

Thanksgiving Service - 11/05/25

In the last couple of months, we have gone from one end of the life journey to the other end – from Christening to dying. However, for Christians, both are equally joyful occasions. At the Christening service we welcomed young Xavier into the Church community, and at the Thanksgiving service we gave thanks to God for the life of a good and faithful servant of God's work.

Our dear friend and brother in Christ, Syd Gardner, passed away last month, in his 80s, leaving his widow, Margaret, his wife, and a large family tree (most of whom attended (squashed into) St Michael's Chapel, in Paignton, to remember Syd's life. he will be missed by all. His work within the GSF, along with Margaret, has spanned the last decade.

We enjoyed a hearty buffet in the Lounge afterwards. A headcount gave up after exceeding 40 persons! A large donation has gone towards the work of The Royal British Legion, in Syd's memory.

Next month we welcome Mr Andrew Crossley, from Silverton, to present to us the work of "Good News for Everyone" (formerly "The Gideons"), on Sunday 1st June.

Christening Service - 06/04/25

We decided to skip our monthly SMF in Paignton for the month of April, to instead enjoy the Christening Service of baby Xavier, in St Mark's Church, Pinhoe Road, Exeter. It was a packed Church congregation of family, friends and members of the local parish, and our own GSF folk. It was special for Adam & Loxley, to have Revd Tatty Wilson (now of Egg Buckland, Plymouth) to come up to celebrate the Christening ceremony, as it was, she who married the couple two years previous.

After the service, about 50 folk joined us in the adjacent Church Hall for a buffet lunch. It was a joyous occasion, and one which will be treasured by the family. We pray that, as he grows up, Xavier will come to know the Lord personally in his own life. He certainly has a good number of "aunties" and "uncles" to pray for him.

Our next service in Paignton will be a Thanksgiving Service for our recently departed brother in Christ, Syd Gardner. His wife, Margaret is our Fellowship Secretary, and Syd was on our Pastoral Care Team for many years. For this reason, our previously scheduled "Songs of Praise" service will now be moved to the Autumn.

Holy Communion - 02/03/25

Because of the irregularity of our celebration of Holy Communion, when we do, it is a very special service which we all value deeply. The sharing of the Emblems of Bread & Wine are the blessed Sacrament which our Lord instructed (and was re-iterated by the Apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians chapter 11), are in remembrance of Christ's body broken on the Cross, and His blood, shed for us, for the remission of our sin.

We will not be meeting in St Michael's Chapel in the month of April, due to the fact that we shall all be celebrating the Christening Service for Xavier in St Mark's Church, Exeter, on Sunday 6th April at 9.30am, followed by lunch and partying in the Church Hall.

The next service in Paignton will be a Songs of Praise service at 4.45pm on Sunday 11th May (the 2nd Sunday, due to the 4th May being a Bank Holiday weekend).

Welcoming and Dedication Service - 02/02/25

It is always a pleasure to welcome someone new into our Fellowship, but even more so when it is my own grandson. Along with family and friends, Adam & Loxley wanted to give thanks to God for their young infant son, Xavier. The small St Michael's Chapel was packed full, to rejoice in the birth of this child, and we all sung children's hymns and read Bible passages relating to the importance of dedicating our young ones to God at an early age. We all declared promises, before God and each other, to be Xavier's extended Christian family. Our good friend, Mark Perkins, shared a message from Matthew's Gospel, of how Jesus Himself, blessed the young children who were brought to Him.

We enjoyed a grand supper together after the service. We look forward to a 'special' supper next month when we celebrate Holy Communion on Sunday 2nd March in the St Michael's Chapel, Paignton.

Christmas Lunch & Carols by Candlelight - 15/12/24

As a trial, we decided to hold both the Christmas Lunch and the carol Service on the same day. Logistically, this worked out very well; by having our Lunch in Torquay, at the Livermead Cliff Hotel Restaurant – The Oceanic, we just had to drive everyone the 5 miles along the coast to St Michael's Chapel, Paignton, for our Carol Service in the evening.

The Lunch at The Oceanic was excellent. The food was of exceptional standard, as was the service. We were all 17 of us, well filled with Christmas Fayre. Then, as planned, we all made our way to St Michael's Chapel where we enjoyed our annual Carol Service, followed by mince pies and sherry.

