



The Magazine
of
Highams Park Baptist Church

Cavendish Road, E.4.



2016 NUMBER ONE

CHURCH PROGRAMME



SUNDAY SERVICES: 10.00 a.m. Morning Worship (including a crèche and groups for children and young people)

Holy Communion is conducted regularly within the Services. We invite all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour to eat and drink in Communion. Please see the Church Diary (at the back of the magazine) for details.

Monday Gathered Prayer 10.00 – 11.00am at the Church
An opportunity to pray for the life and work of the Church and for the local community

Friday: Boys Brigade and Girls Association:

Anchors (For boys and girls in school years 1-3) 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Juniors (For boys and girls in school years 4-6) 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Company Section (For boys in school years 7+) 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Cell Groups: The cell groups are small groups of people that meet together every other week for friendship, support, Bible study / application. It would be great if you wanted to try one of the groups. Details of the dates when the groups are meeting are available from Jonathan.

Sunday Cell Group : 7.30 - 9.00 pm at 21 Falmouth Avenue, contact Margaret on 8527 3544

Thursday Cell Group: 2.00 – 3.30pm at 212 The Avenue, contact Sheila on 8531 5480

The deadline for items for the next edition is Sunday 13th March 2016
Editors: Dave & Jacquie Lyus, 25 Gordon Ave., Highams Park, E4 9QT 020 8527 1505
Email: davelys@yahoo.co.uk

Cavendish Road, London E4 9NG

(☎ 020 8527 8993)

February / March 2016

Minister:

Rev. Jonathan Boyce
21, Warboys Crescent,
Highams Park,
London, E4 9HR

☎ 020 8531 0620

Church Secretary:

Mr. Philip Slaney
49, Chingdale Road,
Chingford,
London E4 6HZ

☎ 020 8524 6258

Dear Friends,

Have you heard the joke that asks which Bible character had no parents? (*Joshua, son of Nun*). Or the one that asks where the first tennis match is mentioned in the Bible? (*When Joseph served in Pharaoh's court*). Or/ Who was one of the cleverest men in the Bible? (Abraham - he knew a Lot). Finally, who was the greatest financier in the Bible? (*Pharaoh's daughter - she went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet*).

The Life Application Bible introduces us to the prophet Habakkuk with these words: 'From innocent childhood queries to complex university discussions, life is filled with questions. Asking how, and why and when, we probe beneath the surface to find satisfying answers. But not all questions have answers wrapped and neatly tied. These unanswered problems create more questions and nagging, spirit-destroying doubt. Some choose to live with their doubts, ignoring them and moving on with life. Others become cynical and hardened. But there are those who reject those options and continue to ask, looking for answers.'

Habakkuk was a man who sought answers. Troubled by what he observed in the world around him, he asked some difficult questions. These questions were not merely intellectual exercises or bitter complaints. Habakkuk saw a mixed up, messed up world and it broke his heart - Why is there evil in the world? Why do the wicked seem to be winning? It's offered that he boldly and confidently took his complaints to God....and that God answered....with an avalanche of proof and prediction.

'It may seem', God says, 'as though the wicked / evil triumph, but eventually they will be judged and righteousness / 'right' will prevail. Judgement may not come quickly...' God says, '...but it *will* come.'

Habakkuk came to see his own limitations in contrast to God's unlimited control of all the world's events.

We do have the apparent tension between the claim that God is in control of the world and its events, and the obvious reality that so much of the world is not as God or we would want it to be. For example, a group of people were discussing the issue of suffering: 'Sometimes I think it would be nice if God did exist but then I think about some really terrible things that happen in the world and I think, 'if there was a God why are all those horrible things happening'?' Someone made the point that human beings themselves are responsible for much of the suffering in the world.

However it may seem to you and me sometimes, God is alive and God is in control.

Having heard from God, Habakkuk expresses what has been described as 'a prayer of triumph'. By way of response to all that life may bring, Habakkuk declares his trust and confidence in God: 'The Sovereign LORD is my strength'.

Whatever we are facing we can know God's help. Whatever we are facing we can experience God's strength to see us through.

We cannot see all that God is doing but we can be assured that he is God and that He will do what is right. Knowing and remembering this can give us confidence in a confusing world.

Someone has commented of God: 'When I fall, He lifts me up. When I fail, He forgives. When I am lost, He is the way. When I stumble, He steadies me. When I am broken, He mends me. When I face trials, He is with me. When I face persecution, He shields me. When I face problems, He comforts me. When I face loss, He provides for me. When I am afraid, He is my Courage. When I am weak, He is strong. He is God, He is faithful. I am His and He is mine. So if you are wondering why I feel secure, understand this...God is in control, I am on His side and that means all is well with my soul.'

