

UNSCRIPTED

Unlimited Church's Newsletter



There's Change in the Air...

There is a lot happening at Unlimited Church over the next few months. This latest edition of **Unscripted** explores the transitional period as we sadly wave goodbye to James and

Liz Grier, and welcome in Helen Sherlock as Vicar. We will also be saying another sad



goodbye to Chris who will be moving onto curacy, and we have welcomed Jack as part of the Unlimited team!

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A Note from James

James Grier

Am I about to lose my identity? For over 10 years, whenever I have spent any time with groups of youth in Exeter, at some point someone will say that I used to come into their school. Then we have the awkward conversation about whether I remember them from a sea of faces in assembly.

'Aren't you that guy that used to come into our school?'

As Liz and I prepare to step back from Unlimited and release it into the fantastic leadership of Helen, I've been reflecting on our time. When thinking about what you've achieved it's easy to look at numbers. Unlimited has never really seen the numbers we would have liked. But I've always been encouraged that although Jesus taught crowds of thousands, all the most significant encounters that the Gospels record are with ones and twos.

Over the years, it's the interactions with individuals that stand out in the life of Unlimited. The first couple we ever chatted to and prayed for,

playing guitar on the Green. The girl who found sanctuary in the church on a night out. The lad who was being treated badly by his partner who we encouraged to find help. The girl who met us on the Green and went back to the youth drop in where she lives and asked to go to church. The teacher who discovered something of faith through our assemblies. The lad who we'd met once and prayed for and who then came to Night Café and told us how what we'd written when we prayed for him, held him back from taking his own life.

It's not about the crowds, it's about every individual whom God pursues with his reckless love. It's also not about people knowing me or remembering me, it's about them encountering Jesus. And so as our time at Unlimited draws to a close and I reflect, I wonder what more I should have done. There is a scene at the end of Schindler's List, where Oscar Schindler becomes distressed. He has saved so many Jews from the Nazis, but he realises if he'd sold his car he could have saved ten more. His gold pin badge could have been another two. Just one more. If I had my time again, I would want to be more bold. I'd want to talk more of Jesus. I'd rather people had heard more about Jesus and met him, than remembered me as the guy from school or café. I'd love to have told just one more.



The Future Looks Bright

Helen Sherlock

What a strange and sad year it has been. So many lives lost or changed because of the pandemic and normal play has not yet been resumed, and yet there is a real sense of hope rising. Perhaps it's because we are moving towards Easter, a time of pain, hurt, loss and trial followed by a resurrection that change the world for all time. Spring is springing and the days are getting longer, hope is certainly rising!

Change is an inevitable part of life, some of us see change as difficult and others see it as an opportunity, but regardless, change is what happens. Unlimited Church is entering a period of drastic change, new leadership, moving, all being well, back to gathered meetings and still there is a sense of anticipation and hope. I am so thrilled to have been passed the baton from James and Liz. They have shown their ability to put dreams into practise and I don't take this new role lightly. God is at work and we can see His fingerprints everywhere we look. We continue to reach out to the young people of Exeter and cannot wait until we can host Hub Café back in the building providing a safe space for them to gather, play, chat and ask questions of life and faith. We are dreaming big and seeking God

regarding how to go out to the young people with hopes of a coffee van in a park opposite the college as a meeting place to build relationship and provide the opportunity to extend an invitation. An invitation has so much potential, it is only when we are invited that we can make a choice, a choice to accept or decline.

"God is at work and we can see His fingerprints everywhere we look."

Our hope and prayer as we move forward is that we would grow in courage and opportunity to extend this invitation, firstly for coffee or snacks in the park, then into the heart of the church and then into a relationship with a God who loves them fully and perfectly. God is preparing the ground, he is already so visibly at work, our prayer is that we can play some part in this, continuing the work that James and Liz so courageously began and have handed on. Join us, if not in person, then in prayer. God is on the move and we have a generation of young people who are in desperate need of a relationship with him, they just need an invitation.

A Letter from Liz

Liz Grier

Handing anything to anyone is tricky in this pandemic. Christmas present exchange was at times comical.

