

the **Christian Worker** MAGAZINE



December 2020 • Vol 52 No 12

**2020
comes to a
close**

**BBS announces 2021
programme**

**"Multiple messages of
baptism" by Jim
McGuiggan**

Appeals and updates

CONTENTS

- 3 MY PERSPECTIVE
2020 comes to a close
- 4 MULTIPLE MESSAGES OF BAPTISM
Thought from Jim McGuigan
- 5 BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES
Looking beyond 2020
- 6 THE OTHER DECEMBER FESTIVAL
Thought from Trevor Williams
- 7 NO CONDEMNATION
Thought from Eddie Fisher
- 8 APPEALS AND UPDATES
 - Philippines Monsoon update and continued appeal
 - Appeal for work in Pakistan
 - Africa Medical Project Appeal
- 10 THOUGHTS FROM TREVOR
Trevor Williams
- 11 DIARY OF EVENTS IN UK & EUROPE
AND NOTICES
- 12 THE FINAL WORD
Steps into heaven



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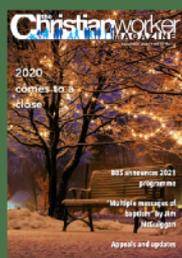
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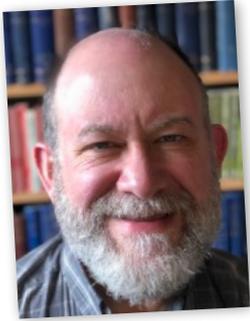
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Front cover: winter scene; above: Gigie Carranza sorting supplies for the typhoon victims in the Philippines



MY PERSPECTIVE



The
year
that
wasn't

2020 comes to a close

If I had to describe the year 2020, the phrase that runs through my mind is “the year that wasn’t”. Let me explain what I mean.

We began this year with many plans. At East Kilbride we have a congregation meeting at the beginning of the year and discuss plans and ideas for the coming year – which we did in January. And we had some good plans! Sadly, those plans had to be shelved and most likely some of them will see the light of day in the coming year.

The British Bible School governors meet last January to plan our teaching and filming for the spring and for the coming year. We did manage one filming session and to teach one study weekend (and the Christians in Aberdeen are still waiting for the conclusion of Ezekiel) but everything else had to be put on hold.

That very much has been the story of 2020. The restrictions due to Covid-19 have meant that we couldn't do what we had planned to do. But having said that, we believe it has been better to delay than to go ahead and possibly have fewer to teach in the future.

Despite the restrictions there has been so much good happening throughout the country and in the congregations. As far as we are concerned at East Kilbride, we have had greater contact with the community and with Christians in area congregations. Many community groups were unable to continue using their community centres and halls because they have not yet reopened. But our building is available

and it is now being used every day of the week. This has allowed us to meet more people in our area and more now know where we meet.

Many area congregations have been unable to resume worship in person because the centre where they meet has not reopened. We now have several from other congregations meeting on Sundays with us, which has allowed us to get to know them better. Even though we wear face coverings and have to maintain our distance it is still good to be with other Christians.

This pandemic has also introduced us to a new way of teaching others. Many congregations have learned the use of Zoom as well as YouTube technologies. The British Bible School has embraced Zoom and has used it well in providing evening Bible classes since March. These are planned to continue even after we come out of restrictions. In January the Bible School plans to begin offering their Applied Biblical Study Modules through Zoom, as well.

It has been a restrictive year with much not happening. But it has also been a year that has opened doors to new opportunities, new ways of teaching, and new people to get to know.

God can take what we might think is the worst situation and enable good to come from it. I can't help but wonder if sometimes we need shaken out of what we become used to in order to open our eyes to new – and possibility better – opportunities. Let's look forward to another new year of service!

Jon



MULTIPLE MESSAGES OF BAPTISM

Those who continue to believe that the authority of God is brought to us in and through the Holy Bible are happy to know that there's a day coming when all wrongs will be righted. And the assurance that this will indeed happen is the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31).

Believers who are immersed into union with the Lord Jesus in their rising out of the water are bearing witness to His resurrection. In that physical, faith-filled act they are imaging the Lord's rising from the dead and in proclaiming to the world that truth they are proclaiming that there is a day coming when all wrongs will be righted. The plundered poor in their millions now and in ages past if they heard that would think it was and is blessedly good news and might eagerly turn to Him in trust.

