

Bethel Christian Fellowship

Vital
Signs

Easter 2017

By Proctor, Greg. Retrieved from www.bethel.edu/communities/communications/vital-media.org/vital/index.php?record=30661428

Heaven can be entered only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way. But the Gateway to Life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.

Matt 7: 13-14

Many of you know I spent a couple of weeks in Africa recently. One of the orphanages I was able to visit, the Watoto Was Orphanage, was in desperate need of help. Your generous offerings raised £1500 for them. Thank you.

David Brett

Contents of the Easter Edition

Gordon: Easter - Alive Again!.....	3
John Appleton and Anna Faro.....	4
Garry Cockrill: I am the Way, the Truth & the Life	5
Keith Taylor: Let Us Think.....	6
Jesus in Every Book of the Bible	7
The Well & Bethel Cookbook 2017	8
Jenny's PCC Award	9
Answered Prayers	10
Service Info	11

Edited by carolbowerman@googlemail.com

We live and die;
Christ died and lived!"
(John Stott, Evangelical
Christian leader)



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ALIVE

© Microsoft clipart

Easter – Alive Again!

Mary Magdalene, according to the Biblical account of Easter, was the first person to see the resurrected Jesus. But first she faced the enormous grief of his death, and early on Easter morning the bewildering shock of the empty tomb.

Then Mary ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

Mary Magdalene was a changed woman. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary. Mary’s deliverance is the catalyst which makes her sign up with the Jesus movement. For three years or so Mary was part of Jesus’ following.

Going to the tomb on Easter morning was a human thing, a matter of devotion and caring. But Mary’s devotion was turned to something completely different by meeting Jesus in the garden.

Mary turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

*Jesus said to her, “Mary!”
(John 20:14-16)*

This is revelation. A moment of truth. Here is the risen Lord. Jesus died, and rose again. No man has ever done this - a dead man cannot rise. But Jesus did, and this power, this supernatural life is the source of our Christian faith, our community, our life together in Witham as Bethel Christian Fellowship.

Paul the Apostle wrote in the letter to the Phillippians, “That I might know him, and the power of his resurrection.” He says he counts all his achievements as loss, to just know Jesus, in this way.

Knowing Him. Mary Magdalene knew Jesus personally. Paul knew him as his Lord and Saviour. I know him as the Living Christ, today, whose Love reaches out to me in so many different ways. By His grace! The living Christ can say to you, “Your sins are forgiven you.” He is able now to breathe into you eternal life. The Lord is risen indeed—in this see the evidence of His power to save to the uttermost. To quote Charles Spurgeon - ‘from this first solid stone of the resurrection you may go, step by step, over the streams of doubt till you land on the other side fully assured of your salvation in Christ Jesus!’

Happy Easter
Weekend,

Gordon





For as by a man came death, by a man has come the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

(1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

Encouragement from John Appleton

Over sixty years ago I had an encounter with Jesus, and from that moment my life changed. It changed who I was as a person, how I spoke to others, and I received a new peace from Him. One verse in the bible has especially spoken to me:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

Following my cancer diagnosis in early March, I continue to know this peace from our Heavenly Father. I know our Father is in control and thank the Lord Jesus for the tranquility that He gives.

I truly believe that Jesus gives His peace to His disciples and I believe that this serenity is available to all Christians. As I face this trial in my life, I trust in the Lord and believe He is faithful to His Word.

Every blessing to you all.
John Appleton

Witham's Easter March of Witness!

Please come and join us for our town's Easter March on Easter Saturday!

The march is a short walk through Witham town, starting at 11am at the bottom of The Grove shopping precinct. It's then followed by an inter-church outdoor service in the Newlands precinct (outside New Look) and it's a great opportunity to be a visible Christian presence at the most important time of the year for us as believers.

So often we can feel overwhelmed at the lack of understanding in our secular culture about what Easter really means, but how will people know its true meaning unless we tell them, and demonstrate its importance to us?

It's a real buzz to proclaim the name of Jesus in the midst of busy Easter shoppers. All ages are welcome to come and join in. Let's make sure Bethel is well represented this year.

