

The Good Shepherd Fellowship

Flock News

Year 15
July 2017

Prepare Ye The Way!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Tool-Belt of Faith	2
A New Commandment	2
Just God's Waiting Room?	2
Syd's Soap-Box - A Day at the Races	3
Combined Fellowship cont...	3
Have you got a BBF?	3
Diary Dates	4
Warm Welcome!	4

Special points of interest:

"THE GOOD SHEPHERD FELLOWSHIP "HOME GROUP" CONTINUES TO MEET EVERY THURSDAY AFTERNOON @ 2PM IN THE GOOD SHEPHERD DRIVE COMMUNAL LOUNGE. ALL ARE WELCOME TO COME ALONG. REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED.

"THE SOCIAL PROGRAM FOR THE FELLOWSHIP CONTINUES TO INCLUDE OUR FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR—SEE THE DIARY ON PAGE 4.

"THE "READ & RETURN" LIBRARY OF LITERATURE AND AUDIO. IS AVAILABLE, EVERY SUNDAY MORNING IS BEING RE-VAMPED FOR YOUR PERUSAL. TOM HAYDON IS OUR "LIBRARIAN".

Pastoral Care Team (PCT)

Pastor: Rev Graham Charters

Rev Syd Gardner

Joan Charters

Secretary: Margaret Gardner

Treasurer: Brenda Thomas

St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton:

Dave & Jackie Hughes

GSF Auditor: Kevin Cook

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6, Good Shepherd Dr, Exeter, EX2 4JE

Just over 15 years ago, God guided me, with the support of a few others, to start up a ministry specifically to reach out to the needs of folk in their "autumnal" years, based mainly at Good Shepherd Drive sheltered housing complex.

As this vision was bathed in much prayer and waiting on God's timing, it became evident that such a ministry would, at some point in the future, run its course, purely through the fact of the natural progression of ageing. The Church, nationally and globally, is obsessed with numerical success, and anything less is looked upon as failure. God gave us a peace about this, and I have constantly been reminded that he has called the work of The Good Shepherd Fellowship to be a

Gateway to His Eternal Kingdom. **John 21 v 17** *Jesus' challenge to our love for Him, "Feed My sheep."* Our purpose is to bring assurance and reassurance to folk who have travelled their spiritual path of Faith, and just need ushering along to their prom-

are committing dear friends to their Eternal Home. But, on each subsequent occasion, we rejoice once more in knowing that we have played our part in marking out the Way of Salvation, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In my younger days, I was a Youth Leader in a Church full of kids and teens who were looking forward to life with all its possibilities and challenges. Now I am privileged to be a conductor on the bus towards those "Pearly Gates"!

One day, all these things will pass away, and the Fellowship's "job" will be done. But there will be much celebration in Heaven, as we all will join that "choir in the sky"! **John 1 v 23** *"Prepare you the Way of the Lord!"*

The Good Shepherd Fellowship, Exeter
Meeting at "Cornerstone"
A non-denominational Christian Fellowship in the heart of Exeter
The St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton

ised rewards in Glory. **2 Timothy 4 v 7**, *"...for I have finished the race and I have kept the Faith."*

In our human mindset, it has often been with great sadness that we have bade a fond farewell to beloved members of our Fellowship. And, as the years go by, it is with more frequency that we

From the Secretary's Minutes

Time flies when you are having fun!

I am sure we have all heard that saying over the years, and it is a year since my last report and it does seem as if time flies. It seems impossible that this is my 5th year of serving as your secretary, and as always it has been a busy and joyful one, but as ever tinged with some sadness.

We have said goodbye to some dear members of the Fellowship, namely John, Hilda and Wyn. However the sad-

ness is always tinged with joy and thanksgiving for lives well lived and the knowledge that they are at home with their Lord and Saviour. We give thanks too for the monies raised from the thanksgiving services we held that enabled us to purchase a new 21st century PA system. We have also been blessed with a wonderful new organ which keeps Joan on her toes as well as her fingers!

We have been blessed by the ministry of many regular visiting speakers, and have enjoyed many of our usual activities

throughout the year, many of which included food so that we are fed both physically and spiritually.

So, we come to the end of another year in the life of the Fellowship, and look forward with anticipation to what the Lord has planned for the next year, or to put it another way - 8,736 hours! Time which I am sure will continue to fly, as always!

Ecclesiastes 3 v 1 *"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven."*

Margaret Gardner—Secretary

THE TOOL-BELT OF FAITH



As we have continued to look at ways in which God has provided us with His wealth of riches, we have centred our studies on a passage from **2 Peter 1 v 3—11**. In **v3** God has given us “everything we need” for life; and then goes on to explain how we can “make every effort to add to your faith” **v5**.