Ugly and successful discrimination based on any excuse is tyranny and abuse of the vulnerable and the helpless. Though government structures are of God (Romans 13:1-7; Colossians 1:16) and a gift of God, in the hands of we sinners they are corrupted and corrupting. God brought the cosmos under new management by the crucified and resurrected Jesus (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:12-23) who is utterly opposed to all injustice and ugly discrimination.

Believers who are baptised into union with the living Lord Jesus proclaim that to the world. "You are all children of God by faith for as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. Therefore there is neither..." and Paul lists some of the things that divided people in his day one from another. Such divisions express hatred, despising and greed for power. In their millions the 'inferior' who are characteristically the powerless and voiceless, characteristically live and die powerless and voiceless. Those who in God-generated faith come to Baptism to enter into union with HIS death commit to the meaning and consequences of His death and resurrection on behalf of the entire world.

Baptism denounces all that divides humans one from another. It is not less than an act of trust that seeks personal forgiveness—it is more! It is a voice on behalf of an entire world filled with people who have no voice. Outside of Christ we would expect social injustice but a trust-filled commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ visibly and Biblically announces a current judgment on it and a coming righting of all wrongs! The Baptism of a believer is a proclamation of the Gospel because it focuses on the world's Saviour *and* Judge.

No Christian would tolerate our moving the Death of Jesus from the heart of our gospel. We learned that from Christ Himself in Luke 24:46 and elsewhere and from the apostolic witnesses (1 Peter 1:11). But Paul would not tolerate our proclaiming the death of Christ isolated from His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:12-22 and in 1 Peter 1:3 and 3:21 the apostles tell us that Baptism saves us...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. See also Romans 4:25.

The Gospels, though they have much in common, each goes its own way to express its gospel message but in closing they all agree to close with the resurrection and glorification of our Lord. Our gospel is a gospel about resurrection LIFE and that's what we see when sinners come to find forgiveness and LIFE in the Redeemer. In Baptism they unite with Him and take His name on them.

(Holy Father we pray for a fragmented and sin-sick world of which we are a part. Thank you for your generous love and the gracious forgiveness you have given us in the Saviour. Energise us with the power and grace of the gospel and lead us to focus on HIM in all our teaching that when we lay our weary bodies down at the end of our service here we might thank you that many answered your gracious invitation because we gossiped rather than lectured. Help us Holy One to help the Church to see the power and grace and truth in your appointed and wise way of gospeling in Baptism and in the Supper of the Lord Jesus. This prayer in the name of your Holy Son.)

Jim McGuiggan



BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

Looking beyond 2020

People talk about things returning to some semblance of normality, but the likelihood is that things will not ever be the same again. Of course, that could be said of life in general as each day brings new opportunities and leaves behind past experiences, but life beyond this current crisis will likely be significantly different from life BC.

In some ways, some of us may find this a little disconcerting, but I am persuaded that many positive changes have already come about. We have been particularly impressed by the continued enthusiasm for our Online Bible Classes, so much so that we are looking forward to a new programme of activities beginning in the new year. All this has essentially been made feasible through a general acceptance and growing familiarity with online conferencing.

Starting in January we will continue to offer two weekly Online Bible Classes, a Sunday Morning Message (for as long as movements are restricted) and a weekly Friday Evening Quiz. We will also start hosting a number of Evening Lectures Online on a variety of subjects, once every two months.

Online Extension Programme

Perhaps the most significant development is that we will be offering opportunities to study our Applied Biblical Studies curriculum modules in online, weekly two-hour classes. These will be open to anyone interested in more in-depth, structured classes, but numbers will be limited. Our current plan is to offer three modules per year.

Unlike our weekly Online Bible Classes, students will need to enrol for these classes and a nominal fee will apply. There will also be additional class assignments which students will be expected to complete – all designed to enhance the learning experience. Smaller classes will also enable greater class participation and give better opportunity for useful discussion.

