

@CryptLeeds

Easter Edition

Perfectly Imperfect



St. George's
Crypt



Ending Homelessness, Restoring Lives, and Sharing God's Love

Welcome

to our Easter Newsletter

Chris Fields
Chief Executive Officer



Hi everyone, and welcome to our Easter newsletter.

We are theming this edition around “perfectly imperfect”. That’s quite a statement and evolved from Chapel discussions around forgiveness and redemption. I recalled that when I worshipped at St. Michael’s and All Angels in Farnley, it has a glorious stained-glass window of the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ in terrible suffering and then in magnificent ascendance.

That all sounds wonderful until your eye fell to the bottom of the window and the Apostles were all there with a golden halo.... all except one, the sad one with hunched shoulders and remorseful face, holding a money purse. Being the big softy (don’t tell the team!) that I can be, poor old Judas always made my heart bleed for his bad choices, deception and basic human frailty.

I know Victorian standards and understandings were different to ours in an enlightened, modern world, but I believe that Christ had forgiven him before he committed anything, so for an artist to commit Judas in glass (albeit beautifully) to an eternity of shame seems to me a little harsh. What about Peter’s terrible temper or Thomas having doubts? What about James and John wanting to be at the right hand of Jesus? These are just normal people doing human things.

It is simply “family”. Rich and diverse; loving, arguing, reconciling and forgiving.

Here at the Crypt and throughout our projects, we must understand that basically, people “stuff up”. Bad decision after bad decision, driven by circumstances we will never understand, lead to a damaged human being needing a listening ear, compassion, understanding and help. Who are we to judge?

Quite often I see people on TV or in the street that I knew ages ago, or I have not seen for a while, and I will say to my lovely wife “haven’t they aged?” She will reply in a kind manner “darling, did you use a mirror to shave this morning?” OUCH! Busted! banged to rights...guilty as charged!

When here at the Crypt we are accosted, shouted at or sworn at, it comes from a place of vulnerability, hurt and fear, rolled up into anger and frustration. It offers another opportunity to forgive the perfectly imperfect person... just like me.

So, this Easter as we look to the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, let’s not forget that in the chaos, noise, anger and uncertainty everyone has their own cross to bear. A history and a story worth telling. And we are, all in turn loved without judgement knowing that we are perfectly imperfect.

*Heavenly Father,
I come to You today without a mask, without the exhausting need to have it all together, and without the pretense of perfection. I come as I am — flawed, broken, and in progress.*

Thank You for the freedom to be imperfect. Thank You that Your love for me is not a grade based on my performance, but a gift based on Your grace. Help me to embrace the truth that I do not need to be perfect to be loved, cherished, or used for Your glory. When I stumble, help me to laugh rather than break. When I fail, help me to learn rather than dwell. When I look in the mirror and see only my shortcomings, remind me that You see a beloved child, fearfully and wonderfully made, just as I am.

Release me from the heavy burden of perfectionism. Replace my self-criticism with compassion.

Teach me to extend grace to myself, just as You so freely extend it to me.

Thank You that in my weakness, Your strength is made perfect. I celebrate that I am a “work in progress,” and I trust that You are not finished with me yet.

*In the Name of Love,
Amen.*

May the risen Christ pour blessings upon you and those you love this Easter and evermore.

- Chris

Perfectly Imperfect...

How an unexpected tragedy led to hope.

When fire tore through their home, it didn't destroy their recovery, it forged it.

One individual had a challenging start to 2026, after multiple attempts at recovery and hitting one too many rock bottoms, he finally found himself in *Growing Rooms* for the second time.

After five months clean, he relapsed after leaving *Growing Rooms*. His mental health had been a long standing battle, marked by deep depression, homelessness, and multiple suicide attempts. Life became overwhelming, and the weight of it all felt unbearable.

"I couldn't handle life. I needed something to numb how I felt."

Yet even after hitting another rock bottom, the desire to change never fully left him. He made the courageous decision to return to *Growing Rooms*. Since his last time in the programme, it had expanded and this time, he found something he had not experienced before: a strong, supportive community he could truly rely on.

"It's nice to be around people who want the best for you and actually see you get well."

Growing Rooms supported him by connecting him with a counsellor, giving him the tools and space to begin working through his mental health challenges and take steps toward a healthier future.

