



HOOK CHURCH NEWSLETTER Jan 2024

The Church Prayer Meeting (#4) = December 2023

The **fourth time** we read of the early church at prayer is in Acts 4.

Peter and John had been arrested by the Jewish Authorities and put in jail. The next day they were allowed to go free but they were banned from preaching in the Name of Jesus. This was serious. Serious because Jesus had commanded them to preach to the whole world in His Name; but the worldly authorities banned them from preaching His Name. What were Peter and John and the church to do? Obey God or people? They choose to obey God. And they covered their decision in prayer at the church prayer meeting (Acts 4v23,24) and prayed a majestic prayer (Acts 4v24-30) which brought an immediate amazing response (4v31) and they continued to preach the Name of Jesus boldly.

Paul

“CHRISTMAS TIME, mistletoe and wine, children singing Christian wine”

How did the celebrations begin at Hook?

Little Rascals had a wonderful Christmas party.

With mince pies/Christmas cupcakes.

A Christmas craft. A bible story and Christmas songs.

40 families attended.

Please could we have prayer for ongoing building of relationships with
parents/grandparents/carers.

Sandra Fitzpatrick on behalf of LR team

I.D. celebrated the advent of the birth of Jesus over 3 Fridays. We began by having a progressive dinner hosted by 3 church families. Each festively decorated home provided spectacular hospitality. Starters were at the Rigby's, main course at the Herring's and pudding at the Broomhead home. At each home Ruth provided the children with spiritual food in the form of a vignette regarding the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. A small wooden ornament with one of the many names and titles of Jesus was given to each person. We were well fed spiritually and physically!

The next Friday we had dodgeball and craft evening where we talked about Christmas presence (Emmanuel) and showered the kids with love-a gift of Christmas scented shower gel!

The last evening was servant-themed as the kids decorated the church building for the wonderful SSOR concert!

A month-long celebration pointing to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus.

Coralie on behalf of I.D team

TIMELESS UPDATE DECEMBER 2023

Since October, Timeless has continued with monthly events and November saw our card class, kindly led by Rosemary Bunce and accompanied by coffee and mince pies. We all had a lot of fun making our Christmas cards and Rosemary provided much guidance and the necessary equipment.

In December, we held our traditional Christmas lunch ably led by Carole and her team. We had an amazing 55 guests who thoroughly enjoyed their meal of roast turkey with all the trimmings and followed by Christmas pudding (handmade by Carole) and coffee. Paul gave a warm Christmas message and Colin provided the Christmas music. All in all, it was a really lovely event.

Once again, I would like to say a HUGE thank you to all the volunteers who continue to offer their generous help in serving at these events, providing the delicious food, as well as setting up and clearing down. I cannot stress enough how much your help is valued and appreciated; please accept my heartfelt thanks for all you do.

We will continue with the monthly events and in January we will hold a coffee morning with a talk from Kingston Community Library. This will be followed by a visit from Zoolab in February, who will be coming with a small selection of exotic animals for us to hear about and, if we wish, to touch and hold. We will continue throughout next year with more monthly events, which will be advertised on church suite and in the Sunday notice sheet.

We have also continued with our visits to Appleby and the Royal Star & Garter care homes to provide Services and these have been very much enjoyed by the residents, especially the Christmas service at Appleby last week. These services will be offered monthly to both care homes on an alternate basis, but at Easter, we will once again go into both homes.

The film afternoons started again in November, when we showed **The Remains of the Day** and in December, we showed **Elf**. The films will continue to be shown monthly until April and the details will be provided in advance.

I would like to wish everyone a truly blessed New Year and we look forward to welcoming all our seniors to our forthcoming events next year. Please do invite any neighbours, family and friends along to these events as we would love to welcome them in.

Details of all the events will be posted on church suite and in the Sunday notice sheet.

Noëlle

Natter & Nosh our year finished on 8th December with Sarah Lee – a local teacher who also makes decorated flower pots and colourful paper items using her own designs in beautifully vivid colours. It was great to hear a bit about her life, faith and how she got into this during lockdown. It was inspirational - especially for the artistic and crafty people amongst us! There was also the opportunity to purchase her items afterwards. We enjoyed a marvellous spread once again on the theme of 'Christmas Food' We have so many interesting and varied dishes each time, it really is very delicious.

We also had the help of Bernard and Ray washing up which is invaluable and we want to express our grateful thanks to Bernard for the many years he has helped on this team now that he has stepped down. We really need some more men to help now, so if any of you would like to join the team, (it's easier now we use the dishwasher) please see myself, Anne or Rosie.