We've got used to the 'covid drop', placing an item on the floor, or doorstep, and backing away. Of using copious amounts of hand sanitizer when we touch anything that someone else may have touched first. Which makes it weird to be thinking at this time of doing exactly that. Passing Unlimited on. In my head I have an image of a relay race, with James and I passing the baton onto Helen. Because after fourteen years our time has come to an end. We are so excited for all that is to follow for Unlimited. I will leave with so many amazing memories and so much thankfulness for all that God has done in me and the church over that time. Unlimited started in 2007 for young people who 'don't do church'. We didn't start with a team of people. We didn't even have a building to base ourselves in. But we gradually attracted a team of people who were passionate about reaching unchurched youth, and every week we went out and talked and, if possible, prayed with young people in and around Exeter City Centre. The whole thing was scary and exciting in equal measure. We didn't always know what God was up to. Whether or not we were doing the right thing. At every step we just tried to be faithful to what God was calling us to do in that moment, and we find ourselves in exactly that place again. We don't



quite know what comes next for us, but we do know that it is time to leave.

"We need to know our own race and we need to pursue the life that God has given us."

It seems fitting that the image I have of this time is of a relay race because the mission of Unlimited has always been encapsulated in a picture of a running race. The mission is simple. 'Young people encountering the God they've never met and living the difference.' The picture that we had was of a race as described in Hebrews chapter 12. Each of us has our own race set before us. We can't run someone else's race, simply our own. We need to know our own race and we need to pursue the life that God has given us. To run freely and effectively we need to get rid of all the stuff that holds us back, and weighs us down. We need to deal with stuff that is wrong in our lives. And then we need to fix our eyes on Jesus - who began it all and will complete it all. And we've spent fourteen years learning to be unlimited. Unlimited by church culture and tradition - where it is unhelpful, unnecessary or inappropriate. Unlimited in our openness to

and love of people - treating them as unique and as God has made them to be. Unlimited in our faith and expectation of God - living by faith, not inhibited by past experience or fears. We have so many precious memories. So many amazing moments where God broke through and did incredible stuff for us just as we were giving up hope. He has done so much for us. We are now a Bishop's Mission Order.

We have a building, church members with a passion to reach out to the young people of Exeter and help them encounter the God they've never met. We work with youth across Exeter. We go to where they are, rather than expect them to come to us. Over fourteen years we have prayed for more than 1000 young people. We've been to local schools, run mentoring programmes and taught PSHE lessons. We've had drop-in cafés and made countless toasties and hot chocolate mountains. We've run a night café offering sanctuary and safety to young people out in the heady night-time economy of clubbing and alcohol. Twice we've filled Exeter cathedral with

thousands of young people for a night. We've camped together and holidayed together. We've eaten together every Tuesday night we've been able. We've tried at every step to be faithful to what we think God is saying to us. It's been amazing.

And as we've been running the race set before us we've been encouraging others to do the same. And what happens now? Well, we get to hand the baton, Unlimited, to Helen and then get to stand back and watch her race on ahead. We become part of the crowd cheering and witnessing to all that God will do through this church in the world. It doesn't feel as though we're racing onto the next thing, but rather standing aside to let Helen sprint forward with Unlimited. We don't actually know what God wants for us beyond this standing aside. James will work full time with the diocese, and I will continue with ordination training. There is no big exciting new thing that we are moving onto, yet. We are just trying to be faithful in running our race, fixing our eyes on Jesus, and trusting in His plans for us and for Unlimited.

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From Student to Curate: A Few Thoughts from Chris as he Approaches the End of his Time at Unlimited

Chris Harris

I joined Unlimited in Autumn 2014 as a fresher at the University, keen to find a church to get involved in, and following a recommendation from a former member who I'd met by chance in London that Summer. He was training for ordained ministry in the Church of England then, and I was exploring a sense of calling I had to do the same. Now he's back in Exeter as the vicar of another church, and I'm coming to the end of my training, about to head to Totnes for my curacy. Maybe I'll meet someone on their way to Exeter university this Summer and see if I can keep the train going...

