become disciples of Jesus Christ' Across is formed by 10 churches working together and is based at St Andrews Church, Goldsworth Park, GU21 3LG.

Contact: Riz, the ACROSS Co-ordinator at acrosswokingoffice@gmail.com

Across is part of the Mahabba Network www.mahabbanetwork.com

'Cross cultural ministry in Woking'