Over two thousand, six hundred years ago the prophet Habakkuk wrote: 'The Sovereign LORD is my strength'. We can know it to be true for ourselves also. They are the words of our Church Text for 2016:



Cavendish Circular



With memories of Christmas fading as Spring approaches we remember those who helped to make the festive season so enjoyable at HPBC. Thanks go to Jonathan for leading our worship so inspiringly; to Mandy Edwards and the Junior Church staff who presented another innovative and charming Nativity; and to Kirsten and the Christmas Choir for enhancing our 'Carols by Candlelight' service. We also thank Kirsten for once again hosting a festive afternoon of carols and delicious refreshments just before Christmas. A tree and decorations at Church added to the festivities; thanks go to all who put them up – and cleared them away (Phil and Jason)! We are grateful to Dianne and Dave Kendrick for overseeing the Christmas postal service, and to Mandy who created another beautiful large card for everyone to sign. See more images of the Christmas festivities further in this issue.

On Sunday December 20th we welcomed Mundele Pedro into membership. We give thanks for her commitment to our fellowship and the part she already plays in the work at HPBC.

Both our Women's and Men's groups have activities planned early this year. By the time you read this our ladies will have held an afternoon tea on Saturday 13th February; we hope to bring you a report next time. Many thanks to Muneyi Antoniou for taking over the leadership of this group from Lizette Wilson, who has relinquished her role as co-ordinator due to increased family and work commitments. We take this opportunity to thank Lizette for all her hard work in leading this group. Muneyi would welcome ideas for future events -watch this space!Meanwhile the Men's group is holding a Saturday Breakfast on 27th February at Mulberry House where the guest speaker will be Simon Pinchbeck from *Christian Vision for Men*. Details of the breakfast meeting appear further in the magazine. Our thanks go to Phil Slaney for his leadership of the Men's Group. Please do support both these groups – they are an excellent opportunity for Christian fellowship and spiritual renewal.

Calling all former Youth Group members!! Phil also draws our attention to a Youth Group Reunion to be held on Saturday 11th June 2016 at HPB. Please put this date in your diary now if you were a member of our large and lively youth group between 1969 – 1980. Further details are at the end of his article.

The Women's World Day of Prayer Service is being held on 4th March at Malvern Avenue Church at 10.30am. The theme this year is '*Receive children. Receive me.*' and has been prepared by the Christian women of Cuba. Details can be obtained from Hazel Ansell who is our Church representative and you can read more about this service further on. Please support this ecumenical worship event which, despite its' title, is not just a day of prayer for women but for everyone!

We remember those of our fellowship who are unwell or undergoing treatment at present. Margaret Norris has seriously decreased mobility and is receiving outpatient treatment while Geoff has also been unwell - although it was good to see him at Church again recently.

Linda Lewis-Azayear is still awaiting a hip operation while her father, Walter, is currently very unwell in South Africa. Her daughter in law Emma (formerly Purver) has fractured a bone in her foot. Robert Edwards has been in hospital recently suffering severe pain and is on pain-killers while undergoing further tests.

We send our condolences to Phil Slaney on the recent death of his brother Steve after a long illness. Steve and his wife Eirhona visited HPB on several occasions and we hold her, Mark, Rhys, Claire and baby Bobby, together with Phil, in our thoughts at this time.

As the magazine was going to press we heard the sad news that our former Church Secretary and faithful member over many years, Beryl Alvarez, had died following a diagnosis of cancer last year. Beryl was a vital and committed member of HPB who contributed greatly to the work of our church in many areas. Together with Joyce Stanborough, our former Church Treasurer, she moved to Frinton some years ago but had retained close contacts with our fellowship. There will be an opportunity to remember Beryl and give thanks for her life and all she meant to HPB, in our next issue. Our loving condolences go to her son Geoffrey and Joyce, who cared devotedly for Beryl throughout her illness.

Recently we were pleased to hear from our former Moderator Rev. Douglas Sparkes who often led our worship and guided HPB so wisely and faithfully through our interregnums. He and his wife, Doris, enjoy keeping up to date with all our news and he writes:

"Here is a voice from Highams Park past - and your own! I ought to have written long ago and I apologise very sincerely that it is only now I am sending. Please forgive me for my silence. Every two months or so Doris and I receive a copy of your Magazine and perhaps you wonder if we ever see or appreciate it. So let me say that we appreciate it very much indeed. My first Sunday at H.P. was during the ministry of Alan Smith. From then on for many years I made regular visits and always it was a delight to do so.

