

We believe that prayer is powerful, and we also believe in doing something about the destitution we see around us. This resource will open your eyes to the realities of homelessness, but also challenge you to respond through prayer and action every day during Lent.

#### Contact


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Registered Charity Number 1107554

 **OASIS COMMUNITY HOUSING**  
**HOPE. NOT HOMELESSNESS.**

40 days of prayer  
and action  
during Lent



When Christians start to think about Lent they often tell the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4.1-11). Some years back after spending time with people who were street homeless, what struck me about that story with great joy was that Jesus chose to be powerless. He could have turned the stones into bread. He could have jumped off the Temple and been safe. But he chose not to. What gave me great joy was that Jesus seems to have taken a decision to be powerless so that he could know what powerlessness is like.

Many of those with whom Oasis Community Housing works know a very great deal about feeling powerless. It may simply be having to spend over an hour on the phone waiting to talk about your Universal Credit. It may be having no option at all about where you spend the night. Or perhaps being unable to get hold of somebody to talk about your mental health when you urgently need it.

Often we cannot do anything to take away that sense of powerlessness. Not even Oasis Community Housing staff can get the Universal Credit helpline to answer more quickly! But what we can do is to share something of that powerlessness with clients as Jesus seems to have done by voluntarily embracing powerlessness in the wilderness.

Most of us feel powerless at some time or another. When that happens we can become more aware of those who feel powerless many more times than we do, and remember that we and they are not alone because Jesus has chosen the path of powerlessness.

The Rt Revd Mark Bryant  
Assistant Bishop Diocese  
of Newcastle and Trustee of  
Oasis Community Housing



5000 people will be sleeping rough on our streets tonight. This Lent we invite you to join us on our mission to reignite a hope and a future for everyone facing homelessness.

We're a Christian charity addressing both the immediate needs and root causes of homelessness through four cornerstones of support;

