

**The  
Good Shepherd  
Fellowship**

# Flock News

Year 19

**Autumn 2021**

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**Special points of interest:**

The Good Shepherd Fellowship is still very much alive and active. We do not meet as a "congregation", but we continue to minister to those who need God's love in practical ways.

We hope that our regular social programme will also kick in by Christmas-time, God willing.

Please note, those of you whom are tech savvy, our new email address and revamped website.

**Pastoral Care Team (PCT)**

**Pastor:** *Rev. Graham Charters*

*Rev. Syd Gardner*

*Joan Charters*

*Margaret Gardner*

**Treasurer:** *Branda Thomas*

**Elder Emeritus:** *Frances Steele*

**Website:** *Adam Charters*

**SMF Paignton:** *Dave Hughes*

**GSF Auditor:** *Frank Bye*

**Registered Address:**

6, Good Shepherd Dr, Exeter, EX2 4JE

**Our \*NEW\* Email Address:**

[gsf.exeter@gmail.com](mailto:gsf.exeter@gmail.com)

## J. S. Bach reveals all...

I have recently been educated in the realms of classical music, as I tune in regularly to Classic FM (other radio stations are available!). One of my favourite tunes is a dreamy and tranquil composition by Johann Sebastian Bach: "Sheep may Safely Graze".

If you have not yet listened to this masterpiece of classical music, please take five minutes to sit back and enjoy the calming melody; as it plays, it draws us into a utopia of green pastures and lush meadows, where all around is nature's tapestry of God's glorious creation.

The composer was surely meditating on [Psalm 23](#); imagining the safety and the peace we can experience under the care of the Good Shepherd. Also, the verses of [John 10 1 - 18](#) confirm the relationship of Jesus to his Flock.

I must confess, I have been worrying for our Flock over

these past months, that we might not wander like sheep without a shepherd, as the uncertainties of our Fellowship's future have hung over us. The Lord has given us a peace which passes all understanding, [Philippians 4 v 7](#) "The peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Flock News we shall be meeting for our first service on Sunday 3rd October, which is our Harvest Festival – what better way to reconvene than to have a service of thanksgiving to God for all His goodness!

A lot has been going on behind the scenes in order to bring us to this place; not least is the revamping, by Adam, of the GSF website. Now 'live' and available, it contains everything you need to know regarding our history, our present and our future. If you have

access to a smartphone, a tablet, or a computer, then you can visit anytime!

But don't worry, if you are like me (a bit of a Luddite!) we will still keep you informed by more traditional methods!

*Graham*

*The Good Shepherd Fellowship, Exeter  
A non-denominational Christian Fellowship  
in the heart of Exeter*

*The St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton*

Yes, indeed, God has been faithful to us, and has opened up opportunities to move on into a new chapter with us. Thank God that the St. Michael's Fellowship in Paignton is able to, once again, open it's Chapel for us and to meet together on a monthly basis.

We must treasure this "green pasture" in which we can "restore our souls". As you receive this interim Autumn

*"He lets me lie down in green pastures"*





# THE GSF/SMF IS '(A)LIVE'!

We must not forget to thank Brenda Thomas for her faithful efforts in keeping the old GSF website up and running over the past years. It has not been an easy task, and one which has taken much time and diligence in producing.

With her eyesight difficulties and her decreasing mobility, she has asked that Adam might take over the reigns of this important ministry. In

this, our new chapter, the website will become more necessary as the world is moving on in technological progress.

I know we heavily advertised our website in the main Flock

News, and I'm sorry to confuse you, but because of many 'expeditious' reasons, it has been necessary to register a new 'www.' domain; this can be read in this Box:

*Our \*NEW\* website is online at:*  
**[www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk](http://www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk)**  
*Contact us by our \*NEW\* Email at:*  
**[gsf.exeter@gmail.com](mailto:gsf.exeter@gmail.com)**  
*Recommend it to your friends!*

Make a note of both the website and the email address. Write them in your diary, or save them on your phone!