Anna Faro

"The tomb of Christ is famous because of what it does NOT contain."
(Sam Morris, African Methodist)

Jesus Says "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6) but what does this mean?

Jesus says he is The Way in response to Philip's question "we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus says *he* is The Way, not that I'll show you the way, or here is the way, but that *I* am the way - there is no other way to connect with God. Jesus called at least five of his disciples to follow him, and they do, so does this make them born again believers? No. Philip proves this when he asks Jesus to show him the Father and Jesus has to explain that Philip doesn't understand yet. Philip does have faith, but just faith because he is persuaded that Jesus is the Messiah.

I grew up an atheist in an atheist family. I didn't become a born again Christian until I was 25. At 11 I remember wrestling with the problem of living one short life, dying and then being gone for eternity. Why?! What is the point? Torment! Then at age 16 I had an experience of God which was a physical encounter, I felt like I had been plugged into a light socket, a rush of joy maybe, but after that I just continued on with my unbelieving life for 9 more years. No church. No godly life. A normal teenage life. I was not born again but I had started on the way to follow. God was calling. Did I believe in Jesus? Yes! But so does the devil (and he trembles, James 2:19).

The encouraging thing is that once you are on the way, nothing can knock you off the way (Isa 25:8, Psa 26). Even if you are foolish, you can stay on the way and not fall!

Once you are persuaded, the next step is to believe (the Truth) and to put your faith in him (the Life). Faith as a verb, not a noun. When I was 16 I was persuaded Jesus was real but had no relationship with him. To believe is to put your trust in someone or something. To believe in Jesus must mean that you believe what he says in the Bible, and if you believe what he says then you need to obey what he says.

How do you put your trust in him? When we hear his voice, we have to respond somehow. Praying for someone else is an act of faith. But praying about a personal problem is trust. To trust you have to know Jesus, talk to him, hear from him, know how he works, how he answers, why he answers prayer.

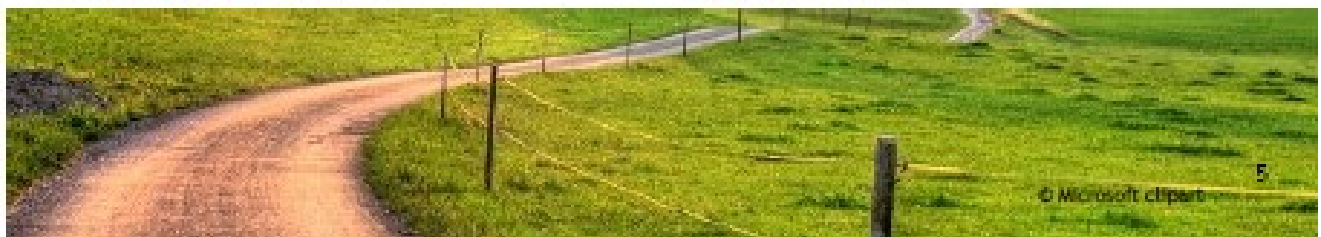
Are we on the way but just don't know Jesus?

Do we know Jesus but not well enough to trust him?

Remember: we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Rom 8:28).

For more, listen again at www.bethel-witham.co.uk/sermons/

Garry Cockrill



LET US THINK! –

God is the original thinker

The mind is incredible. Computers etc are amazing, but the mind that invented them, the programme writers and engineers...it all blows my mind. Yet God is the original Thinker - "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" Creation, macrocosmic and microcosmic (outer space and inner space) tells the astounding wonder of the divine mind. "Come", says God, "let's think this through together." Such an invite is credible only because God made us in His image, a thinking image for He is the eternal Thinker.

As a Christian you don't have to throw your mind overboard in order to please God. He calls us to worship Him with all our mind. Believing in God isn't thoughtless, it's thoughtful. Faith isn't blind trust, it involves assessing evidence, looking at God's word and seeing it to be sufficient and reliable. The idea behind, "Don't think, just believe", is quite wrong. The epistles of the New Testament are addressed to our understanding. If we remove our minds, if we don't think, we'll miss all the astonishing glories of Romans 5 and 8, of Ephesians 1 & 2 and Hebrews - to name a few.