Our tool-belt can be equipped with:

Goodness Knowledge
Self-control Perseverance

Godliness Brotherly Kindness
Love

as each attribute is added to our faith, to enable us to be more effective in our walk with Christ.

We have all seen Bob the Builder with our kids or grand-kids. Have we noticed the thick yellow belt he wears when he goes off on a job? He is equipped with tools which will enable him to accomplish the task ahead of him.

We considered our Faith as likened to a brand new car on our garage forecourt. It is beautiful. It has great potential. But, it is untried, and untested. Until we get in, start it up, and drive onto the highway, we will never experience what it can do. Our faith is untried and untested, until we step out in faith and trust God to supply us with all the “tools” we need to negotiate life’s obstacles and trials.

Add to your faith...

Goodness is that which is God-given, for no-one is truly good, but God alone. We should be a reflection of God’s goodness. **Ephesians 2 v 10**

...and to Goodness...

Knowledge is gained from reading God’s Word—the Bible. And from experiencing God’s faithfulness by trusting Him. **Psalms 119 v 66**

...and to Knowledge...

Perseverance requires us to go through testings and sufferings with joy, because we can rejoice in the victory that only God can give. **Romans 5 v 3**

...and to Perseverance...

Godliness can only come from God, Himself. We are called to be his ambassadors/representatives, so must strive to be more Christ-like. **2 Corinthians 5 v 20**

...and to Godliness...

Brotherly Kindness should be a natural expression of our faith. This testimony is stronger and more evident than any other attribute. **John 13 v 34—35**

...and to Brotherly Kindness...

Love encapsulates all the other tools. Without love then the rest of our tool-belt is useless. God is love and our greatest tool from God is His gift of unbounded love. **Romans 5 v 7—8**

By adding these tools to our faith, “...they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive...” **2 Peter 1 v 8**

May we all kindle that desire among ourselves, that we may be enabled in our walk of faith to be more like Him.

Our website is on line at:
www.thegoodshepherdcornerstone.com
Contact us by Email at:
exeterchristianfellows@gmail.com
Recommend it to your friends!

Self-control can only be gained by recognising that our journey of faith is not easy, and that commitment and self-sacrifice is needed to overcome. **Titus 2 v 11**

...and to Self-control...

Gospel of John chapter 13 v 34 –35 - A New Commandment

“Now I am giving you a new Commandment—love each other, just as much as I have loved you. The strength of the bond of love you show between one another will prove to the world that you are my special followers.” (Paraphrased)

May be we can all think about ways in which we can show that special love to one another in practical ways. The Lord hasn’t made this an optional clause—it is a testimony of God’s love living in us. Can we write a card, pick up the phone, call round with a cake, invite for a cuppa—or just be there when required?

ARE WE JUST “GOD’S WAITING-ROOM”?

A dear friend once commented to me, “So, your Fellowship, it’s a bit like “Waiting for God”, isn’t it?”

I went home and thought about their observations. Now, most of us at some time, have had to sit in a waiting-room of some kind. Aren’t they bleak, unfeeling places? Full of a toxic mix of germs and Germaline.

I don’t recall ever looking forward to being there. When I was sat in such a room,

flicking through a decade-old woman’s magazine, all I wanted to do was get out into the fresh air. Silence was the unwritten rule of the house, even though there were plenty of folk to talk to. No music. No snacks. No joy. No health.

Romans 8 v 23 “We wait in eager anticipation for the redemption of our bodies—for in this hope, we are saved!”

Is The Good Shepherd Fellowship just God’s Waiting-Room? I sincerely hope not! Yes, we are all looking forward to our Heavenly Destination, but we’re far from just sitting waiting for the “Grim Reaper”. We read God’s Word. We fellowship. We sing praises to God. We eat together. And, by God, we’re happy! Any infirmities we may have right now, will all be made whole in Eternity.

NO—DEFINITELY NOT!!



A Week at the Races.

For some years I worked with a mission named The Open Air Mission it was a mission that preached the Gospel in the open air. When I first worked with them I was working as an Evangelist in the City Mission in Chester. Every year a group of the Open Air Mission would come to Chester in their mobile homes and stay at Kingsdown Chapel. Every Bank Holiday Monday in May we held a welcome service for the men of the Mission who came to the races at Chester. At the welcome service the men who came gave a report on what they had done since the previous year, then we would devote ourselves to a time of prayer for the work of the Open Air Mission.