 HOME

24hr supported accommodation for young men and women facing homelessness

 ASPIRE

Employment support and financial skills training

 BASIS

Emergency beds and crisis services for those sleeping rough

 EMPOWER

Support for people who have experienced domestic abuse

<p><b>Ash Wednesday: 26th February</b></p> <p>2020 is our charity's 35th anniversary. Over the decades we've always stayed close to our roots - our HQ is still in Gateshead, and our mission is still <i>To transform communities by creating access to housing, addressing homelessness and journeying with people as they fulfil their God-given potential.</i></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Reflect on the passage below from Isaiah 58 v 6-7 which inspires our work: <i>Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter?</i></p>	<p><b>Thursday: 27th February</b></p> <p>Since 1984 we've followed where God has led us, growing to bring hope to people facing homelessness in Gateshead, Sunderland, Croydon and Southwark.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Say a prayer for those facing homelessness in your community, and in the communities we serve.</p>	<p><b>Friday: 28th February</b></p> <p>2,273 people were homeless in the North East according to the latest statistics from Shelter.</p> <p><b>Fact:</b> Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises access to housing as a human right.</p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday: 29th February &amp; 1st March</b></p> <p>In the past year we supported 1,263 individuals across all of our projects, successfully moving 211 people into their own accommodation.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Donate £1 to OCH for everyone you share a house with.</p>	<p><b>Monday: 2nd March</b></p> <p>We operate two Basis homeless centres in Gateshead and Sunderland. These provide refreshments, showers, laundry facilities and advice to anyone facing homelessness.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Search Google for the location of your nearest Basis centre so you can refer homeless people to it. <b>Basis@Gateshead</b> postcode: NE8 1PZ <b>Basis@Sunderland</b> postcode: SR2 8HR</p>	
<p><b>Tuesday: 3rd March</b></p> <p>People sleeping on the street are 17 times more likely to be victims of violence. One in three rough sleepers have been hit or kicked or experienced some other form of violence</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Psalm 92:1-2 states <i>'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'</i></p> <p>Pray for safety and protection for people sleeping rough tonight.</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 4th March</b></p> <p>A daily shower is something most of us take for granted. It's hard to stay clean when you are homeless. We provided 955 showers to people facing homelessness last year providing free soap, shampoo and fresh towels.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Work out the cost of your favourite shower gel or shampoo and donate the amount to Oasis Community Housing so we can continue to offer free showers.</p>	<p><b>Thursday: 5th March</b></p> <p>Homeless people generally have poorer health than the average person. This is due to a range of factors (not being registered with a GP, addiction issues, becoming a victim of violence, stress, sleep deprivation). We set up a health suite in Basis@Gateshead to deal with the immediate health needs of our homeless friends.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Reflect on the health implications of homelessness: Jo regularly came to Basis Gateshead. She'd complained of toothache, but wasn't registered with a dentist. We took Jo to A&amp;E at the QE hospital, but as she was an active drug addict she couldn't wait the required time to be seen. Weeks later Jo went into septic shock in central Newcastle, spending a week in intensive care due to a simple toothache.</p>	<p><b>Friday: 6th March</b></p> <p>Everyone loves a cuppa-tea, coffee or something herbal. Making a brew is a great way to start a conversation, and it's one of the first things we offer when someone comes into Basis. The trust this builds leads to people reaching out for help and taking positive steps out of homelessness.</p> <p><b>Give:</b> We've served 12,993 cups in our Basis centres last year. It Costs £2.20 to buy a good coffee at a well known coffee franchise. Can you donate the price of a coffee so we can continue to build trust with those who have no-one else to turn to?</p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday: 7th - 8th March</b></p> <p>This Sunday is International Women's Day. We set up our Empower Domestic Abuse service because domestic abuse is one of the leading causes of homelessness among women we work with.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Reflect: Wisdom and beauty both found a home in Abigail, whose story is told in 1 Samuel. Abigail was <i>'...an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings'</i> (1 Samuel 25:3), Abigail was dignified and honourable despite her situation.</p> <p>Our Empower team restore safety, honour and dignity to lives devastated by domestic abuse.</p>	
<p><b>Monday: 9th March</b></p> <p>Our Empower team supported 140 victims of domestic abuse over the past year.</p> <p>We do this through safety planning and a healthy relationships course</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> A home should be a place of safety and security. Please pray for all who are stuck in the cycle of domestic abuse today.</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 10th March</b></p> <p>Every woman we help has their own story of how they became victims of domestic abuse: Janice was in the care system for most of her childhood, having 14 separate Foster placements. She has been in several abusive relationships that were physically violent and emotionally controlling. She was referred to Empower to be able to better recognise the signs of domestic abuse, rebuild her confidence and move towards independent living. Janice has shown real commitment, participating well in group discussions and offering good peer support. Janice is in a new relationship, which she's happy to discuss with us. We have taught her about her rights under 'Clare's Law'.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Educate yourself about Clare's Law by watching this short video: <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/ochempower">www.tinyurl.com/ochempower</a></p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 11th March</b></p> <p>Relationship breakdown is the second biggest cause of homelessness.</p> <p><b>Give:</b> Donate £1 to OCH for every female member of your close family</p>	<p><b>Friday: 13th March</b></p> <p>Northumbria Police statistics show there were 5,838 reported domestic abuse incidents in the area in 2018/19. That's 486 a month.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> #itsnotok is trending on Twitter to highlight the prevalence of domestic abuse. If you have a Twitter account why not read some of the contributions.</p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday: 14th &amp; 15th March</b></p> <p>Last year the Naomi Project near Saltwell Park provided intensive support and accommodation to 29 young women facing homelessness.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Pray for those in our Naomi project - that they can reset and restart their lives during their time with us, and that God will bless and prosper them.</p>	
<p><b>Monday: 16th March</b></p> <p>Elizabeth House in Low Fell is home to young women and their babies who are homeless. In 2020 we plan to extend this 9 bed property to create more living space.</p> <p><b>Give:</b> Give £1 for every bedroom in your house.</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 17th March</b></p> <p>Life expectancy for a female rough sleeper is only 43 years old.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Please pray for all the women on the streets who need help and support to find safety and a place to call home.</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 18th March</b></p> <p>During the year we housed and provided 24/7 support to 38 young women at our No.3 project in Peckham.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Watch the video of our patron, Songs of Praise presenter Rev Kate Bottley as she tours No.3 speaking to residents: <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/no3peckham">www.tinyurl.com/no3peckham</a></p>	<p><b>Thursday: 19th March</b></p> <p>Many people in our housing projects have lost contact with family and friends. We try to show them they are loved and valued - especially during holidays.</p> <p><b>Give:</b> Please donate the cost of an Easter Egg for a young homeless person this year.</p>	<p><b>Friday: 20th March</b></p> <p>Today we host our 35th Anniversary Dinner at the Hilton Newcastle-Gateshead.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to see @revkatebottley and @9Supermac in action and celebrate 35 years of #HopeNotHomelessness, #bethedifference</p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday: 21st - 22nd March</b></p> <p><i>"Oasis Community Housing provided a home in a time of need. Their support workers guided me through the process of applying for university and went above and beyond to help me reach my dreams"</i> - Sally</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Pray for grace and wisdom for our staff and volunteers as they support people facing homelessness.</p>
