

MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH MESSENGER September 2021



1st September:
Welcome back to our
Community Lunch Family



THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE VILLAGE



THANKING GOD FOR OUR BLESSINGS

Our winter barley ripened quickly this year, and soon the combine harvesters were rolling here on the Northumberland / Scottish Border.

As the first trailer load of grain came into the shed, I ran my hands through the golden grains, offering a short prayer of thankfulness as I savoured the smell of fresh cut barley. It was a good harvest.

I've often reflected on the Old Testament festival of the Firstfruits, where the Israelites offered the very first sheaf of the spring harvest to God (Leviticus 23:9-14). I think this act required great faith, as they trusted God for a fruitful harvest to come, something that was far from certain, given their utter dependence on the weather.

I'm not sure about you, but I'm always up for giving thanks *after* the event. I'll sing 'Come ye thankful people come' and rejoice that "all is safely gathered in", but am I able to trust with anticipation for what is yet to come?

The festival of the Firstfruits reminded God's people that everything they had came from Him. I am reminded that I must learn (and relearn) to trust in God, who has proven His faithfulness to me, over and over again.

Perhaps right now as a church community or an individual you're waiting for a certain event, standing on the cusp of a new initiative, praying for a certain outcome or anticipating a long-held vision becoming reality. Let's all keep trusting that whatever the challenge, however things turn out, irrespective of what we anticipate, God is going before us and has secured the Firstfruits of an even greater harvest through Jesus, as He rose from the dead.

Just as the grain offering to God in the Old Testament anticipated a harvest to come, Paul reminds us that Jesus' victory anticipates an even greater bodily resurrection and eternal peace (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

As we continue our journey with Jesus through the challenges of each day, let's do so with a deepening faith and trust.

From Alistair Birkett's Blog



BECOMING NEW

When a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, it's hard to believe it's the same creature. But at both stages of its life, it has a body that is perfectly suited to living in a particular environment.

This insect can help us understand the afterlife and the significance of the resurrected Jesus. Paul, on his journeys, discovered that some members of the church in Corinth were confused about life after death. So, he wrote a lengthy letter to them to explain the importance of the resurrection of Jesus, and how it affects our future existence. Paul describes a seed becoming a plant. Out of its death comes a beautiful new life form.

Paul points out that all living beings have a body that enables them to live in a particular environment. There are earthly bodies for living in a physical world and a spiritual body for living in the heavenly realms. And so God will give to us a new spiritual body to enable us to live with Him in heaven.

Butterflies eventually die, but in our resurrected body we will not be subject to decay or death. How do we know this? Jesus said: "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Jesus died on the cross, arose from the grave, and so opened up the way for all believers in Him to go to Heaven. Thanks be to God!

Lester Amann



LEARNING LESSONS FROM A GRAVEYARD

If you're looking for a quiet oasis away from the bustle and busyness of everyday life, there's a place where nature, heritage and the life histories of hundreds of local people are on peaceful display.



Take a walk in your local cemetery. The chances are it's a place where nature abounds, where socially-distant peace can be found, and you can meditate on the deeper issues of life.

It's true that graveyards seldom feature in most people's favourite places to visit. Many find them morbid, reminding them of their own mortality.

Or they can prompt memories of loved ones no longer with us, and the sadness overcomes the happy memories of the life shared together. Others simply rush past cemeteries or graveyards, without even noticing that they are there.

But walk among the gravestones, read the inscriptions and you find the stories of people's lives.

Samuel Ryder, the Hertfordshire seed merchant who devised the United States v Europe Ryder Cup golf tournament, is buried in the cemetery opposite the church where I minister. When I visited recently, someone had left golf balls on his grave.

In the same cemetery, there are more than 200 plain white graves of local and Commonwealth service people who died during



the two world wars, and a memorial to the many local soldiers who died in the First World War.

To wander around any cemetery or graveyard is to enter into the lives of generations of families. To see the grave of the still-born baby close to the child who died in infancy, both near to the grandmother who died in her nineties. The husband and wife who died within months of each other, are alongside the wife who outlived her spouse by decades.

