

# Vital Signs

Bethel Christian Fellowship - July 2016

We have this treasure from God, but we are like clay jars that hold the treasure. This shows that the great power is from God, not from us. We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. We do not know what to do, but we do not give up the hope of living. We are persecuted but God does not leave us. We are hurt sometimes, but we are not destroyed.

2 Corinthians 4 v7-9

## *Contents of the July Edition.....*

<i>A Farewell.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Gordon Crick.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>The Faithfulness of God.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>An Everyday God.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Cinnamon Trust.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>What We Believe.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Comments on the EU Referendum.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>International Justice Mission.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Answered Prayers.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>BCF round up.....</i>	<i>11</i>

### *A Farewell From Sylvia Cameron*

Last September when Bethel had a picnic in the park, I went to the United Reformed Church instead. The next Sunday I went to Maria Anderson's membership service. During that service I felt a prod from God to consider changing to there. I didn't do anything about it until a week later He prodded me again via a Sue King talk. I then talked to Paul Ellis, the minister at the URC, about it. I continued to go to Bethel and occasionally to the United Reformed Church. By the end of the year I had so many prods and words that I had to do something about it.

I had spoken to a few people about it and decided to leave Bethel and go to the United Reformed Church.

I kept talking to God when I felt Him say to me that Bethel was chosen by people I knew in the church but this new change was chosen by Him.

I have had a wonderful 31 years at Bethel. I have seen my son David grow into a wonderful young man with a lovely wife and two wonderful daughters and how they have grown in God. I have made many lifelong friends and have had many adventures into college, Africa, the Walk of a Thousand Men and lots of other things for God. Now I am on a new road with God but I don't know where.

A big thank you to everyone in the church for all they have done for me over the last 31 years.

May God bless you all.  
Sylvia x

## *Disturb Us, Lord!*

There is a most interesting poem you can find widely quoted on the internet which is attributed to Sir Frances Drake, perhaps when he was about to sail for the coasts of South America around the year 1580. Historians cast doubt on this claim for authorship, but the poem itself is well worth reading. Here is one verse and the poem's conclusion:

*Disturb us, Lord, when  
With the abundance of things we possess  
We have lost our thirst  
For the waters of life;  
Having fallen in love with life,  
We have ceased to dream of eternity  
And in our efforts to build a new earth,  
We have allowed our vision  
Of the new Heaven to dim.*

*This we ask in the name of our Captain,  
Who is Jesus Christ.*

The state of settling down, where life is ok but not adventurous, where my goals are partially met, where my obligations are satisfied but my hopes are disappointed, seems a familiar place for many of us to be. But who has the courage to pray "Disturb us Lord!"

The EU Referendum has shaken our nation. The very narrow margin of decision, the subsequent loss of the prime minister, the divisions in the Labour Party and the very visible divisions in the country affect us all. The subsequent turmoil in the financial markets, the fall in the pound, and the gloomy forecasts from economists could easily cause us to lose hope.

The Old Testament prophets knew God in a special way, were given revelation of God's dealing with the nations of their times, and often stood alone in declaring that there was hope in the

shaking of nations, economies and leaders. Look at this example from the Prophet Haggai:

*"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty. 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty." (Hag 2 v 6-9)*

The house Haggai was immediately describing was the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, but nothing about this second temple, itself destroyed in AD 70, leads me to believe that that prophecy was fulfilled by that building. The Temple was the centre point of the kingdom of God on earth, the place of meeting between God and men, the place of sacrifice. The fulfilment of the prophecy is not to be found in any house made with hands, but in the true Temple of living stones, the house not built with hands that Jesus is building in our time. Jesus as a man was all that the Temple shadowed and foretold. It is in Him, and in the Fellowship of believers which is his body here on earth, that Haggai's vision will find its full realisation.

Here is hope, here is adventure, here is the deepest of all fulfilment. To know that we are part of God's plan to defeat evil and to overcome the world. To know that, at the same time as the nation is shaking, we are part of a local church which worships Jesus Christ, and knows his peace.

