

Extra mile

More than a meal

As numbers rise at our lunch and evening Drop-ins, hospitality remains at the centre.

Room for hope

In a tough year for the Overnight Night Welcome Centre, guests are still cared for.

News and prayer

News from the Child and Family Centre, and prayer requests.

Pruning and growing

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5).

In recent years I am sure we have all experienced change and no shortage of turmoil.

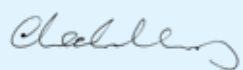
Well over thirty years ago, we developed a Nursery in the community of Linthouse, Govan which was named 'Little Branches'. From this, our Child and Family Centre grew, we have seen the children of those first 'little branches' move through the Child and Family Centre.

However, in more recent times we have had a tough decision to make which will see the Nursery element of the Child and Family close at the end of June this year. For more on this see page six.

Despite the width and depth of our impact, Glasgow City Mission is actually a small charity. As you will read, this winter our Overnight Welcome Centre has again been the city's core response to those who face street homelessness during the coldest months of the year.

We have moved where the Spirit has led and in all that we have done we have seen God move. In this season we are experiencing a cutting back. But we started with little branches, we have strong roots, we can weather storms and we believe in the growth which is to come.

Amen



Charles Maasz
Chief Executive



More than a meal

As numbers rise at our lunch and evening Drop-ins, hospitality remains at the centre.

"There are lots of places to go in Glasgow to get food, but not so many where you can sit and get a chat – this is definitely one of them."

Anthony has been coming to the lunch Drop-in for the last three months following a relationship breakdown, and he appreciates the chance to chat with other guests, volunteers and staff. He says, "The staff are always upbeat. If you spend too much time on your own, you can end up in a dark place."

We have been operating a lunch and evening Drop-in each weekday since restrictions eased after lockdowns, and guests have appreciated the consistency. Average numbers at each session were around the 60 mark, but now we can regularly have more than 80 people sitting down with us to each meal. If anyone needs support with things such as accessing benefits they can stay on after the Drop-in for one-to-one advocacy.

Hospitality

As Anthony notes, it's important not only to feed people, but also to spend time getting to know our guests. Simon, Assistant Manager, says that many of our guests are in need of good conversation and someone to listen. We can also signpost guests to our other services such as counselling, addiction support and help to find work or college places. Volunteers play an essential role, eating with guests and listening to their stories.



Chase and his wife Sarah have been volunteering for two weeks and are enjoying sitting with the guests. Chase says, "We love the environment created here, that we pray before every session, and can be the hands and feet of Jesus. We love the holistic approach – you don't just feed people, you help them get back on their feet or find accommodation."

The growing number of people without any accommodation in Glasgow is one of the reasons for increased numbers at the Drop-in. People who have come to our Overnight Welcome Centre (OWC) but who didn't receive accommodation have nowhere else to go during the day. They know they can get a hot lunch and then go up to Urban where they can use the computers, have a coffee and meet with our Housing Settlement Officers.

Simon says, "The Overnight Welcome Centre guests appreciate having a safe place to spend the day. They know they are welcome here and people will smile at them, which can make a big difference."

Turn over for an update on the OWC.

Adopt a Drop-in week!

Could your church partner with us by adopting the evening Drop-in for a week? You would send 10 volunteers, two each evening, to serve the meal and sit and chat with guests. We would send you prayer news for the week and could send a speaker to a church service or meeting. Contact us to find out more.

Room for hope

We like to share hopeful and uplifting stories in Connect. However, in many ways the news from this year's Overnight Welcome Centre is extremely discouraging, particularly in the context of gains made in the past four years.

The Overnight Welcome Centre (OWC) runs from 1 December to 31 March to help people at risk of sleeping rough to access emergency accommodation and then move on to a more settled place to stay. For the second year in a row, we have been running the service from our city centre building through the night. We work with our partners to source beds in various locations, mostly in allocated hotels, and we also have funding for additional emergency beds.

Glasgow City Council officially declared a housing emergency in November, due to a diminishing supply of homelessness accommodation to deal with the rising number of people requiring accommodation. In the first two months of this OWC season – December and January – we had seen 597 unique guests compared to 534 in the whole four months of the previous season.

Elyse, OWC Manager, says, "We are currently facing our busiest year since the winter project began in 2010. The team have shown a huge amount of grace in the midst of challenges. There is not enough accommodation to send people to, so we are making sure people are being kept safe."