We also want to express an ENORMOUS thank you to Norma who has been on the N&N team for 18 years, she has been an invaluable member, faithful worker and great fun to work with - but felt it is now the right time to step down. We will really miss her contributions to the team. She has done a sterling job encouraging the guys to join the washing up team in a very humorous way too, we will miss those emails, Norma!

The programme for next year is now available, we pray God will bless the events we have lined up. Another varied and interesting selection we trust. It would be fantastic to see more ladies go on to attend Alpha and come to know the Lord. We keep praying.

Our first event next year on 18th January will be a positive look at 'Stepping into the New Year' with Jenny Brown - who was a senior minister at All Souls and now has an international ministry in teaching and building people up and is currently programme co-ordinator and interim head of care for Friends International. Do put it in your diaries and come along.

Thank you all so much for your interest and support, it is much appreciated.

Hazel Brown

Hook and the Persecuted Church

I thought that this would be a good time to talk about the things that have been at Hook over the last year in relation to the Persecuted Church.

Prayer Meeting

For example, every month we hold prayer meetings on the 2nd Monday at 10am and 8pm, where we pray for three countries where persecution is rife and also an organisation that helps Christians in one of these countries, usually with spiritual resources but also with humanitarian aid.

Open Doors World Watch List (WWL)

Every year we have a group of dedicated people within the Church who pray for a country on the WWL. This is a list of the top 50 countries in the world where persecution is most extreme. At the beginning of each year when this list is released it is firstly released at a meeting held in Parliament to which all MP's are invited. If anyone would like to pray for one of the countries on this WWL then please speak to Barbara.

Church Slot's

Once a month we have a slot in the service to draw attention to a specific country or campaign. These slots are relating to countries on the WWL and are presented by people who pray for these countries.

IDOP day

Every year organisations that support the Persecuted Church hold an International Day of Prayer. This year we had a visiting speaker called Kenneth Harold from Release International and we were blessed by his ministry and the prayer time with him. He also brought along some resources for those who wished to learn more about Release and the Persecuted Church.

Future Plans

In 2024 we will be continuing with the above activities and we are also hopefully planning to have a Christian book table (2nd hand books) in the spring and a cream tea in the summer. The purpose of these events is to raise awareness and to also raise funds that can go to organisations that support the Persecuted Church.

Many thanks for reading this article. If you would like any additional information on anything mentioned above then please speak to Barbara.



from generation to
generation



At Christmas, we often read the genealogy of Jesus, tracing back his family line, from one generation to another, until we get back to Adam. 76 generations are counted, from Adam to Jesus. It is now estimated that approximately 60-80 generations have been born between the birth of Christ and those alive now.

I love history and finding out how so many family strands came together to form each person, but each person is so much more than a strand of DNA. They lived a life, in body, mind and spirit, experiencing and learning so much between birth and death. Each of those lives is an example of how they interacted with the world, and for Christians, how God interacted with them.

Recently, a picture of Hook Church, as it used to be, was shown on the church Whatsapp Group. People still worshipping in the church know how the small place of worship has grown into the large building, and membership, that now stands on the same site. Many of them were a part of that journey.

In Deuteronomy 32 v 7 the Children of Israel are told *“Think of the past, of the time long ago; ask your parents to tell you what happened, ask the old people to tell of the past.”*

In Hebrews 11 we read of the people of the Old Testament, their lives and how their faith was worked out in many different situations. In Hebrews 12 v 1, this great cloud of witnesses is used to spur on the Christians of the New Testament.

What is it that older generations can tell us?

a) They have a conversion story to share.

In Philemon v 9-11, Paul writes “It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful

both to you and to me.” Imagine Paul’s testimony. In fact, you can read it, throughout the book of Acts.

b) The length of their lives means that they have learnt from past experiences.

In Psalm 143, David prays for help going through a difficult time and then says v 5 “I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.”

c) They have become wise and developed a deeper understanding of life.

"Wisdom belongs to the aged, and understanding to the old," says Job 12:12, but Job 32 v 8 explains “the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.”

d) They want to tell the next generation what God has done for them.

Psalm 71:18 says, "Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come."

e) They can still bear fruit in old age.

“The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age;” Psalm 92:12-15

f) They can still make a difference in praying witnessing and worshipping.

Luke 2 36 -38 “There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. Then, Psalm 148 v 12-13 “Young men and maidens together, old men and children! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted.”

g) They are still learning new things and becoming more Christ-like each day.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 says, "Though outwardly we are wearing out, inwardly we are renewed day by day”

h) They still have a role in learning and teaching younger generations.

