

FAITH MATTERS

Advancing

When the Church was formed in the book of Acts, it was designed to be unleashed on society to make God's kingdom known. It was an exciting time. What we don't always see is the struggle with agreeing on theology, the tension in how things should be organized, and who should lead what. The early church needed to organize itself so that the work of Jesus could continue.

2000 years on Covid 19 is forcing the Church to reorganise itself. How can we be unleashed to do the work of God, living out the mission of God in our neighbourhoods thus allowing every individual to meet with God. June has seen us examine different aspects of the Early Church in Acts and reflect upon which aspects we need to develop, corporately and individually, to fulfil our mission to the world.

My prayer is that we grow and develop as God leads.

Pastor John.

Keeping in touch

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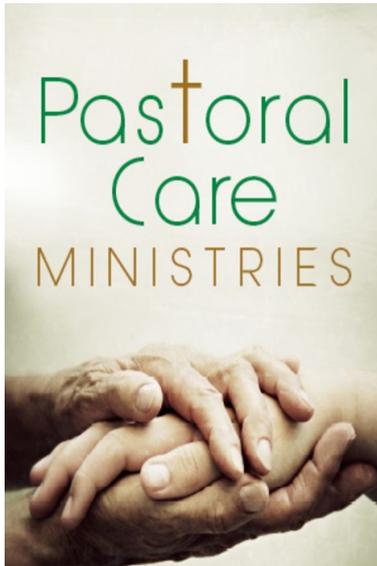
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Leadership Team - Pastoral Care

As our nation navigates it's way out of lockdown, we are turning our attention to how we try to re-establish some sort of normality. This involves how we reinstate public gatherings, but what is of greater importance is the wellbeing of our church family and the communities we serve. Our church is defined by our people, not our premises. Therefore it is of utmost importance

that we begin to consider how we can care for those that the Good Shepherd has entrusted to us. Mental health issues, tensions in relationships, debt, unemployment, loneliness. These are just some of the issues we need to minister into. In response we are looking to create, train and support a Pastoral Care Team. Please consider if this is an area in which you can serve?

“Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words .”

Current Programme

Sunday 11 am
Sunday Stream on Facebook

Tuesday 7.30pm
Prayer Meeting via Zoom

Wednesday 7.30pm
Reflections via Zoom

Thursday
Throwback Thursday

Saturday
Saturday Bible Smiles

Mon to Fri
Daily Devotionals

Malcolm Duncan - Good Grief

How do we as Pentecostals, respond pastorally in the current Coved 19 crisis? What do we believe about death, sorrow and grief? How do we minister into a world that is broken and falling apart? What does Pentecostal theology say into lives that are fractured by grief and loss? Christians are not immune from this heartbreak. Malcolm shares his own personal experience of family pain and grief and points out that a theology that claims protection but doesn't face reality, does no good.

How do we help people walk through sorrow and loss without indulging in short-term escapism? Giving false promises to people is not going to help them in the long run. Job and David experienced the reality of suffering (Job 16:16, Psalm 23:4) even though they walked with God. It was real, and raw, they didn't deny the reality they were experiencing, but they trusted and relied on God through it. Their hope was in Him.

Our challenge is to just sit alongside others in their pain with no words or clichés just like Job's friends in Job 2:13.



Malcolm Duncan cont.

A theology of death is not a theology of despair, rather it is only when we can be honest about what we hate about death that we can begin to form a response to it. We are reminded (Psalm 23:4) that God is encountered in the darkness, that shadows prove the presence of light. The mists of uncertainty or questioning can lead to new discoveries of faith and hope. Let us not be afraid to be 'honest'

So, what is a Pentecostal theology of sorrow and death? We believe, as Pentecostals, that God's Spirit is present with us in every situation. This is not a time for a triumphalistic theology (Christian life being one of glory) but instead it is a time for a theology of presence and hopefulness with the result that churches could be beacons of hope in our generation. Not that we avoid death but rather that death does not have the last word. It is swallowed up as 1 Corinthians 15:54 declares.

We are not defined by our circumstances; we are refined by them and when we realise that, we at last come to a place where we can face death helpfully.

Our challenge now is to develop a public Pentecostal theology, for the 21st century, one that grapples with sorrow, fear and despair; a Spirit-enabled theology of presence leading to a Spirit-enabled theology of promise. Malcom shares that it is these convictions which draw us into God in praise and adoration, and propels us out into the world in mission.

You Hold It All Together

It feels like an ocean of sorrow is under my skin.
Even the ocean eventually meets the sand.
Sorrow on sorrow, I'm waiting, heavy I'm anticipating,
Trusting the current will carry me

You are my strength
You are my song
You are my salvation
You hold it all together

We come with great expectations and fears in our hearts
Send us Your light as we're making our way through the dark
All of the earlier troubles chaos and pain they unravel
Looking ahead we rejoice in You.

Like a stone in the wasteland I was useless until You.

Lifted high in Your mercy out of sorrow and made new.