The beginning of 2026 was difficult not only for him, but for many of the men at *Growing Rooms*.

One evening, residents from one of the shared Crypt houses went out to attend a meeting. Everything felt normal until a phone call changed everything. The house was on fire.

"At first I thought it was a joke, until I realised it wasn't. I ran home and saw three fire engines outside the house."

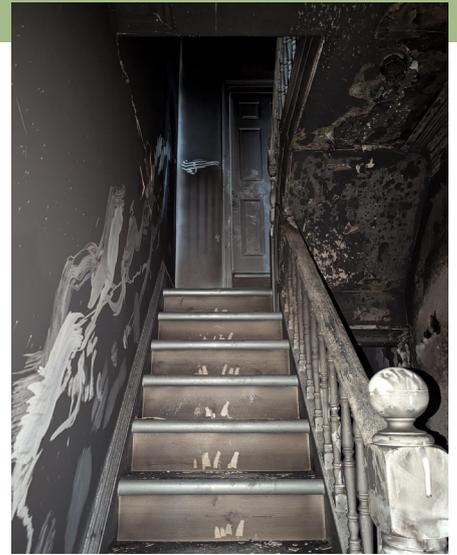
The property was severely damaged by smoke. Personal belongings were destroyed. The place they had come to call home was no longer liveable. Tragically, the fire was caused by his electric scooter exploding inside the house. The guilt that followed was overwhelming.

"I'm still really struggling with it. I have a lot of guilt and emotions I'm trying to process, but I just thank God that no one was hurt and that we were all out when it happened."

What could have easily led to relapse instead became a moment of unity. *Growing Rooms* staff and residents stood together, supporting one another through the aftermath.



The stairwell, before the fire.



The stairwell, after the fire.

Rather than breaking them, the experience strengthened their sense of connection. "It's made us realise how important life is and how short it can be. Material things can be replaced. Buildings can be fixed. Life can't."

Despite his challenges, this individual continues to show resilience, honesty, and determination. His journey is a reminder that healing is not about perfection, it is about progress.

We are all imperfect, all cracked in some way, and yet those cracks are often where the light gets in.

"There's no shame in admitting you're struggling. It's okay not to be okay."

At *Growing Rooms*, we believe in perfectly imperfect people because even in the ashes, there is hope. And even in brokenness, there is beauty.

A Day in the Life at the Care Centre



One of our clients getting lunch.
(Photo used with permission)

At the heart of St. George's Crypt in central Leeds is the Care Centre, a 24-hour service supporting some of the city's most vulnerable and entrenched rough sleepers. We spoke to a few of the day staff to get an insight on what it is like to work in this role on a day-to-day basis.

Kirk is the Project Lead at the [Crypt Care Centre](#). "This service provides temporary accommodation for up to 28 people, alongside additional compassionate bed spaces for those in urgent need.

Supported by a dedicated team of 10 support workers, the service runs 24/7 and no two days are ever the same. Every day, the team delivers welfare checks, coordinates vital appointments, and works closely with external partners including health services, addiction support, and specialist agencies for extremely vulnerable groups. We really value and rely on these services."

The Centre also provides a weekday lunchtime service and evening support for people who may have nowhere else to turn, offering warmth, food, clothing, advice, and - where possible - a safe place to stay.

Safeguarding those in our care is central to everything staff do, for service users, staff and the wider community.

Staff tell what it's like to work in the heart of St. Georges Crypt.

Garvin has worked at the Crypt for four months. His role involves welcoming people as they arrive, as well as ensuring safety for all our service users.

"People often think I'm security, but I'm not. My role is about interaction, safeguarding and building trust. Most situations can be de-escalated through conversation and building a rapport."

Since starting the role, Garvin says all his perceptions have changed.

"We all stereotype; I've done it myself. But once you get to know people and hear their stories, you see them differently. What's presented on the outside isn't what's really happening to them on the inside."

By treating people with dignity and respect, Garvin has built strong relationships with many service users.

"A lot of these guys are truly suffering. That rapport that we build helps us break down barriers, and that helps us to get them the help they need."

Simon works in the Duty Office as a Support Worker. Having been clean from drug addiction for 14 years, he feels his lived experience strengthens his work.

