

God's Presence in Our Community (TLG)

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[0 : 0 0] it's really lovely to be here um i've got a question to get started just to wake up our brains give yourself a shake if you've been feeling like you've been sitting well you did just stand up and worship um i'm not very good at sitting still for a long time just share that with you so i've got a question one word you can just keep it to yourself you can tell someone if you want what brought you here this morning have a little think next question one word what got you out of bed last wednesday did you get out of bed last wednesday what will get you out of bed next wednesday well just have a little think about that um while i tell you a quick story um a vicar at this time of year was invited into school to do assembly went into school a sea of children in front of him and he said i just want to start by asking you a question see if you can guess who am i i've got pointy ears a big fluffy tail and i love nuts no answer he tries again i've got pointy ears big fluffy tail and i love nuts nothing no one once more he says i've got pointy ears big fluffy tail and i love nuts come on guys and this child very quietly in the front row puts his hand up and says i think the answer is jesus but you don't have sound like a squirrel i'm rubbish at telling jokes and i just got you to laugh yay um is the answer always jesus are you here this morning because of jesus did you get out of bed last wednesday because of jesus if you don't know jesus in your life is there someone that could introduce you to jesus we've just heard this um reading from thank you from susie and i'm going to be unpacking that this morning and bringing in a little bit of salt and light as well thank you wendy my name is kate so i'm part of the community here at christ church at the moment i serve christ church by being on the ecc i also do transport on a sunday morning lovely kim and marjorie are not here with us this morning they're in western but um the thing that i have probably done the longest is be a coach an early intervention coach and if my answer this morning wasn't jesus it would be early intervention and i'll tell you all about that i was a primary school teacher for eight years um then i moved to working for the local church in christ church for oh no i was primary school teacher for 10 years eight years here and during that time found tlg and just fell passionately in love with this program and have seen it in action on the ground here in clevedon when a job came up to work for tlg as a regional leader across the southwest supporting churches of all shapes and sizes um i was fortunate enough to get that job i remember being with angie the day i got that phone call went a little bit bananas and then i've now stepped into a new role away from that regional lead to uh the program lead for early intervention so i love the way that god takes us step by step he kind of he builds us up he supports us in um what we do and yeah i'm i love what i do um so i am here to share with you this heart that tlg as an organization has for transformation and seeing change in young people's lives so we're going to look at some of the challenges that are faced today by struggling children and families and we're going to reflect on god's heart we're going to join in with god's heart for that and then i'm going to invite you to consider some

of the ways that you might like to join in of which there are many so bear with we're going to go on a whistle stop tour and i hope that you enjoy this morning i've got three short clips that you're going to watch so you don't just have to listen to me the whole time um i was going to pray but susie's already prayed but you know prayed but you know what my prayer is this morning that the holy spirit would disturb us that it would disturb he would come and disturb our spirits open our ears our eyes and our kind of our hearts to respond so we've listened to the words of isaiah god's word and when we look at the first couple of passages it says comfort oh comfort my people says god she's been punished enough more than enough and now it's over and done with so we see here god's desire to bring comfort to those that have struggled literally comfort means to just speak to the heart in this passage we see his desire to peace uh just to comfort those uh particularly with hurting hearts and we see god's heart for the people of israel who've been in captivity experienced destruction but it reminds us that we are all waiting for god and we are waiting for him to bring his justice on oppressive systems his kingdom of justice peace and love and we are in that time now god's kingdom come his will be done and when we look at the statistics from our own nation today then well i hope that this breaks our hearts i hope that statistics are tricky aren't they sometimes it takes a while for them to land and i'm about to whiz through some so let's open our ears to hear them this is already out of date this slide was made six months ago it's now 5.3 million children living in poverty and it's increased by over half a million in the last five years so a massive impact on families one in three parents say they've missed a meal just in order to feed their kids in the wake of the pandemic the nhs are estimating that an extra 1.5 million children and young people are going to require mental health support in the next five years and in the last academic year there were over 418 000 exclusions from school around 25 000 of those 25 000 of those were in primary school and that's children as young as five who are being told that they don't fit in a system and are being put on a path which statistically so research has shown statistically leads them to much more potential for unemployment poverty gang county lines involvement imprisonment worst case scenario suicide it shortens lives these statistics and we can see the injustice on a greater scale if we can get our heads around what this means that poor children are four times more likely to be excluded and we only need to turn on the news or tune into the news to hear tragedies affecting young people and families really challenging circumstances due to the cost of living crisis and many other things that are challenges in our day to day these statistics the statistics look at that are nationwide but we're part of this nation so in our own community this is happening and we know it breaks god's heart let's not become numb to this ourselves it should break our heart and then what follows in isaiah is what we believe is god's call to the local church today that's you and me

