

# Esther's legacy is helping families

**IT was a living legacy to the church she loves.**

The generosity of Esther Brading has helped Christians at St Mark's Church in North End realise a dream – to set up a special service for pre-school children.

Now each month parents bring their under-fives to 'St Mark's Sparrows'. Children sing action songs, listen to a story, and join in prayers and activities in front of a lighted candle, tiny cross and four watchful sparrows on a small makeshift altar.

Esther, who had been a member of St Mark's for more than 40 years, decided she wanted to make a donation while she was still able to enjoy its fruits. She handed it over before moving to a residential home in Scotland to be near her family.

The church's curate, the Rev Pennie Payne, had dreamt for six years of running a mini-church for pre-school children. She suggested spending the cash on toys, books, puppets and equipment so they could launch a group. It now meets on the third Thursday afternoon of each month.

"Esther was a midwife herself, and the children in church adored her," said Pennie. "They would fetch her cushions so she could be comfortable in her pew. I promised her that I would do something with small children and so we started 'St Mark's Sparrows'."



"It's called that because Jesus promised that if a sparrow fell to the ground, he would know about it. We bought five sparrow finger puppets - one for Esther - and we sing the sparrow song each time.

"We've also bought good-quality books, toys and equipment, including 24 picture cards, each of which has a picture, story, prayer and activity about a particular theme. I am so grateful to Esther for her wonderful gift and the timing of it."

Mum Louise Sheridan brought her children, three-year-old Harry and one-year-old Caitlin, all the way from Southsea for the first service in July.

"Although we've moved to Southsea, I grew up in this church, so I don't mind making the trip," she said. "If I bring them to church on a Sunday, I feel as though they are interrupting it for others. Here they can be as loud as they like!"

"They seemed to enjoy themselves hearing about Noah and making animal noises, so we'll come again."

The idea fits in well with the bishop's Kairos initiative, which is encouraging parishes to find new ways of ministering to those who don't normally come to church.

And the creation of 'St Mark's Sparrows' has cemented links with the existing playschool for



(left): Esther Brading; (above): Children enjoying activities at St Mark's Sparrows, the monthly service for the under-fives

pre-school children that meets in the church hall. Children from the playschool will now take part in both a carol service and a harvest service for young children in the church.

An earlier donation given by Esther has been spent on new vestments. St Mark's member Carole Eamey designed and created a stole, and cloths for both the altar and lectern using material that Esther paid for. Each has a 'Sunburst' theme and can be used when either white or gold is the appropriate liturgical colour.

"I looked at photos and details of vestments in the US, Canada and Australia, and was inspired by ones made for an Episcopal church in America," said Carole. "The idea is to show the glory of a sunburst. Both the lectern and the stole have cruciform versions of the design, and I still have a chasuble to do."



## HAVE YOU GOT THE BOTTLE



### STAFF URGENTLY NEEDED

#### >Canteen Supervisor

Gilead Foundations is looking for an exceptional person to take responsibility as supervisor of our catering and canteen facilities. This will involve planning, budgeting and supervision of all meal preparation, for up to 60 people, 3 times a day. Must be a qualified chef/cook.

This is a live-in post with salary approx £15k p.a depending on experience.

#### >House Parents

We urgently need HOUSE PARENTS to provide a stable family environment for students helping them with their problems and giving spiritual and practical counsel in a parental role. These posts would ideally suit mature couples, with the pastoral experience of dealing with men and women with deep-rooted problems in their lives. These are live-in posts with a combined salary of approx £18,000 depending on experience.

If you are interested in either of the above vacancies, please apply in writing with a current CV to:

Gilead Foundations Vacancies, c/o Chris Girdler  
Cornerstone Vision, 28 Old Park Road,  
Peverell, Plymouth, Devon PL3 4PY (01752 242262)

#### If YOU need help...

You may be in need of help personally, or may have a friend or member of your family who could benefit from spending time at Gilead Foundations. If so, please contact our office for details on how to apply. (See below for contact name and address)

#### How You Can Help...

• With financial gifts • Standing order donations • Practical items • Inviting a team to your church • By telling people in need about Gilead • Praying for the team • Giving financial support to the team as they go out in faith • Coming to work with the team - even for a short time

Contact: Lois Samuel, PR Dept, Gilead Foundations Charity,  
Risdon Farm, Jacobstowe, Okehampton, Devon EX20 3AJ  
Tel: 01837 851240 Fax: 01837 851520  
Email: pr@gilead.org.uk Website: www.gilead.org.uk

**Gilead**  
FOUNDATIONS

## Help to reach East Asians in UK

**HAVE you wondered how to share the gospel with some of the thousands of people from East Asia who now live in the UK?**

Help is at hand - a day-long training session run by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) is coming to our diocese next month.

It will give you some insight into the culture of thousands

of Chinese and other East Asians who are studying or working in the UK.

The day will be held at St Jude's Church in Southsea on October 2. The main speakers will be Melanie Croom, Mark Muller and Carolyn Kemp, all of whom have worked with East Asians both in the UK and abroad.

Individual sessions will tackle issues such

as 'How an East Asian would read the Bible', 'Evangelising and discipling Chinese people' and 'Leading Bible studies with East Asians'.

The day starts with coffee at 10am before the training starts at 10.30pm. The final session will finish at 5pm.

Participants should bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be available.

Organiser Mary Thurlow, who works with East Asian students who attend St Jude's, said: "Because there are thousands of students from mainland China alone in the UK, the more Christians who are willing to be involved in different ways, the better!"

For more details about the day, contact Mary Thurlow on 023-9283 2178.