"We deal with complex issues, drugs, alcohol and mental health. People come to us at their lowest."

The first few days are focused on stabilising individuals and meeting their most basic needs.

"We start from scratch; things most people take for granted. From there, we try to help people onto a safer, more stable path."

Building trust is key, especially for people who have experienced repeated trauma and rejection.

"There's a lot of mistrust. Why should they trust us after all they have been through? We try to meet people where they're at."

These Care Centre stories are just a tiny glimpse of the hundreds of people we support all over the city every day. At St. George's Crypt, we walk alongside the perfectly imperfect, meeting individuals in their moment of need - sometimes saving lives.

At its core, the Care Centre offers more than accommodation: it provides stability, hope, and compassionate, round-the-clock support to help people move forward from rough sleeping and address the root causes of homelessness.

After 96 years, our work continues to grow, reaching more people than ever through partnerships across Leeds and requiring creative responses as to how we can help many more hurting and vulnerable people.

We hope and pray that it continues for many more years to come.



Support Worker Simon, Care Centre

Chaplain's Corner

*I believe in Jesus Christ...who...
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
(from the Apostle's Creed)*



If you ever get the chance to visit St. Nicholas' Church in Moreton, Dorset there is some beautiful artwork to see in the etched glass windows that flood the inside with light. Commissioned after the church's stained glass windows were shattered by the direct hit of a German bomb in 1940, the replacements, designed by Laurence Whistler, are remarkably unique.

They contain spectacular scenes of butterflies, birds, rabbits, wild flowers, candles, stars and planets. Yet there is another dark window that can only be viewed from the outside.

What you see might initially shock you for it shows Judas in his final brokenness and death, a man bereft of all hope and life, and from his lifeless fingers, fall the accursed thirty pieces of silver.

Yet...as the silver coins fall to the ground, they are transformed into beautiful flowers. In many ways the window is upsetting and stark, yet at the same time, it contains a picture of hope, that even the most profound brokenness can have beauty. Which is what we believe here at the Crypt, that there is beauty even in the deepest of our scars.

Each and every day we encounter souls who are broken in so many ways, battling to survive the living hell of life traumas that would take the very heart of you and me.

Yet in each new dawn they greet, they display a courage that is beyond description, simply in living to fight another day. What a privilege it is here to walk alongside them on that journey.

A little while ago I preached at my wife's church solely on one line that sits in the affirmation of faith that is the Apostle's Creed.

Between the pain of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday, the Apostle's Creed tell us that Jesus 'descended to the dead.' Why would Jesus do that? Well, I have an idea, a story in my head, that Jesus descended to the dead...to find Judas.

Yes, I imagine, Jesus with all his scars from the cross, tired and exhausted setting out to find the person who betrayed him, find the man bereft of all hope and life, take him by the hand and lead him home.

That is what I like to think Jesus did, and if he did, that is what Holy Saturday is all about, finding those who are trapped in the darkness and leading them into the light. That is why I like to think that here at the Crypt we are Holy Saturday people.

Ever since our beloved founder Don Robins opened the doors, our calling for these last ninety-five years, has been to reach into the depths of someone's Holy Saturday, someone's darkness and accompany them into the light of a new day.

In my idea, in my story, when Jesus and Judas emerged into the bright light, they would not have looked perfect.

There would have been Judas still bearing the scars of being wracked with guilt and Jesus would still have the wounds of the nails and spear.

New life does not mean being perfect but maybe it means seeing the beauty in our scars, and allowing them to tell their story. Our sisters and brothers who come into the *Growing Rooms* programmes are incredibly brave in sharing their stories of addiction and how it has deeply affected their lives, and the lives of those they love.

In their ever open and honest assessment of the impact of addiction, they are sharing the story of their scars, and as they continue in the journey of recovery, are a living example of how those scars can become a thing of beauty.

They and the story of the brokenness of their scars are such an inspiration to us all...like beautiful flowers emerging into the light of a new Easter dawn.

Risen Christ, strengthen us with the courage to share the story of our scars with hope, and faith, and love, and to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

Part of my role as Chaplain to the Crypt is visiting churches (of all denominations), schools and other groups and preaching and speaking about our work. If you are interested in me visiting and talking to your congregation or group, please contact me on chaplain@stgeorgescrypt.org.uk

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**ST GEORGE'S
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If you are interested in organising your own fundraiser, we'd love to hear from you! Please email fundraising@stgeorgescrypt.org.uk for support.

