Acts 27: 24,25

“Do not be afraid ... keep up your courage, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”
Salvation Comes From the Lord (Acts 27:13-44)

This morning we’ve come to our final session in our series looking at the great storms of the Bible. What’s clear is that storms reveal. The Flood revealed the hearts of human beings and the heart of God. Jonah’s storm revealed him to be a man with the language of worship but not the life. The storm Jesus calmed revealed, not only His great power and love but also that the response He looks for is faith. Our final storm, the shipwreck of Paul in Acts 27, reveals that God is faithful, and faith in God shows itself in acts of courage and love.

In Acts 27:25-26, Paul says: “Keep up your courage. For I am convinced that it will happen just as He told me, nevertheless we must run aground on some island.” God’s faithfulness to us, does not exclude us from facing great challenges and difficulties (like running aground in a storm) but assures us of ultimate success, giving us every reason to take heart and be encouraged.

I hope you have been encouraged through this series and will continue to be in the coming weeks. Whatever challenges we face, either together or individually, and however desperate things feel or appear, we can take heart, for God has made us great promises and what God promises, He always delivers.

A Plea from our regular Zoomers to Meet and Chat

The after-service Meet and Chat started off promisingly with a number of people joining in to share thoughts and news. The numbers have however steadily declined and it is turning out to be quite a lonely experience for those who do make the effort! If you are free any time between 11am - 12noon on Sunday mornings, do consider joining this group, and encouraging them in their efforts to keep in touch.

To join the Zoom meeting, click here or type the following address:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5711492935?
pwd=QlZ4U3AzTW9YanpXc2pJa1I2VHZOUT09
Meeting ID: 571 149 2935/Password: John 3:16

Next Week

Emma will be bringing God’s word to us - “Waiting for the boys”! (based on Luke 1)
Staff Matters

More changes on the staff front with Emma and Darren now being furloughed for 50% of their normal hours, and Kevin and Bayo remaining on 75% and 100% respectively. This will be kept under review as time goes on and changed as the need arises.

In the meantime, Chris will be taking Tuesdays off, Sandra will be taking Thursdays, and Colin on Mondays. Erik meanwhile is taking a week’s holiday this week. Please see an update from Darren on page 8.

Staff contact details: firstname@victoriabaptist.org.uk (eg chris@victoriabaptist.org.uk)

Sign-In

Please note that if you are visiting the church/office for any reason - other than attending an organised group meeting - we would ask you to use the side entrance/reception where you are asked to sign in - using your own own pen! We would also ask that you wear a mask whilst on the premises.
**Christmas at VBC**

The services listed below are planned for the month of December as we resume where we left off after the recent lockdown.

As before, it is important that you book your seats in advance. We will do our best to accommodate everyone who wants to come but there may well be times when we have to ask you to defer for a week if we find we are inundated with requests to attend. We will be as fair as we can and your cooperation thus far has been very much appreciated. We do need to point out that the COVID infection rate has increased significantly in recent weeks and would ask you, if you are in the “vulnerable” category, to give serious thought as to whether it is the right thing to attend.

We are taking bookings for all Sunday morning services in December, as well as the *Carols by Candlelight*. There will in fact be two *C by C* services so, when booking, please state which time you would prefer.

All services will continue to be recorded for watching on YouTube, including the Christingle service on Christmas Eve. A message from Sandra and Erik can be found on page 6.

- **Sunday 6\(^{th}\) Dec**  
  Morning Service 10am  
  Bible Study  4.30pm (no need to book)

- **Sunday 13\(^{th}\) Dec**  
  Family Service 10am  
  Prayer Meeting  4.30pm (no need to book)

- **Sunday 20\(^{th}\) Dec**  
  Morning Service 10am  
  Carols by Candlelight  4.30pm  
  Carols by Candlelight  6.30pm

- **Thursday 24\(^{th}\) Dec**  
  Christingle (online only, available from 4pm)

- **Friday 25\(^{th}\) Dec**  
  Christmas Day Service 10am

- **Sunday 27\(^{th}\) Dec**  
  Morning Service 10am
Volunteer Vacancy

An opportunity, outlined below, has arisen within the VBC Ministerial Team. If you are interested, please contact the office for further information and an application form. Applications need to be received by the end of the day on Thursday December 31st.

