



St Marks Milton Keynes

In the summer of 2012, three adults and one toddler moved to Milton Keynes to start St Mark's. Their hope was to become a vibrant Community of Grace, where people from across the city discovered an ever deeper, more sustaining faith in a God that they did not yet believe existed.

There are 250,000 people in the "new town" - a town with below average church membership, above average mobility and a unique design and make-up.

The gospel of Mark is the inspiration for our name - a gospel which describes the dynamic, powerful and surprising Kingdom activity which happens wherever Jesus is present, and a gospel written for the uneducated who did not have prior knowledge of prophecies and religion.

The description of the early church in Acts 2 is the inspiration for our rhythm of life. We meet in public places and homes, breaking bread together, sharing with and working alongside those who are in need, helping each other understand and apply the teaching of the Scriptures and doing so with joy.

Our gatherings are typified by food, accessibility, fun and honest discussion. We think that circles are better than rows, and a circle is even better if there is a table in the middle! Everyone is welcome to participate. Faith should be life-giving and discovering Jesus should feel more like 'coming home' than 'visiting a strange land'.

Since our first tentative steps we have grown to a community of over 70 people. We have become key supporters of the local Women's Aid refuge, providing money for their emergency relief budget, helping to rehouse two families, enabling summer excursions and Christmas parties and throwing a party for the overwhelmed staff!

We were greatly impacted upon learning that 1 in 5 children in Milton Keynes live in poverty. This has led us to work in this area of need - the first project being one named "Make Lunch". This is a national initiative to help bridge the holiday Hunger Gap for children who might not otherwise eat when their schools are closed at the end of term. In our first year of operation (last year) we grew from feeding 13 children in one school, to working in 4 schools across the town with a small army of volunteers (most from outside a church) and served 907 lunches to children and their families. This year, by joining with the local Foodbank we hope to treble that number.

We are more than our pattern of meeting. We are a nomadic community who find our home wherever we are. We are seeing faith grow and awaken in unexpected places. In conjunction with the Red Cross we are the first MK church to house a Syrian family this year. We are passionate about the mission of the commission.

Paul Oxley, who planted the church is a Self Supporting minister, and we recently took the step of faith to employ someone part time to run the work among the 1 in 5 children. Supporting these two staff positions, hiring venues, resourcing Make Lunch, raising funds and discovering creative ways to grow are all challenges for the coming year, meaning we are so thankful that you would consider praying for us and joining with us. Thank you!