We still live in Windsor but our activities are somewhat limited these days - we both suffer from *anno domini* together with some associated conditions, but are very grateful for the measure of health and strength we do enjoy. Amongst our many blessings are the host of memories that we cherish, and very highly valued among them all are those of H.P. Every time you send us your Magazine those joyful memories are refreshed. Still there are names appearing in print so well remembered by us - notably, of course, Beryl Alvarez whose welcome was always accompanied by a cup of coffee. May God bless and encourage you all in this new year of His grace. Once again, thank you for stimulating our memories and all the news of HP."

(This was written before we knew of Beryl's death. Douglas was very sad to learn of the news).

Christmas Round up



Christmas is over for another year but there are many memories remaining:

For us the first event was not at Highams Park - as you may know we spend some time in Newark in Nottinghamshire where the local parish church, St Mary Magdalene, has for several years held a Christmas Tree



Festival. The church itself is built on a large scale and may well form one of our articles on places of worship. Local businesses and organisations create Christmas trees which are

displayed around the church. This year there were one hundred and ten trees. The fact that such a number could be spaced out around the building gives a feel for how large it is. We took our daughter's children to see this wonderful sight and the colour, decoration and lights of the trees were much enjoyed.

Returning to Highams Park we saw the Annual Nativity play.....

Over the last few years the Nativity performed by the younger people has looked for a new angle on an old story - this year was no different!

Have you ever considered that the Three Wise Men were married and that their wives were not happy to stay at home whilst the husbands went off on their travels? This was the theme that was acted out.

All the usual characters were there - the angels, shepherds, animals and, of course, Mary, Joseph and the baby.



The Star processed around the church and came to rest - not over a stable but over the congregation where a young baby made an excellent infant Jesus.

We enjoyed the enthusiastic singing and joined in heartily. The whole cast and all the many people involved deserve our thanks for a good start to the HPB Christmas.



We must thank Dianne and David Kendrick for donning post persons guise to open the Christmas Post Box and distribute the cards. Mandy Edwards again created a large card so that we could send a seasonal greeting to others in the church.



Many of the congregation went home with a Christingle. This had been introduced by Jonathan during the service when he explained its symbolism - an orange, representing the world, a red ribbon wrapped around it, or a paper frill around the candle, representing the blood of Christ. Dried fruits and/or sweets are skewered on cocktail sticks pushed into the orange, representing the fruits of the earth and the four seasons. A candle

pushed into the centre of the orange, then lit, represents Jesus Christ as Light of the World. Aluminium foil, representing the star that showed people the way to Bethlehem. There was an opportunity to make your own or you could have one made by Stephen and Sam.



Another event that is becoming a tradition is the afternoon of Women's group fellowship at Kirsten's where traditional food is served and carols sung.

There follows some more Christmas pictures:



Our
Nativity
Crib

Paul as a
Wonderful Herod
meeting the three
Kings



Everybody
SING!

HPB Men's Group Events

Our next event will be on:

**Saturday 27th February 2016 at Mulberry House, Chelmsford Road,
High Ongar, Essex CM5 9NL**

at 9-11.30am (Meet at 8am at HPBC if lift required or go direct).

The morning begins with a full English Breakfast followed by a time of
worship and guest speaker:

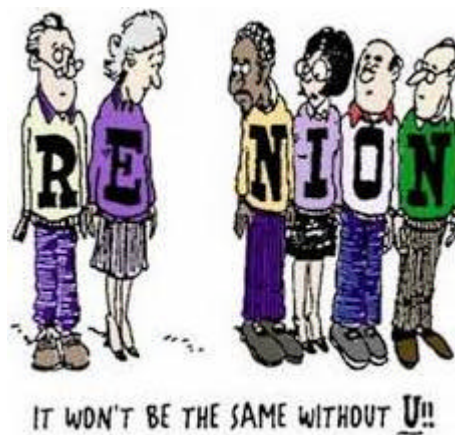
***'From Copper, to Criminal to Christ' with Simon Pinchbeck (from
Christian Vision for Men)***

Simon says, 'I was a copper, who had a career change and became a criminal, then had a life change and became a Christian. Evangelism is in my DNA'.

Cost: £14 including breakfast and drinks on arrival.

To reserve a place at our table let Phil Slaney know by **Sunday 21st
February 2016** with £14.

Advance notice:



**Highams Park Baptist Church - Youth Group Re-union on Saturday
11th June 2016 starting at 4pm in Fellowship Hall.**

Anyone who was a member from 1969 - 1980 are welcome! More details to follow in the next edition of the magazine. Phil Slaney.



Receive children. Receive me.

Women's World Day of Prayer is an international, ecumenical, prayer movement that invites women, from a different part of the world each year, to prepare a worship service through which their hopes and fears for their country may be brought before the whole world in prayer.