We normally skip January for an SMF service, so the next time we meet together will be on Sunday 2nd February 2025. That service will be the Dedication Service for our newest, and youngest member, Xavier Charters, who was born on 22nd November '24.

Joan's Joanna - 10/11/24

This year, Joan's birthday fell on Remembrance Sunday, so we incorporated the Time of Remembrance into the "Joan's Joanna" celebrations and held the SMF service at Gittisham (home of Ian & Helen and mum). This all worked very well, and some members from the Honiton Family Church also joined with us.

Firstly we held a brief time of quiet reflection for those who have given their lives in conflicts; then we sang songs of praises around the piano, interspersed with quizzes and refreshments. We celebrated mum's 92nd birthday with a cake and candles.

We will next meet for our annual Christmas Dinner, followed by our Carol Service at St Michael's Chapel, Paignton, on Sunday 15th December.

Harvest Festival - 06/10/24

Our Harvest Table was full and overflowing with items to be distributed at the "Haven of Hope" orphanage, and to some of the poorer regions in Moldova. Among the goods were toiletries, toys, knitted blankets and gloves and scarves, and dried foods.

After the service, which was presented by Matthew Jackson from Okehampton (representative for the Romania operation), we enjoyed a hearty Harvest Supper together.

There will not be our usual service in Paignton next month. However, on Sunday 10th November (Remembrance Sunday) we will be meeting at Gittisham (nr Honiton) for an evening around “Joan’s Joanna”.

Gospel Service - 01/09/24

We held our second annual Gospel service to emphasize the importance of proclaiming the Good News message of Salvation through Jesus Christ. Our speaker for this service was our dear friend Mark Perkins (Outreach UK). He is employed by various Churches around Devon to encourage local evangelistic activities in the communities. It is good for all of us to be reminded of the Gospel message, and to put our faith into daily action in our own lives.

Next month we will hold our annual Harvest Festival on Sunday 6th October, when we will be bringing items for the “Haven of Hope” orphanage in Lipova, Romania.

“GSF – Annual Review ‘24” - 04/08/24

As we commence a new 12-month cycle, the Fellowship enters its 23rd year. We enjoyed a special service of praise and thanks to God for His faithfulness over the previous years, and as we prepare for a program of services and activities ahead of us. All of our folk plus many other “friends” of the Fellowship, should by now have received copies of our annual “Flock News”. This should contain all the information needed to keep up to date with items for prayer as we move forward together.

Our first service for the coming months will be a Gospel Service on Sunday 1st September, when our dear friend, Mark Perkins (Home Evangelist for Devon), will be sharing the Good News message of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

GSF 22nd Anniversary “Songs of Praise” - 07/07/24

What a wonderful way to celebrate our anniversary service. Dave Worrall from Stoke Canon gave us a program full of good old hymns of praise, in thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness. A packed St Michael’s Chapel raised the roof in heart and soul and voice for over an hour.

Then, after blowing out the candles of the anniversary cake, we all enjoyed a well-earned supper. Next month, Sunday 4th August, we will include our GSF Annual Review, as we look back over the past 12 months and look forward to the coming year.

Isaac Watts – Hymn-Writer - 02/06/24

Many of the most well-loved hymns which have lasted the course of time, were written by a few great hymn-writers. One of these was Isaac Watts. We learned about the man, and we enjoyed singing some of his best loved songs – “Praise My Soul the King of Heaven”; “O God Our Help in Ages Past”; “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”; and “Joy to the World”. He penned over 750 more, but time would not permit!

Next month we celebrate the Fellowship's 22nd anniversary. We will be having a "Songs of Praise" evening on Sunday 7th July, hosted by our dear friend from Stoke Canon, Dave Worrall. Everyone will also receive this year's Flock News newsletter.

Holy Communion - 12/05/24

After a quick return from a family European road-trip, we assembled, as planned, for our Fellowship's service of Holy Communion. These services are always very special, and, although infrequent, are very significant in our faith journey, in remembering together, Christ's sacrifice for us, through the emblems of Bread & Wine.

