

Good Shepherd Fellowship

Flock News

Year 4

July 2006

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Special points of interest:

- The Good Shepherd Fellowship is a recognized Christian Church Fellowship within the city and is on the Exeter City Council's web-site database.
- Minibus outside bookings continue to raise much needed income

Chairman

Rev Adrian Magor

Secretary

Miss Frances Steele

Treasurer

Mr Graham Charters

Ready for a Harvest?

Not having been brought up in the "established" Church, I had never appreciated the relevance of the Sunday which falls in the middle of spring and exhorts the Church to preparation for a future harvest. Rogation Sunday is celebrated in the month of May for the Church to look at itself and re-assess where it is heading and what crops it is preparing to sow for the autumn harvest. The seed we sow will always determine what crop we will reap.

In [Luke's Gospel chapter 8](#), Jesus tells the parable of the sower; and in [verse 11](#) He says, "**The seed is the Word of God.**" And in [verse 15](#), "**The seed that fell on good soil.....produced a good crop.**"

In a park, I watched as children played in the mud. They kicked and splashed and dug and got really dirty. They had

great fun. But what had they really achieved? Had they prepared the soil for seed? Did they have any forethought towards any kind of harvest?

No! They were just playing around. No Rogation—No Harvest.

The Good Shepherd Fellowship is growing-up, spiritually. Playing in the mud is for the children. Preparing the soil for planting seed is our mission. In the Apostle Paul's letter to the [Galatians chapter 6 and verses 8-9](#) we read, "**If we sow in the Spirit, we will reap eternal life....in God's perfect timing we will reap a harvest.**"

Over the past years we, as a Fellowship, have grown together, sometimes suffering losses, sometimes rejoicing at additions. But, faithfully, the seed—The Word of God—has been sown. The soil has been, and is continually being prepared, and we pray together that we will reap God's harvest in the fullness of time.

We are but a small-holding in God's great farm-land. However, if we are faithful in our service, then the prophecy of [Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 14](#) will come to pass, "**For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the**

"They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, sharing communion, and to prayer."

Notes from our Secretary

Another year has passed and we have just celebrated our 4th anniversary. How good God has been to us as a Fellowship. We give thanks for the faithful input given by Graham and supported by his wife, Aura Marina.

Good news, too, regarding our minibus which is being utilised frequently by other organisations, thereby contributing to its upkeep.

Sadly, in recent months, some

of our members have been laid aside with health problems and old age. We continue to remember them in our prayers.

A faithful few have still continued to meet in homes, monthly, to join in prayer and Bible study. However, as an aging Fellowship, we need to re-assess our ability to committing to these meetings. We can discuss our options at the AGM. A quarterly "planning" meeting may be an option,

possibly on a Sunday lunch-time, after Holy Communion service (so Adrian would be available).

As we enter another "Church Year", we pray for God's guidance as to our spiritual pathway.

[Revelations chapter 2 verse 25](#), "**Hold on to what you have received, until I come again**".

Frances Steele—Secretary

Diesel keeps going up and up

God's provision of our new minibus has been such a blessing to us all in the Fellowship. Since acquiring this 17 seater LDV diesel powered bus, we have been inundated with requests from various groups, Churches, and organizations, who wish to borrow it.

Of course, primarily, the minibus is for use within our Fellowship, to escort folk to our services, and to transport us on our regular social engagements. However, without the outside input of finance, we would struggle to cover the costs that owning such a vehicle can cost. With the price of diesel at high on £1/litre a full tank costs about £60 every couple of months.

We have loaned out the bus—apart from the Good Shepherd Drive shopping shuttle, and luncheon outings—to

the Torch Fellowship for the Blind, the Sacred Heart R.C. Church, Beacon Heath Chapel, the DCHS, Buller

Recommend to your friends & neighbours:
MINIBUS FOR HIRE
Contact: - 07786 846044

Court Sheltered Housing, and other individuals and groups. I have received only positive feedback from all these groups, and thank God for them and their money.

Each month we are committed to paying back £100 of the private loan which was offered to enable us to purchase the minibus last year. We are now nearly halfway through the thirty installments, and the minibus fund is fairly healthy after having received a much reduced Insurance bill of only £880 (we had been paying upwards of £1200/annum).

Our thanks, once again, goes to Mr Ian Downs, the Chairman of the Exeter & East Devon Sports Association for the Disabled, with whom we have enjoyed a good working partnership. Thanks to them we receive our Tax Disc without any cost, and also our Disability Badge.

We must not become complacent, though, as with any aging vehicle, bills for repairs can hit you out of the blue. The minibus is the biggest expense for the Exeter Christian Fellowship, and,

Saying "Good-Bye" is Easier When You Know Where You're Going

After a prolonged fight against various cancers, my Dad, Alan David Charters, passed into the Lord's presence having "fought a good fight", on 24th September 2005. The Congregational Church in Crediton was full to the brim with folk who had been touched by Dad's life and ministry.

