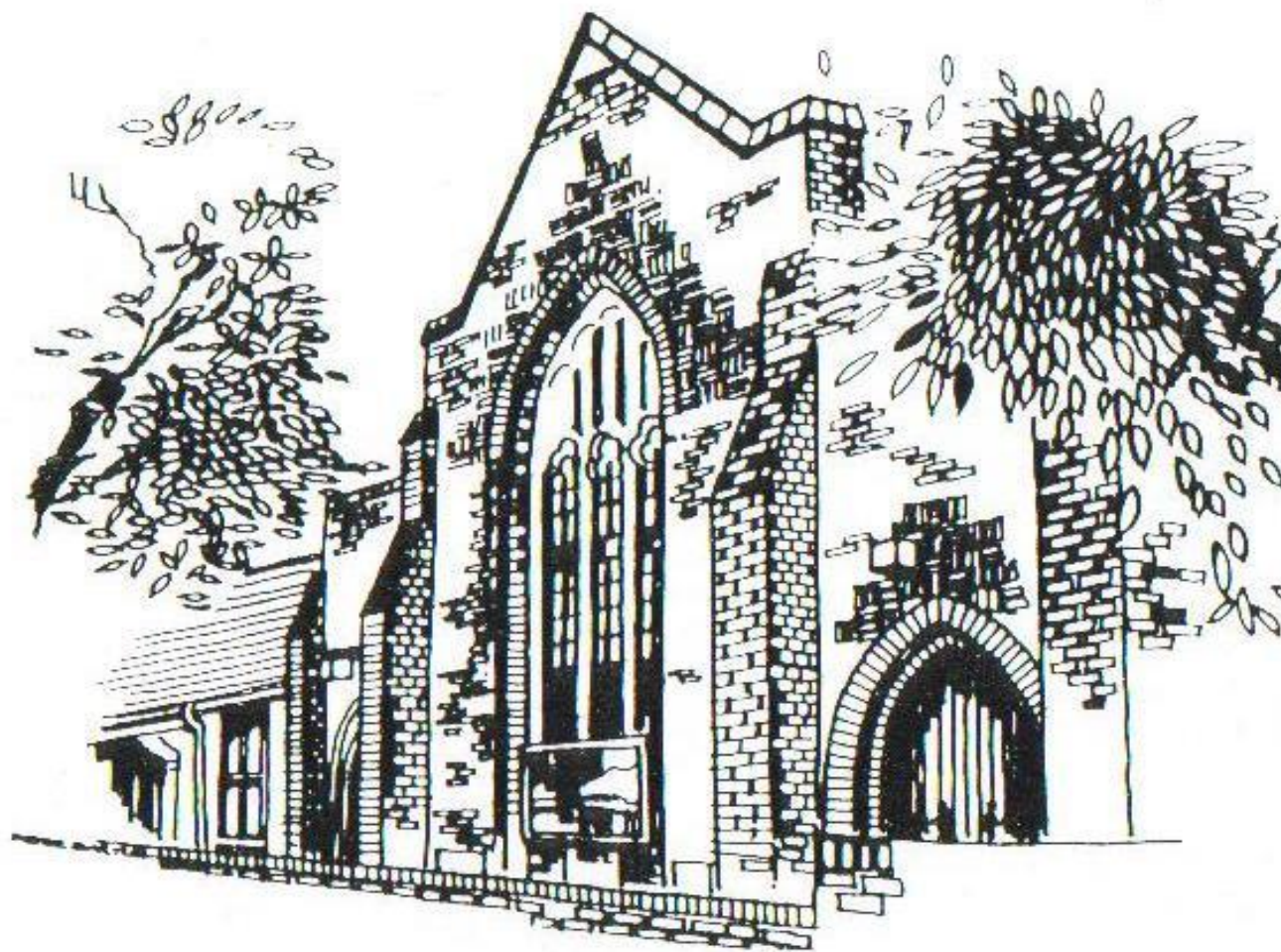




The Magazine
of
**Highams Park Baptist
Church**

Cavendish Road, E.4.



AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2020

CHURCH PROGRAMME

Sunday Services

From August 9th Services are allowed to be held but with restrictions as laid out in the booklet that has been distributed to all worshippers. Please refer to this for all the necessary guidance and times. There will be no Sunday School or any groups at this time.

For any further information please contact the Church Minister or Secretary.

Monday Gathered Prayer 11.00 – 12.00 am at the home of Margaret Norris.
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) combined with

Juniors (For boys and girls in school years 4-6)
6.30 - 8:00 pm
Company Section 6. 30 - 8.30pm.

Cell Groups: The cell groups are small groups of people that meet together for friendship, support, Bible study / application. It would be great if you wanted to try one of the groups.

Friday 'Praise, Prayer and Worship'
Monthly 7.00 -8.00pm at the Church.
Contact Muneyi Antoniou or Peter Burke for details.

Tuesdays, weekly at 8.00 pm
at Sarah and Paul Raymond's House.

The deadline for items for the next edition is Sunday September 20th 2020
Editors: Dave & Jacquie Lyus, 020 8527 1505 Email: magazine@hpbc.co.uk



Cavendish Road, London E4 9NG

August / September 2020

<p><i>Minister:</i></p> <p><i>Rev. Rosemary Eaton</i> <i>21, Warboys Crescent,</i> <i>Highams Park,</i> <i>London, E4 9HR</i></p> <p>☎ 020 8523 5056</p>	<p><i>Church Secretary:</i></p> <p><i>Ruth Underhay,</i> <i>249, The Avenue,</i> <i>Highams Park,</i> <i>London E4 9SE</i></p> <p>☎ 07593 421214</p>
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Our Minister writes:

What matters most? For months the answer to that question has been shaped by COVID-19. Across the world governments have taken action to halt the spread of the coronavirus. Saving lives and protecting healthcare systems has been the highest priority. Life and health were what mattered most.