I'm always struck by how people are described. Most are defined by their family relationships - beloved grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, wife, husband, son or daughter.

Others are described by their roles in life - actress, golf professional or for the war graves, by their ranks. How long, I wonder, had the young men and women been in uniform before meeting their deaths - and being remembered ever after as soldiers? In some cases, it may have been just a few months.

What, I find myself asking, would I like to have written on my gravestone? How would each of us like to be remembered? How can long lives be summed up in the few words you can fit on a gravestone?

And what is it that we are doing in life that will be of lasting value? Cemeteries are places that can make you consider your own life and think about what is important in it.

Many Christian funerals begin with the words of Jesus Christ, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

It is a promise I hold to as I walk the paths around the graves.

Peter Crumpler





FUTURE FORM OF WORSHIP

Two thirds of churches in UK plan to keep streaming online, says survey.

Almost two thirds of UK churches plan to carry on streaming online, even after restrictions lift.

According to a recent survey by the insurance group Ecclesiastical and The Bible Society, 93 per cent of churches have used new ways to keep in touch with their congregation and over two in five churches (43 per cent) saw an increase in attendance as a result.

Live streaming has undoubtedly helped churches keep their services going during the pandemic, but this research suggests most, 62 per cent, would like the new habit to stay.

In the survey, 93 per cent said that they had used the video platform Zoom since March 2020, while others used Facebook (60 per cent), YouTube (5 per cent) and Microsoft Teams (1 per cent) to stream to their congregation.

Over two in five of the churches who had used these new channels said that they had seen an increase in attendance against their usual numbers, leading most to say they will carry on streaming after lockdown ends.

As one vicar in Norfolk said, "At the height of the pandemic we were getting over a hundred visits to our Facebook page a day, ten times as many as beforehand.

"By using social media we've been able to reach many more people than ever came through the actual church door each week, so it's definitely something we're looking to continue offering. There is certainly more hope now than there was this time last year and we look forward to the Lord leading us from this difficult time into freedom and new beginnings."

Peter Crumpler



THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

This month we are looking at the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20). It's the story of a farmer who sowed his seed in different type of soils. These represent the different responses of the heart to God's Word (v15-20):

1. The hard heart: 'like seed along the path...as soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.' (verse 15). Some people, when they hear the message, get distracted eg social media, work or relationships. Personal priorities prevent them from hearing God.

2. The shallow heart: 'like seed sown on rocky places...since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.' (16,17). These are the people whose heart isn't open to the message. When things become uncomfortable or discouraging, they are ready to quit.

3. The crowded heart: 'like seed sown among thorns...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.' (verses 18,19). This soil is most relevant for us today. People crave status, comfort, security and personal desires alongside the things of God. It's a heart that is worried about life getting out of control!

4. The open heart: 'like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop - some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.' (20). This represents the open heart that listens and accepts Jesus's word, and is ready to follow Him however difficult things become.

What kind of soil is our heart? Are we hard, shallow, crowded or open? Do we have a heart of faith to follow Jesus in every aspect of our lives? By Paul Hardingham



CLIMATE SUNDAY

Sunday 5th September is being designated Climate Sunday, ahead of the UN's climate change conference, COP26, in Glasgow during November. How should we approach the challenge of climate change?

We have damaged God's creation: God delights in His creation: 'God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.' (Genesis 1:31). However, we have damaged this world and impacted people, created in His image. The burning of oil or gas and cutting down forests is increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. The global average temperature could increase by 1.5°C in 2030, resulting in significant damage to our planet. Already, increasing temperatures are melting ice caps, raising sea-levels, changing rainfall patterns and creating extreme climate events. It's the 70% of the world's poorest population who are being impacted most!

Hope is found in Jesus: He has an intimate knowledge of the workings of creation. 'For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.' (Colossians 1:16,17). Our hope for the future lies in what Jesus has done and continues to do in the world. He is the one who sustains creation and will bring everything to completion.

An invitation to respond: Simple everyday actions can help to sustain our planet, including recycling of waste, energy saving and changes in our lifestyle and diet to help the planet. We can fix our eyes on Jesus, as we pray for our world for our world leaders, gathering in Glasgow, asking that they may reach a good agreement for the future of our world.