On Sunday the 2nd June we will celebrate the hymn writer, Isaac Watts, author of over 750 sacred songs in the 17th century. We will sing some of the more popular ones, including "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross".

Post-Easter Celebration - 07/04/24

Having not met together for Easter Sunday, we enjoyed a Post-Easter service to celebrate the Paschal season. We looked at some of the Scripture passages where Jesus appeared to different ones of His disciples. We also distributed mini-Easter eggs and ate many Hot Cross Buns with our Easter refreshments.

Our next service will not be on the first Sunday of May, as it falls on the Bank-Holiday weekend, but instead we will meet on Sunday 12th May for a Holy Communion service.

The 4 "D"s of Lent - 04/03/24

For the third Sunday in Lent, we looked at Colossians 4 v 2 – 6, and considered 4 "D"s which would take us through this Lenten period: Devotion to God, Dependency on one another, Desire to witness, and Duty to serve.

After the service, we enjoyed a Lenten Supper of cheese and biscuits, together. We look forward to Easter. Our next service will be on Sunday 7th April. This will be the first Sunday after Easter Sunday.

Haven of Hope: Update - 04/02/24

Our first service of 2024 was held in the St Michael's Chapel, Paignton, where Matthew Jackson shared up-to-date information and photographs of the orphanage in Lipova, Romania. It was interesting to see and hear about all the children there, especially young Florica, who we are "adopting" as our Fellowship's child. We were all greatly encouraged and had a bumper collection which will all go towards the work of the "Haven of Hope", plus some more knitted items.

Next time we meet, we will be half-way through the season of Lent, so we will have a Lenten service followed by a Lenten Supper on 3rd March.

Joan's Joanna! - 10/11/23

Our evening soiree around Joan's Joanna has become a staple event in our social calendar. Joan Charters, now 91 years young enjoys to celebrate her birthday amongst friends, while singing old favourites from wartime songs to choruses of praise, and of course, plenty of food and drink, interspersed with a quiz or two.

The next time we will meet, will be at The Cowick Barton Inn, in St Thomas, Exeter, for our annual Christmas Lunch on Saturday 9th December.

Christmas Lunch - 09/12/23

This was the year that Christmas Lunch nearly didn't happen! Our venue (as of last year) was to be The New Inn, Alphington, but, with a week's notice, they closed down! I quickly found an alternative – The Cowick Barton Inn, in St Thomas, Exeter. This turned out to be an excellent substitute for us. All 17 of us enjoyed a lovely meal in a festive atmosphere. We'll be coming here again next year!

Carols by Candle-light - 17/12/23

Our final service of the year was our Christmas Carol service held in the St Michael's Chapel in Paignton. It was an atmospheric service of much emotion and sentiment, as we celebrated the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ's birth in Bethlehem. A great way to see out the old year and look forward to 2024.

Our first service for '24 will be on Sunday 4th February, when we will receive up-dates on the life of the children at The "Haven of Hope" orphanage, Lipova, Romania.

Harvest for the Children - 01/10/23

Of all the Christian festivals in the calendar (apart from Christmas and Easter), the Harvest Festival has to be up there. Harvest is a joyous occasion on so many levels; it's a celebration of God's provision. We thank Him for all he has blessed us with throughout the year. This year we have not brought traditional fayre to the harvest Table (marrows, fruit, or vegetables), but rather, we have given toiletries, stationery, knitted blankets, scarves, pastas, etc. which can be transported out to the "Haven of Hope" orphanage in Lipova, Romania, where the children will receive our harvest gifts. We also received a bumper "offering" which will help with their running costs.

This was our last official Service at St Michael's until our Carol Service on 17th December. However, we do have some other dates between times: On 22nd October we celebrate the 100th birthday of our sister, Joyce Percy. On 10th November we have a date around "Joan's Joanna" in Honiton. And on Saturday 9th December, we enjoy our annual Christmas Lunch in a local eatery – more details to follow.

Gospel Service - 03/09/23

Our main purpose as "Church", is to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ. This was the first specifically Gospel Service we have held (and it won't be the last). Our dear brother, Mark Perkins, shared the Gospel message to a packed Chapel. Unfortunately, not many from St Michael's Court actually attended, but we will not be discouraged. We posted fliers in every letterbox on the compound. We pray that, in time, He will bring fruit.