Far too many charismatic preachers are telling us that the mind is a problem. "Forget here" they say, tapping their heads, "you need to get it here", clasping their hearts. The message is clear; there's no place for the mind, for thought in the Christian life. Well that just isn't true. God gave us our minds and He will address them, inform them and renew them.

In Romans 12:1 Paul gives a primary place to the understanding when he
6 says we are to be "transformed by the

renewing of our minds". The importance given to the thought life in Scripture is very high. The battleground for credible spirituality in this present age is the mind. There is a historic aspect to our salvation, *we have been saved*; there is a future aspect to our salvation, *we will be saved*. But there is also the present aspect - *we are being saved*.

In this present aspect, the here and now aspect, it's a matter of the mind. Our spirits have been quickened, we've been born again. Our bodies are to be redeemed in the future, we'll be transformed and changed, but now, at this time, it's our minds that are being saved, we're undergoing the redemption of the intellect, and our present transformation (salvation) is in direct proportion to how much we're prepared to submit to this divine process. The battle now is for the mind.

This being true, attacks on thinking and using the mind must be viewed with caution. Both the misuse and the abuse of the mind are serious. It's in this light that we should consider the devil's constant attack on the mind. Because Christ is the light (understanding) of the world the devil will do everything possible to close the mind and prevent understanding.

The truth is, "the eyes of the heart" must be illuminated by the Spirit (Ephesians 1:18) so the heart can see, reason and understand. Perception and reception of truth involves our understanding, then any denigration of the mind must be regarded with caution, particularly if it is by the renewing of the mind with such truth that our lives are transformed.

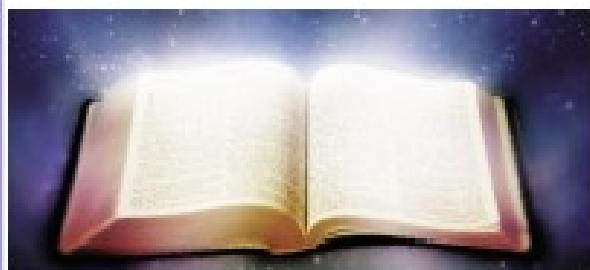
"Give me understanding and I will keep your law". Psalm 119:34

Keith Taylor

Jesus In Every Book of the Bible

Jesus is woven throughout the Bible, in every book Jesus is expressed....

Genesis = the seed of the woman.
Exodus = the passover Lamb.
Leviticus = our high priest.
Numbers = the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.
Deuteronomy = the prophet like unto Moses.
Joshua = the captain of our salvation.
Judges = our judge and lawgiver.
Ruth = our kinsman redeemer.
1st/2nd Samuel = our trusted redeemer.
Kings/Chronicles = our reigning King.
Ezra = the re-builder of the broken down walls of human life.
Esther = our Mordecai.
Job = our ever-living redeemer.
Psalms = our shepherd.
Proverbs/Ecclesiastes = our wisdom.
Song of Songs = the loving bride-groom.
Isaiah = the prince of peace.
Jeremiah = the righteous branch.
Lamentations = our weeping prophet.
Ezekiel = the wonderful four face man.
Daniel = the fourth man in life's fiery furnace.
Hosea = the faithful husband forever married to the backslider.
Joel = the baptizer with the Holy Ghost and fire.
Amos = our burden bearer.
Obadiah = he is mighty to save.
Jonah = our great foreign missionary.
Micah = the messenger of beautiful feet.



Nahum = the avenger of Gods elect.
Habakkuk = Gods' evangelist
Zephaniah = our Saviour.
Haggai = the restorer of God's heritage.
Zechariah = the fountain opened up in the house of David for sin and uncleanness.
Malachi = the sun of righteousness rising with healing in His wings.

