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HOW SILENTLY

Someone asked me recently what my favourite Christmas carol is. I think it varies from year to year, but when she asked, a particular verse of O little town of Bethlehem immediately came to mind:

**How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him
still the dear Christ enters in.**

The world is so noisy, there is always someone or something clamouring for attention. Sometimes it can be so difficult to still my heart down to really hear God. It is difficult to put into words why I like this verse, but I think it is something to do with its truth, its timelessness, the unchanging and ever-present nature of God's presence, the miracle God works in human hearts, the mystery and hope of Christ entering in, of heaven touching earth.

I looked up what was meant by the word 'meek' because it so often has negative connotations. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said 'blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'. Meek is the opposite of proud, arrogant, rebellious. In its positive sense, it does not mean timid or fearful, rather quiet, gentle, submissive, patient, humble, self-controlled. Pride and rebellion say 'I know best'. Meekness and humility recognise



something bigger than 'self'. How we need a bigger perspective than ourselves! Praise God that we cannot box Him in, that He inspires awe and wonder!

What is this wondrous gift? The baby in the manger? The mystery of God made man? Reconciliation and friendship with God? The gift of the Holy Spirit breathed into a human heart?

What a privilege that God would impart to human hearts, the blessings of his heaven! The Bible says 'guard your hearts' and 'do not let your hearts be troubled'... words I really need to hear in these troubled times. **There is something incredibly encouraging about the fact that whatever trouble, grief, busyness or noise might be shouting around me, in the stillness Christ continues silently to enter in, to save, to restore, to still storms, to walk alongside, to be a light in the darkness, to bring hope.**

Nicola Sharples



A HUNDRED YEAR OLD POPPY ...



This year marks 100 years since the first "Poppy Day" in 1921.

The first remembrance of the fallen of the First World War (WW1) was at a peace parade in July 1919. It was held as a temporary Cenotaph made of wood and plaster, designed by the prominent architect Sir Edward Lutyens. During the first week after the parade, more than a million people visited the Cenotaph in Whitehall. Within ten days it was decided to make the Cenotaph a permanent memorial and Lutyens redesigned it and built it in Portland stone.

What about the poppy, though?
*In Flanders fields the poppies
blow
Between the crosses, row on
row....*

In America, Moina Michael was inspired by the first lines of Canadian John McCrae's poem and she made a poppy out of red silk and wore it to remember those who had served in the war. She made many poppies and sold them to raise funds and the symbol was adopted by the American Legion Auxiliary to remember the war veterans.

How did it come to Britain?

We can thank a French woman, Anna Guerin, for popularising the poppy as a remembrance symbol in this country. She had travelled to England in 1911, but moved to the USA at the outbreak of war. Whilst there, and following Michael's lead, she was instrumental in fundraising for those made destitute by the war. After

selling poppies in several US states, she travelled back to Britain and persuaded the fledgling British Legion to accept her idea of using the poppy to fundraise. Earl Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the army during WW1 and founder of the British Legion, wanted 11th November 1921 to be known as Remembrance Day and he called it "Poppy Day"

Early Protesters ...

Did you know that at that first "Poppy Day" parade some ex-servicemen caused disruption at the service? They were angry at the lack of support and opportunity that they had received after the war. Rather than remember the dead, they wanted the survivors remembered. This is now reflected in the work of the British Legion.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Daphne Hodgkinson



LPF DAY OF MINISTRY

Saturday October 18th 2021 dawned brightly. I had just returned from a holiday in Bournemouth and I needed to start the washing and make

my shopping lists, but wait, we were driving down to Rushden Mission for the Day of Ministry. Oh no! With some reluctance we set off, little knowing the unique teaching that lay ahead. How the Devil tries to divert us from meetings that are going to help us communicate the Gospel!

Ian Fall led our opening worship and set the scene and quietened our hearts. Dr Ray Evans then introduced his subject of talking to others in a way that they want to hear.