This summer, as July turns to August, other priorities are emerging or perhaps being rediscovered. Restrictions on social and cultural activities have been eased. Things aren't quite as they were before but slowly individuals are able to resume those activities that are most important to them. Businesses are restarting and furloughed workers are returning to their jobs. For the government, economic recovery is now the priority. For individuals and families, increased possibilities for social contact perhaps matters more.

What matters most, asks Jesus? The short parables in Matthew's gospel gives his answer. What matters most is the kingdom of God. Like a tiny seed or yeast mixed into dough, the kingdom begins in a small way. Like fine pearls or hidden treasure, the kingdom is of great worth. Those who find the treasure and allow the seed to take root in their lives are part of the kingdom. The precious and life changing kingdom is what matters most in this world.

As young boys, Rodrigo and Gleison, began collecting bricks to build a house. They knew that building a decent home would change their lives. One day they realised that something else mattered more than their own security and comfort. The two young men willingly gave all they had to build a church so that the kingdom of God might grow in Port Velho.

Churches are beginning to reopen around Britain. After weeks of worshipping online and gathering on Zoom many local Christian communities will come together again this summer. Congregations will probably be small. Services will be shorter as recommendations and restrictions are still part of the picture. The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast teach us that this is not a problem. The kingdom of God starts small and grows steadily.

What matters most? Each of us must answer that question for ourselves. Our lives and our health are important. Social connection and economic security are significant factors for our wellbeing.

As Christians we believe that a relationship with God through Jesus enriches and sustains us through good times and bad.

Through the parables of the kingdom, Jesus offers an answer that we might well carry with us in the coming days. What matters most? The kingdom of God. From small beginnings this great treasure is the single most precious thing. It changes our lives and, through us, could change our world.

Rosemary



As restrictions are gradually lifted in some parts of the country we rejoice in the re-opening of our Church buildings for Sunday worship on August 9th. While there are many safety restrictions in place, and our Sunday service will not be as normal, we are thankful that we can once again come together (at a safe distance and masked!) to give thanks to God and praise Him. We are so grateful to the team that has made this re-opening possible. It has not been an easy task and one that no-one could have anticipated having to do. A great deal of hard work and research has gone into ensuring the Church complies with all the necessary directives and in producing the accompanying leaflet which gives a guide to worshipping safely and has been distributed throughout our fellowship. Thanks also go to those who have worked throughout this time to maintain the Church premises and gardens; attend to the financial upkeep, cleaning, refurbishment, decorating, drainage, gardening and liaising with our hirers and dealing with enquiries generally. All these, and others have given their time and talents to ensure that the Church is in good repair and ready for use once again.

During this challenging time we have continued to be inspired and uplifted by the Sunday Supplements, Rosemary's Blogs and the Zoom sessions. We thank those who have been responsible for preparing and distributing the Supplement material and hosting and leading the Zoom sessions. This has contributed to the continuing life and witness of HPBC and the fellowship has been much enriched by the prayers and reflections we have enjoyed through these mediums. While Church buildings may not be fully operational yet, Christ's kingdom on earth has remained a vibrant and vital force and, in many ways, has grown immeasurably despite the restrictions imposed on us. A renewed sense of fellowship and strengthening of faith has been very evident since our isolation began and we pray that it will continue to grow and enrich our lives as we move forwards into an unknown and challenging future.

The Editors



Cavendish Circular

We give thanks to all who have helped to keep Church family connected and supported during the time that we have not been able to meet regularly. Thanks go once again to those who have been helping with shopping, checking on friend's well-being, gardening, and keeping in contact, especially with the house bound.

Our thoughts turn, as always, to those of our fellowship who are unable to get out and about or are in ill health or undergoing treatment, including, Mavis Grint, Dorothy and Cliff Tayler, Doris Thorndyke, Margaret Norris, Jarhna Saha, Joan Meunier, Margaret Enaholo, June Tresadern and Joan Ashley. We also remember Toby Player, together with Wendy, Gary and Gemma, who has found these past months particularly difficult without his sessions at Trinity House. The whole family have worked tirelessly to provide stimulating and fun activities each day for Toby and we hope that he will soon be able resume his normal daily activities at the Centre.

Our loving condolences go to Bob Jenkins whose niece, Michaela, died in early June. Michaela had been suffering from lung cancer and Bob wishes to thank everyone for their prayers and kind words during her last illness. Please continue to pray for her family and for God's peace and love for all who knew her.

Our condolences also go to the family of our former member Roger Parmenter who died at the end of July after a long illness. Roger, and his wife, Barbara, were members of HPBC for many years, together with his sister and brother in law, Gwen and John Hunn, their family and his mother. Our prayers go to Barbara, Stuart, Louise and Daniel and all the family members as they remember all he meant to them and give thanks for his life.

Catherine Newman, Mandy Edward's mother, was briefly in hospital, recently with worrying symptoms but thankfully later released into the care of the G.P. As no family member was able to accompany her it was very concerning for the family and we pray that she is now symptom free.

We were sorry to learn that Robert Edwards had a bad fall while out shopping at the end of June. He broke his arm and suffered significant cuts and bruising. After a brief stay in hospital he was able to come home. He continues to recuperate and undergo out-patient treatment. We wish him a speedy recovery and that the pain and swelling will quickly decrease and he will have full mobility restored.

During the latter part of July, Muneyi Antoniou was admitted to hospital in severe pain. This was a very worrying time for her and Tony and we are glad that she is now back home and hopes to return to work soon. Our love and best wishes to her as she recovers from this attack.

We remember in prayer all who will be returning to work, commencing new jobs, and looking forward to starting or returning to school or further education at this time; that they may feel supported and strengthened in these difficult times.