**Children and Families Worker**

The church is looking to appoint a Children and Families Worker to coordinate children’s activities within the church. This will include planning and resourcing an engaging Sunday School curriculum.

The successful candidate will also demonstrate the ability to organise, support and train volunteers, to maintain appropriate relationships with families of children who attend church activities, and to build on existing relationships with local schools.

As part of our Family Ministries team, you would be expected to work closely with our Youth Worker.

The role will be 30 hours per week, the majority to be worked in normal office hours with some evening and weekend work on a regular basis.

**Volunteer Vacancy**

The Prayer Diary that appears in this news sheet every week is a source of great encouragement to many. We have a very faithful team of people who produce this week by week, each person being involved about once every 7 or 8 weeks, so about 6-8 per year generally.

We now have a vacancy on the team for January so I would love to hear from anyone who would like to consider being involved. I need to know asap really so I can get the rota for next year sorted.
Sunday School

Please note that Sunday School classes will start up again next week. (Sunday 6th). It is essential that you book in advance if you want your family to attend. We need to know in advance how many to expect, no turning up on the morning unannounced please!

Living Life

Mick Trott and his team are hoping to leave the UK on Friday 10th Dec, taking their annual lorry-load of shoe boxes full of presents to the needy children of Croatia. If you would like to donate a shoe-box, please bring it along to the church office by next Friday, 4th December.

If you need a reminder as to the contents of these boxes, and you’re reading this online, press here - this should take you to the LivingLife website where you can find out all you need to know.
If you live in the Eastbourne area and are struggling with overwhelming debt, we can help you. Call **0800 328 0006** to book an appointment with our Eastbourne Debt Centre.

COVID-19 means that Kingdom Way Trust and the Eastbourne churches will be unable this winter to offer the same dormitory-style winter night shelter accommodation as has been provided for the past nine years. However, it is the Council’s intention to make winter accommodation provision for known/verified rough sleepers. The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) team have asked the Winter Night Shelter volunteers to continue to be involved in this Winter Temporary Accommodation through meal provision and some social interaction with residents. If you are interested in volunteering, press here.

If you aren’t reading this online, the website address you need is:

https://kingdomwaytrust.org/winter-night-shelter/this-years-winter-night-shelter/

**Foodbank - A Polite Request!**

If you are intending to make a donation to Eastbourne Foodbank of Christmas items (mince pies, Christmas puds, chocolate items etc) could you please deliver it to us by the end of this coming week at the latest. We massively appreciate your support & want to make sure the items you donate get to the right people in time for Christmas.

On a different note, we are also aiming to give a toiletry gift set to families this year along with a food hamper. If you can make the donation of a gift set it will make someone very happy this Christmas. Please ensure donations reach Eastbourne Foodbank, again by the end of this coming week. Find out more on our Facebook page or website.
**Digital Evangelism - a plea!**

If you find our services edifying, it would help us greatly if you could click the thumb-up “like” button on the YouTube videos. This means our videos are more likely to appear in other peoples YouTube feeds which in turn means people are more likely to watch our videos. It would also help us if you could “subscribe” to our YouTube channel. This means our videos will be easier for you to find but also means people are more likely to find our content. Likewise, we would always encourage you to share the link to the videos on your social media feeds as this in turn helps people connect with us and may also mean some of your non-Christian friends will see and access the services.

**Darren Update**

Dear Church Family,

I’m thrilled to be able to let you know that I have been confirmed as the new executive pastor of Freedom Church, Bexhill and I will be starting there from the 1st Feb 2021. It has been a real blessing to have been able to start my ministry training at Victoria and I’m very grateful for the step of faith taken in this by Chris and the leadership team in appointing me. Without their support, I most certainly wouldn’t have been able to start my training this year and in this, I also extend my thanks to you, the church family, who have been a constant source of encouragement for me and the family. We will miss you all tremendously and I am grateful for the experience I’ve gained at Victoria which has been formative for me in my ministry training.

