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FELLOWSHIP MATTERS !

THE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF CLARE BAPTIST CHURCH

To follow and worship Jesus
and make Him known



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128

“What do we do? The minister’s on sabbatical! Arrgh!”

By Rev Pail Hills

I’m not sure but I might be being a bit over dramatic with that title! However, when you have become used to seeing a friendly face every week, knowing they are “not there” can be a little daunting. So, what to do?

Firstly, **DON’T PANIC!** I hope I didn’t shout that too loudly. It’s meant to be in big friendly letters as on the front of “The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy”, and if you don’t get that literary reference I am shocked and you need to read the book (or watch the TV series or see the film). But the fact is there is no need to get anxious, and the reason for that is....

Secondly, **God is still in charge.** Each of us still has direct and open access to our heavenly Father and his love and care are never switched off (Jn.3:16, Rom.5:8). Indeed, this time is an opportunity to take a look at our own spiritual lives. A mistake we sometimes make about ministers is that they are responsible for developing our spirituality. That’s not so. They can help, teach, suggest, pray and point things out, but the responsibility to grow spiritually lies firmly with each of us. And God can be trusted to be with us and help us at all times (Jn.14:15-16).

Thirdly, (sorry this is beginning to sound like a sermon) **WE are all still here.** The church as people hasn’t disappeared. We have one another to care, support or stir us up. Caring is something all God’s people are called to do, for one another and for our wider community (Gal.6:10). People will come and lead our worship. Preachers will still preach. And we can all notice who needs a bit of encouragement or a hospital visit or a supportive word of encouragement. Of course, someone has got to organise some of this, so do pray for and support the deacons and whoever else is involved. And, simply, look out for one another.

At the same time, there will be a prayer team in the Upstairs Hall and others who will be joining in prayer at home.

Please pray:

For the organisation - which will need to be flexible as we find what works best.

For guests that they may feel welcome, those who are regular Allsorts Mums as well as those who have never been before. For the older children that they may join in with the activities.

For the helpers that they may feel valued and not overwhelmed, especially for those who will have not always be doing the same role on their weeks.

And finally for a knowledge of God's presence with all of us.

Sue Cumber



Family Fun Days – School Summer Holidays 2022



There was a good response at the May Church Meeting to the idea of running a weekly Family Fun day during the Summer holidays. Vivien agreed to head this up and a meeting was arranged to decide what form these days would take. The response to the “helper’s roles and availability was over whelming. Some like, Ruth and Abi Ridgway signing up straight away, others offering amazing flexibility. Even so it has been a challenge for Viv and myself to ascribe days and roles to various people.

The parents involved in Allsorts were keen that a weekly meeting would continue through the summer but would need to include older siblings. Posters were drawn up and a booking form launched online. Within 48 hours some of the dates were booked to capacity and the rest filled up quickly.

It was decided that the Tuesdays (the usual Allsorts meeting day) would begin at 10am. Parents with children under school age would mainly be in the Hall, although this will be flexible, while the older ones will have a Bible story with songs, activities and craft in the Church. At 11am there will be drinks and biscuits for all and after this, weather permitting, the older children will play outside.

At midday, lunch will be served and parents, children and helpers will have the chance to eat and talk together – finishing at one o'clock.

I’ve just thought of a bit of a problem. In the light of what I have just said you might be thinking “Do we really need ministers?” Well, I think the answer is “Yes, because they are given to us by Jesus himself” (Eph.4:11-13). Their task is to help us “be the church” caring for the world and telling people about God’s challenging love....”to equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith...and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”.

So, when the minister is on sabbatical we have a great opportunity to put into practice what we have learnt, been encouraged about, challenged with and generally called to be as God’s loving people. It could be quite exciting, couldn’t it and not anxious at all? After all, “The LORD is **my** shepherd, I lack nothing”(Ps.23:1) for each one of us.

Paul Hills



Muse

In my last Church we occasionally sang a song with a chorus which went-

*'So every day, we're on our way,
For we're a travelling, wandering race,
We're the People of God.'*

I was chatting to friends the other day and said how hard it was every time we moved, to begin again.

I also recall a conversation with our son then aged 16yrs old. Apparently Les and I had ruined his life by uprooting him from the town of Sudbury Suffolk and transplanted him in the country of Spain and in the city of Barcelona. No friends was his cry!



I then reminded him that each time he moved he *gained* new friends and he had not lost friends for now he had friends in America and Canada as well as Spain and Sudbury. This was followed by silence as he thought about it. I heard no more of the damage we had incurred; in fact, when he started applying for jobs because he put on his CV, educated and lived in Spain for six years, it got him many an interview. So change although hard can also be an altogether life building experience.

