

**Exeter Christian
Fellowship
"Umbrella
Ministries"**

Flock News

Year 7

July 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Where does all the Money go?	2
Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam	2
Credit Crunch! Ouch!	2
Message from the Chairman - A Stumbling Block	3
Combined House-Party	3
The "Haven of Hope" Orphanage	3
Diary Dates	4
Warm Welcome!	4

Special points of interest:

*Thanks to Councillor Phil Brock, our Minibus Ministry has once again benefited from a substantial Community Grant.

*Special "Invitations" are being printed for us to welcome our friends and neighbours to our Church at Cornerstone.

Chairman:

Rev Adrian Magor

Pastor:

Rev Graham Charters

Secretary:

Miss Frances Steele

Treasurer:

Mrs Brenda Thomas

GSD Liaison Officer:

Miss Audrey Masters

Elder:

Mr Gordon Burd

Regd. Address:

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Exodus 15 v 13 (*This is part of the Song of Victory, that the Israelites sung as they marched from their captives*) **"In Your loving-kindness You have led forth the people You have redeemed. You have guided us to Your Holy Habitation".**

...And we'd just got settled into our comfy armchairs in the Communal Lounge at Good Shepherd Drive. Seven years of great fellowship together; good times, hard times; times of rejoicing; times for grieving. Arguments and united fronts; tears of laughter, and tears of pain. We were content. We were "safe". We didn't want to contemplate change, because....well.... because we don't like change—change is bad!

But, nevertheless, change has been forced upon us. The world in which many of us grew up has shifted in it's attitude towards the

preaching and proclaiming of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Believe and practice what you want—but not on our premises".

Can we begin to imagine how the wandering Israelites felt as they drifted aimlessly in the Wilderness for years and years. And yet they held

the Land that God had promised, and that was Joshua. Many had started that journey, but not seen the final destination; others had not been there at the start, but would now inherit a New Beginning.

A good book is divided up into many chapters. We can not digest a whole story in one go, but, rather, we absorb portions, chapters, and move on as we turn the pages, to see the plots develop, and new plots are grafted into the story which now becomes a journey of experiences. God is not finished with the Good Shepherd Fellowship, no, He's just taking us on into a new chapter, with new challenges. Are we ready for what He has in store for us? Don't get left out in the Wilderness! Come with us and enjoy the fruits of God's

*Exeter Christian Fellowship
"Umbrella Ministries"*
Incorporating
**The Good Shepherd Fellowship, Exeter
&
The St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton**

firm—with a few hiccups along the way—to the promise of a land drenched with milk & honey. Out of all those people, only one would eventually cross the Jordan and enter

From the Secretary's Minutes...

As the years pass, we don't appreciate change—we like to stay in our own little groove, remembering the good times such as the years at Good Shepherd.

Meeting new folk, many varied activities, outings, etc., and then—O dear! We've got to move. We're reminded of our Lord's words in **Revelations 21 v 5** "Behold, I make all things new", which can be applied to our own transfer to Cornerstone.

But this can be a fresh opportunity for us to expand—reach out—invite new folk to join with us in this new chapter—thereby feeling a refreshment and renewal in ourselves.

A great deal of work, preparation and planning has been undertaken to make this transition happen smoothly—Graham warrants our special thanks for his commitment.



Let us, therefore, go prayerfully into the future. All the regular events and outings will be taking their place in our Fellowship diaries, just as last year. As we enjoyed the Vicar's Tea Party and our Harvest Supper out at Winkleigh—so again we shall be fellowshiping with Adrian & Janet.

Last Autumn we enjoyed a lovely Away-Day up on the north coast of Cornwall, in Polzeath. This year, in November, we are going to Brunel Manor for a Combined House-Party with a couple of other Churches joining together.

So, the life of the Fellowship moves on! Welcome to a new chapter!

Frances Steele—Secretary

Where does all the money go?