it says prepare for god's arrival make straight the roads smooth a highway fit for god fill in the valleys and level off the hills so i'm thinking i did a bit of gardening yesterday i mean to be honest my garden's a wreck just filling in anything in the garden is just like exhausting what does it mean fill in the valleys level off the hills well let's go on a bit of a journey here we are in bolivia it's not quite like the road to ken is it a bit different so this is one of the most treacherous roads in bolivia and we're going to imagine a man called alfredo who is a real person alfredo's job is to transport timber from zayamas situated in the tropical lowlands of bolivia to the mega city of la paz along the youngest road road anyone want to hazard a guess at what youngest road translates as death road this journey can take up to three days and it can be really dusty and then when it rains mud forms and of course the truck gets stuck in the mud drivers have to abandon their vehicles to physically fill in the holes and i'm having a moan about the little potholes in my garden fill them with stones piles of leaves to provide traction the truck needs to move forward there are many sections of the road where the drivers find themselves on an extremely narrow path rocks jutting out one side deep valley valleys down on the other so people drive with their heads out of the window and they keep their eyes on the edge of the path to ensure that they don't fall to an almost certain death can you imagine this as your path in life feeling so overwhelmed by the potential danger and constantly consumed with worry that you're in that state of anxiety all the time and this is the reality that i want us to be kind of invited into this morning maybe if we're honest it's a reality that some of us are living in ourselves let's not just make this about outside of the church community we are part of this community this is a reality for many today young people that we work with are facing exclusion rejection anxiety jail shorter life expectancy the first thing one of the first children that i coached told me here in clevedon is that he expected to go to prison when he's older in clevedon in year five as alfredo reaches the last couple of kilometers of his journey the road to la paz is finally paved and after three days of treacherous driving conditions the road is smooth straight and the first thing he does is give thanks to god that he has survived once again he knows that he's on the final stretch and he is safe we talk a lot about being safe at tlg i'm going to now sort of in a minute describe what those spaces look like so for many children their journey does feel fraught with pain and worry but what if it doesn't have to be entirely like this so at tlg we have this opportunity with our incredible partner churches christ church is a partner church there's 220 at the moment over the the whole nation and we are just passionate about this paving a way for broken lives to be road builders clear a highway of hope preparing a way for god's light to shine to be salt and light in our community picture again that last two kilometers here is after three days of terrifying driving finally alfredo can