*Gordon*

Image by Hart, Francis Russell. (from old catalog) [No restrictions], via Wikimedia Commons



## *The Faithfulness of God* *A Testimony* *by Gordon Crick*

On January 5th this year we held my Father's funeral in Deal. He was a spiritual giant, a man of God, someone who devoted his life to serving Jesus. It was a sad but uplifting occasion which brought our wider family together. Seeing the impact my Father had on others in his generation, made me marvel at the faithful keeping power of God. My Grandfather, Robert, died of TB in 1937 when my father was only about 11. He wanted his family to remember him by this verse in 2 Timothy Ch 1 "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day." My Father committed his life to Jesus in 1943, six years later.

This year we had the great occasion of Rachael's baptism at Fellowship Afloat on March 6<sup>th</sup> - an amazing day for Rachael, and a truly heartwarming and encouraging one for the rest of us. Sorry we only have a black and white picture!

And then in June, John and Jamie's marriage ceremony in Italy, where the whole of our immediate family were together, having a great party and wonderful time with a new family, forging new transatlantic links with Rob & Bev and Chris & Alex Pruden from Tucson, Arizona.



This photograph above, showing the family together with Jamie at the wedding, captures the joy of the moment and fills my heart with gratitude to God. Way back in time the writer of the book of Deuteronomy put it like this "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him."



## *An Everyday God* *A Testimony* *by Carol Bowerman*

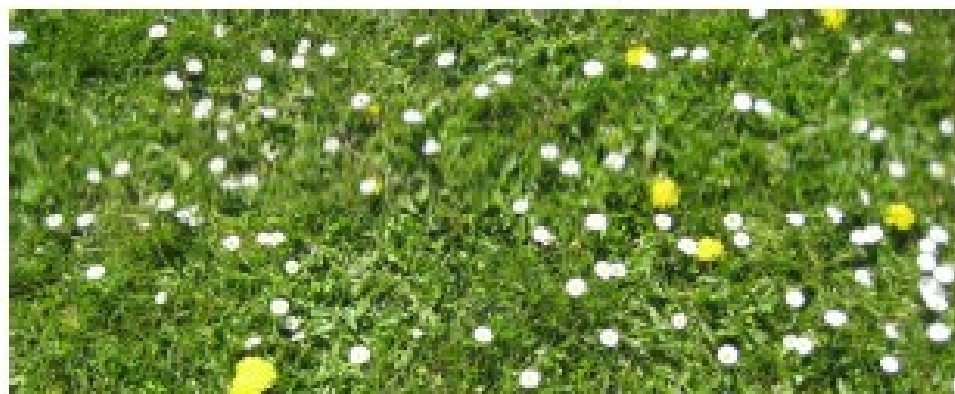
For all the drama of my youth and the crises of my twenties and thirties, I seem to find myself now in comfy suburbia, being a house wife and mother to three boys. Why do I believe in God? Because He got me through. When times were tough and I didn't know myself, He knew me and made others come to me that I didn't know I needed. He was the thread that kept me going when the self-destruct button was almost too tempting. Looking back I see how many of the complications I encountered were ways God had of making me keep going. It's been hard to let go of the troubles, they were, after all, who I was, how I defined myself. As I learnt to relax more into God, the more I found that I was someone underneath all that angst. God knew I was there, he just needed to help me find it. Tests and trials were the only way - "we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." Rom 5:3

It's such a cliché, but I have learnt in the last ten years (slow learner, I became a Christian thirty years ago!) that the more I relax into God,

the more He helps. The more I really trust Him, the more He comes up with the goods. And the physical and emotional relief is tangible when a problem is truly handed over to God. Yes, the problems are still there, but God is dealing with them now. Most recently I have become more aware of God's presence in everything. The more tuned in to God I become, the more I notice Him. The more I want to behave in His way. I listen to songs on the radio, non-Christian songs, and I hear the promises of God in them. Probably not intentional by the songwriter, but God is still ruler of our world.

I think the point I would most like to make about living with God, is that when you open your ears and eyes to Him, you will find Him. He is always searching and listening and proving himself and offering gifts and celebrating your joys. He is there. He helps you drive safely home. He finds that parking space for you when you are ridiculously late. He finds that wedding ring when you thought it was gone forever. The little things we don't notice, but that make our lives better day to day. It's not coincidence, we are being looked after. We may not need a big miracle, we may just need some help through the chaos or the monotony of the day. Let Him. We just need to forget ourselves and wake up and realise who is helping us.

"Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Eph 5:14



Beach Rules:  
Rest.  
Relax.  
Recharge.