Titus 2 v 2-4 “Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children.”

i) Though their health may be fading, their strength is in God.

Proverbs 23 26 “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

How blessed are we, as a church, to have so many people of older generations to learn from, but the Bible also teaches us how to show that we value the older people in our church.

a) We should show respect to older people.

Leviticus 19:32 "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God."

b) We should listen to them and not view them in a disparaging way.

Proverbs 23:22 "Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old."

c) Treat them in a loving way, as if they were from your own family.

1 Timothy 5v 1-2 "Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity."

d) Meet the needs of those who live alone and may be in need of support.

1 Timothy 5 v 3 "Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need."

Charities supporting the elderly outline a few aspects of life that can be difficult for older people:- loneliness; financial struggles; practical everyday difficulties; lack of IT skills and increasing need of support. When we talk and build relationships with the people who are older than us, younger people benefit, and so do the older generation. When they find it too difficult to attend church, they are still able to benefit us, and to enjoy the benefit of contact with people from the church. A card sent, a call, a Bible verse shared, a little help, can make all the difference to people who have served the church for many years, and who are still walking the path of faith.

I am sure that all of us were moved at an evening service, by the account of a Christian man, whose committal service had no reference to his faith. When his daughter was asked why this was, she said that since he had become unwell, contact from members of the church had fizzled out.

So, let us do good to all people, as we have opportunity, especially to those who belong to the family of believers, from generation to generation.

Wendy Hedge

In Memory of Joyce Woodall

Joyce married Bob in 1962 and Martin was born in 1963, followed by Alison in 1975. Joyce worked for M Perkins & Son Ltd where she made church and university textile trimmings, fringes and tassels. She enjoyed her work and met Pat and Anita who became lifelong friends. Joyce worked there for 60 years.

Martin married Sandra and had two daughters. Alison married Russell and had two boys. Joyce loved spending time with her family especially when her grandchildren were young. She was a wonderful mother and grandmother.

Another passion of Joyce's was attending Hook Church. She was heavily involved in the young children's work and especially enjoyed helping out at the Holiday Bible Clubs. Hook was a big part of Joyce's life, even during lockdown she would watch the services online.

Sadly, Bob passed away suddenly in 2015 and just six months later Joyce was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. With help and support from family and friends she managed to have a good quality of life. Joyce would attend church services whenever possible, visit local cafes. She enjoyed going on short walks with neighbours. She also loved having Alison and her family staying with her in the holidays. She also loved having visitors and her friends from church who popped in for a cup of tea and to see how she was.

Eventually the time came, when sadly it wasn't safe for Joyce to remain at home. Martin and Alison looked around for a care home. Having found a suitable one, there was a long waiting list. Pat mentioned that a friend at Church, Helen, worked in a care home in the same area. On visiting they quickly knew this was the place for mum. Joyce moved in and very quickly made her mark with the carers and residents who all loved her. Being a very kind and caring person Joyce would always make sure the people around her were happy and not left out. One example of this, is when asked where she would like to sit for lunch, she spotted her friends but then saw a lady sitting by herself and asked to sit with her as she didn't want the lady to be sitting by herself.

Joyce's physical health was starting to deteriorate and she had a few stays in hospital. At the end of her last stay, she was discharged back to the care home, where she was welcomed back with a big fuss being made of her. Sitting with her friend for tea, Joyce was really happy to be back laughing and joking with her friends. Later, two lovely carers were helping her into bed and making her comfortable and it was as if someone from above, had reached down to her, and said, 'come on Joyce take my hand it's time to go' and she went.

Joyce wouldn't want you to be sad for her, she had a wonderful life, she loved her church and was loved by her family and friends. She will be missed but hopefully with a smile not a tear.

Martin and Alison both say how they feel very privileged to have been so involved in their mum's care over the last seven years and through doing so they've shared many happy times with Joyce and created a lot of special memories. They feel blessed to have had such a loving and caring mum. They would like to express their gratitude to everyone who took their time to visit mum as she really enjoyed spending time with people. Even though she was suffering with Alzheimer's it didn't rob her of her loving, caring personality and right up to the end she still recognised the main people in her life.

Joyce's testimony in her own words.... (April 2004)

God works in mysterious ways. It was a beautiful Sunday morning and I was coming home from church thinking over what I had been told about Jesus dying on the cross. I had been going to Sunday School for about 5 years. In those years I had come to love what I had been taught about Jesus but at that time I didn't have a bible or hymn book of my own.

