



“What’s Up Zak?” was SWAG’s 4<sup>th</sup> production telling the story of Zacchaeus the Chief Tax Collector but expanding on the very short story we all know. SWAG took this theme and made it relevant to today. They wondered about Zak’s personal life.....did he have a family or any friends? The people in Jericho who so hated him must have had differing opinions and maybe not all of them were adamant that Zacchaeus was all bad. “What’s Up Zak?” was inspired by a book called Silent Witnesses of which there are many in our Bible. These witnesses are ourselves today and SWAG demonstrated this brilliantly through acting, miming, song, dance and art.

There was humour too. The 1960’s Flower Power theme lent itself to a little bit of fun for the cast, involving a pretty awful outfit in Zak’s costume, some wonderful dresses, flared trousers to be in awe of and a wig that really was quite hideous. It’s amusing to think that some people did actually wear this stuff.....and no doubt the fashion world will evolve and dig it out again sometime in the future.



Music by Matthew West dominated the show’s soundtrack with incredibly well written melodies causing much foot tapping and lyrics that aimed right at the heart of the matter with words like “angels of apathy”, “mercy is a song”, “every time I look back over my shoulder I can see the life you saved me from” and “DO something”. The final song of the show was entitled “DO Something” beginning with that question we all ask....“why don’t you do something God, about all this horrible stuff going on?”.

And God answered with **I did. I created YOU.** Every single person in the audience was YOU and me and SWAG used the song to inspire us to stop assuming other people will do what needs to be done and do it ourselves. This is our ministry. This is the ONE job that Jesus asked us to do.



Danny Gokey, a singer who won American’s Got Talent a few years ago, has dedicated his life and work to Music, spreading messages like “if you aint in it” which was the song with which SWAG greeted Jesus. Another fast paced and wiggle inducing number to engage the audience. The message here

was that there isn't much point to anything material or otherwise without God in our lives. This was the message that Zak's best friend Francis was trying to get across to Zak along with the help of his wife Geraldine. In SWAG's story and in the one in the Bible, Zak is convinced eventually.

God spoke to the audience about who they might be. Were they more Zak or Francis and Geraldine? Which one are YOU? SWAG wanted to reach us with this message and get us to ask ourselves to really consider what we are here to do.

But there weren't only happy clappy and feet jiggling songs to smile along with.



There were also some moments of reflection in which Zak recognised how self-involved he had become, ignoring his wife and child, treating them badly, creating anger and upset in his home which caused his son to beg in prayer.....help to bring his Dad's heart back to where it needed to be. "The Power of Prayer" was mimed to exceptionally well by Zak's son and wife moving towards a climax in which Zak's heart *did* return as

he prayed to God himself. Jesus had come to Jericho to see Zak and achieved his goal of bringing his heart back home. He got him out of the tree, which was beautifully represented with use of the wooden cross used usually only on Good Friday. The somewhat giggle inducing art work created a "tree" but the concept of the wooden cross we venerate on Good Friday being used to show new life in Jesus Christ through Zak was subtle but powerful.



Support and encouragement to the youngsters from Father John came in the reminder that they had achieved *four* things in one show, one of which was the outreach beyond our communities in fundraising for Tonic Music for Mental Health, a Portsmouth based non-profit organisation. Steph Langan, Founder and Director, came along and explained what the organisation strive to achieve with help such as SWAG's fundraising. She said after the show "...thank you to the amazing young people at SWAG who performed a wonderful play at their Church this evening.....generously donated £410.39".... a very respectable achievement going towards helping those in need through Tonic. **SWAG have now raised a total of £2110.00 for Cafod, Brendoncare, Simon Says and Tonic. Exceptionally well done SWAG!!!!**

DETAILS OF THE NEXT SHOW DATE AND REHEARSAL TIMES WILL BE UP IN THE CHURCHES VERY SOON. If anyone in YEAR FIVE and above would like to be part of the next show, please email me at [joannapuzzle@gmail.com](mailto:joannapuzzle@gmail.com), phone me on 07437 440299 or find me in the choir at St Edwards on a Sunday morning. Friends are welcome too even if they don't come to this Parish weekly. Joanna