On Friday 4 March an estimated 3 million people in over 170 countries and islands will gather to observe the day of prayer, using an order of service written by Christian women in Cuba and translated into over 60 languages and 1000 dialects. In the British Isles alone over 6,000 services will be held.

The day begins as the sun rises over the island of Samoa and continues until it sets off the coast of American Samoa, some 35 hours later. The theme 'Receive children. Receive me' reflects St Mark's Gospel, chapter 10 verses 13-16, which is the focus of the service and a reminder that everyone is a child of God and equally worthy of our love and respect.

The Republic of Cuba is the largest Caribbean island, located at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico and called 'the Key to the Gulf'. Politically at odds with the USA, Cuba suffered greatly due to the economic embargo imposed upon it in 1960 but has found strength within itself to move on and overcome many of its problems.

This is not a day of prayer just for women - everyone is welcome to attend the service:

You are invited to the
Women's World Day of Prayer Service
on
4th March.
at
Malvern Avenue Church.
Time.10.30 am. Refreshment afterwards.

Xylonite News

Most of you will know about the Tortoise and the Hare - but what do you know of the Elephant and the Tortoise. Please see the details below from the Highams Park Society.....

As you know one of the Society's functions is to help preserve the heritage of Highams Park and to inform residents - particularly new residents - about the history of Highams Park.

One of the most important features of life in Highams Park from 1897 to the 1970s was the Xylonite / Halex plastics factory. It was one of the major manufacturers of plastic in that period and employed over 1000 local residents at its peak. The Society has taken a keen interest in the Xylonite factory and its history and was instrumental in returning and restoring the Xylonite War Memorial plaques which now stand in Hale End Library.

We are delighted that our local artist Barnaby Barford was commissioned to design and install a sculpture to commemorate the Company at the entrance to Tesco. It is based on an early company logo of The British Xylonite company (BXL - later Halex), the Elephant and the Tortoise. The works of Xylonite used to occupy the site of the Tesco store. BXL were an early plastics manufacturer. The work is made of stainless steel and the pattern has been cut by laser. The myriad circular holes in the work represent ping pong balls which were manufactured here and at one time it is thought virtually all the world's table tennis balls came from Highams Park.



It was unveiled on Saturday 6th February at 4.45. and many people attended the event. The picture is taken from the Highams Park Forum (www.highamparkforum.co.uk) which is a mine of information on what is happening in Highams Park and is to be recommended. Incidentally some people are puzzled as to why an Elephant

and Tortoise? Xylonite were noted for making imitation ivory and tortoiseshell jewellery, hence the Elephant / Tortoise motif.

ED's note: Here you see the sculpture awaiting unveiling - we will bring a picture of it in all its glory next time.

11 Mission and Evangelism

*Part of the 'Baptist Basics' Series
Series Author: Dr. Nigel G Wright
Produced by the Baptist Union of Great Britain*

Since their beginning, Baptists have always been deeply committed to mission and evangelism. We believe that God wills the salvation of the whole world. According to the apostle Paul, God has a plan for the fullness of time and it is 'to gather up all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth' (Ephesians 1:8-10). In another place he states that in Christ 'all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible' and goes on to say that through him, 'God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross' (Colossians 1:15, 19-20). As the words 'all things' occur a number of times in these verses it is difficult to get beyond them. They mean what they say, 'all things' leaves nothing out. And Christ is the means by which God intends to restore the whole world.

A Universal Vision - It is true to say then that a Christian vision of God's purposes is universal, it is all-embracing. God is concerned for the reconciliation of human beings to himself (2 Corinthians 5:20). God is also concerned for the resurrection of human bodies so that at some future point we shall all be changed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body (Philippians 3:21; Romans 8:11). God is furthermore concerned for the renewal of the whole created world so that it becomes a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness is at home (Romans 8:20-21; 2 Peter 3:13). This breadth of vision expresses the extent of God's love for the creation that has been called into being through him. This creation has lost its way. But in Jesus Christ, God has acted to restore it, to bring it back on track so that it can be reconciled to him. In the fullness of time this will all be brought to completion. At the moment, it is completed only in part (1 Corinthians 13:9-10) but one day it will be fulfilled and there will be universal and cosmic peace. This need not mean that all human beings will finally accept God's grace and mercy for themselves. There are warnings about the danger of being lost (Matthew 25:31-46). But with these sober words in our minds, there is a great and exciting hope for the world even despite all its miseries.

A Universal Mission - The universal vision prepares the Church for a universal mission. The word 'mission' refers to the task to which the Church is called. If God has sent Jesus, the Son of God, into the world in order that the world might know life in all its fullness (John 10:10), Jesus has sent the Church into the world in the same way that the Father has sent him (John 20:21). The terms of reference that applied to Jesus apply to us as we continue, with his strength and in his Spirit, to do the kinds of things that he did, only further afield, to the ends of the earth in fact (John 14:12; Acts 1:8).