Each morning, our two Housing Settlement Officers (HSOs) follow up with the previous nights' guests. This can be as many as fifty men and women. The HSOs do what they can to help them move on from their emergency accommodation. Due to the lack of capacity in the city, this can be a slow process.

This is all in stark contrast to the last few years when there was an emergency hotel bed for nearly every guest who needed one

and we were then able to help people move on to more permanent solutions.

Guests who we have not been able to accommodate have nowhere to spend the day, and often come back to our building where they can eat at the Drop-in, take part in activities at Urban, or meet with our HSOs.

High demand

Our partners are also at capacity and sometimes refer their clients to us. We have become the last stop on a broken line. Sarah, one of our HSOs, says, "It's a city in crisis but there are tiny glimmers of hope [when people do get accommodated]. This is what we cling on to and it also gives our guests hope that although things are moving slowly, they are moving."

One thing that hasn't changed is the level of care we offer our guests. Louis, one of the staff team, says, "It is a privilege to sit alongside people and share life with them – showing compassion and valuing them as individuals."

"It's a city in crisis but there are tiny glimmers of hope [when people do get accommodated]. This is what we cling on to and it also gives our guests hope."

Sarah

Prayer and reflection evening

Please join us for an evening of prayer, stories, thanksgiving and reflection for this year's Overnight Welcome Centre.

Date: Sunday 14 April

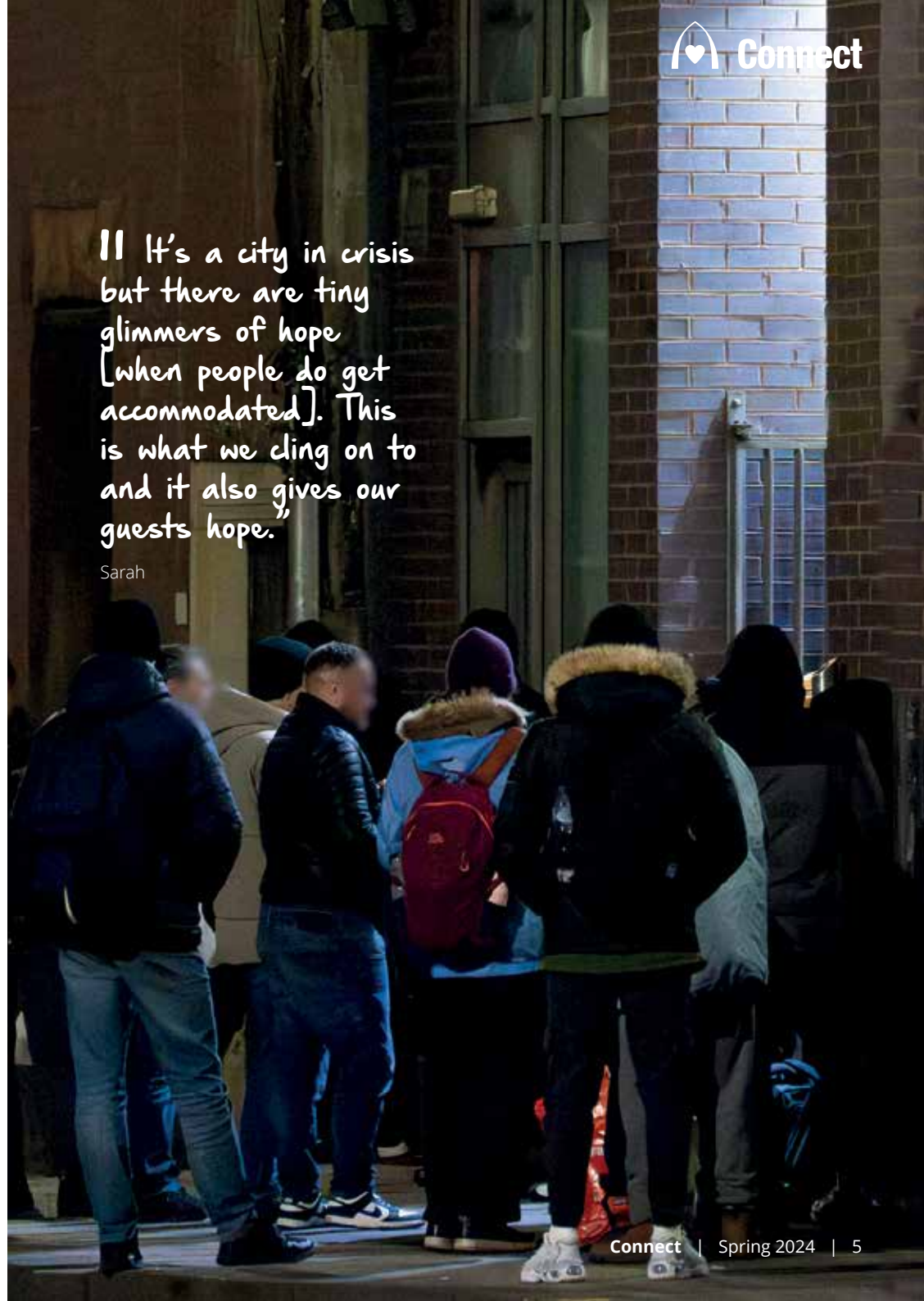
Venue: Adelaide Place Baptist Church, 209 Bath Street, G2 4HZ