# The Cinnamon Trust

The National Charity for the elderly, the terminally ill and their pets

The Bantham Swoosh is a 6k (or nearly 4 mile) swim down the river Avon in Devon. I took part to raise money for a charity called the Cinnamon Trust who I dog walk for.

I'd been training long and hard for the swim but it was surprisingly difficult on the day. My visibility and technique were really hampered by accidentally picking up someone else's (terrible) goggles. I ended up swimming the whole thing alone - a few minutes behind the main pack of swimmers and a few minutes in front of the group doing a sterling job keeping up the rear. It felt pretty quiet and lonely.

I say "alone" but I wasn't really alone: I had a lifeguard paddling on a board next to me the whole time. Even though I couldn't see him because of the waves and my terrible goggles, and I couldn't hear him because of my thick hat, I knew he was there keeping me on course and stopping me from swimming into the main boating channel. When I got cramp, and when I was on the verge of a panic attack he talked me through it. At the end, when I'd finished after almost everyone else had gone home, he celebrated with me with a big high five before I crossed the finish line.

A little while afterwards, I realised that we all have a lifeguard with us all day, every day, cheering us on. We can't see God, sometimes we struggle to hear him but we know he's there quietly travelling alongside us, supporting us, encouraging us and celebrating when we do the hard things. Like Rend Collective sing: "You are the peace in my troubled sea".

The reason I was fundraising for the Cinnamon Trust is that I walk a lovely dog called Frankie who is owned by a lovely couple called Lynne and John who have Leukemia and Parkinsons. Lynn has really appreciated everyone from Bethel's prayers over the last few months and we have had some great conversations about God, prayer and hope through adversity. I saw Lynn last week and she has found out that as her Leukemia is very rare (apparently she is one of 4 people in the world with this type) the doctors have run out of treatment options. She is doing her best to keep positive about this but I know she's finding things very hard. Please pray for Lynn and John to make the most of the time they have together and for Lynn to stay healthy for long enough to see her grandchildren grow older. The doctors have given her a year, but please pray for more time for her.



I've raised £270 so far - thank you so much to all who have sponsored me! I am keeping my sponsorship page open for a couple more months to try and reach my target of £500, my fundraising page is [www.charitychoice.co.uk/fundraiser/carlajohnson/bantham-swoosh](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/fundraiser/carlajohnson/bantham-swoosh).

Carla Johnson



## WHAT WE BELIEVE

(<http://www.aog.org.uk/about-us/what-we-believe>)

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice.

*2 Tim 3:15-16, 2 Peter 1:21*

We believe in the unity of the One True and Living God who is the Eternal, Self-Existent "I AM", Who has also revealed Himself as One being co-existing in three Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Deut 6:4, Mark 12:29, Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14*

We believe in the Virgin Birth, Sinless Life, Substitutionary Atoning Death, Miraculous Ministry, Triumphant Ascension, Bodily Resurrection, and Abiding Intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ and in His personal, visible, bodily return in power and glory as the blessed hope of all believers.

*Isaiah 7:14, Matt 1:23, Heb 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22, Acts 2:22, 10:38, 2 Cor 5:21, Heb 9:12, Luke 24:39, 1 Cor 15:4, Acts 1:9, Eph 4:8-10, Rom 8:34, Heb 7:25, 1 Cor 15:22-24, 51-57, 1 Thess 4:13-18, Rev 20:1-6*

We believe in the fall of man, who was created pure and upright, but fell by voluntary transgression.

*Genesis 1:26-31, 3:1-7, Rom 5:12-21*

We believe in salvation through faith in Christ, who, according to the Scriptures, died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day, and that through His Blood we have Redemption.

*Titus 2:11, 3:5-7, Rom 10:8-15, 1 Cor 15:3-4*

This experience is also known as the new birth, and is an instantaneous and

complete operation of the Holy Spirit upon initial faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*John 3:5-6, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 5:1*

We believe that all who have truly repented and believed in Christ as Lord and Saviour are commanded to be baptised by immersion in water.

*Matt 28:19, Acts 10:47-48, Acts 2:38-39*

We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an endowment of the believer with power for service, biblical evidence of which is the speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.

*Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:4, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 19:6*

We believe in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of Christ in the Church today.

*1 Cor 12:4-11, 28, Eph 4:7-16*

We believe in holiness of life and conduct in obedience to the command of God.