Jacquie

The Church Gardens

For those of us who have been unable to visit the Church recently (which probably means most of us) there may have been the concern that the garden at the rear of the buildings might have become overgrown . But all is not lost - a stout band of willing(!) helpers have kept it looking trim as shown in the pictures below:



We do thank them all - Jason Close, Liz and Simon Jones, Dave Mayhew and Peter from next door- perhaps 'When I needed a neighbour' is appropriate. If I have forgotten anybody I apologise but, whoever they were, they have done an excellent job!

DL

HOPE

FionaThorndyke writes: I recently gave a talk at the Sunday Zoom meeting which prompted many responses – thank you for the positive interest! What follows here is based on the talk – which focussed on the theme of HOPE.

When we think about hope, we probably have very different hopes – our own personal hopes, hopes for our families and friends, hopes for our work situations, careers, colleagues, hopes for our spiritual life. But just as the recent months have united us in our limited, lockdown environments, we have also been united in our hopes – we have hoped for things to improve, we have hoped for the time when we can see our loved ones face to face, hope for the virus to be controlled and now hope for a longer term solution. We are reminded about Hope in the verses from **Lamentations 3: 21 – 26**: *'Yet hope returns when I remember this one thing: the LORD's unfailing love and mercy still continue, Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The LORD is all I have, and so in him I put my hope. The LORD is good to everyone who trusts in him, so it is best for us to wait in patience.'*



Hope is also the title of this painting by George F Watts. Watts was born in 1871 and raised by a strict evangelical father. He came to dislike organised religion but had an extensive knowledge of the bible. He was a symbolist painter – in his words he painted ideas and not things. This painting is one that is very meaningful to me, and I believe is significant for each and every one of us at this particular time. .

In the painting we see that Hope is presented as a sad and forlorn figure, and the overall atmosphere is morose and bleak. The colours are soft and muted, maybe dull – and the figure is bent and curled up, her face downcast. We can also see that Hope is blind. She is seated on a globe and she is clutching a lyre. All the strings on the instrument are broken – except one. She appears to be

leaning towards the lyre, perhaps trying to catch any faint music which may come from the last remaining string, but here her efforts seem to be in vain. Hope is sitting dejectedly, her pose and her attitude would contest that there is any happiness to be found when all seems lost to her and around her.

Watts painted Hope at a time of personal loss – his adopted daughter had just lost her own child due to illness. He also set out to depict Hope at a time when society was marked by economic decline and societal deterioration – there did not appear to be progression and people were questioning their religious beliefs and doubting whether God exists. It was a time of uncertainty, conflict and change. These last few months have at times seemed very bleak for many people, especially for those who have become ill, those that are front line key workers, those who have felt very socially isolated by being restricted to life at home. There have been – and still are – serious consequences for many, not only in terms of their physical and mental health – but also their economic situation. There are those who have lost jobs or now have little financial security.

Similarly, today is a time of uncertainty, conflict and change. When faced with such fears and challenges it is easy to question belief – where and how can there be a God who is our father and who cares for each of us?

We also see that the figure of Hope is bowed – but she is not broken. She still clings to her lyre and she continues to listen for any sounds of music, or it is said that she is still plucking the lyre to find whatever melody she can from the last string. She is still trying to find pleasure in any remaining harmony, to create music and joy from what is left to her. It is said that Watts made Hope blind as she is expecting nothing. But though we see a figure that appears defeated she has not lost all – she is holding on to what remains, and is trying to find comfort and solace in what she does have and what she is able to do. I first saw this painting at the Watts Gallery, in Compton, Surrey shortly after a time in my own life that was very bleak and that resonates with this painting. It was a very dark and difficult period during which time my life had completely changed. I did still have my faith but questioned this given that I felt so abandoned. One constant in my life was HPBC – I did still go, and as always, I sat next to Doris, and it was through my friendship with Doris that I came to meet Michael.

You may notice something else in this painting. Above the figure of Hope there is a small glimmer of light. Hope does not see that there is a star shining above her; she is blind, she is turned away – but it is there shining brightly through the murky sky. Suffice to say I could not see that there was a star – shining over me – but it was there and God was at work in my life in a way I could never have imagined or expected. Often as Christians we feel that we are in the dark - we do not know or see what is to come, what is ahead, what God's greater plans are.

The picture is not only about Hope as a solitary figure. It also suggests, as she sits on top of a globe, the larger hope of the world, and with the star shining through the darkness, that there is peace and light above the turmoil and sorrow of the world. For all of us our lives have changed quite dramatically in the last few months and our world will never be quite the same. Perhaps those things that we hoped for will now never be – or not as we had wished them to be. We may also have had doubts, difficulties and asked the question – where is our hope? Doris chose the hymn **'Great is thy faithfulness'** and how fitting to be reminded that when we feel without hope that God is a faithful God. Yes, it has been a difficult and fearful period, but we have also had time – time to be spent in different ways – and we have been able to appreciate each other and the world around us in a different way. We have taken notice of what we had taken for granted.

As many of you know, Michael and I spent much of the lockdown in London as we were not able to return to the Netherlands. Flights, train journeys were all cancelled. What we had hoped to be doing, our expectations, all disappeared and we had to live day to day – we could not make any plans. It was frustrating, especially for Michael who, being considered high risk, had to stay in for much of that time. I was fortunate enough to be able to carry on working as all my teaching transferred to being online. I was also fortunate that I could exercise once a day. I fell into a new pattern of getting up early, going to Trent Park and running for my hour.

I ran frequently each week – from mid March to mid May and during those early morning runs, when the weather was beautiful, I was blessed to see spring unfolding. Every day and every week there was something new appearing, from daffodils, bluebells, forget me nots, yellow fields of rape, and of course, the accompanying wildlife – squirrels, deer, birds. It was joyous and uplifting. I realised that I would never have experienced this had we not been in lockdown. This unexpected time, allowed me the opportunity to truly appreciate and be thankful of what is ever present, rather than take this for granted. We have all had to recreate our own worlds and find joy and pleasure – and bring joy and care to others - in different ways. Another example of that is our Zoom meetings.