This applies to preaching, teaching and one to one conversation. I love this quote from Spurgeon, "In order to gain attention the first golden rule is, always say something worth hearing. Nobody goes to sleep when he expects to hear something to his advantage. I never did hear of someone going to sleep when a will was being read in which he expected a legacy"

He was an inspirational speaker and no-one slept in his sessions! We did not miss a single word or illustration and he certainly made us all think about the words and phrases that we use in many contexts. He left us wanting more. I thoroughly enjoyed the day.

Do read the notes on the website. Thanks to Dave Tuckett for his organisation and Rushden Mission Fellowship for their impeccable hospitality.



Nehemiah 2:17

‘Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem.’

Recommended Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

Over the past two issues we have been considering the life of Nehemiah. We have seen God’s providential care over him, and his commitment to prayer. We conclude by considering his Spiritual Passion.

Most people I have met, enjoy a hobby or pastime and they can be very passionate about it. For some it is sport; others love reading; many enjoy walking in the countryside; while others spend hours in the garden. It can consume much of their time and in some cases their energy. But here we have a man who had a spiritual passion.

When we turn to chapter 2, it is four months after the events of the opening chapter. Nehemiah is once again in the king’s presence, but on this occasion his countenance is downcast. This had never happened before, and the king notices (v2). This is a serious offence in the court, so no wonder Nehemiah became afraid.

He begins to explain to the king the reason for his sadness. It is all because of Jerusalem. The king then asks, ‘What do you request?’ (v4). In v 5 he prays to the God of heaven.

Chapter 1 is the main prayer of Nehemiah. Chapter 2:4 is an urgent, arrow prayer. Sometimes arrow prayers are necessary, but you cannot as a Christian live on arrow prayers alone. They will make you immature and spiritually lazy. With the king’s blessing in v 6, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to commence the rebuilding of the city’s walls.

This would be a monumental task, and there would be much opposition that Nehemiah had to face. He would also need to find time to encourage the people in the task they had undertaken. Yet it is amazing what you can achieve

when people are united and have a passion for the work.

Someone put it this way: ‘We must pray as if it all depended upon God and work as if it all depended upon us.’

The Christian says, ‘Let us arise and build.’ The enemy says, ‘Let us arise and oppose.’ There is no triumph without trouble. There is no crown without a cross.

The task of rebuilding the walls was completed in six months of receiving the king’s commission. The complete city walls were completed in the amazing time of 52 days.

We couldn’t contemplate such a task today, even with all our modern technology and up-to-date building equipment. The workforce would go on strike!

But with God’s guidance and Nehemiah’s leadership and encouragement, the task was accomplished. Nehemiah stayed in Jerusalem for twelve years before returning to Susa.

Whatever fellowship we belong to, there is a monumental task before us. But we have a monumental God supporting us. The moral and spiritual walls of our land have crumbled before us. Therefore, let us arise and build. With God nothing is impossible. Times of revival are testimony to that fact.

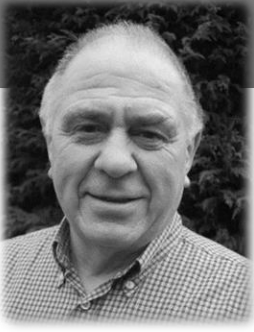
Give me the faith which can remove and sink a mountain to a plain;
Give me the child-like, praying love which longs to build Your house again.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

With kind permission of Day One Publications who in the Summer of 2021 hope to publish a book of 365 daily readings entitled 'Thoughts for the Day' by John Roberts



ARE WE HAVING A BONFIRE TODAY?



Mentoring the students at Cliff College for their outdoor manual time was always a pleasure, well,

nearly always. We had our moments.

Many, many times over my twenty-nine years there, on arriving for the garden/grounds manual, they asked “are we having a bonfire today?” This was probably the most asked question in the Autumn and Winter terms. I have to admit that many times I was as keen as they were to have one. With a large estate like Cliff having so many trees and shrubs, the answer was often yes and the eagerness to start manual was very evident. Quite often the eagerness to start manual was not always so apparent, so much depended on health, mood, weather, tiredness, work to be done, but it was always good to have something in common like having a bonfire. Manual was generally seen as a good opportunity to get outside, away from lectures, lecturers and essays.