Time: Doors open 6.30pm for a 7pm start

The event is free but please register by scanning the attached QR code or go to our website's event page.



We look forward to seeing you there.



News and prayer

> Nursery closure



It is with great sadness that we confirm that the Nursery at our Child and Family Centre in Govan will close in June 2024. Our Nursery team has delivered an excellent service for many decades – regularly going the extra mile to give children the best possible start in life.

The Nursery runs each weekday morning. However, several years ago, the Scottish Government introduced a policy offering all three to five year olds full-day nursery provision for 50 weeks a year. This would not have been feasible for us, so we decided to remain as a morning-only Nursery, running in term-time. The number of children being enrolled has consequently been declining, which has made it unsustainable.

We are working hard to enable the children to manage the move into a new Nursery or up to their primary school in the autumn. All of the other services at the Child and Family Centre are continuing, and we look forward to welcoming the Nursery children to our Holiday Clubs and to seeing those who move onto primary school at our After School Clubs.

Pray with us

- > This is a difficult time for the Child and Family Centre, particularly for the Nursery staff and the families who will be affected, so please join us in praying for families and staff.
- > Give thanks that we will be able to take families at the Child and Family Centre on trips and outings in the Easter holidays. Pray this will be a fun opportunity for families to spend time together.
- > Please pray that all of our Drop-in guests feel welcomed and that as staff and volunteers spend time with them, relationships would develop and we would be able to learn about and help meet individual needs.
- > Pray for the remaining nights of the Overnight Welcome Centre – that they will be peaceful and numbers will be manageable. Please pray for all the guests we have seen, particularly for those who have yet to be accommodated.
- > There are many reasons for the housing crisis in Glasgow – pray partners will work well together in the coming months to find lasting solutions.

More online

Stay up to date with our latest news and plans on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



www.glasgowcitymission.com



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“I want to transform lives in Glasgow”

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The sum of £10 £25 £50 Other £ _____ every month

On the 1st 15th of every month, starting in _____ MONTH

Account holder: _____

Account number: _____ Sort code: _____

Charities Aid Foundation processes donations on our behalf and will send you a Direct Debit Guarantee and advanced notice letter before your first donation.



I'd like to give a one off gift of £ _____

I enclose a cheque (payable to Glasgow City Mission) Or Please debit my card

Card No: _____ Expiry: _____ Start: _____

Security code (last 3 digits on the reverse of your card): _____

Please tick here if you do **not** require a receipt and please be assured of our thanks.

2 Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

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I want to make my gift worth 25% more at no extra cost.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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We'll not share your details with any third parties for the purposes of their marketing or phone you to ask for more money. We'd like to let you know the impact of your support but if you don't want to hear from Glasgow City Mission in the future, tick here .

3 Please send me more information about:

volunteering booking someone to speak at my church/group

fundraising I want to receive prayer news by email

leaving a gift in my will

Email: _____

Completed forms can be posted to: 'Freepost, Glasgow City Mission'



kiltwalk



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THE
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Take part in Scotland's largest fundraising event to raise funds for our guests. The Glasgow Kiltwalk takes place on Sunday 28 April, so you still have weeks to get in training! Choose one of three distances (Mighty Stride, Big Stroll or Wee Wander) and invite family and friends to join you on a great day out to support those affected by homelessness and poverty in Glasgow.

Register and get all the information about the event using this link <https://thekiltwalk.co.uk/events/glasgow>, or scan the QR code provided. Then follow the steps to set up your JustGiving account. We will supply a t-shirt and will have a support team on hand on the day.



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