Matthew = king of the Jews.
Mark = the servant.
Luke = the son of man feeling what you feel.
John = the son of God.
Acts = the saviour of the world.
Romans = the righteousness of God.
1 Corinthians = the rock that followed Israel.
2 Corinthians = the Triumphant One, giving victory.
Galatians = your liberty, He sets you free.
Ephesians = the Head of the Church.
Phillipians = your joy.
Colossians = your completeness.
1-2 Thessalonians = your hope.
1 Timothy = your faith.
2 Timothy = your stability.
Philemon = your benefactor.
Titus = the truth.
Hebrews = your perfection.
James = the power behind your faith.
1 Peter = your example.
2 Peter = your purity.
1 John = your life.
2 John = your pattern.
3 John = your motivation.
Jude = the foundation of your faith.
Revelation = your coming King.

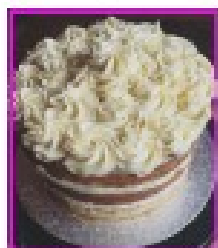
Throughout history and into eternity, Jesus is alive!

Bethel Cook Book - New Edition!

We published our last edition of the Bethel Cook Book in 2015, and we were hoping to bring out an updated 2017 version with new recipes to support the youth in their quest to get to *newday* again this year.

So far only four new recipes have been received! So to avoid a pamphlet rather than a book being issued, please have a think about your favourite recipes! Bread, savoury treats, cupcake delicacies, whatever you like best. Share your favourite treats and help the youth raise money for this year's bible week!

Either email or hand your recipes over in person to Alan Battley, who will be collating them all.



The Well's Easter Window Competition winner is Alisha Nicole Norton (3 years old) from Bethel's Little Friends Toddler Group. She has won a £5 voucher to spend at The Well. Congratulations!



The Fundraising Auction for *newday* in February raised £400! Thank you everyone who contributed!



The Well over Easter

We are closed Good Friday and Easter Monday. However, we are open as usual on Easter Saturday (10am-2pm).

We will have fun craft activities and balloons available for the children throughout the Easter holidays plus we have a fabulous children's menu.

New Specials: All Day Breakfast and Delicious Cream Teas!

New homemade cakes on offer: Simnel Cake, Fruit Cake, Lemon Cake, Coffee and Walnut Cake and Traditional Victoria Sponge.

Special offer for a limited time: with each slice of cake bought on Fridays and Saturdays, you will get a cup of English breakfast tea for free!

The Well is looking for somebody to help out on Wednesdays, ideally front of house. We would also love some back up volunteers for when staff go on holiday. If you are interested, contact either Amanda Harrison or Gordon Crick.

Jenny Wijekoon, one of our fabulous volunteers at The Well, has won one of the Police and Crime Commissioner For Essex's Annual Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Community Safety!



Jenny has volunteered at our coffee shop, The Well, for the last two years, providing vital pastoral care both at The Well and through home visits. She is well recognised for always going above and beyond for those who need help and offers care in whatever is needed; spiritual, physical, practical or emotional, though most of the time it involves having time to listen.



Jenny is in the office at The Well on Wednesdays. If you are in need of help she will try her utmost to be there for you. She offers care in whatever form is needed; spiritual, physical, practical or emotional.

Jenny has helped so many people at The Well, at Bethel Christian Fellowship and in the Community that it is very much deserved. Big Congratulations to her!

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

We at The Well are thrilled at Jenny's achievement in winning one of the Police and Crime Commissioners Annual Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Community Safety. She works so hard, in this area, plus does everything with great love, knowledge and enthusiasm. It is fantastic that her hard work is being recognised and awarded by the Community. We would like to thank Jenny for all that she does and for all those that she has helped and blessed.

Amanda Harrison,
Manager, The Well

Winning the PCC award was a complete shock and surprise! I had never considered my pastoral work to be award winning! I actually feel so privileged for being able to come next to people in a personal and caring way. Without my faith and the power of the Holy Spirit I would not be able to care and serve. There have been times when I have felt tired or stretched and often an element of sacrifice has been needed but having Jesus walk alongside me has given me massive strength and energy! I have been reading recently about Jesus washing the disciples feet. Jesus did this act in love and humility. In this time God is calling us to come alongside people with simple, kind acts of love. Love makes a massive difference in our self-consuming society. Doing the unseen acts is a wonderful way to witness our faith. We are all pastoral carers and can make a difference. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Jenny Wijekoon

Answered Prayers



Margaret's neighbour was diagnosed with stomach cancer, and we were asked to pray for her as she had been told that it was terminal. Margaret reports that her neighbour has been receiving some treatment and has been dealing incredibly well with it. Her daughter-in-law commented to Margaret that the prayers of the church appeared to be working! Further treatment is due to continue for the next month, and we will continue to pray for improvement or better.