There are bigger and grander organisations all around Exeter who are not able to finance their own vehicle. God has blessed us with a wonderful tool for which we should be continually grateful; and he has laden us with a tremendous responsibility also, to be a blessing to others who may benefit from our minibus. May we never take for granted the privilege we have to bless others who can utilise and enjoy this transport.

Luke 12 v 48 "To whom is given much, much will be required, and to whom is entrusted, so the responsibility will be the greater."

May be, over time, we have grown complacent, and have taken for granted that "we have a minibus". We are living in a world where richer groups than ours are going to the wall, and having to cut back on "luxuries" like owning their own bus. I have often been challenged

by those who don't understand the bottomless pit of vehicular expenses—"Where does all that money go, then?"

Every time our minibus is borrowed, 100% of receipts are ploughed back into its upkeep.

MINIBUS FOR "HIRE"

Contact: - 07786 846044

Recommend it to your friends!

This saddens me a little. Not just because of the inquisitiveness of the question, but because, possibly, the message of God's provision has not

evidenced itself clearly enough because we, as a Fellowship do not give the praise and thanksgiving publicly to Him. We must, especially in these days of economic uncertainty, continually recognize God's faithfulness to us. For, for every penny we give to His Work—be it in the Sunday Collection bag, the Easter Sunday Gift Envelopes, an anonymous gift or bequest, or some fund-raising event, it is only a token gift towards the Umbrella Ministry that we can provide to the broader community. For without God, we would have nothing, for all that we have comes from Him.

This past year, the minibus has been used by Church groups, children's camps, school trips, birthday parties, rock bands, family outings, funeral mourners, to mention but a few. We have kept our costs competitive, and have managed to maintain the vehicle to a good and safe

Jesus wants Me for a Sunbeam

- How many loved ones have we laid to rest over the years? As I look through the ECF archives, the number has passed into double figures. As we pause to remember, I am sure we can all picture our dearly departed, and we can recall to mind those special moments we have shared with them. Each one has left an imprint on the life of our Fellowship. Some for being gregarious; others for being quiet, and still others for lighting up our lives with a radiance and joy. Heaven will be a better place for the addition of these souls into God's everlasting Glory.
- Once again, this year we have had to say "Farewell" to loved ones. It never gets any easier, and the human pain takes time to heal, but we rejoice that there is always room for one more Sunbeam in Heaven.

- Revelations 22 v 5 "And there will be no need for lamp-light or natural sunlight, for the Lord will illuminate them and become for them as lights, to reign for ever and ever throughout eternity".**

Such was the parting sentiment as we paid tribute to the life of our dear friend Oscar this Spring. He was no orator or preacher. He was not highly educated or the possessor of certificates and qualifications. Oscar would not have been classed, in the world's eyes, at least, as one of life's great achievers. But in God's eyes Oscar was a walking Sermon—a testimony to the faithfulness of a man committed to his Saviour and Lord.



We may have lost a lovely, kind man, but his legacy will live on in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know him.

And, of course, we appreciate that this will not be the last, and that we will again and again mourn the passing of loved ones from our midst. But we shall never cease to rejoice with the angels in Heaven as God's precious Sunbeams shine brightly for all eternity.

CREDIT CRUNCH! OUCH!!



- You would have to have been locked away in a sound-proof room, to have missed the fact that the world economy is in a downward spiral. The pound in your pocket is worth a fraction of what it was worth 18 months ago.

- We notice the pinch when we get our Utility Bills; when we pull into a Petrol Station; on our weekly shopping trips; and when we need to buy a present for someone's birthday. In all areas of life we are being affected by things which are way out of our control. We are helpless as industrial leaders, politicians, and Trade

Unions, all scratch their heads. They've no answers. In fact, many of them have themselves been fleecing the system to feather their own nests!

God has promised He will be faithful to us, and He will not allow His children to want for anything. But, in reality it is hard, especially when the collection bag comes round, or the charity letter drops through our letterbox. The pocket only goes down so far, and then it's empty. We're not mean, but we do have to tighten our belts.