The first module on offer from Tuesday, 5th January will be “The Authority of Scripture” (INT02), one of our introductory modules which explores the processes by which the Scriptures came to be written, from revelation to compilation, with an emphasis on their authoritative role in our lives. Details, including a syllabus, can be found on our website.

Patrick Boyns britishbibleschool.com

Looking ahead to 2021 ...



Sunday Morning Messages

A weekly, start-to-the-week message of encouragement for the duration



Online Bible Classes

Continuing our popular evening, online Bible classes for all



Friday Evening Quiz

An educational, enjoyable & light-hearted hour together



Online Extension Programme

An opportunity to study one of our ABS Curriculum Modules in an online, weekly two-hour class*



Evening Lectures Online

A once-every-two-months Saturday evening presentation on random subjects

* Requires enrolment and engagement with additional class assignments



THE OTHER DECEMBER FESTIVAL

On Thursday evening, 10th December, the celebration of Hanukkah will begin and continue to the evening of the 18th. This is the only Jewish festival mentioned in the New Testament that was not in the Old. Jesus himself was in Jerusalem for the celebration and we can read about this in John 10:22-24.

commanded the leading priest to offer a pig as sacrifice on a pagan altar. The Priest, Mattathias, refused and when another Jew came forward to kill the pig, Mattathias drew his sword and killed the man. So began a series of battles guided by Mattathias's sons leading a rebellion known as the Maccabean Revolt.



The celebration reminded the people of the invasion of Israel by Antiochus Epiphanes. In 175 B.C. this tyrant became king of the Syrian area

including Israel, imposing Hellenisation throughout the area. Shabbat was done away with, the eating of pork became compulsory, and paganism was introduced. Tradition says that a pig was sacrificed on the Jewish altar and a statue of Zeus was erected in the Holy Place within the Temple. Many died in their attempt to remain true to the Jewish faith.

In 164 B.C., after three years of war, Jerusalem was once more in the hands of the Jews. The Temple had to undergo months of repair and restoration making new vessels and Menorah. The Feast of Tabernacles should have taken place in October and so in an effort to do something similar there was a ceremony to mark the rededication of the Temple in December. The oil was poured into the Menorah only to find there was only sufficient for one day. The lampstand was lit however and continued alight for eight days whilst new oil could be found acceptable for the purpose. This was considered a miracle and the celebration of Hanukkah established.

Today the Hanukkah candles are lit one day at a time, increasing in number as the days go by. The central 'servant' candle lights the candles each day. Many Jewish children receive lots of new toys at this time, much like many children receive toys at Christmas, and so the celebration like most other events is given over to commerce. Today we find Menorah with its 8/9 branches offered with decorations for Christmas.

We do well to remember that Hanukkah and Christmas are events that can lead our minds to the coming of the Messiah, when the greatest of all gifts was given and when the Light of the World came to bring peace and harmony for all people.

Trevor Williams

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“NO CONDEMNATION”

Romans 8:1-10

Romans 8 is regarded by many as the greatest chapter and is the longest in the book. It begins with ‘no condemnation’ and ends with ‘no separation’. In this pericope there are two laws, two walks, two lifestyles and two minds. In verse 2, the law of the Spirit of life is contrasted with the law of sin and death. In verse 4, the walk according to the flesh is differentiated from the walk according to the Spirit. In verse 5, the life according to the flesh is compared to that of the Spirit. And in verse 6, the carnal mind is distinguished from the mind of the Spirit.

These verses naturally divide into condemnation (verses 1-4); carnality (verses 5-8); and confirmation (verses 9-10). Romans 8 begins with the transitional ‘therefore’, a reference to chapter 7:24-25, and in this regard contrasts the life dominated by human nature and that controlled by God’s Spirit.

There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ because we have been transformed by the Spirit for to be outside of Him is to live in a state of condemnation (John 3:17-18). When a person obeys the gospel of Christ the condemnation is immediately and forever removed. Our salvation removes forever the divine condemnation only as we remain in Christ. As we walk in the light of God’s word, the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us and, as a consequence, no condemnation is warranted (1 John 1:6-7).