This Sunday I was thinking more deeply about Jesus and the cross. The question I was asking myself was: Is Jesus a good man who could endure a lot of pain? God's timing is always the right time because it was just then when I was nearly home that I found an open hymn book

laying in the road and it was open at the hymn 'I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me and rest' for the first time in my life I was listening to the voice and at the same time began to look beyond the cross which I had never done before. My blind eyes were opened and I could see God was beginning of all things and Jesus was with him. That day I left the darkness of this world and walked into the light of Christianity. We read so often about God's unfailing love and as I look back on my life, I see how often I have failed in my love of God. I look again at the cross and know that I have been forgiven through Jesus.

I was thirteen, I was riding my bike to school, I had to go a little past my school on this morning to see a lady for my mother so I have been told, when a car knocked into my bike sending me over the handle bars by about 10ft. I was unconscious before I hit the ground. I was rushed to hospital where I stayed for three weeks. The first three days I was in a coma and then seven days after that I remained unconscious.

God was my helper, so as I share this time with you, I will praise his name for it is good. One night I walked through the valley of the shadow of death three times, I was aware of the darkness that surrounded me but I felt no fear, I was filled each time with the presence of Jesus, he came in a way I'd never known before. He came in a new fullness, his light was always before me as well as being in me each time, I knew if I could reach the light I would be face to face with Jesus. When I recovered consciousness, I was suffering from amnesia, except that I knew who Jesus was. Nearly fourteen years had been taken from me just as if it had never been. I didn't even know my own name.

When my time came to leave Kingston hospital my parents were advised to let me do what I used to do before my accident. My mother knew how much I had loved going to church and Sunday School, friends from there had been to visit and told my family they had been praying for me, we also heard two schools and two churches had been praying for me.

Remember that hymn book I found coming home from Sunday School? That was the first thing I remembered. I also remembered where the man who had read the lesson that morning lived and that I had grown up at The Oaks. By Sunday afternoon I was receiving more and more of my memory back. I had just started rebuilding my life. If anyone were to ask how long did that take, I would say about ten years but when I stop to think about it, I must say I'm still rebuilding my life. I've not yet run the race which God has planned for me. I have often asked why did he send me back? I had to smile as I typed this: The doctor said I was alive because I have a strong will to live, that is far from the truth as any Christian will tell you. Three times I nearly died, each time I walked down the valley of the shadow of death, I tried to reach the light that was before me because I knew if I reached the light I would be face to face with Jesus because, as I have said when I came out of my unconscious state, I didn't even know my own name but I knew who Jesus was, that's the only thing I remembered. When my time comes again to walk down the valley of death, I'll have no fear because Jesus is with the Christian all the way and the walk is peaceful. The 23rd Psalm says it all.

I met the driver of the car when I went to court and I was cleared of all blame, he nearly killed another child before me. I've never had one bad thought about that man. All this

happened many years ago. God has blessed me with a family of my own, Bob my husband and two children, Martin and Alison. I thank God for these years for I have received from him a peace which passes all understanding.

At the threshold

Loving Christ, we stand at the threshold not only of a new day, but a new year.

Just as it is sung, *'the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight'*,
so too, are centred in You and upon You
all our yearnings for today, tomorrow, this next year.

You know utterly everything we've experienced
in every hour of every day of each of our lives until this very moment:
vast individual tapestries of events and emotions, including all that has challenged us.

Should we be carrying invisible scars as a result of what has gone before,
we know they have been permitted by your loving and transformative hands.

Not only will You heal them,
but through Your intricate plan for each of your children
You will bring ultimate beauty from them in time.

You are the Master Weaver of each of our tailor-made tapestries
and Your intent is always wise, always good, always loving.

We thank You for all the moments of joy
and all the blessings You have given us during this soon-to-be-past year:
so many, Lord, more than we could possibly count!
You cascade your blessings, large and small, upon us.

But the most enormous blessing and the greatest joy of all is knowing You and being yours.

You have been beside us each step,
and You promise to continue alongside us
until the moment You bring us home...
and, oh, what a glorious day that will be!

Until that time, let us offer ourselves to You again, afresh,
at the beginning of these brand-new 365 days,
in thanks and loving service for each day that You give.

Let us look to You, the Son – *our Son-shine!* – to equip and inspire us for all You have for us.

Let us serve You with our hearts, minds and souls,
keeping our eyes firmly fixed on You, our beloved Jesus.

We love You,
we thank You,
and we seek to honour and glorify You
in any and every way that we can.

Deborah Stevens

As requested.

Thank you once again to those of you who have contributed to this newsletter. Those who responded to my requests and those items that have been submitted without a request. They are all greatly received.

The next newsletter will be in March and the deadline is 25th February. Email rosemarybuncehook@gmail.com or by hand.