feel safe reassured free from worry and on a broad road to hope so back in isaiah the scripture calls us to fill in the valleys level off the hills smooth out the ruts clear out of clear out the rocks isn't this a reason to get out of bed in the morning isn't this an incredible mandate for us as followers of jesus christ we want to be sought and light if you're sitting here thinking do you know what kate i'd love to be sought and light but i'm absolutely exhausted and i've got a whole load of stuff going on myself tell god that is not his heart for us life is unbelievably difficult it is so hard we are all facing huge challenges pretty much back to back crazy i'm 50 next week i wasn't going to bother doing anything and then i suddenly thought you know what i'm alive this is a gift and it is crazy so i just sent out a quick message to a few people saying fancy joining in raising a glass just to toast this crazy thing called life i'm not saying that it's an easy thing it's crazy we need to love one another we need to show our community god's love that we have experienced and if we haven't then let's ask him to show us show us show us in the people around us don't just give up god's at work so let's have a little bit of a think about tlg transforming lives for good well we know that anything really begins with one thing pretty much so the tl journey big sort of tlg journey began with this young man 20 years ago he's called lewis and he was suffering under the injustice of actually the system that he was in he was struggling to cope he'd been excluded from school time and time again he'd given up and when lewis started coming to the local church youth group the guys there realized that they had to do quite a lot more there was an opportunity to do a lot more to support lewis but also to support other young people like him they had to level off the hills the barriers that stood in his path and so tlg was born and there's been a careful program building over 20 years so these are the things that tlg do three things we've got education centers their alternative learning provisions for those children that really are at point of exclusion they are not managing to be in school they've got nothing else the local church partners with tlg and we help them to set up a school provision in a church site we've then got two volunteer programs that's what we do early intervention coaching i'm going to tell you more about that and make lunch which we did for a while was an incredible thing and at some point i really believe that god will invite us into that again as we build team so tlg is just an umbrella organization with a heart and passion that we share you know that comes from god it's about the local church it is just about the work on the ground that local churches are doing so here i go to wendy who has been a coach for how long have you coached do you reckon 2017 we partnered i think you're in the first cohort so 2017 christ church partnered with early tlg to do early intervention coaching we trained nine people next year another 13 next year another eight and i think it's something like we've got over 30 people trained as coaches and we've worked with over 55 children in our community so it's for an hour a week for a whole year and it's not just the children

wendy no no we help the children in their desperate need and build up a relationship with them but by doing that we're helping the schools to help them as well and we're getting alongside them and building a relationship with their families um to help them as well and by doing that you're building the relationship with the community and helping the community we are wendy thank you i realized this morning when liz prayed that community com unity means with unity like that's the church isn't it thank you wendy lucy is a school key contact so for every early intervention center like christ church we have a coordinator emmy is our coordinator at the moment and lucy you sort of wear two hats because you also do a bit of that and the coordinator from church liaises with the school contact so lucy tell us a bit about what you think is amazing about early intervention in school okay and i'll be quick even though there's a lot of things i could say so i have the amazing privilege of also working in a school um so i am a coach a volunteer coach but i also work in st john's primary school in clevedon and i work with children with social emotional and mental health things going on or things they're struggling with and i just i am so lucky because i get to see the other side of not just that hour a week but the difference it makes to those children so i'll tell you about a little girl who had a coach for a year and i used to work with her before i wasn't her coach but i used to do maths with her and her self-esteem was just so low you she just she was like a little ball a lot of the time she'd just be screwed up she'd quite often be crying she couldn't make friends very difficult home life spent a lot of time on her own and also helped to look after an adult at home he wasn't very well so she was a young carer and she had a coach she loved it this amazing gift of an hour a week and it was just about her and she could choose what she wanted to do and kate will tell you about that and just this week i now have her in a maths group again and i was reflecting on she is like a different child she's got lots to say she's got her hand up she's joining in she's actively engaged in the learning i can tell whereas she wasn't really with me before when i was doing math and i know that her mum also says that she's just seems happier and it doesn't mean that everything's changed for her and everything at home home has changed but it's she's grown she's grown physically and how she holds herself but i know that she's grown so much on the inside as well that she's just very different so yeah thank you it makes a difference and we believe that is god's work that we are showing god's love it's god's love that transforms lives and we are the conduits of that there are children in our community they don't have any contact with their grandparents you know somebody like honestly if i could choose a granny wendy it would be you and i just think you know it's a gift that you give your time jim i can't even see where you are but there you are jim used to leave work at i don't know he used to fly down the motor at whatever time it was on a friday afternoon just so he could coach he'd worked all week just so he could coach a child in school amazing story of jim who was like just stepped up really felt that kind of heart thump when somebody else came from tlg a few years ago but um the first session that jim had with the child that he'd been matched with and we work really hard to match children well we're not talking in primary school about those children that are getting other professional interventions we're talking about those kids that need it but they just don't get any extra time and teachers are struggling and these children need help so jim first session i was in there as well and you know