Jesus understood that because the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, he was anointed 'to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour' (Luke 4:18-19). Christians follow in his footsteps. Christian mission is concerned about the restoration of all things to their rightful place under the Lordship of Christ and in the service of God (Acts 3:21). Christians know that only when Christ returns, will it be possible to say that, 'the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever' (Revelation 11:15). The kingdom is the gift of God and its final arrival is not yet.



But in the light of the kingdom, and moving towards it with hope and anticipation, it is possible to serve its interests and its coming, to prepare the world for the coming reality. The Church acts as the agent and sign of the kingdom. It points to it and invites people to prepare for it, and in doing this, it acts on behalf of it, achieving reconciliation of people to God and a degree of transformation along the way.

The Dimensions of Mission - The word 'mission' is a way of referring to all the aspects of what the Church is sent to do. 'Evangelism' refers in particular to the specific activity of making people aware of Christ and the salvation that comes through him, and of inviting people to put their trust in him and be baptised. As a general term, mission has a variety of dimensions.

1) Nurturing faith and discipleship: Christian communities exist to share their faith with others and then to nurture that faith in those who respond. It does this by baptising new believers, teaching them the way of Christ and enabling them to become self-sustaining through prayer and study. People's initial interest in Christ only becomes a permanent lifestyle of discipleship when they are helped to put foundations in place and to live the life of faith in a Christian community. The very life of the church is part of the mission of the church. In the regular rhythms of prayer, worship, sacraments, fellowship and preaching there is power to heal.

2) Witnessing to Christ: Witness was the outcome of the Holy Spirit's coming to the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8). The church witnesses to Christ as 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14:6). It does this very largely by existing as an active, worshipping community of believers that is open to others, inviting them to share its faith. By being friendly and hospitable and by allowing people to explore Christian belief in their own time, it draws people into its life and its experience of God. In addition, by reaching out to people beyond the boundaries of the Christian community, it presents Christ to them as the Saviour of the world through whom we can be reconciled to God. It does this through the day to day witness of its members in their places of work, study and leisure and by more planned forms of contact with people in their neighbourhood.

3) Responding to human need: Jesus both preached and acted to help people in need. In particular, he healed the sick, fed the hungry and set people free from evil influences. In these ways he took people who were excluded from their communities and enabled them to be included. Through these actions he revealed the love and mercy of God and showed that God cares. It was said of Jesus that 'he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him' (Acts 10:38). Christians are told to 'do to others as you would have them do to you' (Matthew 5:12) and to 'let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven' (Matthew 5:16). Doing good is one of the ways of bearing witness. It should include the daily, ordinary acts of kindness by which Christians show their concern for their neighbours and for strangers, and also active programmes of social action designed to alleviate human poverty and suffering. These things are worth doing because they are in themselves good, and the good is always worthwhile. In other words, they should never be just for the sake of making converts, even if converts are in fact made.

4) Struggling to transform society: There are many forms of human suffering where it is not enough to meet immediate needs with caring compassion. This would be to deal with the symptoms of a problem without getting down to its root causes.

In these situations, something needs to be done economically or politically to bring about a change from which all will benefit. This proves true about providing clean water, abolishing slavery, working for fair trade or combating the sex trade. This list could be added to endlessly. Changing these unjust practices or structures is always a struggle, both because it means overcoming inertia and because there are strong forces that have a vested interest in keeping things as they are. This is the point at which social action becomes political action and where well thought through and accurate forms of advocacy aimed at change become necessary.

5) Caring for creation: As the whole world belongs to God, and as God's ultimate purpose of salvation embraces all of creation and not human beings alone, mission must also include a proper concern for the natural and human environments. After all, if the planet is polluted or damaged, the implications of that for all life are incalculable, as in the case of global warming. The world does not revolve around human beings but around the God by whom, and for him, it was made (Romans 11:36).

Christian mission should therefore include a concern for the natural world and for animal welfare, in so far as these can be seen to depend upon human behaviour (Jonah 4:9-11). It should also be concerned about the potential of human nature that can dignify or degrade.

6) Engaging with other world views: Bearing witness often takes the form of proclaiming the faith to others. On other occasions it happens in the form of conversation or dialogue. This is the case when Christians engage with other religious or ideological traditions. The aim here is to increase mutual understanding, to lessen tension or hostility between different groups and to seek for areas of common ground. The extent to which this can be found will vary from case to case. However, by bearing witness to Christ in a way that respects other people's convictions and values human relationships, the likelihood is increased that others will learn something from Christ and be influenced by him.