Michael read the following prayer in closing our talk:

Thank you Lord, that through every weakness and hard place your strength is displayed in our lives. We can't do it on our own. But you can, through us. Your power is mighty within us; you are our Helper and our Strength. All things are possible through you. (based on 2 Corinthians 1: 4-5).

"... Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ so also our comfort abounds through Christ."

He also pointed out an important difference between the prayer and the bible verses. The reading stresses that, as we are comforted, we are then able to comfort those around us – our comfort abounds through Christ. This has been evident in our Zoom meetings – not only for those who are able to attend - but as we pray and think about all in our HPB church family.

During Fiona and Mike's Zoom reflection the new song from Peter Burke was played - Peter gives further details below:



Dear all,

I'm pleased to release my new song, Lord Lead the Way, on YouTube. Please have a listen on this link.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXdNNyXrqOk&t=302s>

Please leave a comment if you can, enjoy and share with your friends and on Facebook, I would really appreciate all your support.

Thank you to everyone for your encouragement.

Peter Burke

Support from the Church

As you may know we now give a donation to BMS and Home Mission every three months to help them and even though the Church was in lockdown we were able to give £540.75 to each. To explain our position please be aware of the following:

The Church should, and we do, continue to meet our objectives with regard to BMS and Home Mission, and even now we are closed as a Church these Missions need our support more than ever. The payment that we have been able to make for 2020, as at 30th of June, is **£1,081.50** and each BMS and Home Mission have been paid **£540.75** which has come in from the offering so far for 2020. This, like our offering, is also down by £300.00 compared to 2019.

Going forward I will be paying both BMS and Home Mission every three months from our collections, to ensure we show a true balance and they receive money more regularly.

Jason

There follows a letter of thanks received from Home Mission:

09 July 2020

Dear Jason,

I'm writing to thank you for your recent contribution to Home Mission of **£540.75**.

The Home Mission appeal provides the financial bedrock for our wider family life. As you are aware, it enables and funds three things to take place: missional initiatives in local churches and projects; regional associations supporting churches in mission and ministry; and our national resource, the Specialist Teams, based at Baptist House in Didcot, Oxfordshire.

In terms of mission projects, the LBA continues to support various initiatives right across the capital which are making a real difference to people's lives: from Messy Church at Deep Water Baptist Church in Hayes (Kent) to a vibrant Community Outreach project in Mill Hill. Home Mission also funds our internship programme where, this year, we have three young adults gaining experience in Christian leadership through involvement in the LBA, Spurgeon's and the local church. Many of these projects are seeing significant fruit in new disciples being won for Christ. Indeed, one of our churches receiving Home Mission funds – Hersham – has grown so much that it is almost self-sufficient. These are good news stories indeed - facilitated by your generous giving.

I am only too aware of the financial challenges upon our churches and church members especially with many, the LBA included, having to shoulder the continued burden of the deficit payments to the Baptist Ministers Pension Scheme.

Given recent decisions on the part of the Baptist family, we are becoming ever more certain that this particular burden has a finite duration. We still have several years remaining before this problem is hopefully removed for good but the outlook is far more optimistic than it was several years ago. Do pray for the Support Services Team at Baptist House and the Pension Trustees as they continue to navigate our denomination out of that situation.

You may well have read my letter about the Home Mission appeal sent out in November. As I stated back then, I would urge you to prayerfully review the amount you set aside for the 'family purse' especially during the period where you set the budget or consider your specific giving to Home Mission. Even just a *small* increase can make a large difference to us. Despite a significant increase on 2018, the LBA fell 1% short of budget. That was a better result than many other regions as the whole appeal fell 4.5% short (£179,575). We would be grateful if you could keep that matter under review.

Thank you again for contribution to this important aspect of our Baptist life. We look forward to your continued support.

Yours, in Christ,

Phil

Rev. Phil Barnard
Regional Minister, Team Leader
London Baptist Association



You may be interested to hear that the 2019 Baptists Together Annual Report is available on their website at www.baptist.org.uk/annualreport.

Having looked at it I found that, unlike many business reports, this was easy to read and contained details of projects and work that is taking place all over Britain. It is good to know that there is a lot of life in the Baptist Church of which we are a part.

If you have time, do access the report via the website and enjoy its contents...

DL

Return to Ghana

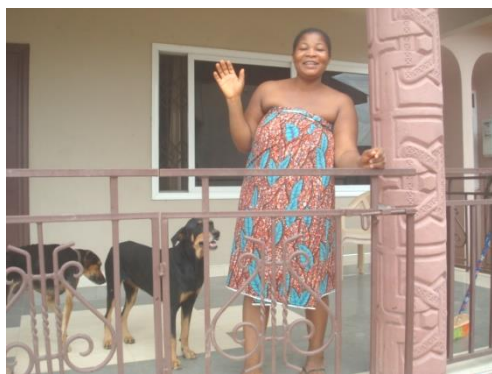
I returned to Ghana in April 2019, this time to Koforidua, the regional capital of the Eastern Region, intending to be there for up to a year. My Salvation Army minister friends, Justice and Christiana Incoom with their two sons, Gideon and Louis, were based there as the District leaders. Before my arrival, Justice had suggested finding me a 'room', as their house was not big enough for me to live with them. So he found me a 'room', which turned out to be a brand new one bed roomed flat, which was to cost me around £500 for the year's rent!

It was unfurnished, but I already had a double bed from when I had lived in the north of Ghana, a couple of years ago, so I bought the essentials: a microwave, a small fridge, a mobile wardrobe, a fan, iron and ironing board and basic kitchen stuff. A family from the Salvation Army church I was attending, loaned me a double sofa bed (I had guests to stay on a couple of occasions) and I borrowed plastic chairs and a plastic coffee table. I



managed very well - just as well I am a dab hand at cooking in the microwave! I even managed to do omelettes and toast, as there was a grill in it, as well as stir fries. My landlady enjoyed cooking and often prepared spicy local dishes for me.