As we move forward, we would appreciate your continued prayers for our family. Freedom Church has taken a bold step in appointing us. They are a small church who, like many smaller Baptist churches, are facing real issues of decline; they have no young families, no musicians, limited resources and the vast majority of their members are retired. God has however placed on them a burning passion for seeking the lost and a mission to love their community; they are committing their last dwindling financial resources to bring this about. It is a boldness that in humanness would seem forlorn but, through God, we know that He is able. I am convinced we are going to see God do remarkable things, scripture affirms how God is always using the forlorn hope to show His glory. All revivals start in prayer though, and not human action, and so that’s where we’ll seek the impossible, on our knees. I would appreciate it if you could remember us in your prayers as well.

Darren
Christmas 2020

The VBC Christmas Postal Service is now up and running and the postbox is beginning to fill already.

The postbox is positioned just inside the side door leading to the offices. If you are calling during office hours, although some staff are working from home or being furloughed, I would be very surprised if you didn’t find someone in to answer the door. Perhaps you could phone in advance to check.

Please remember that the last date for posting is Wednesday 9th Dec. The cards will be available for delivery to you from Saturday 12th - not as previously stated where we had thought we might get you to collect them yourselves. We have some very kind volunteers who have expressed their willingness to deliver them to your doorstep!

Please take note of the following not just to help things to run smoothly but, more importantly, also to keep the risks of spreading the virus to a minimum -

- Sort your cards into alphabetical order by surname - put an elastic band around them and then put them inside a plastic covering or a plastic bag of some sort.
- Please do not drop them into the box loose!
- You may like to include a gift in lieu of postage in a separate envelope. These gifts will be forwarded to the Fellowship Fund. If you need an envelope, you will find some on top of the postbox.

As an alternative to the usual way of sending cards, you may prefer to send a general one electronically. If you want to e-mail a message for all the church family, send an e-mail to the helpdesk with the subject: Christmas Card, and we will then collate all of these messages and produce something to pass on to everyone.

Wanted - Sewing Machines!

Mel Allen is hoping some of you will have a Singer sewing machine which he can take off your hands - the older and rustier the better! He is taking as many as he can, doing them up, and then working with a local charity (Nebulus) involved in helping people with mental health issues. Please contact him directly if you want more details.
PRAYER DIARY: 30TH November - 6TH December

‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear...... ’(Psalm 46:1-2)

MONDAY Heavenly Father, who holds us in Your right hand, remind us that we do not need to be afraid; we are made courageous by Your Spirit within us. May our families, friends, neighbours, community and nation look at us and see someone who still stands strong, because our God is a faithful God and will never leave us or forsake us. He reigns for ever!

TUESDAY Faithful God, we find ourselves in strange times, where the cracks in the foundations of our world are beginning to show. We look to You, our unshakeable God! When the world is dark, lift our eyes to You. Encourage us to know that You are at work, even when we can't see Your hand. We pray for our families, saved and unsaved - Lord, work in their hearts, open spiritual eyes and ears so that they come to know Jesus as their Saviour.

WEDNESDAY Father, ABBA, we come to You as children of the King to pray for ALL children at this time. Protect them we pray, from Covid 19, and anything that is not of You, wherever they may be....... in nursery, primary or secondary schools, colleges, universities, hospitals or at home, in the UK and throughout the world. Protect too, our parents, grandparents, siblings, families and friends, teachers, carers, the NHS and all the front line workers who are working such long and tiring hours for our benefit. We ask that You bless them mightily, Lord!