On 1st October we have our annual Harvest Festival. We will be bringing items especially for the Haven of Hope orphanage in Lipova, Romania. Again, we will invite the residents of St Michael's Court.

Even-song - 06/08/23

It was decided last year, at our GSF AGM, that we would disband the formalities of annual meetings, and instead hold an Annual Review within one of our Summer-time services. We held a simple Even-song service this month, within which, we all shared and reminisced on the events of the past 12 months, giving thanks to God for his continued faithfulness. It was a lovely, interactive time of fellowship which was a blessing to all of us.

We also looked forward to the coming year, and the program of services we hope to have. Next month, Sunday 3rd September, we are planning a Gospel service. We will deliver invites to all the St Michael's Court residents, and invite our friends along. Mark Perkins will give the Gospel message

Songs of Praise! - 02/07/23

Due to asbestos investigations, we were unable to meet for our scheduled service at the beginning of June, so this was an extra-special gathering. This Songs of Praise had triple significance. Firstly, we wanted to give thanks to God for the lives of our dearly departed sisters, Brenda Thomas, our treasurer, and Pam Wilson (wife of the late Frank Wilson). Secondly, we celebrated our GSF's 21st anniversary, and God's faithfulness to us over the past year. Thirdly, we welcomed Dave Worrall to lead us in the singing of some good old Sankey's hymns.

The whole evening was a great success. God willing we will meet again on Sunday 6th August for a brief Even-song service, at Paignton, incorporating our "Annual Review" (replacing the previous, formal, AGM). This year's Flock News newsletter will also be distributed.

Coronation Celebration - 07/05/23

The weekend was memorable for the coronation of King Charles III. We had to mark this royal occasion with a special GSF/SMF service in St Michael's Chapel on the Sunday evening, followed by a veritable feast of Coronation Chicken sandwiches, Strawberries, Blueberries and Cream (red, white & blue), and, of course, a Cream Tea.

The service followed many of the prayers and hymns used at Westminster Abbey. We all enjoyed the evening celebrations..

Next month, on 4th June, we will celebrate a service of Holy Communion, together in St Michael's Chapel, Paignton.

Palms for a King! - 02/04/23

As we commenced Holy Week, a service for the “blessing of Palm Crosses” was the theme of our April service at St Michael’s Fellowship. We considered the atmosphere of that triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the real purpose of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross of Calvary.

The palm crosses were prayed over and distributed, so that we may all display one within our homes. We enjoyed hot-cross buns and Easter Eggs together after the service.

Next month we will celebrate the Coronation of our new king, Charles III, on Sunday 7th May.

Haven of Hope, Lipova - 05/02/23

A lovely, informative evening was had by us all, with a presentation of the Haven of Hope orphanage in Lipova, Romania, by Matthew Jackson. He showed us photos of the children and the buildings and some of the life-stories. He asked us to “adopt” one little 8yr old girl, Florica, as a Fellowship. We will endeavour, over the month to come, to emphasize our support for her in practical ways, as we pray for the whole work, there. We gave some knitted items for Matthew to take out on his next trip, and a gift of £150 towards the ministry.

We will meet again at the end of February for a Lenten Service followed by a Lenten Supper on Sunday 26th, at St Michael’s Court, Paignton.

Joan’s Joanna! - 15/01/23

Having told a “white lie” about the 90th birthday evening for Joan Charters on the 10th November, we eventually held the soiree at mum’s new home in Gittisham (the home of Ian & Helen), on the Sunday afternoon. A dozen of us joined together in their lounge for some olde tyme singing, a quiz, a buffet of sandwiches and cakes, and some chorus singing. We finished off with an epilogue brought to us by Mark Perkins. The evening was a great success (eventually!).

Our first service of the Fellowship will be on February 5th at St Michael’s Court, Paignton, when we will receive a presentation of the work of the “Haven of Hope” orphanage in Lipova, Romania.