The landlord's family lived on the same gated property and another female teacher, Saviour, lived next door, in an en suite bedroom, although there was a small communal kitchen area for her to use, on the compound. There were also several other half-built flats. We had two dogs, who barked at everyone they didn't know and had to be put on the landlord's porch and the gate closed whenever anyone



new arrived. They were fine with me eventually, but at first, my landlady had to come and take them to the porch when I arrived home. So, I felt very safe there. I had bars on all my windows and would only shut them if there was the threat of rain. It was the rainy season up until the beginning of December, when we merged into the dry season. It was hot during the day, 35+ degrees, but down to about 21 at night, which made sleeping easier.

In May, I started working at Asokore Salvation Army School, mostly with the teachers, although I did help out in classes occasionally, a bit like a teaching assistant. The school was from pre KG1 (kindergarten) up to JHS 3 (Year 10), all told just over 700 pupils. For several weeks, I observed all the teachers and trainee teachers in the school,



45 observations in total, and wrote a report for each person, with suggestions on how they could improve their classroom management. The teachers and trainees were really grateful for my reports, as they all want to be the best teachers they can be. I also led a workshop on classroom management with the trainees.



During the summer holidays, I spent a few weeks in the UK, then returned to Koforidua for what I was hoping would be for another six months.

From October, I observed and wrote reports for another twenty-two trainees and six new teachers who had started at the school. Classes 1 to 6 had up to 75 pupils in a class, so six extra teachers were employed to help out. The problem was that the school desperately needed six new classrooms, so that the existing classes could be split. There was literally no room to move, especially in the older classes, where the kids were bigger.



A new child-centred curriculum was introduced across the country in September, 2019, but



little could change in our school until the new classrooms were built. Then there was the extra furniture and equipment that was needed for group work and practical hands-on activities that the curriculum advocated.



Thankfully, the Ghanaian government had made the use of the cane illegal over a year ago, but many teachers struggled to follow this ruling. This was where I came in, with classroom management strategies. I had some interesting conversations with colleagues who loved to quote 'spare the rod and spoil the child', so I tried to encourage them to think of it as 'spare the discipline and spoil the child'. I told them that by removing the cane, their discipline procedures needed to be even more rigorous. I also told them that it was child abuse to be still using the cane! So I challenged any teacher or trainee I saw with a cane in their hand. They usually had the grace to look sheepish and were quick to apologise.

My Head Teacher, Madam Evelyn, was an amazing, forward - thinking lady and we got on very well together, often having lengthy discussions based on my observations and how I was advising the teachers and pupils. She was very supportive of what I was doing.

The extreme weather often experienced in Ghana can cause problems at school, especially when the classrooms are little more than a roof and walls, with open spaces for doors and windows. On several occasions, I was in such a classroom, when there was a massive downpour of rain. It meant that the pupils had to move towards the centre of the room and continue with their work as best they could. The noise of the rain on the roof would be deafening, so it was impossible for any class teaching to be done! The dirt playground rapidly turned into a pool of mud.



At the end of the school year, in July 2019, my school had a formal graduation ceremony for the first time. This was for the KG2 pupils who were moving from the kindergarten department up to Year 1, the Year 6 pupils who were moving into the JHS department and the Year 9 pupils who were moving on to the Senior High School. Such events are becoming popular in Ghanaian schools.



It was a wonderful occasion, which lasted most of the day and we were grateful that it did not rain! The programme included musical items, traditional dancing, speeches and, of course, the presentation of graduation certificates and year group prizes. Many parents attended, along with various church leaders and the town chief.



I was honoured to be invited to be one of the guest speakers for this occasion and to present some of the year group prizes.



The pupils who were graduating wore traditional graduation mortar boards and gowns and the staff all wore outfits made of the same fabric.



From the last week of January, 2020, until the week before I returned to the UK in Mid-March, my role changed and each week I was visiting Salvation Army schools in the Eastern Region with my manager, Samuel, from the SA Education Unit. This was an amazing experience, as it meant that I got to visit schools in very remote areas, often reached in very challenging travelling conditions. Bumpy, potholed, dusty roads took us through lush vegetation, farmland and, on one occasion, a palm oil plantation which covered a huge area. It involved leaving home very early in the morning and using public transport – taxis and mini-vans (tro-tros) which, in Ghana, is an experience in itself! We were very grateful for the times when our visits involved Justice and he drove us in his air-conditioned car. There were also a couple of times when we had to stay overnight in local hotels.



I felt a bit like a school inspector, as we were checking the teachers' planning notes and making sure that their registers were accurate and up to date. There was also an opportunity to chat with the Head Teacher, to hear the concerns he/she had about the school and then we held a staff meeting with the teachers, to hear about their challenges. Many were struggling with using the new curriculum in such limited facilities and poor structures, as well as

trying to adapt to the government ruling of not using the cane. Resources were another issue, as schools are desperate for reading books for their libraries. Only a few have a designated area for a library, but I was able to tell these schools that I would arrange for surplus reading and story books to be sent to them from the UK, something my previous school in Loughton has done for me on two occasions. School visits were such an eye-opener and I realised how blessed we are in the UK. Ghanaian teachers, particularly in government schools, work in such challenging conditions. Building programmes are underway, but there is a long waiting list, so it is a slow process.
Jan Smithers.



The Dictionary definition of Fellowship is very plain and simple:
'Friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests'.