He, with my Mum, Joan, has been a blessing to us at The Good Shepherd Fellowship over the years, through word and song. His talks, be they at Christmas, Easter, or Harvest Festivals, have always been memorable and easily understood. As a Fellowship we commend his soul to God's grace, with thanksgiving in our hearts.

Faithfully, two or three Sundays a month, June Sedwell has driven in to Exeter with

our keyboard player, Peter Ward, to fellowship with us. June, with her husband, Terry, have hosted some wonderful Garden Parties for us at their home in the wilds of Warkleigh (near South Molton).

Because of their son's prolonged illness, they have had to make the big decision to move home from Devon to Dumfries. They will be greatly missed by us all. May God give them His peace as they house-hunt and settle into a new life in Scotland.

We enjoyed a final "Fare-Well" party with them in May.

By the natural aging process, it is a

matter of course that the Lord will see fit to call our members "home" once in a while. And we thank God that we know where we're going. However, as some have passed on, we praise God for the new faces added to our number recently.

We still count in our Flock some who are unable to get out due to health issues. Just this last spring, Mrs Frances Blakey, after a spell in hospital, had to leave her flat here, and now lives at The Old Rectory, in Old Tiverton Road. And George & Mary Cook, at Gainsbro' House are also unable to join with us as regularly as they would like..

GOD TOLD US THIS WOULD HAPPEN

This time last year, we were all concerned for the peoples of South East Asia, as they struggled to survive in the aftermath of the horrendous Tsunami. How quickly these international disasters seem to slip shyly onto a paragraph on page 5 of the newspaper, to be replaced by a "celebrity" love-child, or a sportsman's injury, or the indiscretions of a politician. Yet, all the while, there are those beyond the reaches of media zoom-lenses, who are still striving to make a kilo of flour and some polluted river water sustain a brood of mal-

nourished off-spring. They are living in an uncertain world; a world where every day is a challenge to their existence; a world where fickle standards cause a Soap star or a reality TV contestant to swerve our eyes away from what matters to what bares no relevance to reality.

Since the Tsunami, there has been the awful hurricane which they named, "Katrina", devastating the Southern States of the USA. There have been heart-wrenching pictures of poverty and

starvation from forgotten civil wars in Africa. And, as I write this, there is a volcano threatening to erupt and destroy homes and livelihoods in the Philippines and Indonesia; not forgetting Iraq and Iran!

Jesus says, in the [Gospel of Matthew chapter 24 verses 6—9](#) "There will be rumours of wars.....but the end is still to come.....there will be famines and earthquakes.....and the love of man will grow cold.....so be ready!"

Message from the Chairman

So, I awoke at 5am, not sure if I was in Wellington (New Zealand) or Winkleigh. The outline for my letter to you all was on the tip of my tongue! - "When the Roll is called up yonder....." We accept that the AGM will be full of facts & figures, and rightly so, as it's all good record keeping. However, we don't keep a "membership list" or an "attendance register", but, thank God, He has us on His Heavenly Roll. I'm sure Graham will acquaint us with statistics and averages regarding the Fellowships progress for the last year.

A quote from The Mikado, - "I've got a little list, you are on

my little list." Yes, we keep a few contact names and addresses, but computer readouts and Data Protection Acts!! - **Matthew chapter 22 verse 21, "Let us render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and render unto God that which is God's".**

Then, fear not when we are called home where... "the roll is called up yonder", as The Data Protection does not apply! But, our Christian pilgrimage here on earth is to be fully accounted for when our names are read out from that Heavenly Roll. Is your name there? It's never too late in this life, but far too late when that Roll confronts us.

Keep the faith, and remember Christ's commandment, **1 John chapter 4 verse 7 & 8**, to **"love one another.....for love comes from God."** This is our faith, live our lives actively for Him.

Janet and I have missed you all over the wintertime, as we flew across the globe to belatedly celebrate our Ruby Wedding Anniversary with family in New Zealand. I now have the arduous but rewarding task of sorting through my hundreds of snap-shots to seek out that one perfect landscape photograph! I feel a slide show evening coming on!

Fellowship Away-Day

For a change, this year, I organized a Fellowship Away-Day instead of our annual House-Party. I have relations living in the small, rural hamlet of Ashbury (on the Wiltshire/Oxfordshire border). The Ashbury Free Independent Evangelical Church is situated at the foot of the famous White Horse Hill, which we all ventured up during the afternoon of our Away-Day on Saturday 27th August last summer.

Our guest speaker, and host, was Mr Philip Charters (my uncle). He gave us some interesting insight into what "Fellowship" really means, and where

we fit into God's plan for the world and the Church. We were treated to a Fellowship Lunch, and, later on, to a wonderful Cream Tea out in the garden.

About 20 of us were able to enjoy the lovely summer's day. We traveled up in the comfort of our minibus.