On the Tuesday morning we would meet for prayer then have some lunch together, then we would walk down to the race course on the "Roo-Dee" - an area of Chester where the old Roman harbour used to be; over the years the river has changed course on several occasions and over the time it has silted up and sometime in the 19th century a race course was built on the area and it was named the Roo-Dee. We would all meet on the course and set up a place to stand, then we would start to preach, we would take it in turns to stand on the box between the races, and when the race was on we would pray.

We would leave the races before the last race and we would move up the town to the Cross in the centre and we would preach again as the people came out of the races and they would sometimes stop and listen. One evening after the last race I spoke to a young man from Manches-

ter, he took a Gospel of John from me and I spoke to him about salvation, and he went on his way.

A couple of years went by until I met with the same young man. He came to me at the cross and he told me he had read the Gospel I had given him and he had become a Christian when he was on the train going home. The men and women we met were all given a Gospel or a Christian tract, but that young man was the only one who I met at race week in Chester who came back and told me he had come to Christ through my giving him a portion of God's Word.



When I joined the Open Air Mission our second visit to a race course was in June when we went to the very busy race course at Epsom Downs. We would stay in the van at Epsom Baptist Church. The two races we went there for were the Oaks, and the Derby. We started by walking down through the coaches and the buses giving out a Christian newspaper. On the Oaks day we would stand by the bar and preach. You always had to be careful because people would throw things at you, usually cans of beer. On the Saturday we would preach outside a pub on the racecourse, and we would do personal work in the market on the Derby day morning. I also went to Epsom to the Derby with London City Mission and we would also preach on the Downs.

Another race meeting we went to was Royal Ascot. We would do personal work in the morning when many of the wealthy persons had picnics with tables, chairs and candle sticks, and they were not happy if we interrupted them. After the Queen had driven up the course we would set up opposite the stands and preach between the races. In the morning we would speak to many very rich people who believed they were alright. Their wealth was their god, and they didn't believe they were sinners in need of salvation.

The St Ledger at Doncaster was a long drive from London to Yorkshire, as was the one to Liverpool to Aintree for The Grand National, but at all of the visits to the races we saw peoples' lives changed.

It was worth going to these various race courses and preaching the Gospel to the many thousands of people who would never go to church. Every one of the weeks we spent at Racecourses we would be bombarded with beer cans or soggy buns or sandwiches, but we kept on preaching God's Word.

I do not know if the Open Air Mission are still preaching, but I know I enjoyed my time with them, and seeing peoples' lives changed was really wonderful.

by Syd Gardner

The Combined Fellowship.....continued

Collecting the minibus on the Friday morning, 28th October was a logistical problem. Billowing dark smoke covered Cathedral Green, due to the fire at the Royal Clarence hampering our access to the Exeter Cathedral School. Eventually, we were on our way to Stoke Canon Christian Fellowship, for a lunch prepared by our hosts. We were joined by folk from Chagford Gospel Church, Honiton Family Church, and other Christian friends.

The theme, with talks by Danny Chipps, for the day was from **Ecclesiastes 11 v 1** "Cast your bread upon the waters"

In the afternoon, Graham Charters interviewed Mark Perkins and his family on "Does Exeter need a Missionary?", so that we may better support his Home

Away-Day Report!

Evangelism work.

Later we enjoyed a quiz-time presented by Adam & Helen—"Who Dares Wins!"

What with all our desserts added to the Stoke Canon food, there was plenty for

us to enjoy again at tea-time, and again after the evening "Songs of Praise!"

In the evening many more folk arrived to join us in a Praise Celebration led by Dave Worrall. The hall was packed for the entertaining program, plus a solo by John Gooding (Crediton).

Throughout the day, Bridge Books had a lovely display of Christian literature etc, for sale.

We all left both encouraged and tired out by the wonderful challenges presented to us, to cast our bread upon the waters. With

Heaven Awaits!

So, we are all clear on the assurances that God gives us regarding our Reward in heaven; but that in no way negates our human feelings of loss and grief. Once more, as we recall the past twelve months, we take a moment to remember a handful of loved ones.



In the new year, after months of failing health, John Thirkettle "slept away", peacefully in his nursing home bed. He is missed by all of us—especially Joan.

Then our eldest member, at the ripe old age of 101, Hilda Griffiths, slipped into eternity, surrounded by her loving family, this spring.

Finally, one of our founding sisters of the Fellowship, Wyn Pullen, entered into her eternal rest. She will be remembered for so much "behind the scenes" activity, and will be greatly missed.

More Musings from our Secretary

Have you got a BFF?

What on earth is that I hear you asking. Well if you are au fait with the internet, Facebook or other messaging apps, you will know that it means Best Friend Forever!