Motives for Mission - What motivates Christian mission and evangelism?



Love for God. Those who love God should want him to receive the worship and honour that are God's due. It is right and good that people should call God to mind and acknowledge his divine claim on their lives. Those who love

Christ and believe him to be Lord want him to be known to the ends of the earth and for this reason, bear witness to him in all places.

Love for people. Jesus came to bring fullness of life and so love for other people means Christians want them to enter into this also. This is especially so as so many lives are distorted and dehumanised by guilt, shame, meaninglessness and addictions. Because people are lost, and because Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 10:18), the good news of Christ is communicated. Christians also do not take lightly, Jesus' warnings about being eternally lost (Matthew 25:45-46). Love for people means inviting them to be reconciled to God. Christian social action and the struggle for justice stem from compassion and the belief that God has something better for people.

Love for the church. Since the church is God's project, its growth and well-being are also part of Christian motivation. The church is placed in the world for the world's good and to be a sign and agent of the coming kingdom of God. When the church thrives the world can benefit.

Love for creation. Christians believe that the creation will come to its fulfilment in the coming of God's kingdom. They also believe that God is at the centre of all things and the world can reach its potential only when it lives in communion with God. Without God it is out of balance and subjected to futility (Romans 8:18-21). They therefore seek to think about the world and its needs, culture, economics, politics and scientific development from a Christian perspective and to bring these reflections to bear upon the cultural and natural environment in which they live.



Love for truth. Christians believe that Jesus Christ spoke and lived the truth about God, humanity and creation. They therefore care about the truth, about honesty and fidelity, and about helping people to live without delusions. In their mission, they seek to be true to God and believe that the truth sets people free (John 8:32). In mission and evangelism, they see themselves living and speaking truthfully.

Mission as God's Mission - Although the church is engaged in mission, it needs to be understood that mission is first and foremost the work of God. To be engaged in mission is to be co-workers with God, through Christ, in the relentless but patient activity, of drawing all things to that point when all things are at peace so that 'God may be all in all' (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Our Green and Pleasant Land...

'The Road to Little Dribbling'

We do not often review books in the magazine but we received this extract, of the latest book by Bill Bryson from Mike and Marilyn Robinson . They felt that it portrayed a view of Britain as it is seen through partially rose tinted glasses! For those who have not yet met Bill Bryson he was born in the Mid-West of America but lives in Britain (and has become a UK Citizen). He seems to have a soft spot for this little island and some years ago wrote a book called 'Notes from a Small Island'. His new book follows on some twenty years later to see what has or has not changed. His writing style is wryly humorous. I am a great fan and seem to have all his books - this title keeps up the good work! See how much you recognise:
DL

This excerpt appeared in the Sunday Times Magazine

Nothing – and I mean, really, absolutely nothing – is more extraordinary in Britain than the beauty of the countryside. Nowhere in the world is there a landscape that has been more intensively utilised – more mined, farmed, quarried, covered with cities and clanging factories, threaded with motorways and railway lines – and yet remains so comprehensively and reliably lovely over most of its extent. It is the happiest accident in history. In terms of natural wonders, you know, Britain is a pretty unspectacular place. It has no alpine peaks or broad rift valleys, no mighty gorges or thundering cataracts. It is built to really quite a modest scale.

And yet with a few unassuming natural endowments, a great deal of time and an unfailing instinct for improvement, the makers of Britain created the most superlatively park-like landscapes, the most orderly cities, the handsomest provincial towns, the jauntiest seaside resorts, the stateliest homes, the most dreamily spired, cathedral-rich, castle-strewn, abbey-bedecked, folly-scattered, green-wooded, winding-laned, sheep-dotted, plumply hedgerowed, well-tended, sublimely decorated 50,318 square miles the world has ever known – almost none of it undertaken with aesthetics in mind, but all of it adding up to something that is, quite often, perfect. What an achievement that is.

And what joy it is to walk in it. England and Wales have 130,000 miles of public footpaths, about 2.2 miles of path for every square mile of area. People in Britain don't realize how extraordinary that is. If you told someone in the Midwest of America, where I come from, that you intended to spend the weekend walking across farmland, they would look at you as if you were out of your mind. You couldn't do it anyway. Every field you crossed would end in a barrier of barbed wire. You would find no helpful stiles, no kissing gates, no beckoning wooden footpath posts to guide you on your way. All you would get would be a farmer with a shotgun wondering what you were doing blundering around in his alfalfa.