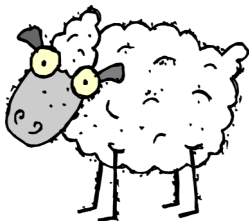
Of course, you can always call me on my mobile if it is urgent or you want to speak more

confidentially. Or if, like me, you're not too good with technology, I'll always be happy to talk. "May we put no obstacles in anyone's way, that might hinder or discredit our ministry; but that we would commend ourselves to God as His true servants." **2 Corinthians 6 v 3 – 4**

Apart from the monthly services at the Saint Michael's Fellowship down in Paignton, and the many other socials

throughout the calendar, I will generally set aside my Mondays and Tuesdays for any home visits, home Communions, etc. Please give me at least a weeks notice.

*Thanks!*



## "Other sheep, not of this Fold"

*John 10 v 16*

Over the next few editions of Flock News, I shall be interviewing various friends of The Good Shepherd Fellowship, who although not regularly involved in our ministry, have at various times been associated with our work in practical ways. They may have prayed for our Fellowship 'from a distance', or have been financially supported by us, or have financially supported us. It will be interesting to hear what these friends have to say on certain issues of the day, and how they see our Fellowship moving forward in God's will in the coming months.

I have selected for our first candidate our dear friend and brother in Christ, and my one-time squash partner, **Mark Perkins**. His Christian ministry is to work alongside Church groups, encouraging them in their own neighbourhood outreach programs. Mark, like many of us, has been through difficult times recently, and yet, thanks to God's grace, he continues to be obedient to this calling. I hope his responses to my questions might encourage us all.



## Interview with Mark Perkins...

**Just to warm you up, Mark, here are a few quick-fire questions:**

**Are you a suit-and-tie man, or a shorts and T-shirt dude?**

Defo, shorts and T-shirt.

**Would a hearty meal for you would be a hot curry, a healthy salad, or a burger & chips?**

Burger & chips.

**To relax, do you: slob in front of the TV, potter around in the garden, or chill in the countryside?**

The TV... Lots of 'slob' shows to watch.

**Which Bible translation is your preferable version and why?**

NIV (New International Version). Years and years of using it. Used to it.

**As a child, were you encouraged to say bedtime prayers?**

Yes, I was.

**In the recent Tokyo Olympics did you cheer on the USA or Team GB?**

USA... because I happened to be in Texas at the time!

**If you had £1 million, what would be your priorities?**

A new house, and more Gospel work.

**Ideally, what would be your car of choice?**

Toyota Highlander. I drove one in Texas—it's roomy, comfy and stylish.

**Would you say you are a 'Party Animal' or a 'Book Worm'?**

Library.

**Now let's get down to the nitty-gritty; what are your views on these in-depth, 'dogmatic' issues?**

**We've known each other for many years, and during that time we have seen many changes in the world around us. Is the UK still the "Christian country" that some people would have us believe? And is this widely held view a psychological barrier to talking to folk about Jesus Christ?**

The UK is far from being the "Christian Country". Acceptable ethics are far below Biblical standards. So their view is a barrier; as so many believe they are 'Christian'. Christianity, to them, is defined as having material blessings, having good morals, and being baptised/christened.

**You have always been a bit of a health freak (compared with many of us!); you enjoy sports like squash and basketball, you cycle daily, and you eat (generally) healthily. Does a healthy lifestyle help you in your Christian life? If so, why?**

Yes! Being energised to serve God. Rising early to exercise and spend time with God. Physical and spiritual exercise work together to strengthen me for 'Service', and guard me against temptation...and that helps maintain the joy in the Lord. When I am not healthy, I have less energy to rise early and spend time with God, so then I am weakened against temptation.

**It is no secret that your personal life has been hit by issues that we, as Christians, think only happens to others. And many of us can relate to some of the stresses that the pandemic has caused us. In such times, there are always those who will want to 'cast stones'. How have you been coping? Has it made you question God, and doubt His love and care? Or, maybe, in such times do we grasp His love and care more closely?**

Obviously, people respond in different ways. Praise God... He called me unto Himself. I've spent loads of time immersed in the Bible, in prayer, praise, and in listening to sermons and reading good Christian books. God has faithfully revealed himself to me... His presence, promise and power. God also disciplined me, guided me, and gave me peace and joy! However, I must keep connected to Him through His Word, through prayer and obedience, because Satan tempts me to think vengeful and hateful thoughts, and to worry. Although I may have lost many worldly comforts, relationships and friendships, I have gained such a deep appreciation for eternal things, Jesus, and the Gospel!