[20 : 12] wondering how's it going to go jim's an engineer in comes this lovely little boy says jim says what do you think you'd like to do when you grow up i'd like to be an engineer and i just left them with this massive box of lego off we go amazing god is in this there are children and young people in our community who've lost a parent in the last year we can love these children by being a consistent adult in their lives for a year and supporting their single parent there are children who will step into school and feel overwhelmed just because of what school is like it's like sensory overload we can provide a safe space for them each week there are children who are struggling with change maybe family breakdown maybe they've moved into this community maybe someone they love has moved away and there are others who are experiencing things that are far worse and very hidden or very internal who have no safe adult in their life to talk to and so what begins to happen is their struggles begin to show through their behaviors showing that distress there are people sitting in this room who have coached many there are people who have trained and haven't yet managed to start coaching but are going to there are people who have experienced what it's like to have a grandchild coached and see the difference that it makes um i thank you if this is something you've already done and i mean you can probably i'm just probably oozing i hope i'm oozing like the invitation to join in and we'll think about what that looks like in a moment when i re-enter my password james said don't let it go to sleep there we go um so i've told you a little bit about the numbers of coaches that we've had trained but covid really interrupted that we moved some of the coaching online but we've um we are in a period of time now where we are praying in a new team of coaches especially for yo moore school we've got coaches coaches in st john's coaches in st nick's um emily and myself have transitioned with our coaches to clevedon's with our coach children to clevedon school because um then they've moved there so we just want to help them kind of settle well and at yo moore at the moment we don't have a team of coaches and we are really praying that there may be some people in the room this morning or perhaps people that you know aren't in the room this morning but you're sitting there thinking do you know what so and so could so do this they would love this it would be an absolute gift to a family so charles's story um you can see another way he says almost all the time i really love that it's like he's on the edge or something um charles's story was filmed in his local church coaching does that was because of covid quite a few of our films were made just kind of where there were still restrictions in school all coaching happens in school and then there's an invitation to build relationship with family as a member of the local church under the church's safeguarding with the whole family and we have seen seven families connecting to the fridge our local our youth group i know that many of our coaches are still in touch with their coach families and just carry on journeying with them and um jim again this morning just shared that he bumped into his child that he had coached and like just how excited he was and like bright smiles and it really does make a difference building these relationships and it's all underpinned with prayer so i'm just going to move over here to draw your attention and just get you to move your necks um so on this table is just lots of stuff from tlg and i would love you to come and just look at it please don't think if you come up kate's just

gonna she's gonna nail me and i'm gonna like be signed up to something it is not like that emmy at the moment is not with us because she's unwell but she is coordinating early intervention and i'm chatting to emmy a lot and at the moment yes i'm gonna just kind of be that point of contact in clevedon but um there are so many different ways to get involved you don't have to become a coach although i'll just talk about that a little bit more in a minute um on this table lots of resources that tlg have produced for working with young people you might just be interested in them emotional first aid that training is free online for anyone just go to the website and sign up it so equips you even as a parent or grandparent to understand what's it like for young people that are really feeling emotional distress brilliant stuff that's for parents and children then all the sort of fun projects we do in coaching the space is so about what the children want to do we talk about being playful having fun i feel like i found my inner child by just becoming a coach because i'm a bit boring and sensible most of the time acceptance really accepting them for who they are not judging not judging their parents curiosity being curious about them and ourselves and life crazy life and finally empathy literally sitting with them in what they're feeling not trying to tell them that it'll get better at a time when they're feeling like i don't think this can get better my dad's just died you know how is that going to get better but just sitting with them in their distress maybe just because they're kind of like worried about the spelling test that they've got tomorrow the the scale of anxiety is you know it's very varied so lots of um things that we do just come up and play with a squidgy ball if you want um there's free magazines for everybody um there's information about prayer becoming oh blast i'm just so high tech sorry that's there is information over there about becoming prayer partners so for every coach check out not being able to multitask just go slow being a prayer partner is a way that you can get involved so every coach has a partner who prays for them there's confidentiality around coaching but god knows the details and it really does katherine i remember maybe katherine's out but one time i was really struggling with the child i was coaching i was in the office with katherine and asked her to pray and that session was so different you know just a reminder that praying really does make a difference and um under your chairs can i just ask you to actually pull these out right now you've got pens and you've got a little leaflet so pull it out and have a look and if you haven't got one then someone will bring you one so just put your hand up um but sort of between you they're probably like every other so it looks like this and the invitation first is to just stay in touch with tlg so that you can pray about the work and it's this little form here staying in touch with tlg if you fill out that form today you get a free copy of this book which i would really recommend it's the story of tlg and the story of the difference that it's making in the lives of young people through the local church so please do fill that out and come and hand it to me and i'll give you a book um the other way that we would like to invite you to support the work of tlg is to become a hope giver it's self-explanatory a couple of pounds a month it makes a difference