I felt sometimes, the start of a new term was rather like a time when they had to be wound up ready to do the work awaiting them. How long they stayed “wound up” depended on each individual student. For some “the wind up” lasted a whole term; some it had to be the beginning of each manual; some a few times during each manual time; all so very different.

It was wonderful to have students, male and female, young and more mature, from so many different countries and cultures and this was so often evident in their enthusiasm, ability and attitude, and also their time keeping. The freedom that came about through the breakup of the communist block, brought many students to the college and some of the best workers in my manual teams. One of the loveliest, hardest working students came from Estonia and she constantly tried to persuade me to plant potatoes all over the college grounds, thinking any grass area was a waste of space and back home it would be used to grow food.

Through all the students, despite their many differences, was the evidence that

they were Christians and at a Bible College. This was a common factor, which I felt made mentoring easier, as opposed to a non-Christian workforce.

Some of my favourite memories are of late winter afternoons, around a bonfire talking, singing and praying. I don’t recall dancing which was probably a good thing or else the local villagers might have thought we were a group of pagan worshippers!

In my first term at Cliff in 1980, I soon realised students worked best singularly, or in pairs. At least they could work and talk at the same time, whereas a group, unsupervised, would soon turn the occasion into a debating session and little work would be done. The discussion was often as a result of that morning’s lecture. Some students found it difficult to work alone.

After a couple of manuals, I quickly assessed who was capable of doing the various work that had to be done. It was good to give some students an area of work and say to them “this is your area for the coming college year, this is your responsibility, do your best, and have pride in it.” This approach often resulted in students sometimes coming out in their free time to work in their area. Great also to see on many occasions their families and visitors being taken to see their special area.



Manual always started with prayer time. On one particular manual, they were very keen to have the bonfire I had promised them, but we had had two days of very heavy rain prior to manual. They decided and were certain that, through prayer it would burn; sadly it didn’t. I did think of Elijah and Mount Carmel.

Very early on, after starting at Cliff, I felt rather overwhelmed at the amount of work to be done and what needed to be done to improve various areas, both for looks and safety, plus how would I cope with this twenty plus group of students,

who in a couple weeks would be coming out for garden manual? I vividly remember praying in the greenhouse about this and God saying “we are in this together, you may wonder if you can, remember always **we can**”. Thankfully, and not surprisingly, I found he kept his promise. A good number of times over the years when some students were struggling for various reasons, I told them of this time in the greenhouse.



The potting shed was, in my opinion, one of the most important places on the whole College site and many times proved to be so. It was not only the centre of the work done in the grounds, but it was also a place of fun and laughter, of prayer and encouragement, and many times the students told me how it was so important to them. If only the walls of that shed could talk, thankfully they cannot. No, they cannot reveal so many confidences and confessions, tears and sadness. Many times a student would stay behind after manual to talk about a concern and we would pray about it. God was truly in that place and many prayers were answered right there.

On many occasions, I reminded them that their work was not truly for me or the College, but for God. He was pleased with his great creation and a good work done within those beautiful grounds. Returning to Elijah and Mount Carmel, water was no problem to God in getting the fire going. What a great faith Elijah had. Please reflect on 1Kings Ch18 v 44. Elijah had just been told a cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea. Elijah told Ahab to get down off the mountain quickly while he could. Elijah knew that God was not sending a bit of a shower, but an abundance of water. I believe God sent not just showers of blessing but abundance of blessings during my time at Cliff College.

Stuart Allen



WOMEN OF ACTION MEETING AT GRIFFYDAM

25th September 2021

The ladies of Women of Action met at Griffydam on 25th September for a time of fellowship, prayer and the study of the Word of God. This was the first time they had met for almost two years. The last time they met face to face was at New Swannington in 2019. It was good to see everyone in person again after having to meet on Zoom.