Oh this mind it can't measure all your favours in this world

So we shout adoration
Holy Holy are You Lord

David Leonard, Leslie Jordan, Sandra McCracken

Saturday Bible Smiles

Dear Pastor

I think more people would come to church if you moved it to Disneyland

Ella Aged 8

Dear Pastor

I know God loves everybody but he's never met my sister.

Tom Aged 6

Dear Pastor

You should train my Dad to be minister. Everyday he gives me a sermon about something.

Mary Aged 11

Throwback Thursday



During June on Facebook we have cast our minds back to birthdays. It's a blessing to be able to celebrate together as a church family. We were reminded of Betty Stafford's 90th and Ted Lewis's 80th birthdays. Here we see Graham celebrating his 60th with SYC and Children's Church.

Pastoral Care

On Wednesday evenings we have reflected on the Unleashed Church commencing with 'The Church Unleashed as Family' – Acts 2:42-47; Acts 15:36-41

The Bible presents two ways or images of looking at the Church as family. The first is as the People of God. The image is drawn from the Israelites. A group of people on a journey, travelling together and connected like a family. The people of Israel were initially a family then a tribe or extended family who served to point the way to God.

The second is that of the Body of Christ. Just like the human body, there are different parts, all important and valued but with different and unique purposes. So, in the body of Christ, all in the family are connected, valued for their uniqueness but also dependant on one another, a sense of belonging. Just like society and any relationship, there can be disagreements, so also in a church family, community. It is how we disagree well, so that we can show the world what it means to be part of the family of God. This depends on individuals working together to be 'giving' and serving one another. Both images depict the Church as a family, community that exists to draw others around it to connect with Jesus. Please pray for our church family and for one another. Why not phone or send a text or card.

Surveys & Finance

Thank you to those who have returned the survey we sent out. We are currently collating the results and they'll be used to inform the Leadership Team as they plan the future ministry and activity of the church.

We thank God for His financial provision and for your support. We still need £12,400 to carry out the repairs to the roof. If you would like to donate or have any Lockdown fundraising ideas, please get in touch.

June Offerings £3793.68 June Expenditure £4563.73



“The goal of parenting isn’t to create perfect kids. It’s to point our kids to the perfect God.” Lindsey Bell

Children’s Church and SYC

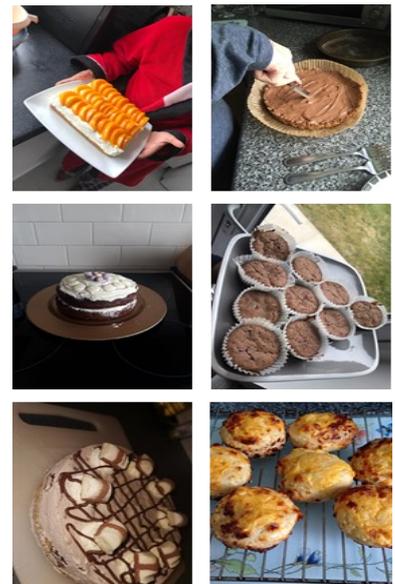
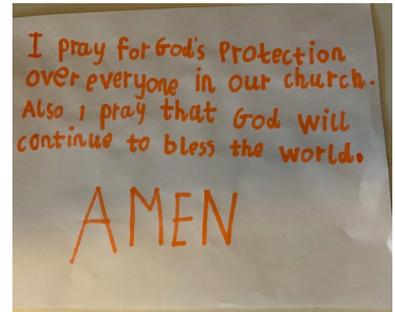
In addition to WhatsApp Children’s Church and SYC have also connected via Zoom meetings, which was great for the children and young people to see each other.

Children’s Church has been learning about Joseph, from his colourful coat to the reunion with his family. We are just starting to look at the life of David starting with his anointing and his encounter with Goliath.

Children’s Church and SYC received a little gift bag of goodies, with pictures, crafts and growing activities, as a means of encouragement. The children have

been sending in pictures of the Bible stories we have studied; prayers; crafts activities and to show the progress of their cress growing challenge. Examples of their prayers and pictures are on Facebook.

SYC have been looking at prayer, worship and messages of hope in the Bible. The baking challenge was the highlight of the month – their baking talents are amazing! The weekly ‘Comfy Chair’ feature has continued, including one from Wearside Youth for Christ’s Andy where we even found out his best dance moves.



Elim Pentecostal Church Sunderland

We passionately believe that God has a plan and purpose for you He loves you and wants you to come to know him through Jesus. We are a Christian community for all generations and nationalities.

We would love to hear from you too, so please send in any news, stories, prayer requests or praise reports.

Thank You..

And Finally...

A soap manufacturer was talking with a Christian. The soap-maker stated 'The Gospel you preach hasn't done much good, there's still a lot of wickedness and wicked people'

The Christian made no immediate reply. They soon passed a child making mud pies. He was exceedingly dirty. It was then the Christians turn and so he said, 'Soap has not done much good in the world, I see, for there's still much dirt and dirty people.'

'Well' answered the manufacturer, 'Soap is only useful when it's applied.'

'Exactly,' was the Christian's reply. 'So it is with the Gospel we proclaim.'

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