The actual word 'Fellowship' is not one that appears very often in the Bible although in the Biblical context it is shown as:

Fellowship is being involved with the unity of God's family. Your relationship with God is first and foremost, and to remain in fellowship with him is to remain in his word. ... 1 Corinthians 1:9-10 (KJV) "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the old style 'normal world' we would come to church on a Sunday morning and an implicit part of the service was the Fellowship felt by all those in the congregation and those who played some role in the act of worship. In fact the congregation is sometimes referred to as 'The Fellowship'. For many this carried on in the aptly named 'Fellowship Hall' with the taking of tea and coffee (and quite often cakes and biscuits especially if somebody had a birthday!). These were not eaten and drunk in silence of course - after all the definition of 'Fellowship' refers to sharing of similar interests - and this sharing was sometimes at high volumes... Perhaps this total experience is what we have most missed with the closure of churches due to the pandemic.

However, once again, technology has played its part and allowed some of us at least to meet via Zoom on a Sunday morning and a Tuesday evening. The Sunday 'service' usually attracts about thirty people and contains the elements of a normal church service with hymns, readings, prayers and a reflection or sermon. It has been something of a revelation to see how people have taken the lead in preparing and presenting the services. The Tuesday evening session follows on from the home group at Paul and Sarah Raymond's and again has proved a great way of meeting together.

Fellowship is important in the wider world too, and should be so to the Waltham Forest residents. Perhaps one of the borough's better known celebrities is William Morris and he felt strongly about Fellowship - so much so that he wrote an allegorical tale promoting socialism called 'The Dream of John Ball'. In it is a passage that has probably become better known than the tale itself:



Forsooth, brethren, fellowship is heaven and lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life and lack of fellowship is death, and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them.

Part of this whole quotation was felt to be important enough to be included in the Borough's coat of arms:



It is also inscribed above the entrance to the Assembly Hall next to the Town Hall for all to see.

We do hope that at some time, in the not too distant future, we may all be able to meet together and once again share the joys of fellowship...

DL



Hello Samson, have you heard that the church is re-opening after 5 months of lock-down due to Covid 19?

Yes Ed, I suppose that's good news for some people who have been self-isolating but not for church spiders.

Why do you say that Samson?

Because of all the changes that have been put in place like, hand sanitiser dispensers, the frequency of cleaning has been increased, doors and windows left open, chairs in the sanctuary are socially distanced 2 metres apart and now face masks have to be worn too!

So, how have all these new measures affected you?

Well Ed, spiders don't like change and I've got used to being left alone in my spiders web in the organ loft – but now I'm scared I'm going to be sanitised or swept away with the new cleaning regime!

Is there anything you would like me to tell the Church Council?

Yes, can you tell them I will be watching the services streamed on-line from my website!

P.T. Slaney – In the tradition of Sam the Spider by A.S. Fugler

Ed's Note: As yet there is no scientific evidence that Arachnids can pass on the virus - so please treat them as friends

Songbird

In recent Sunday Supplements people were asked to suggest a favourite hymn or song. Steve Jenkins suggested 'Songbird' by Fleetwood Mac and the reason for his choice is given below:

Whilst 'Songbird' as far as I know, does not have any Christian or religious connotations, it means so much to me as regards my interest in the Great War and I also find it quite spiritual. Please let me state categorically that whilst I show ample enthusiasm with the work of the band and what the 17th Pals' represent, I see no glory in war and that the reason I feel so passionately about the Great War is due to my research, which has helped me identify the apparent innocence of the lads from both sides who found themselves in the trenches of the Somme – not expecting the slaughter that was about to envelop them.

Anyway, getting back to the song; the connection with 'Songbird' and the Great War is that it reminds me of the Skylark - the songbird heard twittering above the golden cornfields of France in clear blue skies, filled with white billowing clouds and bright sunshine, which for most of the lads would have been the last sound they would have heard prior to the shrill blast of the officer's whistle signifying it was time for them to go over the top and face almost certain death. When I hear this song, I take time to consider the beauty of God's creation, when all around, man is doing his best to hurt his fellow man in so many ways. There are also strong words of love that Karon and I connect with, but the first line takes me right back to the trenches... it is a beautiful song and it always makes me feel quite emotional.



We are grateful to Marina Enaholo who led our devotions at a recent Zoom meeting:

I would like to share a few verses and thoughts about the Word of God and, in particular, three aspects of God's word:

- The **PERMANENCE** of God's word
- The **POWER** of God's word
- The **PROMISE** of God's word

The reason I have decided to share this is because I think we need both the PROMISES in God's word and the POWER of God's words when times are difficult, as they are just now. We need to know that we have God's word PERMANENTLY which, in turn, means we have the POWER and the PROMISE of God's word PERMANENTLY.

When times are difficult we need prayer more than ever. But ironically, when times *are* really difficult, it's sometimes hard to think of the words to pray with as we can feel so overwhelmed with the situations we are dealing with. But we can use God's word at these times. If we cannot find the words to pray, we can speak God's own words as prayers and as a way of claiming the POWER and the PROMISES in His words. We can use God's word *in* our prayers and even *as* our prayers. We can use God's words to speak to a situation that we are in. We can use God's word in so many different sorts of situations such as when we are tempted, when we are scared, when we need comfort. God's word is Permanent, God's word is full of Promise, God's word is Powerful.

PERMANENCE

John 1.1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God".

This verse tells us that the Word was there from the very start and the next few verses describe how the Word was with God in the beginning, and through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life and that life was the light of all mankind. Verse 14 goes on to tell us that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Luke 21.33

In this chapter, Jesus was telling a parable and at the end of it he said: **"Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away."** This verse tells us that God's Word is eternal, everlasting, endless, infinite and immortal. These two verses tell us something about the nature of God's Word. We can see from John chapter 1 that God's word was there in the beginning and we can see from Luke chapter 21 that God's word will never pass away.