Freedom from condemnation is to be found in union with Christ. Those who have exercised faith and have been baptised into Him as a consequence of that faith are freed from the condemnation of a sinful practice. All who remain in Christ and stand in His grace are justified, are no longer under His wrath and possess eternal life because the sphere of safety in which we live is in Christ. Sin is no longer the practice of our life for we have lost the appetite for the sinful lifestyle (1 John 3:9-10).

The Spirit actually brings dead sinners to life (8:10), empowers us to live for God (8:11) and ensures our resurrection to eternal life (8:11). The Christian’s mindset is dominated by the Spirit and in Christ we are guaranteed victory over sin. In Christ we escape the wrath and condemnation of a righteous God. Praise be to Him. There is no condemnation in Christ.

Eddie Fisher
(Warner Robins, Georgia)



APPEALS AND UPDATES

PHILIPPINES

Things have changed so much since we did the volcano eruption relief in January-February of this year. While we have always been limited by our lack of transportation, things are doubly tough now with the pandemic restrictions. Still, we serve and find a way to help those who are in need. Thank you to you and your faithfulness.

Following the powerful and deadly Category 4-equivalent typhoon that struck the Philippines early this month, thousands were left homeless. In fact, typhoon Ulysses (the sixth typhoon to hit us in four weeks) caused the worst flooding in Metro Manila since 2009.

The churches of Christ continue to work together to serve such a huge area (approximately covering 600 miles) devastated by the floods caused by the strong typhoon. We have only just begun. There is still so much to do and so many others desperate for our help.

Our hygiene packs include vitamins, antifungal cream, medicated soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, towel, laundry soap, sanitary napkins, underwear. We also have AquaTabs (to purify drinking water), Doxycycline tablets (prophylaxis for leptospirosis, a deadly bacterial disease mostly associated with infected water), and fleece blankets to give out to the typhoon survivors. And these are only basic

needs that we are giving out. Many are needing help fixing their damaged houses or replacing their roofs.

Over 2.3 million people are affected across 8 regions. Over 23,000 individuals are in different evacuation centres while over 47,000 are outside these shelters. We can only do so much with our very limited resources. Please help us help them. God bless you as you love on my fellow Filipinos. Do stay safe. Every blessing.

Gigie Carranza

British congregations and individuals have so far donated £2835. – Trevor

PAKISTAN

We are all doing well by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are very thankful to all of you who supported us this year.

I would like to request that you continue to support us to keep doing good work for the Lord in this part of the world. Our work for the Lord is growing day by day. Please keep us in your prayers as we are praying for you regularly.

We have start collecting funds for our needy and poor to share Jesus' love and blessings and to help them with food items and warm clothing during Christmas-time. We are going to distribute these to those who need them on 15th December.

Please support us generously and share His love with the needy and poor Christians in our country. And please keep us in your prayers.

Naeem Sabir



The congregation in Montalban has had 47 immersions since the typhoon relief work began, more than doubling the number of Christians.

APPEALS AND UPDATES

AFRICA MEDICAL PROJECT APPEAL

I would like to thank congregations and individual Christians for their generous donations in the past to support the Ghana medical project.

I am looking for financial support to help pay for sending boxes of medical items donated by Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to Ghana. These include ECG machines/electrodes, defibrillators and pads, pacemakers, heart monitors, airway management devices, test tubes, stomach tubes, safety needles, breast tissue markers, spinal needles, abscess drainage sets, bed transfer sheets, sutures and lots more. Some of these items are older models no longer in use, others have reached their expiry date but are still viable and safe to use.

The items will be going to hospitals in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Yemen. Shipping costs can range from £500 to £1200.

The project has been so successful that I'm planning to return to Ghana next year for about a week and half, to do follow up training on ECG (heart rhythm) interpretation. I also intend to provide technical support for troubleshooting/repairing faulty defibrillators. The total cost for running this next stage will be approximately £2500. This includes travel and hotel costs, living expenses, local transport, etc. I will also be buying defibrillator capacitors, power units and resistors.

Wherever possible the distribution on the ground will be led by individual Christians or congregations who can deal directly with those in need so this work will be seen to be in the name of our Lord.