2 Kings 4 v 1—7 tells us a great message of faith and of God's provision. Elisha turns up at a poor widow's home and requests free board. She recognizes he is sent from God, and so she dutifully gives all she has. Through her obedience, She and her son had all they needed.

At such times as this, we need to appreciate that all that we have comes from God, and so how can we withhold from Him, and miss out on His blessings?

Message from the Chairman

A stumbling block!

Romans 14 v 1 "Welcome the weak into your Fellowship, and do not criticize or pass judgment on their opinions or scruples..." **v 10** "...Why do it? Belittling your fellow man; for we will one day all stand before God's judgment..." **v 11** "...then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to offer Him His rightful honour and praise".

My message to us all, this year, is about "Stumbling Blocks". There are 50 mentions in the Bible—that's nearly one a week! For nigh on 18 months we have had to suffer stumbling blocks put in our pathway by those wielding Landlord powers. We speak more on that in my Annual Report to the AGM. **Romans 9 v 33** says, "Look, I am laying a stone in Zion (the Holy City) that will cause men to stumble, a rock to make men fall; and whoever believes in Him (Jesus Christ) will not be put to shame".

So we no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve, instead, never to put hindrances in the way (as has been done to us)!

Reaching out to others in love is not always easy, especially those of an obstreperous nature; critical of our faith and our practices. Love is not touchy, or fretful, or resentful—it is beautiful. It may not keep us completely out of strife (for we are human), but it sure does help! Let us love those who would object us? By God's grace, we can.

Their faith may be weak, but our insensitivity may alienate them further. We may not understand their reasons and doubts, but let us not judge their purposes with our own standards. For it is not for us to try to measure or evaluate another's faith. Concentrate

on our own faith. Our work is to encourage and build up one another in our walk of faith, for in doing so, we will benefit our own souls.

John the Baptist preached in **The Gospel of John 1 v 23** "Prepare (make straight) the way of the Lord". It should be our mission to clear the way for others, to prevent them (and ourselves) from stumbling blocks and hindrances. If we don't, one day questions will be asked of us.

Let us now step out on the straight and narrow way, clear of all obstacles, and into the shelter of the Cornerstone. For Christ is our Cornerstone—that stone which man had rejected. Read **Matthew 21 v 42—44** and see the parallel.

Rev Adrian Magor (Chairman)

The Combined Fellowship House—Party

After a lot of negotiating behind the scenes, and convincing others of the benefits of going away together for a Weekend of spiritual refreshment, We have managed to arrange yet one more House-Party, and it's at our favourite venue, Brunel Manor.

We are combining this Autumn along with the Honiton Baptist Church and a handful from Chagford Gospel Church (the home Church of our guest speaker, Danny Chipps). Danny and his wife came over from Zimbabwe, and took on the challenge of an ailing village chapel to turn it into a thriving Fellowship. He is very involved in

**Combined Fellowship
House-Party
Friday 6th—Sunday
8th November '09
@ Brunel Manor**

the Bible Society and the Gideons. His theme for us this year is

"Grey Matters!"

This really may be our final Weekend, so get on board and join with us for this swansong event. The first weekend in November, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, all inclusive of great food and superb accommodation, for the subsidized cost of only **£110!** There's still places, so don't delay—book today!

See Brenda Thomas for details of easy payment plans. Bursaries available for any who may need financial help

The "Haven of Hope" Orphanage

For the last three years, the Good Shepherd Fellowship's Harvest Festival produce has been supplemented with children's items such as clothes, toiletries, toys, books, etc. so that we have been able to invite John & Dorcas Sumner along to collect it all, and take it with them to the "Haven of Hope" orphanage in Lipova, Romania.

It has been great to receive reports back from John, with photographs, of how the goods have been distributed amongst the children. Many have expressed the joy it brings to know that young, needy kids are benefiting from our giving.

Well, this year we can be even more hands-on. The orphanage is undertaking a redecoration program throughout

this year, and require tools and furnishings to help get the dormitories up to 21st century standard (Romanian standard!).