My young daughter had been suffering with digestive system problems. It was turning into a fear of going to the toilet and was getting serious. I was really worried and had spent almost a year trying to sort this problem out, trying different things, praying about it too. Nothing was changing. Then I went to a bible study which talked about giving things to God. Until then I thought it was my responsibility as a mother to deal with things myself but I'd already tried my best, so I thought I would give it a go and give the problem to God. It was the best thing I've ever done! It took about a week and now the whole problem has been dealt with! My daughter is happy. Going to the toilet is not an issue. Everything is going well! Hallelulah! Praise the Lord! He's amazing!

Amanda Harrison

In the middle of March I asked my housegroup to pray for the safe locating of a teenager who had been missing from my home town of Kesgrave for four days. She had left for high school on the Thursday morning (the same one my eldest son goes to) and hadn't been seen since. Her phone had been turned off shortly after she disappeared and there were no leads. At housegroup on the following Sunday afternoon, I asked everyone to pray for her safe location, if not her safe return home. When I got home in the evening she had been found. Amazing!

Another teenager went missing in Frinton since that episode. I only found out about this boy around ten days after he had disappeared. On 28 March I prayed again for this boy to be located safely ... and the following day he was!

Prayer works!
Carol Bowerman

God-incidence:

The obvious presence of God, in what classically has been termed coincidence, in which there is no plausible explanation.

www.urbandictionary.com

This is the secret of the unworrying people in a worried world: 'fear Him, ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear'.

Alec Motyer
Old Testament pastor-scholar

Sermon Round Up

Listen again at www.bethel-witham.co.uk/sermons/

2 April - Alan Battley: Living out our Faith part 3
26 Mar - Chris Taylor: Living out our Faith part 2
19 Mar - Gordon Crick: Living out our Faith
5 Mar - David Brett's Trip to Africa
26 Feb - Garry Cockrill: I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life
19 Feb - Gary Fisher: I am the Resurrection
5 Feb - Alan Battley: I am the Good Shepherd
22 Jan - Seb Cottrell Dedication plus Chris Taylor: I am the Light of the World
15 Jan - Phil Lottering: Passover & Communion plus Gordon Crick: I am the Bread of Life

The AGM will now be held on Sunday, 14th May following Cafe church on that day. Cafe Church will start at 9.30 a.m. as usual and the AGM will follow on at about 11.15 a.m. We hope to see as many as possible of you there!

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ. Or, at least, an openness to letting him encounter them. I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No-one should think this invitation is not for him or her since "no-one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord"

Quote from Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation submitted by Anna Faro

Breaking of Bread

Sunday 7 May

Sunday 4 June

Sunday 2 July

The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name

Luke 24:46-47

BCF Leadership team:
Gordon Crick (leading)
Gary Fisher, David Cameron,
Chris Taylor



Churches Together in Witham
Invites you to the 30th

EASTER MARCH OF WITNESS

Saturday 15th April 2017

Starting from a new location: the bottom
of The Grove shopping precinct at 11 a.m.

*

Bring your family and friends on our
shorter, safer route through the two
shopping precincts.

*

Bring a banner if you can!

*

Join us afterwards for hot cross buns and a
hot drink at the Holy Family & All Saints
church hall in Guithavon Street.

*For more information phone David Brett on 01376 617308

"There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three." (Billy Graham, Christian evangelist)

Bethel Christian Fellowship meets:

* at 9.30am on the second Sunday of the month
for a cafe service and

* at 10.30am on all other Sundays
at

Maltings Academy, Spinks Lane, Witham.

www.bethel-witham.co.uk

bethelwitham@googlemail.com

01376 520705