This coming autumn will be time for our House-Party again, and we are already taking bookings. It will be held at Sidholme, in Sidmouth, and our speakers will be the Revs Basil & Marion Parkes from Broadclyst. Their theme for the Weekend will be—**"Putting Old on Hold!"**

If you would like to join us, let me know a.s.a.p. The date is **Friday 15th—Sunday 17th September 2006.**

Spiritual Stimulation
&
Physical Relaxation

Church on My Door-Step!

I've been living in Good Shepherd Drive for over 10 years now, and, since it's inception 4 years ago, have been attending our Fellowship meetings every Sunday morning. Our Warden, Graham, a lay-preacher, conducts and pastors these services along with the added help of many interesting visiting speakers, plus our friend and chairman from Winkleigh, the semi-retired Rev Adrian Magor who celebrates Holy Communion with us monthly.

Before the Fellowship started, I had attended quite a few Churches around Exeter, but none that suited my needs. I arrived here from Stratford in London's East End, where I was married, and a baptized member of the United Reformed Church.

Since getting to know Graham, and joining with the Good Shepherd Fellowship, I feel

I have discovered my extended, spiritual family which has benefited my spiritual well-being. Our service is structured yet informal and concludes over a friendly cuppa and biscuits. We all share our faith in God in practical ways. I've also found that many of my neighbours on site share that same faith, and now even more are joining the Fellowship. We are a special community. Some folk have never been to Church, or not for many years; they are finding the Lord Jesus for themselves.

We may not be perfect, but we try to be who God wants us to be. The warmth and friendship is evident to those who come along. Over the years, some of our dear friends have passed away to be with the Lord, but we continue singing His praises, and pray that in His time we shall one day

be re-united. Long may The Good Shepherd Fellowship continue.

Apart from Sunday services we also sometimes join with other Churches for "Songs of Praise" evenings to support The Bible Society. Then, annually we have a House-Party Weekend at a Hotel for a fellowship time with Bible teaching and relaxation.. We always enjoy our "Vicar's Tea Party" at Adrian & Janet's home; and the Harvest Supper they lay on for us. We've also enjoyed June's June Garden Parties near South Molton—but sadly, Terry & June have now moved to Scotland. Our annual coach trip in May is always great fun: this year we visited Bristol Zoo for a cloudy but dry day (and they let us all out!).

(continued on Page 4,...)

Contacts

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GOOD SHEPHERD FELLOWSHIP

**Serving God in the
Community**

(.....cont from Page 3)

Then, of course, there is our minibus. Thank God we can keep it on the road. We have to keep up fund-raising with Table-Top sales, Musical evenings, Cream teas (we pick the strawberries!), various raffles, and Janet's delicious marmalade



The minibus takes us out for lunch and a tipple, at lovely country pubs, come rain, shine or even snow. Graham also takes us shopping at Pinhoe Sainsbury's weekly; and any other outing that takes his fancy. Thanks to God, our minibus has enriched all our lives.

Brenda Thomas

The Good Shepherd Fellowship meets



Diary Dates!

ECF AGM— Sunday 16th July 11-4.5am following GSF service.

Vicar's Tea Party—Saturday 19th August at Winkleigh

Fellowship House-Party— Sidholme Hotel, Sidmouth.

on Friday 15th—Sunday 17th September

Harvest Festival - Sunday afternoon @ 3pm on 8th October @ GSF

Christmas Dinner—Saturday 9th December :3 Little Pigs, Crediton

Operation Mobilisation presentation—"Bible Sunday" 10th December

Carols by Candlelight—Sunday 17th December at G.S.F. @ 10-4.5am

Fellowship May B/H Outing—Saturday 5th May to Beaulieu, Hants.

A Warm Welcome to All!

every Sunday from 11am—11.45am with tea/coffee & biscuits to follow.

The 1st Sunday of every month we invite a guest speaker to come and share.

On the second Sunday of each month we celebrate Holy Communion together. The Rev Adrian Magor serves us for these services.

We are a non-denominational Fellowship which welcomes those who seek to worship God through praise, prayer and the reading and study of His Word – the Holy Bible. Our service format includes 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. Transport can be arranged for any who need help getting to our Fellowship. We have our Minibus, and some of our members drive in with spare seats in their cars.

At the age of four, a toddler is no longer considered a baby. It is recognised as a little person in its own right, with personality traits, with decisions to make, and with a basic understanding of the world around them. There comes a time when we, as Christians, have to make our mark on our locality; we have to say to folk, "Look at us. We are here and we are living out our faith in God in the local community."

The First Epistle of Peter chapter 2 verses 2—5 "You initially craved spiritual milk, not meat, so that you would grow-up in your faith. Now you've tasted that the Lord is good you can recognise that God is building you up into a structure of His design—a Spiritual House—for you are His chosen people." (Graham's own paraphrase)

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