Graham, Aura Marina & Adam will be flying over to Budapest in August, and after a week's holiday, they'll travel across the border into Romania, where they will spend a week at the Haven of Hope.

To raise funds for the orphanage (because they can't actually take any supplies, due to baggage weight), Graham & Mark Perkins will play a Marathon Squash Match at Clifton Hill Sports Centre for 5 hours, on Monday afternoon the 20th July. They have sponsorship forms and will be looking for sponsorship per game (maximum 20 games). Either fill in their forms or contact John Sumner on 01392

661663.

There will also be a Bring & Buy Coffee Morning Sale at Good Shepherd Drive on Tuesday 21st July from 9-45am. And on the following Saturday, the Vicar's Tea Party at Winkleigh will also raise funds. And, the school children's parents on the School Run will be asked to give their fares (inflated!) towards the "Haven of Hope".

Please give generously.



Contacts

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EXETER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP "UMBRELLA MINISTRIES"

Serving God in the Community

The St Michael's Fellowship

(St Michael's Ct., Paignton)

This past year, the second year of the Fellowship, has turned into quite a difficult one. Just as the Church had been established, and numbers were steady at about a dozen or so, each month, then Jenny & Dave made a personal decision to relocate up to Blackpool. This came as a sad shock for us all. However, we believed that what had been started would continue in their absence.

We have been very grateful to our friend Dave Hughes, a tenant at St Michael's Court, who has offered to liaise regarding the services. However, since Jenny



left it has been difficult to keep everyone informed, and numbers have dropped away. We are positive that, with some reminder-invitations through the letter-boxes, we can bring back the "flock".

It was nice that half a dozen folk were able to join with Exeter folk for the Christmas dinner at The Barn Owl. Hopefully some might come along to Brunel Manor in November, too.

Important DATE!



Vicar's Tea Party—Saturday 25th July at Winkleigh 3pm

ECF AGM—Sunday 9th August (following Holy Communion service)

Harvest Supper—Saturday 26th September at Winkleigh 1pm

*G S Fellowship Harvest Festival—Sunday 27th September 11am in the
 Good Shepherd Drive, Communal Lounge*

St Michael's Fellowship Harvest Festival—Sunday 4th October 5pm

*Combined Fellowship House-Party at Brunel Manor
 Friday 6th—Sunday 8th November*

E.C. Fellowship Christmas Dinner—Saturday 12th December

The Barn Owl, Kingskerswell, Nr Newton Abbot @ 1pm — £20

*G S Fellowship Candlelight Carols—Sunday 13th December at 10-4.5am in
 Good Shepherd Drive, Communal Lounge*

St Michael's Fellowship Candle-light Carols—Sunday 13th December @ 5pm

*St Michael's Fellowship 2nd Anniversary- Service
 Sunday 4th January '09 at 5pm*

A Warm Welcome to All!

The Good Shepherd Fellowship continues to meet every Sunday from 11am—11.45am with refreshments to follow. However, as you should now be aware, we are at our new venue **The Cornerstone** (just across the road from Good Shepherd Drive).

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 Rev Adrian Magor usually serves us for these services.

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.

At the age of seven, a child does not want to just learn out of books, he wants to go out on field trips, discover the universe, and surf the internet for answers. There are also opportunities for "sleepovers" with friends, and interaction with other learned tutors. The world has suddenly grown, and it's limitations are only limited by our searchings!

What has always been the safety and security of home and family—things we recognise and are comfortable with, are now replaced with adventure, with distancing ourselves, with moving out beyond the boundaries we've gotten used to.

When God commanded Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, they soon started moaning. **Exodus 14 v 10—18 "So you'd rather go back to Egypt? Stand firm, for the Lord has delivered you, and will fight for you. You need only to gaze at His great feats!"** Graham's Paraphrase of selected verses. **March on to the Cornerstone; for God marches before us!**

This, my friends, is The Church!