Sandra opened the meeting with a time of prayer before we looked at the well-known Psalm 23, which is the Women of Action passage for this year. We were then split up into two groups to look at the passage in more depth,

using five key points:

1. **The Lord is my Shepherd**
2. **I shall not be in want**
3. **He makes me lie down in green pastures**
4. **He leads me beside quiet waters**
5. **He restores my soul**

In our group we shared each of the key points with a time of quietness between each one, before we all came back together to close the meeting. The meeting closed with prayer.

Natalie Johnson, Bedworth

CHAPLAINCY WORK

With Ashington Town Council and The Royal British Legion

Ever since we as the Word of Life Church joined with the WRU, and started to worship from our building on North Seaton Road in Ashington, we have always worked from the point of we must use whatever means to reach our community. Mark 2:15-17 tells us that ***"And it happened as Jesus reclined in his house, many tax-collectors and sinners also reclined with Jesus and His disciples. For there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with tax-collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, How is it that He eats and drinks with tax-collectors and sinners? When Jesus heard, He said to them, They who are strong have no need of a physician, but the ones who have illness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."***

We have to move out of our church buildings in order to meet with those who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel, or those who have and have not appropriated it. We have to meet in other words with the modern day tax collectors and sinners, we have to be the "Chaplains" to our society and there are many easy ways in which we can do this. The following are just an example of what can be done, if we pray, put our faith in action, move out and stand back and see what God will do.

We began a work immediately with the Royal British Legion Social Club who are located two doors along from the Church. They asked me to be their Chaplain after a meeting with them, and from there we were asked to lead all of the Town's Remembrance Day Services

and Armed Forces Day Services, and some other services from time to time with them, culminating in the service for an Ashington man who was the last person to be awarded the Victoria Cross at the end of WW1, and the subsequent 100 years Anniversary Remembrance Service one week later. We helped the British Legion with many other issues, and more recently, they have sold their social club and are now holding branch meetings in the Church, where we attend to the spiritual matters that arise from within the branch.

Throughout that time our relationship with the Town Council began to develop, as the Town Council planned all the Remembrance events. I was invited to speak for two successive years at the Northumberland Miners Gala, at the Remembrance events for those miners who lost their lives working in the coal mines of the county. I have helped to open up a new play area in a local park with everyone including town councillors, the local MP and schoolchildren, sharing in prayer over the new facility.

During the past four years that relationship has been further strengthened by attending all of the Town Council Meetings, which are held bi-monthly, getting to know each of the individual Councillors, many of whom have attended our coffee mornings and dinners at the Church and are happy to promote what we do. They see our passion and value the work we do in the community, knowing that we care. I have even been asked to pray for a couple of items during the Council



Meetings and some Councillors has asked me to pray for personal issues in their lives. They have recently supported us with a bid for funding, with a wonderful letter of praise and support for the work we have done in the community throughout the Pandemic.

We have also developed working relationships with the local YMCA, where we were going to attend some youth meetings to share testimony and help young people with spiritual matters. This unfortunately has been hampered somewhat by the Covid 19 pandemic, but we will hopefully be getting into conversation with the YMCA again soon.

This is God moving and building His jigsaw puzzle, putting all the pieces in place, and we have to be faithful to be just one of the pieces in His unfolding plan. I would encourage anyone today to get involved with their local British Legion, their Town or Parish Council, or YMCA and other "friends of" groups in their communities. God wants us to meet with the tax collectors and sinners of our day, in order that His Gospel Message can be more widely broadcast. Have faith, be prepared to move when God asks you to move, and stand back and watch what He can do.

Rev Michael and Lindsey Hedley
(Word of Life WRU Church, Ashington)



OVERSEAS MISSIONS

New Project for 2021/22

"LOVE RUSSIA"

As a Union of Churches, we have championed many OM projects over the years and as a committee we were delighted when John and Christine Houghton, (Cornerstone, WRU Church, Doncaster) suggested that we consider supporting "Love Russia", which is a small charity they have supported for some time. They had mentioned this to the committee several years ago, but another project had already been agreed.