Christmas By Candle-light - 18/12/22

What better way to welcome Christmas, than to gather together by the light of candles and sing our favourite carols and remind ourselves, once again, of how Love came down at Christmas in the form of a baby in a lowly manger. Our Fellowship had a lovely evening in the St Michael’s Chapel, Paignton, where Joan Charters brought us the message of god’s gift of love through a Christmas Card taking us phrase by phrase through John 3 v 16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We will be meeting for an informal soiree, at Gittisham, in Joan’s new home with Ian & Helen, for “Joan’s Joanna” – an evening of singing and refreshments @ 4pm on Sunday 15th January ’23.

Christmas Lunch - 03/12/22

For some of us, it has been a long time since we all sat down to 'break bread' together. We booked the New Inn in Alphington, for this year's Christmas Dinner. Being close to Exeter, made it easier to get everyone there in vehicles. Two dozen of us enjoyed a lovely afternoon of Christmas Fayre. Our Fellowship funds heavily subsidized the meal, as prices have rocketed over the past year, and we wanted as many as were able to join us. We held a raffle to boost the coffers.

We will meet again, on Sunday 18th December, at St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton, for our Carols by Candle-light service at 4.45pm. We will share sherry and mince pies after the service.

Even-song - 30/10/22

It was decided, after many services of different themes, to hold a traditional Even-song service, using the liturgy devised for use in evening services. The special emphasis of this structured service was – The Hymns and Ministry of Charles Wesley.

We learned about the hymn-writers life in the 1700's, and sang many of his hymns, including "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing", and "And Can It Be". A full Chapel sung their heart out to these lovely old hymns.

Although still in October, this was officially our November service, but for logistical reasons, we needed to bring it forward. Our next service will not be until our Carols by Candle-light Service on Sunday evening the 18th December. However, before that date, we have our annual Christmas Dinner, this year to be on Saturday 3rd December @ 1pm, at the New Inn, Alphington.

Bringing in the Sheaves!(2) - 02/10/22

Our first full year of services, post-Lockdown. We started up with Harvest Festival, last October, and now we have just celebrated our second one. It was a full-house, once again, for a thanksgiving service for all God's provision for us.

We brought produce which we later distributed to the Exeter Food Bank. After the service we enjoyed a Harvest Supper together, and stayed chatting for a good while afterwards.

Just the day before, on Saturday 1st October, our Good Shepherd Fellowship had celebrated its 20th anniversary with a gathering at Honiton Family Church. We sang songs of praise from our own new song book, "Make A Joyful Noise!" This includes choruses old and new on the theme of joyful praise, as mentioned in Psalm 100. Two dozen of us had a quiz and enjoyed a high-tea together. The afternoon was advertised as a garden party, but due to inclement weather, we reverted to plan B. Nevertheless, the occasion was a great success, raising funds for the continuation of our Fellowship's activities.

"Songs of Praise!" II - 04/09/22

Worries that our numbers would be low, due to various illnesses, etc., were unfounded, as the St Michael's Chapel was full to the brim with folks singing the wonderful old gospel hymns written by Moody & Sankey. We had a great evening, led by Dave Worrall from Stoke Canon. The epilogue was given by our dear friend, Mark Perkins. We were able to present Mark with a love offering of £50 towards his evangelism ministry.

We, again, enjoyed a time of fellowship together in the Lounge, where after over an hour, folk seemed reticent to want to go home! It is good to meet together.

Our next opportunity to meet together will not be in Paignton, but in the form of a Garden Party. We will (belatedly) celebrate, on Saturday 1st October @ 3.30pm, the Good Shepherd Fellowship's 20th Anniversary in Ian & Helen Charters' garden in Gittisham, near Honiton. It will be a wonderful afternoon to catch-up with old friends.

The day after, Sunday 2nd October will be our Harvest Festival at St Michael's Chapel, Paignton @ 4.45pm

Holy Communing! - 07/08/22

It is a good thing, once in a while, to celebrate the sacraments of Holy Communion together. With emphasis on keeping folk safe, we shared in the breaking of Bread and the pouring out of Wine, to remember Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross of Calvary. A dozen of us met in the St Michael's Chapel to join in this special service.