<p><b>Monday: 23rd March</b></p> <p>Last year our Aspire team supported 137 young people to overcome the barriers preventing them from getting a job.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> If you have spare time, consider volunteering to support us. We're always looking for volunteers. Opportunities are on our website: <a href="http://www.oasiscommunityhousing.org/what-you-can-do/vacancies/">www.oasiscommunityhousing.org/what-you-can-do/vacancies/</a></p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 24th March</b></p> <p>Psalm 90 v17 states: <i>'May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands.'</i></p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Pray that God will establish the work of those we support into employment so they can live more fulfilled lives.</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 25th March</b></p> <p>This year we have launched our 'Jobs First' model. Supporting people into a job at the first opportunity, then journeying with them and their employers to support them to stay in the job until they're fully independent.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> If you or someone you know owns their own business or works for an employer that may be willing to give a young person a shot at their first job, please get in touch and ask to speak to a member of our Aspire team.</p>	<p><b>Thursday: 26th March</b></p> <p>Tonight at Trinity Square Gateshead we are hosting our Firewalk.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Come along to Trinity Square to support the firewalkers. Or, follow the event on social media #HopeNotHomelessness #bethedifference</p>	<p><b>Friday: 27th March</b></p> <p>Jim had no work experience so we supported him to find volunteering opportunities and training. When he got a job interview he was elated. He was offered part-time temporary work in a factory. Eight months on he's still employed, motivated and happy.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Heavenly Father, you made us in your image and intend us for creative work. Guide the footsteps of those facing unemployment and lead them to places of work where they can use the gifts you have granted them. In Jesus name we ask it. Amen.</p>	
<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday: 28th &amp; 29th March</b></p> <p>Over the past year we have been able to increase the number of flats available to homeless people across Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside from 22 to 34 - bringing hope to more people facing homelessness.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Say a prayer of thanks for all the funding support and our hard working staff who enabled us to get 12 more flats decorated and furnished in 2019.</p>	<p><b>Monday: 30th March</b></p> <p>Since Sept 2019 our Basis@Gateshead centre has been able to open every night from 10:00pm - 8:00am. This allows agencies across Gateshead, South Tyneside and Durham to refer people who are rough sleeping to us for the night - so they have somewhere safe and warm to stay.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Everyone loves a good nights sleep. Many people on the streets do not sleep for fear of attack or theft. Reflect on the simple joy of a comfortable bed in a safe home and thank God for this.</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 31st March</b></p> <p>Many people arrive in our housing projects with nothing but the clothes on their backs. We provide a 'move-in' pack (bedding, towel and toiletries) worth £25 to everyone who moves into one of our projects.</p> <p><b>Give:</b> Can you make a financial contribution towards a move in pack?</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 1st April</b></p> <p>Many homeless people have been let down by family, friends and agencies who are meant to help, so trust is a big deal. When Paul was set on fire while he slept on a park bench in Leazes Park, he walked 3 miles to our Basis@Gateshead centre to get the help he needed - because he trusted the staff there.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> As Christians we place our trust in God. Read and reflect on Proverbs 3: 5-6.</p>	<p><b>Thursday: 2nd April</b></p> <p>£100 could pay for a homeless person to stay in an emergency hostel for a week.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Think about how you and your family could raise £100 this coming summer towards Oasis Community Housing's £100 challenge.</p>	
<p><b>Friday: 3rd April</b></p> <p>Many people don't know what to do if they see someone sleeping rough. Thankfully there are services out there to help - wherever you are.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Alert Streetlink if you see someone sleeping rough so that they can be directed to local sources of support: <a href="http://www.streetlink.org.uk">www.streetlink.org.uk</a> - 0300 500 0914.</p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday: 4th &amp; 5th April</b></p> <p>You count as homeless if you have to stay with friends and family for a prolonged period of time because you have nowhere else to go.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Read and reflect on Romans 12: 9-21.</p>	<p><b>Monday: 6th April</b></p> <p>When the Beast from the East snowstorm hit in winter 2018 - we met Dan. He brought his dogs Duke and Denver into Basis. Many who are homeless are also lonely, keeping dogs for company.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Carry some pet food to give to a dog which provides much needed security, warmth and company to someone sleeping rough.</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 7th April</b></p> <p>In 2019 we secured a new contract to deliver housing and support to young people facing homelessness in the London Borough of Southwark.</p> <p><b>Prayer:</b> Pray for our London staff as they work hard to recruit staff and secure premises to deliver our work in Southwark.</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 8th April</b></p> <p>A lack of affordable housing and changes to benefits can cause homelessness.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Watch the film 'I Daniel Blake' to gain an understanding of the challenges some people face while claiming benefits.</p>	
<p><b>Maundy Thursday: 9th April</b></p> <p>The majority of homeless people are hidden.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Follow our social media accounts to stay updated and share our posts to raise awareness: Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/OasisCommunityHousing">OasisCommunityHousing</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/oasiscomhousing">@oasiscomhousing</a></p>	<p><b>Good Friday: 10th April</b></p> <p>Every year we give a home to around 200 people who would otherwise be homeless.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Sign up to our mailing list to stay updated: <a href="http://www.oasiscommunityhousing.org/what-you-can-do/partner/churches/">www.oasiscommunityhousing.org/what-you-can-do/partner/churches/</a></p>	<p>Jesus over death and the cornerstone of God's redemptive plan for humanity. God showed His abundant love at Easter time, and calls us to Love our neighbours as we love ourselves. That's what we try to do at Oasis Community Housing. As we work to put a roof over someone's head, we are actually seeking to do something much more fundamental. To provide a place where people can belong. A place where they can find community and relationship; a safe and secure place where people can build a new future.</p> <p><b>Thank you</b> for sharing your Lent journey with us. It is our hope and prayer that you have learned more about homelessness and the work of Oasis Community Housing. All donations raised are greatly appreciated and can be sent through one of the options below:</p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Easter Sunday: 11th &amp; 12th April</b></p> <p>Easter Sunday sees the triumph of</p>		