

Saturday 4th August



Withfest Messy Gazebo

What are you doing this weekend? On holiday, gardening, working, having a well earned rest? Well, I'm on a field at our local Music and Bike Festival called WITHFEST. For the first time the local Churches Together are putting on a Messy Gazebo right in the middle of the festivities. Based on Messy Church, we will be offering free craft activities in order to share the Christian story. With a new craft on offer every twenty minutes for four hours over three days we have it all planned; all we need are for folk to stop and have a go!

I know we are prepared, I know we have enough helpers, but there are two unknowns. One is the weather – I do hope it is not too wet and windy! And the second is, will people come and engage with us? In the past I have been amazed when the Church has offered anything 'free' – for instance, trying to give away Fairtrade chocolate and bananas was almost impossible; folk were so suspicious of us and even crossed over to avoid us, they were so sure there was a catch in it!

So when did we get so suspicious? Most of us like a bargain, see the Buy One Get One Free campaigns – but to be given something free? That cannot be true, can it?

Well yes, I suppose there is a catch with our Messy Gazebo free crafts: we want people to hear about Jesus and about his love given freely to us, that the cost has been met by Jesus, and he offers us unconditional love and grace if only we accept it. But if we accept it, it may change us forever – so there is a cost!

Among the crafts on offer will be:

- Pom-pom fridge magnets inviting children to stick close to Jesus
- Rainbow hearts to remind us of God's love
- Butterfly pegs, telling that God gives us new life in Christ
- Fig roll Bibles!
- Lilies made from their own hand prints – “consider the lilies of the field”
- Paper plate crowns – we are the sons and daughters of the heavenly King
- Marshmallow sheep cupcakes – the Lord is our Shepherd

Don't you just wish you were with us and having a go yourself?

This summer many churches will be having Holiday Clubs or outdoor activities, so please pray for the leaders and for those who attend, that God's Good News will be told in such ways that he is made known and worshipped. Please pray for faithful Sunday School and Junior Church leaders, that they may share their faith in ways that Jesus shines through. And please pray for Junior and Youth Club leaders, that they may have the energy to continue this vital work of sharing faith through fun and activities. Also if you have uniformed organisations, pray that those not connected to the church will be open to church folk going and perhaps doing a Messy Gazebo activity on their meeting night with them.

**Lord, be with all Christians sharing with all ages
the message of your presence and love,
in churches, on fields, in homes or on the streets.
Fill them with your Spirit.
Amen**