Rachel's Story

Rachel has spent 26 years battling drug addiction, facing the loneliness, guilt, and depression that so often come with it. In 2024, she joined our Growing Rooms programme, and last year, she proudly graduated.

"In addiction, you feel horrible, lonely, guilty, depressed."

Today, Rachel no longer has to feel that way. She has built strong foundations for her new life in recovery. At her graduation, her eldest son attended the event, witnessing firsthand the support and praise from the women in the programme. Seeing his face light up, Rachel realised she could rebuild their relationship and have him back in her life.

Rachel's journey is not just about her own healing, it is about her family. She has younger children she is still reconnecting with and is doing everything in her power to show them she has changed.

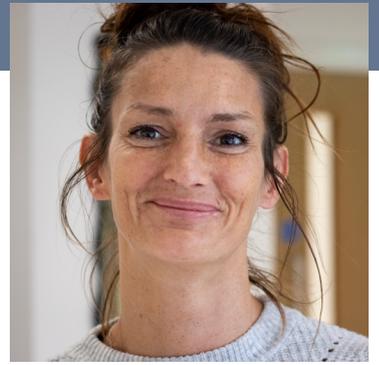
When asked how she stayed strong to complete the programme, after 26 years of addiction, Rachel said:

"I had my eyes open and saw the evidence in other people. I could see what was working for them, so I knew that if I continued to work on myself, I could grow and get to where they were."

Since Rachel has completed the programme she has continued to work on herself.

"I never would have believed it was possible to be where I am today a year ago. I just can't believe the miracles that are happening."

Now, Rachel has moved into Don Robins House, where ongoing support helps her continue her journey. She knows the road ahead will still be challenging, but she has embraced the guidance and community available to her.



Rachel's story is far from perfect, but that's what makes it powerful. Her journey shows that change is possible, even after decades of struggle.

Looking ahead, Rachel hopes to start a mentoring course to help women in prison find recovery.

"I want to give them a little bit of hope that I was given."

Rachel is living proof that with support, determination, and courage, transformation is possible, and inspiring others along the way.

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Signed

Date

GDPR Consent

Would you like to receive the quarterly newsletter and other interesting updates about the Crypt?

Yes by email

My email address:

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Not perfect? Still Amazing

How our partnership with HMP New Hall Prison brings second chances to everyone involved.

At St. George's Crypt, we believe that being perfectly imperfect is something to celebrate and nowhere is that more visible than in our Sustainability Shop partnership with HMP New Hall.



Not every donated item arrives ready for the shop floor. Some pieces are scuffed, tired, or simply need a little care.

But instead of being discarded, these imperfect pieces are given a second chance. Our Logistics team carefully collects them and delivers them to HMP New Hall, where women in custody learn woodworking and joinery skills while restoring and upcycling each item into something special.

What started as a simple idea has grown into a meaningful collaboration. Confidence builds. Creativity flourishes. Skills develop.

And when these perfectly imperfect pieces return to our shops, they carry more than just a price tag. Each one features a plaque sharing its story of transformation.

This project is about far more than furniture. It is about:

- Rehabilitation – supporting women to develop skills for life beyond custody
- Sustainability – keeping imperfect items in use and out of landfill
- Inclusivity – providing a safe, creative space for a diverse group of women.
- Community – connecting prison and community through shared values and visible impact



The perfectly imperfect theme continues in our Armley shop, where our Retail team has launched the *Imperfectly Perfect* clothing rail. This space celebrates clothing with minor flaws; items that may not be flawless, but are still full of style, value, and potential.

Not perfect? Still amazing. By giving these pieces a second chance, we are reducing waste, raising vital funds for our charity, and reminding ourselves that imperfections do not diminish worth; in fact, they often make the biggest difference.



This partnership is a gentle reminder that value is not found in flawlessness, but in renewal. Every restored table, every revived chair, every garment given a second life tells a story of possibility. Just like the people behind them, these pieces show that with patience, care, and opportunity, what may once have seemed imperfect can become something purposeful and powerful.

At St. George's Crypt, perfectly imperfect is not just a theme, it is a belief that transformation is always possible."

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