We joined for food and fellowship in the Lounge, after the service. We may not celebrate Holy Communion as often as we ought, but when we do, it is very special to us who believe in the remission of our sins: **Colossians 1 v 14**, "...in Whom (Jesus Christ) we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins,"

Our next service will be a Songs of Praise (part II) service led by our friend, Dave Worrall, from Stoke Canon.

The AGM / 20th Anniversary - 10/07/22

With hindsight, maybe this date was a bit too close to the Wedding of Adam & Loxley on 24th June. All our attention was on the Big Day, and the AGM became an afterthought.

The AGM was fairly swift and uncomplicated, as the few of us who were present went through the usual agenda of finances, past events, future dates, etc. It was decided to close the PCT, as we felt it unnecessary in this new format, to meet regularly to discuss things, as we all knew our responsibilities with the Fellowship.

We also decided to hold off on any 20th Anniversary celebrations until Saturday 1st October, when we will have a Garden Party in Gittisham.

Our next GSF/SMF service will be in Paignton on Sunday 7th August, when we will celebrate Holy Communion together.

The annual Flock News is out to all Fellowship friends, and all important details and financial reports are within its pages.

The Platinum Jubilee - 05/06/22

What better way to celebrate the Queen's 70 year reign, than to enjoy an uplifting service of national hymns and special Bible readings, followed by a hearty tea. A full Chapel at St Michael's Court, gathered together for a Union Jack decorated celebration (see photos). Long live the Queen!

We won't be meeting in St Michael's Chapel again until the first Sunday in August, and that will be a service of Holy Communion on Sunday 7th August @ 4.45pm. However, in the meantime, we have two other important events.

The first being the Wedding of Adam & Loxley on Friday 24th June in St Mark's Church, Pinhoe Road, Exeter at 3pm. A selection of photos will be available to see on this website.

The second event is The Good Shepherd Fellowship 20th Anniversary. It will form an informal AGM, but more so, a Party. This will be in the St Mark's Church Hall from 3pm on Sunday 10th July. Please try to be there – you are important to the Fellowship.

Good News for Everyone - 08/05/22

For a really informative service on the work of the Gideons, over a dozen of us came along with Bibles of all languages, versions, ages and sentimental values. Andrew and Lynda Crossley shared with us the ministry of getting Bibles into the hands of students, hotel rooms, prison cells and retirement homes.

We took up a goodwill collection which raised £50 for them to use in the cause of "Good News for Everyone" (as the Gideons UK are now called). It was a lovely, informal evening, which continued over our buffet refreshments in the Lounge.

Next month we will be celebrating the Queen's 70 year jubilee. We'll be singing some patriotic hymns, regaling ourselves with red, white and blue, and enjoying a right royal feast together – Sunday 5th June.

Easter Party - 24/04/22

One week after Easter Sunday, a dozen of us convened at St Mark's Church Hall to enjoy an afternoon together, and to watch the movie, "God's NOT Dead 2". This was the second in the series of films. We all felt it was an excellent sequel to the previous film we had seen in January.

During and after the film we had some lovely party food, plus some toasted Hot X Buns. We also played a quiz together.

Due to some various sicknesses and absences because of Easter holiday time, we were lesser in number than we had hoped, but nevertheless, we all enjoyed the afternoon.

As the Sunday 1st of May will fall on the May Bank Holiday weekend, our next service in Paignton will be on the 8th May. We will have a "Gideons" presentation by Mr Andrew Crossley.

Triumphal Entry! - 10/04/22

Palm Sunday is always a special service on the christian calendar. It marks the end of the Lenten season, and the beginning of Holy Week which leads us up to Easter.

Over a dozen met in the St Michael's Chapel to sing hymns of "Hosanna!", and to receive the blessed Palm Crosses to take back to our homes.

On Sunday 24th we will have an Easter Party afternoon in the St Mark's Church Hall, where we will watch the second film in the "God's NOT Dead" series. Our next service in Paignton will be a special presentation of the work of The Gideons, on May 8th (not the first Sunday of the month, because that would fall on the Bank Holiday)

Our Lenten Journey - 06/03/22

As we enter the season of Lent, our special Lenten Service was held in the Chapel of St Michael's, in Paignton. A dozen of us gathered to set off on our spiritual journeys through Lent. Our reflections were based on three tenets of our faith: the Body of Christ; the Blood of Christ; and the Gospel of Christ. We will meet again, in Paignton, on Palm Sunday, 10th April.