**Sometimes when things don't work out the way we want them to, we can turn in on ourselves and say "I've failed". How do we deal with these circumstantial hiccups. Our human frailties say "Give up, and walk away", but what should we do?**

Admit we have failed, or have been failed. Then, immediately turn to God in confessional prayer. Turn to His Word... and read it, believe it, obey it. Allow God to remind us of His sovereign, loving control. Set our minds on things above — above this fallen world where emotions and circumstances can drain us.

**Where do you, as a friend and fellow Christian, see the future for The Good Shepherd Fellowship? Has God finished with us, or do you believe there is more to come?**

There's more to come! God is faithful. As the Fellowship faithfully submits to God, He will guide and use and bless. Leadership is vital to any organisation, and the GSF has good leadership, headed by Graham. Your pastor is a faithful, God-dependent servant, and the Fellowship follows that lead... so...therefore...more to come! The future will not look like the past, but I am confident it will be a future of love, service, fellowship and truth! Perhaps a lot more daily, one-to-one service, which would be very much needed and appreciated in an increasingly lonely, frustrated, hateful, divided world.

**Finally, what book are you reading at the moment, or have just recently read?**

"Personal Testimony of Faith Stories", by Alistair & Wendy McKenna. Inspiring! And they are personal friends of mine.

**Thanks Mark, for being so candid and honest with us. God bless you.**

**We have, and will continue to support Mark's ministry financially and in our prayers as he reaches out to folk in the community with the Good News of Jesus Christ. There is a direct link to his website and contact details on our GSF website: [www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk](http://www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk) in the "Ministries we Support" section**

**In our Christmas edition, there will be another interview with a gardener who is close to the work of the Good Shepherd Fellowship. Watch this space!**





## Contacts

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07786 846044

[www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk](http://www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk)

Email: [gsf.exeter@gmail.com](mailto:gsf.exeter@gmail.com)

c/o 6 Good Shepherd Drive, Exeter, EX2 4JE

## The Good Shepherd Fellowship

### Serving God in the Community

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

Our 'Sister' Fellowship has now stepped up to the cause and become the main meeting place for the Good Shepherd Fellowship. Once a month, usually on the first Sunday of the month at 4.45pm, we will hold a joint service together (normally followed by some refreshments and fellowship). These services commence with a Harvest Festival on 3rd October 2021.



### The Good Shepherd Fellowship

The GSF is now beginning a new chapter in its ministry. This does not include the regular Sunday morning services we have enjoyed over the years, but it will involve much more hands-on and home-to-home emphasis.

We are starting to formulate ways in which we can serve one another and be a 'presence' in our community. 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. We exclude no-one, and welcome all who need Christ's love, in both a practical and spiritual way. Transport can always be provided.

## Important DATE!



Harvest Festival – Sunday 3rd October '21  
at SMF @ 4.45pm followed by Harvest Supper

Service of Holy Communion – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November '21  
at SMF @ 4.45pm

Sing-a-Long around "Joan's Joanna" (89<sup>th</sup> B'day Soirée)  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November '21 @ 6.30pm

Fellowship Christmas Dinner – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December '21  
at The Penn Inn, Newton Abbot, @ 1pm – Cost £7.50  
NB. There will be a sign-up sheet with menu choices

Carols by Candle-Light – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December '21  
at SMF @ 4.45pm followed by Mince pies & Sherry

**For all the above, transport can be provided – just ask!**

If any person, family, or group of friends would like to celebrate a Home "Holy Communion" at your residence, we can arrange for a Monday or a Tuesday (please give us a week's notice).

Or for personal prayer, call Graham on 07786 846044

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

## A Warm Welcome to All!

A final word, so as not to leave any of you in a state of worry or concern for the future, we want you all to be encouraged as we move forward towards the Christmas period. God has been faithful through trials and difficulties, and He will continue to be so. We can only trust Him more and more, as we look forward to what is now called "the New Normal".

So, let us, by God's grace, build His Church.



Hebrews 13 v 6 "For we are His house; and we must hold fast to that courage and hope of which we continually boast - that hope which is our faith in Christ Jesus." **Amen!**

**This, my friends, is the Church!**