I contacted Anna Thwaite who is the CEO for Love Russia, a lovely lady, who joined us in one of our OM zoom meetings. We prayed with Anna, and she shared how she came to be with the charity, it was definitely God appointed! We are very excited to walk this wonderful journey together with all at "Love Russia" in the love of Jesus.

We will be raising funds for a minibus for the Volkhov Crisis Centre with a target of £10,000. This minibus will provide opportunities for children to attend medical appointments and school, and to collect donations of food and clothing. The minibus will also be used for transportation to summer camps for youth, mums, and children. It is very much needed for the work the crisis centre is doing.

Conference was the launch for our new project and as we wanted to have a visual impact, so it was decided that the team would all wear T-shirts with the Love Russia logo on them. We should never be amazed when God moves

through and in His people, to bring us all together for His Glory. **We can all do something to help, please join with us to raise the funds needed.**

It would be great if you can take pictures of any fund raising you are doing for our OM "Love Russia" project. We will share them with our brothers and sisters, so let us work together in unity to help our family in this Crisis Centre. We are all together part of a wonderful union, united in Christ Jesus.

History of "Love Russia" Charity

The "Love Russia" charity was established in 1993, after the founder Noel Doubleday visited Russia to distribute Bibles. He discovered terrible conditions there and underdeveloped children with many of them not even having their basic needs met.

The charity was founded to improve the lives of orphaned children, and destitute young people in crisis. Their aim is to provide relief of poverty, suffering and distress by demonstrating practical Christian compassion and where appropriate sharing the Christian faith.

The charity partners with Russians who want to serve the Lord in their local communities, which leads to community led solutions led by strong Christian leaders.

They operate a range of programmes and as the charity has expanded since 1993, they have been able to support more and more marginalised people.



The Volkhov Crisis Centre, benefits mothers who are at risk of losing their children, due to addictions, domestic violence and/or poverty. In Russia, when women seek help for these challenges, they risk immediate removal of their parental rights and can lose their children to the orphanage system. The centre was established in 2012 and provides comprehensive rehabilitation for mothers seeking to recover from addictions, domestic violence and poverty. The centre is unique as it allows women to keep their children with them while they rehabilitate. The support covers practical intervention, life skills interventions, emotional interventions and spiritual interventions.

They also offer a wide range of other projects such as summer camps, health support, dental clinics and transitional homes for orphanage leavers.

If you need any more information or help concerning the WRU Overseas Missions projects or our Missions, please get in touch with our team. I would like to thank the OM Team for doing such a great job and all being involved.

Blessings to you all
Lindsey Hedley
(WRU OM Secretary)

MARILYN BAKER AT BOZEAT



Years ago, we decided to invite Marilyn Baker and Tracy Williamson to TLC Bozeat.

For those who do not know of these very special people, Marilyn became

blind as a child and has a wonderful story to tell. With an obvious gift for music, she trained at The Royal College of Music and then went on to a teaching career. **She is a Christian song writer, pianist and singer with a remarkable ministry.**

Tracey Williamson, who as a child was affected by an illness which took her hearing, is her personal assistant and she also dances to Marilyn's singing and ministers the Word.

Marilyn has a guide dog, Arlo and Tracey has a hearing dog, Goldie.

We emailed and asked if they would come for a weekend in June 2020. It was booked and plans were afoot, but like hundreds of events, we had to postpone it, and change it to July 2021. But we were still unsure that this was the right decision as we didn't want to turn people away because of Covid restrictions, so after praying about it we contacted them

again and decided on the first weekend in October. **Wow, God certainly blessed us.**

We arranged a Saturday evening concert and for Marilyn and Tracy to lead our worship on Sunday afternoon.

