

SUCU Newsletter

Easter 2015

Message from the Committee

Welcome to our end of term newsletter. The spring term is always a rollercoaster ride with the pressure of exams in January, then the excitement of Events Week and all that follows from that, as well as the AGM to handover to a new committee. Throughout all this our weekly events have continued – please do read more about everything that has been going on below. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the 2014/15 committee for their service to the CU over the past year, as well as all the team leaders who have passed on their responsibilities during the past few months. Thank you also to all of you, our supporters, for your prayers and the many other ways in which you help us to give every student the opportunity to hear and respond to the Good News and Love of Jesus Christ!

Events Week

At the start of February, from the 2nd-6th, SUCU had its annual Events Week as a focus to our mission work and to give our fellow students the chance to investigate what Christianity is really about through a series of different events. The theme this year was 'Uncover Real Life' and we were privileged to have Charlie Skrine, Associate Rector of St Helen's Bishopsgate come as our main speaker. We launched the week on the Saturday as comedian Andy Kind entertained a large crowd with his stand up comedy and shared his testimony.

Through the week we ran four lunchtime talks, with Charlie going through some common objections to our faith, ranging from "How can anyone believe Jesus rose from the dead?" to the historical reliability of the Gospels. The Wednesday talk on suffering was particularly well attended, coming just a week after Stephen Fry's well publicised outburst on the subject. On the Thursday, we ran a 'Grill-a-Christian' event on the centre of campus, outside the Students' Union, giving anyone the chance to come and ask us questions about our faith.

The evening events provided a place to look at the Bible in a more relaxed environment, with a café style-set up, plentiful cakes and live music. Charlie led a look at Jesus using John's gospel and encouraged discussions on the tables. Lots of great conversations arose from this, with many people staying for well over an hour after it had finished, and some taking away their own copy of the Gospel. There was a separate track for international students, with a themed meal each evening and a discussion on who Jesus really was.

The week finished with a performance of the Mark Drama given by members of the CU. Simply by recounting every episode described in Mark's gospel in 90 minutes, the play provokes a powerful response and challenges you to think about how to react to Jesus.

The end of Events Week doesn't mean we stop our evangelism however – the Alpha course has been

running weekly since Events Week (see below), and many CU members are using UCCF's Uncover John to read the Bible with their friends.

Thank you to all who prayed for and supported the week, particularly the CU guests for their hard work, the local churches who provided in many ways and Charlie for the time he took to help make it such a great week. Please do keep praying as we continue to follow up over the coming weeks and months.

Alpha

This term, to follow up Events Week, we have been hosting the Alpha course. We've seen over 40 attendees from outside the CU, with about 20 regular non-christians (or previously non-christians!) each week. It's been a great opportunity to preach the gospel, answer challenging questions and get to know and love each person. Every week we've had a short talk followed by a meal. After, there is an opportunity for discussions to be had - not once have we left when originally planned, with questions and discussions flowing way after the 9 o'clock finishing time.

It's been so exciting to see what God's doing on campus; many have been trying out churches or reading the bible, and many, if not most, are further on in their journey with Jesus. Numbers are not confirmed yet, but there are certainly those who are now excited for what God is going to do in their lives, who were not when they started this course - please keep praying! It's been amazing how many are coming each week, but let's pray for a breakthrough and life change. Thank you for your support and prayers, He is good.

Hall Groups

Hall Groups are a weekly event run by student leaders in each halls of residence. It is an opportunity for Christian Freshers within the university to come together, worship, study the Bible, pray and ultimately be equipped for sharing the great news of Jesus within our halls and across campus.

Over the last term Hall Groups have been working through Romans and Jonah, looking at the grace that God lavishes upon all of us through the beautiful sacrifice of His Son so that we may have a personal relationship with Him, and the command that we have been given to share this gospel with the world, starting with our flatmates and coursemates.

Over the next year we pray that we would see God move massively throughout all of the halls, that we would have the opportunity to talk about the love and freedom that we know in Jesus, to open the Bible with our friends and that we would be a people grounded in prayer.

iCafe

Praise God for the abundance of international students here in Southampton! We have an amazing God and gospel message to share and are in a privileged position to be able to proclaim the name of Jesus with such freedom on our campus.

Following Events Week, we have seen a real interest sparked among our international students in wanting to find out more about the Bible and the person of Jesus. Many have been attending the optional Bible studies, where the Uncover John resource has been helpful in giving seekers the opportunity to investigate the Bible for themselves.

There are several regulars who have been attending iCafe some time now. Please do pray that all they have taken in during the past weeks will be pieced together and that we will see them turn to Christ. Please also pray particularly for our Muslims friends, that they will keep searching and grappling with the questions they have about our faith, and for several of the iCafe team member who meet up with those from other faith backgrounds to read the Bible. As exam season approaches, pray that we will see a continuation in numbers attending, that the team can build meaningful, lasting relationships with international students and that above all that we will see lives saved.

Text a Toastie

Text a Toastie (TAT) has been running every Wednesday evening this term and every night the week before Events Week. It is a chance for people to text in a question about Christianity with a flavour of toastie

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they would like. We then make their toastie, deliver it to them, and answer their question. It has been amazing so far this term; it's such a privilege spending Wednesday evenings with such an enthusiastic team who turn up every week because they are so excited to tell other students about the God who loves them! We would like to thank all those who have been praying for the smooth running of TAT over the past year and would encourage you to continue as we move on through this year and onto the next. Please also pray that God will continue to work through TAT, guiding it and strengthening numbers so that more and more students of Southampton may know Jesus for themselves.

Inside Out

Inside Out has again been running every Friday night this term, from one of the local churches on the high street. We act as a witness, sharing the love of Jesus to the clubbers as they return home from their night out, giving out water, hot drinks, biscuits, and toast. Praise God that He continues to bring in a huge range of people to hear His Good News! Prayer points: 1) That people who come in would remember and think about what they've heard about Jesus, and perhaps come to church or text in to TAT. 2) Thank God for the work he is doing in the hearts of some of the people we see regularly. Pray he would continue to bring them by our doors and work in their hearts.

Dates for the diary

23rd April: Alpha (final session)

30th April: Evening event – film with discussion

7th May: Annual CU Ball – ‘The Moustachequerade Ball’

18th May – 6th June: University Exams

Thanks for supporting us

As a CU we're in an incredibly privileged position to reach out to the students of the University of Southampton, and we'd love to give you the opportunity to be a part of God's work here. Everything you've read about in this newsletter is made possible by voluntary donations, and we're very grateful to all those who partner with us in this way. Standing orders can be made to the CU's bank account (Account Number: 02493362, Sort Code: 30-97-80). Please contact Dan Wallace (treasurer@sucu.org.uk) with any giving related queries. Thank you!