THURSDAY We pray for the Governments of all countries of the world, for our Ministers and Church officers, for Missionaries and all other Christian servants. Grant us, and them, discernment, and Your wisdom in all matters, that we not only look to our own interests but also to the interests of others. Lord, in this special time of Advent, we pray for unification and an end to ALL hostilities, violence and abuse, worldwide, now and forever. As we prepare for Your second coming, Jesus, grant us Your peace. We praise and thank You for all the good, the beauty and wonder of this earth and pray that You would make us worthy of it! Forgive us for the mess we have made, and are making of it!

FRIDAY Let us take time to count our blessings and to pray for those who may not be feeling very blessed at this time. We particularly pray for those who are bereaved and grieving, having lost loved ones, for those in hospital or care homes, for those who have lost jobs and are struggling financially, and for the homeless. Come, Lord Jesus and meet each and every one of us at our point of need. Father, may we never forget to call on You in EVERY situation, thank You that You are only a prayer away. "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you". (1 Peter 5:7)

SATURDAY ‘God loves a cheerful giver’...... let us give thanks for the Foodbank, the Salvation Army, NetworX, Matthew 25 and the many charities that are working extra hard in these times. Grant us, Lord, a spirit of generosity so that even if it's only 'a widows mite', we will, if able, make a contribution in some way. A 20p tin of peas or carrots will be a blessing to someone!

SUNDAY Loving and Almighty God, thank You for the amazing gift of prayer and the ways You move through it. Please help us to pray faithfully for others today and every day. Amen.
SHELTER IN THE STORM – Paul’s Shipwreck
Notes accompanying Chris’ message on Sun 29 Nov 2020

READ: ACTS 27:1-25, 34-44

THINK/DISCUSS:
- Have you ever experienced a flood, violent storm, earthquake or avalanche etc?
- What’s the most terrifying ‘natural’ phenomenon you have ever encountered? How did you react at the time? What actions did you take to restore ‘normality’?
- When we are afraid, in the midst of troubles/storms (physical or metaphorical), what can we do to ‘find shelter’?

STUDY:
- How does Acts 27:33-38 compare with Elijah’s experience in 2 Kings 17:2-6 & 19:3-8?
- In Acts 27:17-19, what actions do the crew take?
- How does 27:42-44 demonstrate God’s sovereignty?
- How might Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:28-30 have helped Paul and others in the storm and after the shipwreck?

APPLY:
- When you are ‘weary and heavy laden’ what do you do to shelter in Christ?
- For Paul and Elijah, rest and food helped them survive. As humourists say, ‘never underestimate the restorative value of a good feed and a good nap’, as God’s provision!
- What do YOU need/need to do to find safety, rest and restoration at the moment? (Physically, mentally/emotionally and spiritually)
- Acts 27:5 gives a hint at what might really help in the midst of the storm though. How does taking communion, and being in communion with God and others, help in times of trouble or need? Consider doing this on your own with God or with your small group. What does the fellowship and unity in the Lord’s supper reveal to you? How does it make you feel?
- How do you recover from life’s ‘violent batterings’, whatever they may be?

PRAY:
Sovereign Lord, when ‘violent storms’ and terrifying situations threaten us, help us to find our rescue in You. Thank You that Your plans for us are ultimately for our good, even though our circumstances may seem harsh. Amen.
Pray also for refugees and asylum seekers who often face literal storms and danger, and terrifying circumstances, in seeking safety and refuge. Ask God for compassion and motivation to help in some way. Pray for Anna Reid and team and the work of NetworX.
Thank You ... (from Belinda Johnson and family)

We were the recipients of a lovely treat on Saturday. The card on it said “from your friends at VBC”. I am not sure whether this is from all our friends or some specific friends!! If it was from the Church I would like to thank whoever decided on a delicious treat for their kindness. If it was specific friends, could you please put a mention on the News sheet to thank whoever it was. They will know who they are, I’m sure!

**Flower Ministry**

On a dismal November day. It’s good to see a splash of colour to brighten things up - and we have certainly had quite a splash these past couple of weeks.

We have had some stunning flowers distributed to various people in the church community. The flowers were donated by Mary Mercer (left), and Gavin & Pearl Rendall (below).