We all need friends, people we know we can rely on to be there in times of difficulty, people who will stick with us in good times and bad, people who will be honest with us even when saying hard truths, people we can be totally open and honest with.

Tim Keller said a true friend is someone who "always lets you in and never lets you down." This is why we need friends, and that is why the greatest friend we can have is Jesus.

John 15 v 13 & 14 says, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."

Jesus is the ultimate friend: he is constant, he will never leave us or forsake us and he knows us better than anyone but loves us anyway. Most importantly he gave his life for us so that we can know the forgiveness of sins and an unswerving hope of a home in heaven one day.

So who is your BFF? I trust your answer is the same as mine - Jesus!

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." **Hebrews 13 v 8**

Contacts

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD FELLOWSHIP

Serving God in the Community

The St Michael's Fellowship (St Michael's Ct., Paignton)

Another year passes, and once again our thanks go to the commitment of our dear friends, Dave & Jackie Hughes, without whom, the St Michael's Fellowship would not be. It is always a joy to join them each month for an evening service in their lovely Chapel. The St Michael's Fellowship has been a constant witness to God's faithfulness, and He is blessing them for their efforts and service. Thanks also to those from the Good Shepherd Fellowship who come down with us every month to support the Sunday services. It is a source of encouragement to the Paignton folk.



We continue to be encouraged with the numbers over the past year. Our in-house boat-builder, Clive, has been through the "valley" these past months, but, thanks to medical care and prayer, he is slowly and surely getting back on the mend. Dave & Jackie's grand-daughter, Jess, growing up towards her teens, is still a regular contributor; Su Cang - from China, still blesses us with lovely Chinese snacks. She has been away in China much of this past year, visiting family.

Kay, has been struggling with her mobility recently and finds the winter months difficult. However, she once again brought some friends to our Carol Service, which we held in the Communal Lounge. We pray for her up-coming house-move to a sea-side apartment in Paignton

And we pray for John, who is opening up as he gains confidence month by month. We pray for his emotional well-being.

May God continue to bless this work down in Paignton, as we continue to meet month by month.

The Good Shepherd Fellowship continues to meet every Sunday from 11am-12noon with refreshments to follow. We meet at our adopted home, **The Cornerstone**, Bull Meadow Rd (just across the road from Good Shepherd Drive).

Important DATE!



15h Anniversary Celebration Sunday 16th July @ 10.45am

(Praise followed by GSF AGM & a Ploughman's Lunch)

GSF Harvest Festival - Sunday 24th September @ 10-45am Followed by a Harvest Lunch @ 12noon. All items to go to local Christian Community projects

SMF Harvest Festival - Sunday 1st October

**Fellowship Christmas Dinner - Saturday 16th December
The Star Inn, Liverton - 1pm - £12 max**

GSF Carol Service - Sunday 10th December @ 10-45am

SMF Candle-Light Carols - Sunday 10th December @ 4.45pm

An Autumn "Songs of Praise" at Stoke Canon (TBA)

NB: GSF - Good Shepherd Fellowship, Exeter SMF - St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton

A Warm Welcome to All!

The 1st Sunday of every month we invite a guest speaker to come and share. On the 2nd Sunday of each month we celebrate Holy Communion together.

The GSF & SMF are non-denominational Fellowships, which welcome those who seek to worship God through praise, prayer and the reading and study of His Word – the Holy Bible. Our service formats include forms of worship from all aspects of the Christian traditions. All who love the Lord Jesus are welcome to participate in our Holy Communion service.

If you need a lift in, just ask and we'll arrange it for you.

I remember my first experience of losing some-one very close to me. It wasn't an old person, or a relative. It was a friend, a class-mate, a young peer of mine with their life ahead of them, and with all the opportunities that would open up to them.

At the tender age of 15, for that teenager, life had ended. It was a devastating shock to me and to my class-mates, as we had to come to terms with not seeing our friend again. We had to assess our own mortality, at a time when our main concerns regarded, on what type of further education should I embark? What are my career goals? Where do I envisage my future path to lead me? Somehow, the menial decisions about weekend activities, romantic interests, social status, all briefly seemed irrelevant, even disrespectful, to our departed chum.

The closeness of eternity furnished questions of much greater significance. Since that moment, there have been many bereavements, each a little easier to deal with than the previous. But, still "the elephant is in the room"! My Christian faith had given me the foundation for recognising that death is not the end, and that we all have the blessed Hope of Eternal Life with Christ Jesus.

God is receiving more and more of our number into His glorious abode. We fear not, for we too will one day cross the Valley of that Shadow. May we all be ready.

Psalm 23 v 4 "Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for You are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way".

This, my friends, is The Church!