The Lord really blessed every aspect of the weekend, from the informal chat over the meal tables to the fellowship and worship at both meetings. We heard of how the Lord guides them and blesses them. **They encouraged us to recognise God's 'nudges' and put our trust in Him in all things.**

We had a socially distanced packed church for both meetings (and we didn't have to turn anyone away!) **Thank you, Lord!**



FROM PIANO TO PULPIT

In the last few years, it is safe to say that the Lord has been working in my life in many ways. Back in 2019, I was baptized into the Church, as I had never been baptized as an infant. I had already been involved in the Church for many years, mainly serving in the music ministry, being one of the piano players at Jump, and also more recently at my church in Southampton, where I study at university.



I continue to play the piano, but more recently, after months of theological study and reading, I became burdened to think about pursuing ministry opportunities, whether that be teaching or preaching. This became clearer on coming to the realisation that many pulpits around our country today are lacking in sound Bible teaching and Gospel proclamation. I was then presented with a wonderful opportunity to preach at Christmas in our Church at Jump. Not knowing how it would go, the Church received it well. Since then, the elders have given me more opportunities to teach,

to see if my calling is sure.

One thing I am committed to is Bible exposition, where you take a passage of scripture and explain what it means. This means that God sets the agenda, not the preacher, allowing the word of God to do the work, not us. The word of God is the means whereby God saves and sanctifies his people: *1 Peter 1:23 'having been born again... through the word of God which lives and abides forever'. John 17:17 'sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth'.* God works out his purposes through the power of the Holy Spirit, working through the inerrant, infallible, all-sufficient scriptures, not by the strategies, ideas, or techniques of men. It is my conviction that our calling is to read and obey the scriptures, and God will bless his people. The Church has always been the strongest when it has stood firmly on the foundation, 'Sola Scriptura', scripture alone. Never have faithful leaders in history tried to 'go with the times' or 'adapt to the culture'. The Apostle Paul knew this, and he even remarked that he had renounced 'cunning' and 'underhanded ways', but *'by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'* - 2 Cor. 4:2. It is my belief that Biblical preaching -



1. Recognises the authority of scripture. It is the very word of God we have to proclaim.
2. Has systematic approach, where every text is explained in the light of the whole Bible, as God's truth is one.
3. Preaches Christ, who is the word of God incarnate, *1 Cor. 2:1-2 'And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.'*
4. Is theological not sentimental. The whole counsel of God must be proclaimed so that his people truly know him deeply, not superficially.

I thank God continually for the ways in which he is working in my life, and I pray that He will use me for His purposes and to His glory.

Simeon Young, Jump Church

ADVERT

For Magazine Committee

Contact Magazine - We're Recruiting!!

We would love to hear from you if you would like to be involved in creating these magazines.

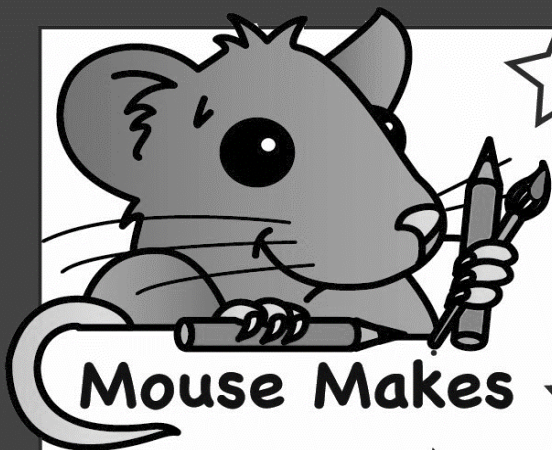
Or if you know someone in your church.

We meet every two months on Zoom to plan the theme and commission articles.

BETHEL COMMUNITY CHURCH

We inducted Andy as our pastor on 12th September. Andy and Lindsey Wade had been with us 1 year, 6 months and 12 days by the time we held the Induction!!!





"I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has been born today! ...

*Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom
God is pleased".*

from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14

HAPPY
CHRISTMAS!

Read the Christmas
story in Luke
1:1 - 2:21



A picture to colour
for Christmas. Colour in
one star each day as you
count down to Christmas!

Dec20 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