Taking the English countryside for granted, assuming that it will always be like this, is almost certainly its greatest threat. The sad irony is the things that make the landscape of Britain comely and distinctive are almost entirely no longer needed. Hedgerows, country churches, stone barns, verges full of nodding wildflowers and birdsong, sheep roaming over windswept fells, village shops and post offices and much more can only rarely now be justified on economic grounds, and for most people in power those are the only grounds that matter. Looked at economically, we don't even need farmers. Farming accounts for just 0.6% of GDP, so if all farming in Britain ceased tomorrow the economy would barely notice. Successive governments have done almost nothing to preserve most of these things.

There is a strange, blind, foolish inclination to suppose that the features that make the British countryside are somehow infinitely self-sustaining, that they will always be there, adding grace and beauty. Don't count on it.

The Road to Little Dribbling by Bill Bryson - Published by Doubleday



Buckfast Abbey

One of our roving reporters is Judy Rowsell. She has kindly sent some pictures that she took on a recent visit to Buckfast Abbey. This magnificent building is sited at Buckfastleigh in South Devon. It is often said that 'it was built by the monks'. This is not strictly true however...



There has been an Abbey in Buckfastleigh since 1018 - initially Benedictine but later, in around 1134, a Savignac Abbey was constructed on a new site, King Stephen having granted the site to the Abbot of Savignac. However, in 1147 a merger took place to create a Cistercian monastery.

At the Dissolution in 1539 all the monastery buildings were stripped and left in ruins. Later they were nearly all demolished, and the site became a quarry! Moving to 1800 the site was bought by a local mill owner named Samuel Berry. He built a woollen mill and a Gothic styled mansion house. In 1872 the building was owned by a Dr.

Gale who in 1882 made the decision to sell the whole site preferably for a religious purpose.

In 1882 the site was purchased by a group of French Benedictine monks, who wanted to recreate a monastery on the site. New monastic buildings and a temporary church were constructed, managing to include the existing Gothic house. Buckfast was formally reinstated as an Abbey in 1902 and in 1903 Boniface Natter became the new Abbot. Unfortunately he died in 1906 as the result of a shipwreck. He was succeeded by Anscar Vonier who pledged that he would make Natter's last wish to rebuild the Abbey a reality. Work began on a new abbey church in 1907; much of it on the footprint of the former Cistercian abbey. Never more than six monks worked on the rebuilding at any one time after the whole community had worked to make repairs to the foundations to bring them to ground level. Due to the primitive equipment (such as wooden scaffolding) and lack of Health and Safety regulations there were accidents but no one was seriously injured. There was to be no cessation of work due to the First World War but as some of the monks were German they were not sent to internment camps as long as they stayed on Abbey lands.

The church was consecrated in 1932 but not completed until 1938. I remember visiting it many years ago and my abiding memory is of a building on a vast scale but one which was flooded with light. This compared to many cathedrals which are often dark places although no less inspiring. It is a place to visit and wonder at how such a building could be built by so few people.

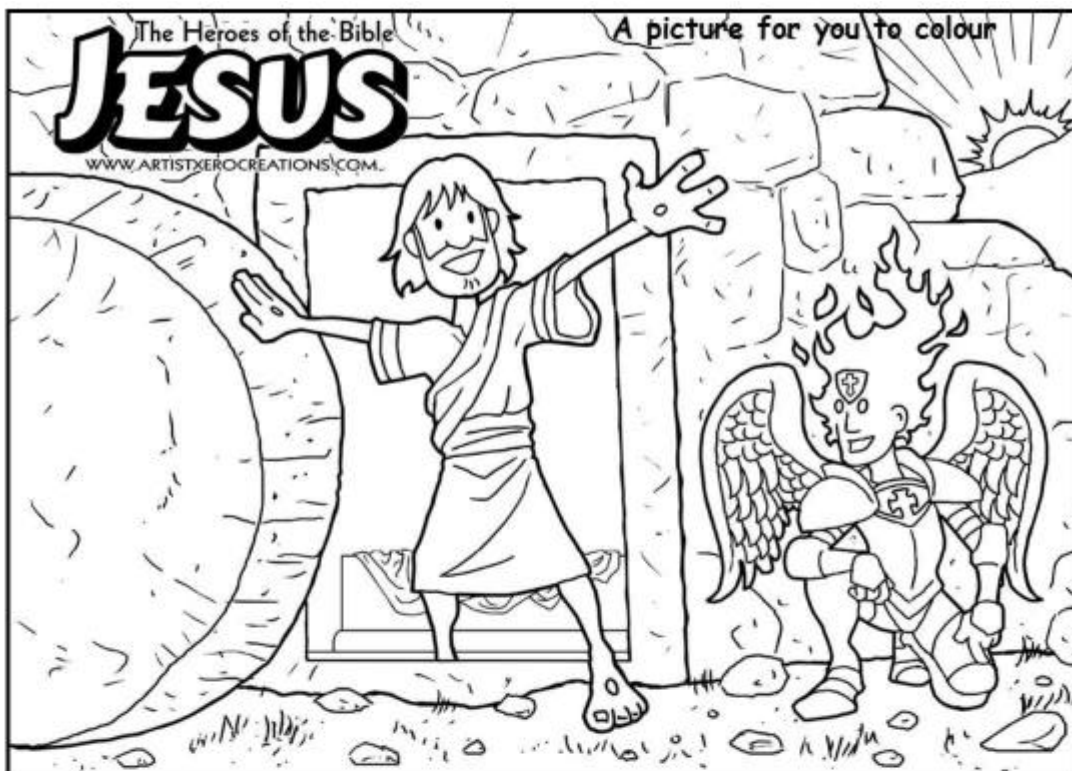
The Abbey manages to be self-supporting, having a farm where bees, pigs and cattle are kept, vegetables are produced and a shop which sells wine, honey beeswax, fudge and other items made by religious communities throughout the world, together with a gift shop, book shop, and restaurant.