After the service we all joined together for a Lenten Supper of bread and cheeses, and fresh fruit. It was a lovely way to fellowship together.

“Songs of Praise!” - 06/02/22

Two dozen folk turned up on a wintry, blowy evening in early February, to raise the roof with old gospel hymns. It was a joy to see folk sitting in the corridor, outside the Chapel to join in. Our good friend from Stoke Canon Chapel, Dave Worrall, led the proceedings with quips and anecdotes interspersed throughout the hymn singing.

We all enjoyed fellowship around a hearty supper in the Lounge, afterwards. Nobody really wanted to leave the table, as it was so nice to be able to chat together, socially.

The theme changes to a service of more solemnity on Sunday 6th March. We shall be in the season of Lent, so we shall use our Lenten Service liturgy sheets. There will be a Lenten Supper of bread and cheese, to follow.

God's NOT Dead! - 09/01/22

Whilst having major concerns regarding the COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines for gatherings, we went ahead, in faith, to hold our “Too-late-for-Christmas” party. We decorated the St Mark's Church Hall, Pinhoe Road, Exeter, to feel a bit Christmassy, for the afternoon of Sunday 9th January.

Over 20 people turned up for a lovely afternoon, including chorus singing, a Bible Bingo quiz (thank you, Helen), a delicious cream tea (with home-made scones – thank you, Liz)), and the main item: “God's NOT Dead” the movie. Apart from initial technological problems with the DVD not talking to the laptop, which, in turn wasn't talking to the projector, ‘YouTube’ saved the day (thanks to Ian & Ray).

I have, with much assistance from Adam, put together a collection of joyful choruses, old and new, into “Make a Joyful Noise”. These 54 songs are all on a special power-point where, with the touch of a button on the laptop, the chorus chosen *miraculously* appears on the big screen. We will make use of this method to avoid using hymnbooks where possible. A big “Thank you” to Joan for collating all the music to match the songs (a major task).

Our next service at St Michael's Fellowship, in Paignton, will be a “Songs of Praise” evening on Sunday 6th February, when we will sing many of the olde-tyme hymns from “Sankey's” hymnal.

Carols By Candle-Light - 19/12/21

It's been two years, two Christmases, since we last celebrated with a Carol Service. On Sunday evening, the 19th December, the small Chapel of the St Michael's Court, in Paignton, was filled with folk from The Good Shepherd Fellowship, Exeter, and The St Michael's Fellowship, Paignton. We sang many of our favourite carols, together, as we centred our thoughts on the Nativity, and the coming of Christmas Day.

After the service we gathered in the Lounge to enjoy warmed mince pies and glasses of sherry, along with other Christmas fayre. A good time was had by all, as we wished one another a "Merry Christmas".

Many of us will not meet again until the New Year, when we will have a Too-late-for-Christmas Party at the St Mark's Church Hall, Pinhoe Road, Exeter, on the afternoon of Sunday 9th January from 2.30 – 5.30pm. We will be showing the film, "God's NOT Dead", and enjoying cream teas together. Flyers will be distributed to homes in the vicinity, and it is being advertised in the St Mark's Church newsletter and website.

Christmas Feast! - 04/12/21

One of our big diary dates each year, has been our annual Fellowship Christmas Dinner. Unfortunately, it has been a couple of years since we last enjoyed this meal together. On Saturday 4th December, 20 of us convoyed the 10 miles to Morchard Cross, where we sat down to a three-course feast at The Devonshire Dumpling.

It was great to be able to fellowship in this way as a lead up towards Christmas. We took a moment to remember those who were unable to be with us due to frailties and infirmities.

Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas-time and a New Year filled with God's riches. The Lord bless you!

We hope to see many of our folk, again, on Sunday evening the 19th December at St Michael's Chapel for our Carols by Candle-light service @ 4.45pm. Afterwards, we will enjoy a glass of sherry with warmed mince pies & clotted cream in the Lounge.

