

**The
Good Shepherd
Fellowship**

Flock News
MERRY
CHRISTMAS

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**Year 19
Christmas
2021**

While Shepherds Watched Their Sheep...

It is very often the case that God will make Himself known to us, and reveal His will for us, when we are obediently and conscientiously going about our daily routines.

faithfully wait upon Him in our everyday lives, then at least we will be ready and available to receive the Lord's calling.

The whole Christmas story is full of ordinary

himself available, **Matthew 1 v 20 & 24**, in taking Mary to Bethlehem, bedding-down in a stable, and then with mother and child, hastily fleeing to Egypt. **Matthew 2 v 13 - 14**

And the Magi, without any idea as to where they were headed, "followed the star" **Matthew 2 v 1 - 2**.

At every stage of the fulfilment of God's perfect plan, He was dependent on mere humans to be obedient to His will.

Are we in the right place to hear His call in our lives?

Graham

Isaiah 30 v 18
"Blessed are all those who [actively] wait for Him [for His calling]."

On that very first Christmas Eve, the last thing that the shepherds would have been expecting was that a choir of angels should appear in the night sky and give them "glad tidings of great joy!"

Maybe we will never be so fortunate as to experience such a revelation from God in such a dramatic way, but, if we

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

folk going about their daily business: Mary was visited by the angel with news of God's will for her own young life. She replied, **Luke 1 v 38** "I am available to what the Lord has said."

Joseph also made

Let's Go To Bethlehem!



Special points of interest:
The Good Shepherd Fellowship is still very much alive and active. We do not meet as a 'congregation' in Exeter but we do meet monthly with the St. Michael's Fellowship in Paignton. 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 take note, those of you whom are more tech-savvy, of our new email address and revamped website.

Pastoral Care Team (PCT)
Pastor: *Rev. Graham Charters*
Rev. Syd Gardner
Joan Charters
Margaret Gardner
Treasurer: *Brenda Thomas*
Elder Emeritus: *Frances Steele*
Website: *Adam Charters*
SMF Paignton: *Dave Hughes*
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THE GSF/SMF IS '(A)LIVE'!

After 18 months, the long wait was finally over; when we could, once again, meet together as a Fellowship. On Sunday 3rd October we gathered in the Chapel of St. Michael's Court in Paignton, to celebrate Harvest Festival. Twenty of us filled the Chapel as we brought our harvest produce to the front table, and we sung harvest hymns and gave thanks to God for His goodness to us, and His protection through the difficult times.

We reminded ourselves of how important and significant each one of us is in the Body of

Christ (the Church) as we read from **1 Corinthians 12 v 12 – 27**: "You are all the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." v 27.

Our next service with the St. Michael's Fellowship, was on Sunday 7th November. This was

all missed for quite a long time. Still very much heeding the government's advice on such gatherings, we were able to share in a special service around the Lord's Table.

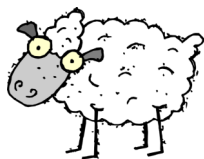
The full reports of these services (and all future meetings) are available on our website (along ◀ with some photos!).

This Christmas edition of Flock News will be out in December, so, if you can join us for our Carols by Candlelight service on Sunday 19th December at

St. Michael's, at 4:45pm.

*Our *NEW* website is online at:*
www.goodshepherdfellowship.co.uk
*Contact us by our *NEW* Email at:*
gsf.exeter@gmail.com
Recommend it to your friends!

our service of Holy Communion; an act of worship which we have



"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 indeed 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 this edition, our dear friend and brother in Christ, **Dave Worrall**. His 'day-job' is as a gardener, but much of his time is involved in running The Stoke Canon Christian Fellowship. Dave, and his wife Marion, faithfully serve the Lord in their community, and have often joined us, or been joined by us, for various meetings. I hope his responses to my questions might encourage us all.

Just to warm you up, here are a few quickfire questions:

Are you more comfortable in a garden or in a Church building?

I love being in Church, but then I also love being out in the garden—"you're as near to God in a garden, as anywhere else on earth!"

Will your Christmas dinner fare be traditional, or do you enjoy something different than the norm?

We're traditional. We love a good turkey, and this year will be no exception.

What TV programme is a 'must' for you and Marion on Christmas Day?

It'll have to be the Queen's Message at 3pm. We like her references to her faith in the Lord.

Which Bible translation is your preferable version, and why?

I like The New King James Version (NKJ) best, because it is closest to the Authorised (King James) Version. To me, it has kept the authority and grandeur of text, even if it's not quite as "flowing" as the "Olde English" usage of language.



Interview with Dave Worrall..

As a child, was Christmas an important family time in the Worrall household?

Yes indeed! Many happy memories of family 'get-togethers' with party games and food. And, not least, to the central theme of our family – the birth of the Lord Jesus.

Apart from gardening, what are your favourite hobbies?

Meteorology (the study of weather and climate), reading, watching a good film, and, to a lesser extent, walking.

Are you a true Devonian, or do you hail from further afield?

I am true Devonian, born in Tiverton – a Tivertonian!

Ideally, what would be your car of choice?

Probably the new Land Rover Discovery (electric, of course!).

What garden plant is your favourite, and why?