The congregation in Aberdeen is overseeing the work and managing the funds that are donated. **We would be grateful for donations to help this project.**

Please send cheques payable to "Aberdeen Church of Christ" to: David Murray, 11 Hunters Rise, Pitmedden, Aberdeenshire. AB41 7QD. Write on the back "Ghana Medical Fund". Bank transfers to: Aberdeen Church of Christ; account no.: 00100607; sort code: 80-05-11'

There is potential for this work to expand even further and I'd be interested in hearing from individual Christians or congregations interested in learning more and perhaps working with us in the future. For further information please contact me (07495 154255 / jdonkor@gmail.com) or David Murray (01651 842864 / 07850 029091 / dgm@ifb.co.uk).

Julius Donkor

APPEAL FOR MEDICAL HELP

Our need for a doctor to come and help us has become apparent as one who we were hoping for is unable to come. Mission work is slow here and the brethren are facing many difficulties, one of which is HIV. We have dedicated six rooms at our clinic for care of people with HIV. In addition the congregation has been recruited by an NGO to teach and train members of the community in HIV awareness with special emphasis in getting young men to test for HIV and teaching the community about GBV (Gender Based Violence). For more details please contact me at wrbobwhittaker@gmail.com.

Bob Whittaker



A group of nurses, during ECG interpretation training at Korle bu teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana.



THOUGHTS FROM TREVOR

95% of children in the UK have no contact with Christianity.

A recent announcement by Scripture Union told that only 5% of children in the UK have any contact with people who have faith in Jesus. Many congregations used to have large numbers of children from non-church families attend Sunday School. This has disappeared from our mission field. Even among our busiest and largest congregations the only children we see in Bible Classes are the children of the local Christians. I challenge each congregation to look at those children under the age of 16 and see how many are not part of a local family.

I started to teach Sunday School when I was 16 years old and at the time thought I understood society. Times have changed and with Internet the world of

younger people has changed. Sadly, many teaching programmes have not. It is difficult for many congregations to devise interesting and challenging teaching programmes for teenagers.

My plea is that we either seek outside help (e.g. Scripture Union or programmes like that) or our own Christians with technical abilities rise up and help the congregations. We have some excellent programmes teaching adults right now on Zoom, YouTube, etc, but as far as I am aware there is nothing for teens and children, especially the 95% outside the Christian circle.

Who will help? Who will share? Who will serve and help reach this young generation? Could this be someone where you are?

Trevor Williams

Many people may still be wondering what to get Mum or Dad for Christmas this year. Perhaps life has been difficult or money is on the short side. If you are wanting something special to give to someone older than yourself do not spend a penny. Most older people are not

looking for presents, they are looking for presence, your presence.

The greatest gift to give to someone older than yourself is your time. A special hour of a grown-up child with an older parent is a gift of gold. You do not need to take anything else other than yourself. They will love to see their grandchildren but they would love to have their own children just on a one-to-one basis just for themselves, by themselves, with themselves. The parents will even provide the tea and biscuits.

So many older people have had to spend far too much time by themselves this year. Give the gift that keeps on giving – yourselves. Your parents still love you no matter how old you are. Go on, make their Christmas special – and yours. They are worth it and so are you.

Trevor Williams

Singles' Enrichment Programme

- ▶ **Date:** 31 July 2021
- ▶ **Venue:** Edmonton Church of Christ Worship Premises
- ▶ **Time:** 3.00 pm-10.00 pm
- ▶ **Target Group:** 18 years or above. Those who will turn 18 before/on 31 July 2021 are also eligible to register.
- ▶ There will be speakers from two sets of couples: a younger couple and an older couple
- ▶ **THEME: CROSSING OVER FROM SINGLE LIFE TO MARRIED LIFE - GET IT RIGHT**
- ▶ **REGISTRATION**
 - ▶ All who are interested in attending the programme are required to register their interest. Registration and attendance are free. To register, contact one of the following:
 - ▶ Email: churchofchristedmsset@gmail.com
 - ▶ Lloyd Agyemang - 07833296396
 - ▶ John 'Nana Akwasi' Asiamah - 07908725427
 - ▶ Yaw Duodu - 07462080692
- ▶ **Closing date for registration: 31 May 2021**



DIARY

January

23rd – **Shepshed**: Online Youth Day – “What does it take to be a superhero?” For more information, contact info@shepshedchurchofchrist.co.uk or 07728 028636.