Think of Abraham and Moses, David and Elijah and so many obscure prophets offering their "Yes" to God. Wow! What God was able to do through them!

the cross. Whilst I still have a long way to go in my faith my knowledge in the truth of God's radical love for us es me reasons to rejoice every day.

Jo Stanbury Jones
sk



10,000 , Jo, for us all to bless the Lord.

**We at Clare Baptist Church pray that the fire of
your love for Jesus will always burn in you
brightly and that your path of service will be
clear and spiritually rewarding.**

Below is the testimony of Jo Stanbury Jones who was confirmed in St Peter's Church in Colchester on May 1st 2022 at the age of 21. Many of knew Jo as a youngster and we all rejoice as a Church in this account of his commitment to his Lord.

Attending St Peters Church was my first time returning to church in over 5 years and I felt this was truly what I had been looking for: a welcoming Christian community, active in charity and with compelling and challenging sermons.



With special thanks to Ryan whose discipleship in bible study was instrumental for me growing in faith and who had the patience and wisdom to answer all my many questions.

My turn to faith was not sudden, but was a slow change influenced by many events over a long period of time.

So, I will only give one reason out of many as to why I found faith or this would be a very long testimony. The reason is that nowhere else on earth can you find the radical hope and love given to us through God's covenants and Christ's sacrifice on

I wonder as we anticipate the next few months without Paul, what will be our response?

Our time in Spain, much as I loved it, was no holiday. It was getting by daily, being confronted by new challenges in an environment strange to me.

At the end of this time I had grown in *Confidence*, I had found a *New place* to call *Home* and there will always be a bit of my heart I left there, and I grew *Spiritually* as I found out more of just how wonderful a God who is always with us, it was He who got me through so many *Challenges*.

We are not having to move our place of worship, but we may have changed and grown a few more grey hairs and a few more aches and pains or new homes and new responsibilities as families challenge our time and energy.

I listen to folk who have been here much longer than ourselves. They had the same challenges in establishing a congregation and using their time and energy and skills to build the fellowship which we enjoy today.

Change. How do we respond today?

Will we be one of those who sit back and sit it out until things get back to 'normal' ? Or will you give your 'Yes' and use this as the start of a journey into the new ,I earnestly pray that you will be one of those giving God all of yourself allowing Him to do amazing work through you.

The Bible teaches us that all we need to do is to give our "Yes" in His service and He can work miracles using even the smallest of offering.

So let us embrace change and offer to do play our part in the service of our Lord.

Thank-you in anticipation.
Elsa Day

Jo Hitchins (née Lipson)

Some of you will remember the Lipson family from some years back. I'm the 3rd of 4 children (just beating my twin brother Daniel!) and attended CBC from about 9 years of age until I left in 1985 to start Nurse training, a calling I had felt from age 13. Just before I left home, David and Carol Whitlock prayed with me and Carol had what I believe was a prophetic word about how God would be using me within nursing, specifically with my colleagues.

Through my career I have found pastoral care, teaching and enabling my colleagues has been a hugely important part of my work, and one which I hadn't really considered, much less expected. I've had various jobs within adult and children's nursing, often working with those with life-limiting and/or life-threatening conditions, and this career has been a privilege.

Running alongside nursing has been my Christian calling *outside* of my paid work, which has included leading CUs, leading worship, leading Home groups, teaching, preaching and pastoral care. Perhaps not surprisingly, there's been a lot of overlap with my paid and my unpaid work. For the past 6 years I've been on the Leadership Team of Godmanchester Baptist Church in Cambridgeshire, and have been heading up Pastoral Care since just before Covid appeared (great timing...).

I'm married to Peter and we have 3 children: Tim (23), Samuel (19) and Catherine (19). We live in Fen Drayton, a little west of Cambridge, with Irene (my Mum) in what we fondly call "The Grannex".

I have intermittently wondered "what is next in Christian ministry for me?" and have gradually and increasingly sensed God calling me to develop my Christian calling more and more over the past few years, and quite specifically over the last few months. This has been alongside an increasing feeling of certainty that God has been saying it is time to leave my nursing job on a chemo unit and, quite possibly, my work as a nurse altogether. So the question I've been seeking the answer to is

Never Again will I confess lack of wisdom, for "Christ Jesus is made unto me wisdom from God"

{1 Corinthians 1:30}

Never Again will I confess sickness, for "By His stripes I am healed" {Isaiah 53:5}, and Jesus Himself "took my infirmities and bore my sicknesses"

{Matthew 8:17}

Never Again will I confess worries and frustrations, for I am "Casting all my cares upon Him who cares for me"

"{1 Peter 5:7}

Never Again will I confess bondage, for "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"

{2 Corinthians 3:17}. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit!