There's so many! To choose one, it would be the large flowered (tuberous rooted) Begonia, which comes with giant flowers in a stunning range of colours. It is happy in pots, or planted out in borders, continuously flowering from mid-summer through till the first frosts of winter. It's a perennial, so if you save the tubers, the foliage also displays a raft of colours, contrasting the colourful flower heads.

Your father worked for the Express & Echo – were you ever tempted in that direction? What moved you to the world of horticulture?

From a young lad, I have always loved gardening, entering and winning prizes at various village shows (many of which I still have pinned-up inside our garden shed!). I cultivated my parents large garden as a child.

While I had an interest in journalism, I knew from dad, the unpredictability of the hours worked (he being called out, often in the middle of the night, to report a news story). My leaning towards figures and accounting lead me into the Post Office and subsequently, The Royal Mail.

Now for some more in-depth questions to both challenge and encourage us at this festive time of year:

Have the last few months posed any personal challenges to you, both in your work, and in your family life? And, can you take any lessons away from these difficult times?

Yes. Along with many others, I greatly missed meeting with friends and family, and Christian fellowshiping. The 'Zoom' technology was enabling, but no real substitute for face-to-face fellowship. Visiting customers gardens and socially distancing seemed so alien to what I was used to. One of my helpers was laid-up with COVID for a while during Lockdown, so the workload on me increased, being single-handed. A great lesson, through all this, was to trust in the Lord daily, in a much more purposeful way.

We know that you love the good 'ole Sankey's hymns, and we have all missed singing in Churches these past months, but why do you think these lovely melodies have stood the test of time, and still enjoy singing them today?

Firstly, the joyful melodies, and then the message within the songs. They are full of Biblical truths which can encourage and minister to us all. May we sing them all the way to heaven, by God's grace! For these reasons they have endured the test of time. Many choruses come to my mind in times when I need them!

As we are immersed in the Christmas season, carols will be playing from high street stores, school choirs, and football terraces. Do you think the true Gospel message reaches people more at this time than at any other time of the year? And is it easier to witness about Jesus within this atmosphere?

Yes, I think Christmas-time influences folk more than usual to attend a Church where they will hear the Good News of Jesus. Through all the materialism, I think people seek the more spiritual side, which is where our opportunities arise!

We have to ask – what is your favourite Christmas carol?

"It Came Upon a Mid-Night Clear, that Glorious Song of Old"; Joyful lyrics, deep truths. I find this carol quite moving.

You know that the Good Shepherd Fellowship has gone through some major changes, somewhat put upon us due to the COVID-19 epidemic. You have been a wonderful supporter of our work through your prayers and fellowship over many years, for which we thank you. How has the Stoke Canon Fellowship dealt with these new challenges, and what lessons can we learn?

Similarly, our activities also had to cease. We utilised phone-calls and Emails, etc. Then we started to meet in our garden last summer for Holy Communion services (in the poly-tunnel if raining!). Recently, we commenced Sunday morning services, sharing our packed-lunches. We've learned that the Saviour is our ever-present Friend. We'll never take our Fellowship for granted, again!

Have there been times in your spiritual walk with God where you have wanted to "give up"? What Bible verses have you held onto in those moments?

I, like many, have had "doubting spells", often in times of trials and difficulties. I turn to [Romans 8 v 28](#) and [37 - 39](#) "All things work together for good to those who love God" and, "In all things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us." Also, [Proverbs 3 v 5 - 6](#) "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

Finally, what books are you and Marion reading at the moment, or have just recently read?

Me, I've just finished reading "The Noah Trilogy" by Chaffey & Adams. A Biblically based novel exploring the background life of Noah, up to and through the flood and beyond. It expands the imagination, revealing Noah's devotion to his Creator, while all around him were falling away in unbelief.

Marion is reading "There is Always Enough" by Heidi & Roland Baker. They work amongst the poor in Mozambique.

Thanks Dave, for being so candid and honest with us. God bless you, and may we wish you and your family a very happy Christmas. We look forward to our "Songs of Praise" service in Paignton on Sunday 6th February.

In the meantime, thanks so much for the opportunity to share my thoughts. Wishing you all at GSF a very happy Christmas & New Year from Marion & I. God's richest blessings from us all at the Stoke Canon Christian Fellowship!



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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's services. 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). All future dates appear here, on our website, and on our weekly Sunday morning texts..



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 now involves 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!



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

The "Winter Blues" Celebration - Sunday 9th January '22
at St Mark's Church Hall, Pinhoe Rd, Exeter @ 2.30pm
Cream Tea, Sing-song, Quiz & a Movie

"Songs of Praise" service - Sunday 6th February '22
at SMF @ 4.45pm followed by refreshments

Lenten Service - Sunday 6th March '22
at SMF @ 4.45pm followed by a Lenten Supper (bread & cheese)

Palm Sunday Service - Sunday 10th April '22
at SMF @ 4.45pm followed by Hot Cross Buns, Easter Biscuits etc.

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!

We are starting to get back into a normality—not as it was, but as it is now! Every month we will gather at St Michael's Court in Paignton, to hold a service in the Chapel. We will vary the content to suit the season and to spice-up the programs. There will also be a few other "socials" throughout the year. We hope you will be able to join us.



"Unto you is born this day...

a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2 v 11

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