July

31st – **Edmonton (London)**: Singles’ Enrichment Programme, 3.00-10.00 pm, ages 18 and over. Theme: “Crossing Over From Single Life to Married Life – Get it Right”. Registration is required – contact: churchofchristedmsset@gmail.com, Lloyd Agyemang (07833 296396), John ‘Nana Akswasi’ Asiamah (07908 725427), or Yaw Duodu (07462 080692).

European Events Calendar

February 2021

15th-21st – **Gemünden, Germany**: Advanced Bible Study Series. Arrive Monday evening for ABSS I, which begins on Tuesday morning. ABSS I – Tuesday-Friday; ABSS II – Friday-Sunday. Contact: Paul Brazle (brazle.paul@gmail.com).

26th-27th – **European Ladies’ Retreat**: Online International Ladies’ Fellowship. Theme: “The Pearl of Great Price” (Matthew 13:45-46). For further details please contact: elrorganizers@gmail.com or see our Website: <http://elr.yolasite.com>.

What does it take to be a superhero?

Find out at our **MARVELOUS** Youth day on January 23rd as we study what it means to put on the armour of God!

Join us on zoom!

For more info contact Shepshed Church of Christ: info@shepshedchurchofchrist.co.uk
07728028636

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

A British Bible School Applied Biblical Studies Module

This introductory module examines the processes by which the Scriptures came to be written, from their composition to their compilation, and explores the reasons for there being 66 books in our Bible, with an emphasis on their authoritative role in our lives.

- TWO HOURS EACH TUESDAY
- ENROLMENT REQUIRED
- ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS
- PERSONAL TUITION
- BBS CERTIFICATION

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2021 Topics

JANUARY • Paul’s Favorite Word (Grace)
FEBRUARY • This Is Going to Sting a Little
MARCH • O Careless Soul, Why Do You Linger?
APRIL • Sin’s Fish Story
MAY • The Big Bang Got So Many Things Right
JUNE • The First Murder Trial
JULY • Understand the New Testament in Just 12 Verses
AUGUST • Have You Seen God?
SEPTEMBER • Sitting in Judgment on the Bible
OCTOBER • Don’t Worry So Much
NOVEMBER • Don’t Quit in a Pit
DECEMBER • Is It Time to Update?

Interested? matt@housetohouse.com | get.housetohouse.com



THE FINAL WORD



Steps into Heaven

Some of the most magnificent buildings on earth have huge sets of steps in front of them – after all a special building has to look imposing and that has to start at ground level. Last month I wrote about ‘Christian overalls’, endeavouring to show that every good thing we wear has to be bound in love and this is a constant theme through the Bible.

The apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 1:5-7, demonstrates a series of steps from faith to love. It is all too easy to say that because we are Christians we love everyone but it is just not true. We may well do our best for as many of God’s people as we know but to love everyone is just not real and if we are honest there are some we may not even like very much.

In the hymn, ‘Nearer my God to thee’, the third verse speaks about steps unto Heaven and the writer is obviously taking thoughts from Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28:10-22. It is comforting that we can develop our Christian lives one step at a

time. Peter suggests that there are seven steps from faith to love. Each one may be steep or difficult or need some effort on our part but they are climbable. From faith we move to a little more goodness, a tad more knowledge, a touch more self-control, another minute more of perseverance, another heart string of godliness and, with a sprinkling of brotherly kindness, we can reach up and find that we can share love and really that was what we were doing all the time.

None of us wants to be ineffective or unproductive. For thousands of years mankind has been farming with a view of a harvest, or has been creating something of use to improve life. There have been aims and ambitions. When we do nothing we have no right to receive anything. In our Christian life our aim is to reach love, just as Jesus did for you and me. We well remember the words, ‘For God so loved the world that he gave...’ (John 3:16). My encouragement to everyone is to climb the steps to Heaven; our God is waiting there for us.

Trevor



Father we want to let faith grow into love, love like yours.

Our faith is small, the steps seem high and we need your strength.

Help us not to look back, nor to look down but look up to see your face.

We pray your Holy Spirit will motivate, guide and strengthen. Thank you.

Amen