if we can get people behind this movement it's making a difference across the whole nation i just want to say please always consider your local church first as you consider prayerfully your stewardship your giving god nothing we have is ours it's all god's what are we doing with it what are we doing with our finances what are we doing with our gifts and skills ask god if you feel that his invitation to you is to support the work of tlg we massively value it and on that note um love this there's little business cards and little flyers i know in this room there are some business people business type people pete and i my husband and i he's on the rugby pitch with tom this morning um we bought a little pub in lockdown and one of the first things we wanted to do was think well how can we use this business that we believe god has given us for community how can we also use it financially to support something well who tlg have got something called future builders so we're future builders we give every month to this initiative and it's got like this is so dull but tax benefits you know like if you actually give from a business to another one it's it's brilliant you kind of are really encouraged to do it as a business please please please pray and think is there anyone that you could give a future builder invitation to i'm about to go up and down hill road and ask them all if they might like to do that and it's our birthday the pub birthday into next week actually and we're going to raise money for tlg by um doing a raffle so that's future builders all and then last of all it's a blank screen guess what i'm going to ask you to think about becoming a coach so come and chat to me or two put your hand up if you're in the room and you've either coached or you've trained as a coach could you just wave your hand talk to one of these people and just bear in mind that in your community there's about 20 more people that you could chat to too who aren't here this morning becoming an early intervention coach it tlg trains you thoroughly we journey with you we support you we resource you you are not going to be alone you're not going to be put with a child that you think oh my goodness that's just going to be so difficult we have we are learning and we are wanting to make sure that you are with the child god has got for you i've got a coach in bristol she's 86 and she's about to start coaching again and so that's pretty much it for me i'm just going to play you a very last clip to finish we're aware that children in our local community struggle for so many different reasons we thought this is something that would make such a huge difference by going in and encouraging kids spending time with them on a one-to-one just the opportunity to see our church do fruitful active work it's a massive part of our church it's a massive part of our ministry to the love of jesus to to people in a really practical way that child has one hour a week where all the attention is on them and you get to walk with them journey with them you see just massive change in that one year it really is incredible how much these young people change i like the quality time that you're able to spend with the child you get to play fun games you get to make interesting things you get to have a laugh and when i came out of that session boy was i filled with joy and when the kids just come running in to see you with big smiles on their faces building a trusting relationship with the child helping a child who's struggling it is just listening to them share with you perhaps things that they don't share

with other adults god is so much in us we can either um just look on and be bystanders or we can actually take part in trying to change lives for good could i do it could i do it the answer is yes you can give it a go i mean an hour a week to you probably doesn't mean that much but to the child you could be coaching that could change their life it's just a wonderful hour a week and i would just say go for it why didn't i know about it earlier simply go for it go for it go for it right now because what you've helped me with i always feel like i want to be like the tombi to help other children so i know what i've been through