We are living in a time when things have changed very suddenly and that can feel frightening, but we should know that God's Word is not like our changeable situation and our changeable world. God's Word is not changeable - it is constant. It has been there from the very beginning and it will never pass away. God's word is PERMANENT, it is something that we can truly depend on; and we can always rely on the presence of God's word.

PROMISE

Isaiah 55 verses 10 - 11. There is PROMISE in God's word.

The next couple of verses from Isaiah speak of the promise in God's word. The first part is so descriptive, in words that we can all relate to and understand:

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my Word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it". There is such promise in the last part of that passage!

We may not always know what God's word will accomplish or the purpose for which God sent it; sometimes we can clearly see the effect of God's word and other times God's word may plant a seed that we cannot see and that we are not aware of but which may bear fruit at a later date. There is a promise in that verse which tells us that it doesn't really matter whether we get to see what His Word accomplishes or not. We have a promise that the Word will not return empty but will accomplish what He desires and will achieve the purpose for which He sent it. That is a promise and God keeps his promises.

POWER - *Matthew 4.4,* There is POWER in God's word.

This tells of the time that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights and at the end of this He was hungry, and that was when the devil came to tempt Him. That first temptation was to do with something we have probably all experienced at one time or another - hunger. It's a very physical thing and a very human thing. The devil said, ***"If you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread"***. Jesus answered in verse 4: ***"It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"***.

We all know that we need food and that our physical needs have to be met for us to have life, but this is a powerful reminder that we are actually spiritual beings and we need much more than food to sustain life; we need the Word of God too. Jesus was hungry when He was tempted; He had the power to do whatever He wanted to. He could have turned stones to bread easily but He did not use His power in that way. He did something much more powerful than that: He quoted the scripture Himself saying, ***"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"***. He was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. In fact, we see that Jesus responded in a similar way to *all* the temptations from the devil on that occasion; He responded every time by quoting scripture to the devil.

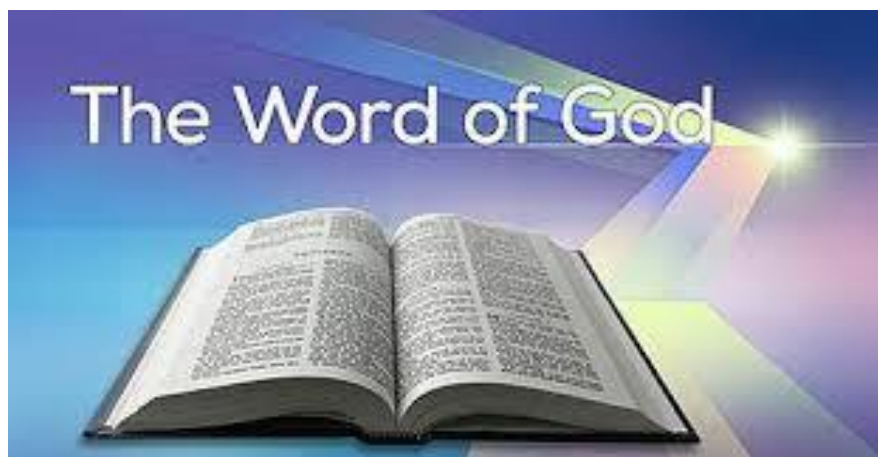
Recently my family faced really difficult times and we really needed prayer. I found myself in a position when sometimes I felt so isolated and so overwhelmed by our circumstances that I found it hard to say prayers myself but what I could do was to speak the words of God. I could and would speak the words in the bible at the times when I really, really needed answers to prayer, and by just speaking those words I was able to feel the presence and the comfort of God.

When my mother was ill with COVID 19 we were in isolation together for two weeks and I did not know at that time whether she would make it through. When she was delirious she hallucinated and saw and heard things that were not there. There were times when she did not know where she was or who I was, but what she did know was that she was very, very afraid. I found that I could not comfort her with my own words. My words did not reassure her because she did not know who I was, or whether I was who I said I was. The nights were always the worst because that was when her fear was most intense. She would literally shake with fear and nothing I could say would make any difference and so I prayed for the words to comfort her, and the words that were laid on my heart to say were from the Psalms. I would sit by her bed and quote Psalm 23 to her, and amazingly, although she didn't remember her old flat and she didn't remember me and every single day she didn't remember why we had to stay in that flat and not leave, somehow she still knew every single word of Psalm 23 and she could still say the words, and the power in that Psalm for her was ABSOLUTLEY incredible.

Verse 4 says ***"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me"***. She would repeat that again and again and again and although the words were so familiar, in the circumstances we were in we saw these words in a new light and they were profoundly powerful and so comforting both to her and to me, in that space and that time. These words that she was saying were really so much more than just words. She was quoting God's Word and we were holding on to the permanence and the power and the promises of God in His Word and it was an absolute blessing to us. This was one of those occasions when I could clearly see that His word did not return to Him empty but did accomplish what He desired and achieved the purpose for which He sent it.

It's great when we can see the power of God's word so clearly in our lives but we don't always get that and won't always. But if we believe what that verse in Isaiah 55 says we know that this *does* always happen, even when we cannot see it. God's word will not return to Him empty but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it.

I hope that these verses and thoughts help to encourage us all to seek to really feel the POWER and PROMISE in God's word, and to remember that God's word is PERMANENT and to hold fast to it during these difficult times.



The Boys Brigade & Girls Association Vision

The BBGA has been looking at our vision and what we be might be doing when we hopefully restart.

Our Vision explains what we do and why we do it.

That children and young people experience "life to the full." (John 10:10). Our prayer and hope is that children and young people experience life to the full through coming to know Jesus for themselves.