Buckfast is known for its tonic wine which has been made by the monks, using a French recipe, since the 1890s. There is also a large beekeeping colony which has been in existence since just after the end of the First World War.



Some views of the interior of the Abbey

(all pictures from Judy Rowsell - with thanks)



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Fill in the missing words: (life John came fulness)
Jesus said, 'I to give - life in all its ' (..... 10v10)

Word Search:
Find the different
ways that Jesus is
spoken of in the Bible

JESUS
ALPHA AND OMEGA
RABBI
BREAD OF LIFE
KING OF KINGS
RABBONI
CHIEF CORNERSTONE
LAMB OF GOD
CHIEF SHEPHERD
LORD
LORD OF GLORY
SON OF GOD
GOOD SHEPHERD
LORD OF LORDS
SON OF MAN
HIGH PRIEST
MEDIATOR
WORD
IMMANUEL
PROPHET



R	V	Y	D	T	S	E	I	R	P	H	G	I	H	C	K	R	N
B	N	C	H	I	E	F	C	O	R	N	E	R	S	T	O	N	E
R	K	C	S	O	N	O	F	G	O	D	P	D	V	I	T	G	W
R	S	Z	H	J	D	N	F	Y	L	S	N	R	V	G	A	B	K
G	O	B	F	I	C	D	R	G	D	Z	G	A	O	H	G	L	T
B	N	C	S	C	E	H	D	R	Q	X	S	O	K	K	E	J	N
Z	O	S	R	O	R	F	O	M	R	K	D	K	E	L	M	L	L
I	F	N	G	R	N	L	S	A	C	S	L	F	M	S	O	R	O
B	M	L	Y	N	F	O	B	H	H	Q	I	L	N	U	D	R	R
B	A	C	E	O	I	B	F	E	E	L	N	M	N	S	N	W	D
A	N	H	D	U	O	K	P	D	F	P	E	X	B	E	A	K	O
R	F	R	T	N	N	H	F	O	A	D	H	P	W	J	A	M	F
Q	O	I	I	K	E	A	D	O	I	V	T	E	W	Z	H	B	G
L	R	S	M	R	K	A	M	A	G	W	I	L	R	B	P	L	L
G	V	T	D	B	E	W	T	M	O	N	V	D	J	D	L	T	O
C	P	R	Z	R	J	O	Q	R	I	F	I	X	M	X	A	L	R
R	M	M	B	B	R	R	D	G	L	X	J	K	B	L	R	G	Y
B	L	A	M	B	O	F	G	O	D	F	T	E	H	P	O	R	P

CHURCH DIARY

February

Sunday 7 th	10 am	Morning Service led by Jonathan
	7 pm - 8 pm	'New Songs' Worship
Sunday 14 th	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Phil
Sunday 21 st	10 am	All Age Service with BBGA Parade led by Jonathan
Sunday 28 th	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan

March

Thursday 3 ^d	7:30 pm	Church Council Meeting at 21 Warboys Crescent
Sunday 6 th	10 am	Morning Service led by Jonathan
	7 pm - 8 pm	'New Songs' Worship
Sunday 13 th	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan
Sunday 20 th	10 am	Palm Sunday: All Age Service with BBGA Parade led by Jonathan
Sunday 27 th	10 am	Easter Sunday: All Age Service with Communion led by Jonathan

April

Sunday 3 ^d	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan
	approx. 11:30 am	Church Members' Meeting (provisional date)
	7 pm - 8 pm	'New Songs' Worship
Sunday 10 th	10 am	Morning Service led by t.b.c

Refreshments are served after the Morning Service every Sunday.