I'm glad I had that chance meeting in London; it's caused my life to be shaped in a particular way. Unlimited as a culture and way of 'doing Church' has moulded me over seven years in many great ways, but not without challenges! I've sometimes reacted against things and been a dissenting voice - most of which James has had to deal with! Some things have won me round, and others I've learnt to live within and support. Yet those things, along with the things that I've loved, have helped prepare me for what's next. Being part of a church isn't about finding what serves me; it's about finding where I can serve others, and sometimes that

means compromising and focussing on what's really important - responding to God's love together.

"Being part of a church isn't about finding what serves me; It's about finding where I can serve others".

Unlimited is a culture, but at any time it's also a community made up of a particular group of people. Something about Unlimited endures, even though from when I joined to when I leave, there will be at most a handful of people who are the same. Many dear friends have left and many have arrived in my seven years. New relationships form, and as they do, we speak into each other's lives not only what we think God is saying (which we've done a lot!), but also our own words. Unlimited is made up of these relationships, plenty of which are the sorts that you rarely find outside of the Church, where a seemingly random bunch of people of different ages and backgrounds can be seen trying to protect their disposable barbeque at the beach from a rogue dog. I'm glad to have experienced these relationships, and to maintain some for many years to come.

Hannah and I met at Unlimited a year after I joined, and married in



in 2019. The church family came together and gave their time to enable us to get married at Mary Arches, and the building has never looked better - even back when I spent half of my internship hoovering! Hannah is, of course, the most life-shaping part of having been at Unlimited, and thankfully, I get to keep her with me.

"I look forward to many interesting conversations where I can listen to people and share the God I know with them."

We move to Totnes in the Summer for curacy. Having a reputation in Devon for being a bit 'edgy', it's a place full of people who are spiritually inquisitive, and I look forward to many interesting conversations where I can listen to people and share the God I know with them. There's a real mix of Church tradition in the benefice (group of parishes), so I'll be robing up at times, which I'm sure many who've known me at Unlimited will look forward to seeing. There's lots of opportunity for mission, and lots for me to learn.

Going in, we feel like God is calling us to have faith to see miracles in Totnes, to offer hospitality, to reach people - especially around our

age - with the Gospel, to continue to listen throughout the curacy, to play a part in deciding for ourselves what we would like to do, and a couple of other pictures we're still working out to do with crumbling walls that might need fixing or leaving... We'd love it if you've read to the end to say a quick prayer for us.

I look forward to joining the Unlimited alumni and hearing of the new ground the church breaks in the next chapter.

New Leadership Members

In the past year we have welcomed three new members onto our Leadership Team.



Emily Fuller



Jack Hooper



Emily Ind



Meet Jack

Jack Doyle

Having started my first year of a Theology degree with Moorlands College I have been delighted to have joined Unlimited in late September 2020 as a Trainee.

Born in East London and raised in North Cornwall, I am not a stranger to new environments and have been blessed by how welcome the community here has made me feel. After attending Bible College for terms in California and York, God gave me a passion for Theological studies and using the gifts He's given me to serve other ans have led me to here. I have a burden for disillusioned young people (I was once one myself) and can't wait to share some of the love that God has shown me with the young people of Exeter.

I am hopeful for and excited about getting involved in our outreach events, serving the community, and working with schools in the area. While the first six months have been challenging with the varying level of restrictions in regards to the pandemic, I have learned so much already in my time with Unlimited and am looking forward to growing in my role going

forward over the next three years and would massively appreciate your prayers. Outside of what I'm doing now, I love to watch Rugby and hope to take up playing it again when restrictions allow.

Quick Covid Update

Izzi Greenwood



As of May 2nd 2021 we will be back in the building (Covid-permitting)!

We cannot wait to be back meeting all together, and are so excited about this next season at Unlimited Church. We are aiming for May 2nd, but are very aware that this all depends on the roadmap which the Government will release when they have made their announcements.

To be "in the know", make sure to follow us on our social media platforms (p.5.) where we announce any of our decisions when they happen. Our website is also regularly updated (www.unlimitedchurch.org.uk) and you can even sign up to our monthly "What's Happening" email so that you are updated consistently.

On our website we will have a detailed explanation of our Covid restrictions and everything that we have put into place for everyone's safety. If you have any questions or queries, please contact us at info@unlimitedchurch.org.uk.