Never Again will I confess condemnation, for "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"

{Romans 8:1}. I am in Christ, therefore, I am free from condemnation.

Inspired by Don Gossett's book

"What you say is what you get!"

Submitted by Rira Bateman

My Never Again List

Never Again will i confess “I can’t “ for “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”

{Phillippians 4:13}.

Never Again will I confess lack, for “My God shall supply all of my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”

{Phillippians 4:19}

Never Again will I confess fear, for “God has not given me the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”

{2 Timothy 1:7}

Never Again will i confess doubt and lack of faith, for “God has given me a measure of faith”

{Romans 12:3}

Never Again will I confess weakness, for “The Lord is the strength of of my life”{Psalm 27:1} and “The people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits”.

{Daniel 11:32}.

Never Again will I confess supremacy of Satan over my life, for “Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world”

{1 John 4:4}

Never Again will I confess defeat, for “God always causes me to triumph in Christ Jesus” {

2 Corinthians 2:14}

“What’s next, Lord - what do you want me to do, and where do you want me to do it?”

So – to cut a rather long story short – in May I started studying the Equipped to Minister course by Spurgeons, which should take just over 2 years to complete and I’ve also been going through the process of applying to start further training in order to become accredited as a Lay Pastor (if accepted this will also take 2 years running alongside the studying). And – very exciting - I finally left my nursing work at the end of June: just to make those of you who remember me feel very old, I am now officially retired!

I don’t know exactly where this is leading me - I think the next couple of years of studying and training will be a time of both using and developing the gifts God has given me and that through that, God will make it clear what the next step is and where he is calling me. Despite generally always wanting to know what the “big picture” is I know I don’t *need* to know now where God wants me in 2 or 3 years, I just need to be open to where and what that is, and simply do *now* what he’s called me to do now.

I would so appreciate your prayer for me as I step forward in this, particularly as I get my brain engaged in studying again and as I prepare for my interview day with the Ministerial Recognition Committee in October.

Thank you!

Jo



Several of us in the Church will remember Irene and Eric Lipson and their family when they worshipped with us. Eric added a new dimension to our understanding of Judaism and its relevance to Christianity and Irene served in many ways.

We are delighted to have a catch up letter from their daughter Jo. It reminds us of how the fellowship and service of previous members still resonates within the Church.

We wish Jo and the families well.

JS



Pulpit Perspective.



Meetings can be dull but the one that Vivien Tim and I had a few months ago, as we anticipated Paul's Sabbatical was quite exciting. We were planning for those who might be willing to minister at Clare Baptist Church by leading the worship in the weeks ahead.

What a positive morning it was.

We sorted themes: The Faithfulness of God, Those Faithful followers of God, and Unfaithfulness from those who turned from God.

Then the diaries came out and dates were discussed ...boring? No because the words 'I could do' came to the fore. By the end of the morning we had volunteered ourselves along with several other folk and trusted they would be willing and.... **they were!**

It was then that we heard from others who, on hearing that we were without a minister for 4months, also volunteered to minister at Clare Baptist.

A big task not at all. How good God's folk are.

So we have a very exciting time to look forward to. It began last week with Tim as he unpacked so well Psalm 23 and we have some loved and respected visiting friends people like Rev David Whitlock, Rev. Simon Mattholie (who will ever forget the indoor firework?) Rev. Paul Hills and Rev. Graeme Ross . Then more of our own folk including Alban, Vivien, Gillian and myself.

We may feel a bit bereft but what treats lie ahead. We do pray that Clare folk will support as best they can, for don't we serve a wonderful God and Saviour who knows our every need and has answered our prayers so generously.

So we give thanks for all those who have said "Yes" and most of all to our Lord who is so worthy of our praise.

Elsa Day

Past Ventures and Future Challenges

When Rita and I ask people to contribute to the magazine we are always grateful for their willingness. We ask for a variety of articles but sometimes as, in this edition, there seems to be a common theme. The Sabbatical period leads us into a time when we look back at past ventures and at the same time face new challenges.

Elsa recaps past challenges in Spain and encourages us to embrace new ones

Jo Hitchens and Jo Stanbury Jones both embark use experience from a past to take them into the future.

Fun Days are there to shine a light for children and their families to see a future Christian path.

We pray for Paul and for the Church as we seek spiritual refreshment, build on the past and prepare to do what God asks of us.

JS