Mission

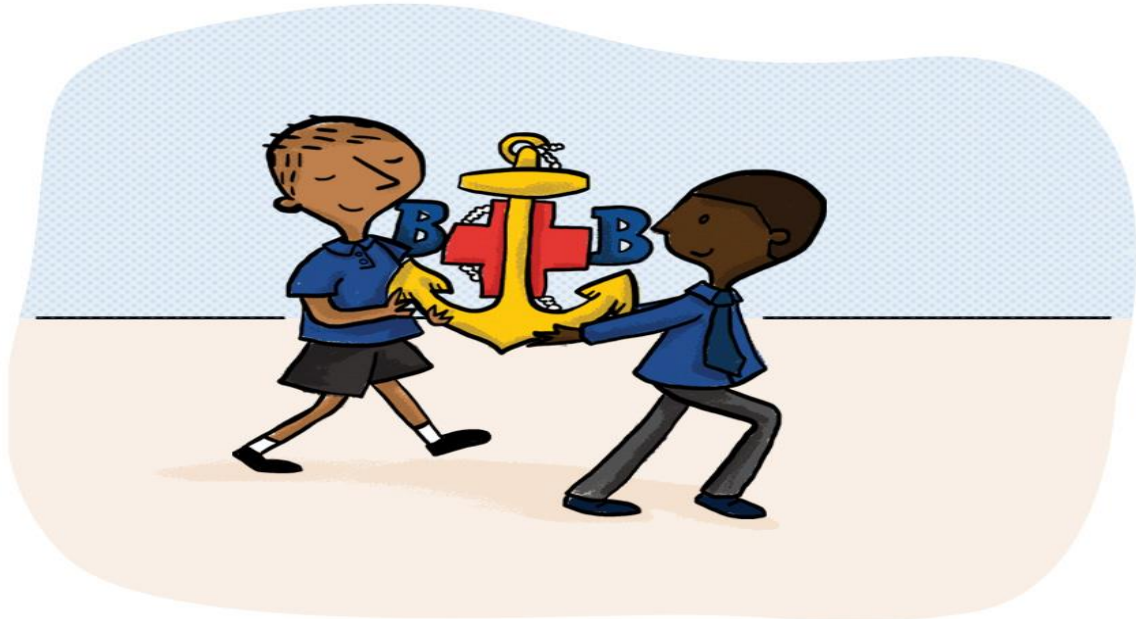
Our Mission explains what we do.

The BBGA has faith in young people and provides them with opportunities to **learn, grow and discover** in a safe, fun and caring environment which is rooted in the Christian faith.



Values

Our Values describe who we are and what we believe...



Faith

We are a Christian youth organisation, and our work is rooted in the Christian Faith. We have a hope in Christ as our anchor that sustains us throughout life (Hebrews 6:19).



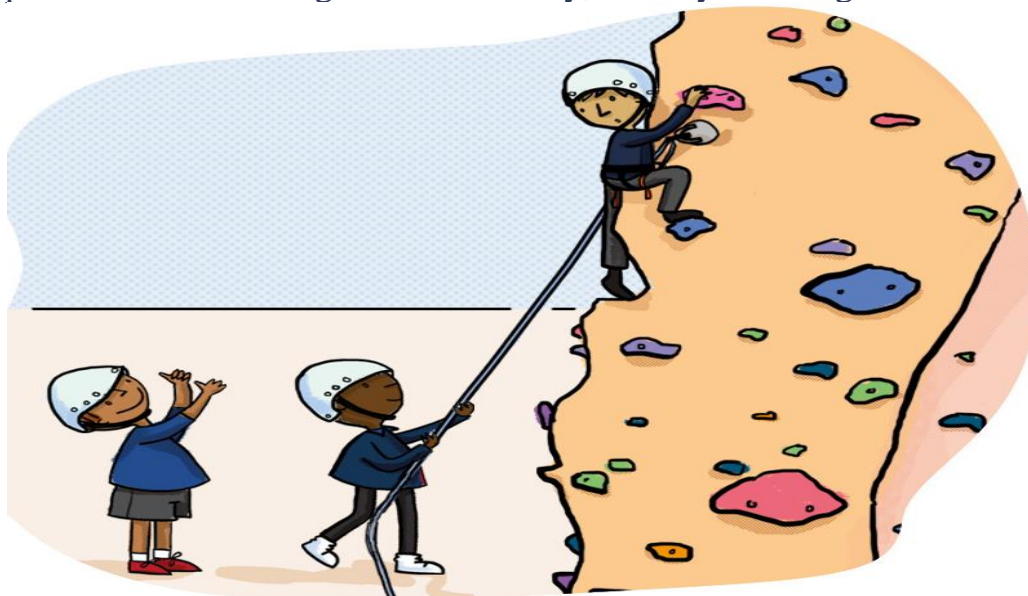
Inspiring

We seek to inspire children and young people, challenging them to live their lives in the fullest sense. We also believe in peoples' abilities to inspire and act as positive role models to others.



Caring

The BBGA is a family. We believe in building loving, caring and inclusive relationships, as well as creating a safe and fun environment that is supportive and nurturing. We are responsive to the needs and aspirations of others regardless of ability, identity or background.



Trusting

We are honest and trustworthy. We seek to empower children and young people to participate and to lead, believing in their skills, abilities and ideas.

Jason Close

Out of the Sunday Morning Zoom Sessions have come very many thought provoking ideas. One such was given by Jason making the analogy that, to quote the well known saying, 'United we stand, divided we fall'.

In these troubled times we do need to work together in all our efforts to be able to resume some form of 'normality'

Sticking Together

When a flock of geese fly south for the winter, they fly in a V-shaped formation. If they didn't, they would never reach their destination. Researchers have found that the V-shaped formation helps geese to fly at least 71% further than they could alone because each bird creates an up draught for the one behind it making flying easier.

If one goose falls out of formation the wind resistance slows the bird down. If it doesn't act quickly, it will not be able to keep up with its flock. So, it quickly gets back into formation.

Like Geese, Christians need to work together in the Church.

These thoughts come together in Philipians 2 V1 to 11

'Unity Through Humility'

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.