Paul Hardingham



PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS IN INDIA. Attacks against Christians are rising as the radical nationalist movement Hindutva grows in influence. Adherents to Hindutva believe that to be Indian is to be Hindu - and nothing else will be tolerated. Under their influence, there are moves to push through a national law to prevent so-called forced conversions.



PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS IN AFGHANISTAN AND ACROSS THE REGION,' Release International CEO Paul Robinson says 'The resurgence of the Taliban will fan the flames of Islamist extremism. Pakistan especially may be impacted by the new mood of militancy - which can only be bad news for the region's Christians.'



PRAY FOR THE CHRISTIANS IN NIGERIA. Ten people, including an infant, were recently killed overnight as armed Fulani militants continued their attacks on Atyap communities in Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Christian-majority southern Kaduna State, Nigeria. Many houses were destroyed and burnt down.

Church Council Meeting

No date has been given for a meeting of the Church Council to discuss the future of the church. Final arrangements including date and time will be circulated in advance .

PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY



We may not be open, for normal worship, but all the people who are part of our church, churches and community families are still out there. They will have various needs and problems and need our prayers.

But we need wisdom as we consider the future of our church:

IN AND AROUND MOTTINGHAM

MOTTINGHAM LIBRARY INFORMATION

Opening times are now as follows:

Monday 9:30am - 1pm & 2 - 7pm;

Wednesday 9:30am - 1pm & 2 - 5pm

Friday 9:30am - 1pm & 2 - 5:30pm

Saturday 9:30am - 1pm & 2 - 5pm.

You can continue to explore all that Bromley Libraries offer on:

<https://www.facebook.com/BromleyLibraries> Tel:020 8857 5406



MOTTINGHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

PLANT SALE. Saturday 11 September

Time: 9.00am - 12.00

Venue: Mottingham Methodist church.

IT'S A BRING AND BUY SALE



BHARTI AND PRAKASH PATEL



You will be sorry to hear of the retirement of Bharti and Prakash Patel, from Jarman & Dixon Pharmacist in Mottingham Road.

They have run the pharmacy for 32 years and are beginning a well-deserved retirement. Their dedication, professionalism and commitment to their customers and the community has been remarkable. We wish them a long and happy retirement.

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WHEN WILL OUR CHURCH BE OPEN AGAIN FOR WORSHIP? ...NOT YET!

But Please Note

Each Sunday in September at 3.30 pm there will be a short service of worship and fellowship in the church led by Deacon Maureen Spinks.
Please feel free to join us



Churches Together in Mottingham is on Facebook;
<https://www.facebook.com/Churches-Together-in-Mottingham-104482874785693>



QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE - A CELEBRATION OF FAITH & SERVICE - 2-5 JUNE 2022!

THE QUEEN ON YORK MINSTER

York Minster is to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year with a statue of the monarch, placed in a niche high on its medieval west front.

The figure of the queen will be slightly larger than life, and she will be holding the historic symbols of monarchy: the orb and sceptre. She will be the first British monarch to have reigned for 70 years.

The statue will be the centre point of a makeover of the open space in front of the Minster, where a new Queen Elizabeth Square is to be created. More details are expected in the autumn.



MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

CONTACTS:

The Minister: Rev Duncan MacBean. Tel: 07432 093353

The Deacon: Maureen Spinks. Tel: 01689 821956

The Senior Steward: Dallas Green. Tel: 020 8617 0076

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THE CHURCH WEB SITE:

Church information is available on the WEB site

Log in to: <http://www.mottinghammethodistchurch.org.uk>.

THE CHURCH AND CHURCH HALL FOR HIRE

Mobile Contact: 07757 717399



On Wednesday 1 September at 12.30 the church door will be open to welcome our Community Lunch family to their first Community Lunch for 18 months.

We subscribe to **Parish Pump** and the **Association for Church Editors**, two sites which provide material for church magazines.



Our **Messy Church** is registered with the official Messy Church Site.

We are a member of **Churches Together in Mottingham**.