Joan's Joanna! - 10/11/21

We should never again need an excuse to meet together in one another's homes for times of social enjoyment. It has been a long time since we were able to do this. And so, on Wednesday evening, the 10th November, a dozen friends gathered around "Joan's Joanna" to celebrate her 89th birthday by singing old time songs and favourite hymns, and having a bingo quiz and party food.

"We really must do this more often," was the general comment. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to meet together socially. Now we are all looking forward to Christmas festivities, commencing on Saturday 4th December with our Fellowship Christmas Dinner, @ 1pm, at The Devonshire Dumpling, near Crediton; then our Carols by Candle-Light service in the St Michael's Court Chapel @ 4.45pm on Sunday 19th December.

Holy Communing! - 07/11/21

For many folk, it has been a long, long time since they were able to join together with other Christians and commemorate Holy Communion. It is one of the most special of Christian worship services, and one which we all cherish.

With the restrictions and sensitivity of government regulations and guidance for such religious ceremonies, we had to conduct this service in an orderly manner, and keep everyone safe. A dozen of us joined together in the St Michael's Court Chapel, in Paignton, and sang hymns, read the Scriptures, and prayed prayers, all culminating in the breaking of Bread, and the pouring out of the Wine, as we remembered the great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ in having His body broken for

us, and His blood shed for us, for the remission of our sins. It was (if not a little chaotic) a beautifully reverent service.

We had centred our thoughts on the meeting of Jesus with a woman of Sychar, at the town well, recorded in [John 4 v 4 - 26](#). Their conversation was on two different levels: she was concerned with physical issues, and matters which affected where and when and how we should worship God. Jesus, however, made it very clear that, [“God is spirit, and therefore those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” v 24](#).

Our fellowshiping after the service was a joy. Nobody wanted to leave, as we chatted and shared together. Meeting on a monthly basis is hard, but the good thing is that when we do get together, it is all the more special. We remembered all those who were unable to join us, for various reasons – often frailty, illness or immobility. We hope they will join with us again on other occasions.

On Wednesday 10th November we meet again for a social soirée around “Joan’s Joanna”, at her home in Exeter, to celebrate her 89th birthday. And then, in a few weeks, on Saturday 4th December we will meet again, this time for our Fellowship Christmas Dinner at the Devonshire Dumping, near Crediton.

Our next service at St Michael’s will be our Carols by Candle-Light service, on Sunday 19th December at 4.45pm.

Bringing in the Sheaves! - 03/10/21

It has been a long wait, but finally, after 18 months, the Good Shepherd Fellowship are meeting together again. This is the start of our monthly meetings hosted by our ‘sister’ Church, St Michael’s Fellowship in Paignton. We gathered together, 20 of us, in the St Michael’s Court Chapel, to celebrate Harvest Festival. It was wonderful to experience the atmosphere of a full-house, all singing hymns and fellowshiping together.

The front table was full of fruit & vegetables, and other sundry items of food and toiletries. Plus, there were also a dozen prepared shoe-boxes neatly wrapped in Christmas paper. All of this produce was later distributed via the Samaritan’s Purse Christian charity.

After our service, we all shared in a Fellowship Supper in the Communal Lounge of the sheltered housing complex, and renewed friendships which had been curtailed throughout the pandemic lockdown.

The theme of the service was based from [1 Corinthians 12 v 12 – 27](#). We are compared to a body of many parts. The writer, Paul, tells us that we are the Body of Christ, made up of many members, and that each member is just as important and significant as any other part of the body.

When asked which might be the best item on the Harvest Table, we compared a banana, a can of peaches, a tin of baked beans, and a bar of soap. Of course, there is no ‘best’ item. Each has its purpose. But each is only best at what they are designed to do. [Philippians 4 v 13](#) tells us that we can [“do \(get through\) all these things, by the strength Christ gives me.”](#) And the Lord says, in [2 Corinthians 12 v 9](#) [“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in your weakness.”](#) And Paul confirms in [v 10](#) that, [“when I am weak, then I am strong.”](#)

We acknowledge that many of us have suffered in various ways these past months: our physical and mental health, emotionally, financially, and socially, but that we recognise that the Lord is a faithful God, Who has not forsaken us.

We all look forward to meeting again on Sunday 7th November for a service of Holy Communion.