*1 Peter 1:14-16, Heb 12:14, 1 Thess 5:23, 1 John 2:6*

We believe that deliverance from sickness, by Divine Healing is provided for in the Atonement.

*Isai 53:4-5, Matt 8:16-17, James 5:13-16*

We believe that all who have truly repented and believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour should regularly participate in Breaking of Bread.

*Luke 22:14-20, 1 Cor 11:20-34*

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the everlasting conscious bliss of all who truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and the everlasting conscious punishment of all whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

*Dan 12:2-3, John 5:28-29, 1 Cor 15:22-24, Matt 25:46, 2 Thess 1:9, Rev 20:10-15*

*The lot is cast into the lap,  
but it's every decision is  
from the Lord.*

*Proverbs 16:33*

The EU referendum on June 23<sup>rd</sup> has clearly been an emotional subject to the country as a whole. With 72.2% of the population (33.6 million people) taking part and 4.1 million disputing the outcome with a petition to the British government, it is easy to wonder where, or if, we should stand in this political debate. All personal opinions aside, where do we stand as Christians in this situation where our country and our friends are so deeply divided? As with all things, we should look to the Bible first for our advice.

How should we behave? In 1 Timothy 2, Paul says "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth ... Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing."

Romans 13 says "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves ... Therefore it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience."

[www.christiantoday.com/article/eu-referendum.christian.today.live.blog/89105.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/eu-referendum.christian.today.live.blog/89105.htm)

[ctbi.org.uk/eu-referendum-church-reactions/](http://ctbi.org.uk/eu-referendum-church-reactions/)

[www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/social/post-referendum-prayers](http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/social/post-referendum-prayers)

[www.christianpost.com/news/anglican-catholic-churches-call-for-unity-love-for-refugees-uk-votes-for-brexit-165616/](http://www.christianpost.com/news/anglican-catholic-churches-call-for-unity-love-for-refugees-uk-votes-for-brexit-165616/)

[www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/David-Cameron-resigns-as-PM-in-wake-of-Brexit-Christian-MP-very-sorry](http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/David-Cameron-resigns-as-PM-in-wake-of-Brexit-Christian-MP-very-sorry)

[www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5743/eu-referendum-statement-by-archbishops-of-canterbury-and-york](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5743/eu-referendum-statement-by-archbishops-of-canterbury-and-york)

8 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." Romans 8:28

Titus 3 says "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone ... But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless."

Paul suggests that whatever we may feel - angry, indifferent, joyous - that our response should be to pray, and to pray for all people in this situation, trusting that God is in control and that the shaking of our country should be to the good and glory of God.

In John 16:33 Jesus said "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

A quick concordance search will come up with many verses about leadership and rulers throughout the Bible. So whether we are rejoicing or mourning, our first stop should be the Word of God.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you." 2 Cor 13:11.

I've listed below a range of interesting articles although there are lots of others available offering current Christian opinion. I recommend this article by Andy Walton if you can't face them all:

[www.christiantoday.com/article/the.uk.has.left.the.eu.three.ways.christians.should.respond/89165.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/the.uk.has.left.the.eu.three.ways.christians.should.respond/89165.htm)

Carol Bowerman





## INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

training projects in a variety of trades. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, an advocacy organisation operating across the world and Tear Fund, which provides resources for poor communities in Africa and South America were also mentioned.

I know that most of you support this fellowship financially in some way. That is good and as it should be. Details of how much we give and what it is spent on were given at our AGM in May but quite a lot of you were not able to stay for that event. Our aim has been to give at least 10% of the church's income to mission work of some kind, usually on a monthly basis.

On June 19th, we had a special service with the aim of making us aware of some of the Christian people and organisations around the world that we have supported over recent years, introducing us to some new ones and praying for them. We had some literature to look at and some special guest speakers.

There was a brief introduction to Hand in Hand, a charity based here in Witham which supports numerous projects in Africa, followed by Tools With a Mission, based in Ipswich, which collects, refurbishes and sends out second hand tools to support

The main focus of the service, however, was the work of the International Justice Mission which only last year moved its headquarters to Witham. We were able to welcome three of IJMs interns, and one of them, Lydia from Germany, gave a short presentation showing us examples of people who have been rescued, supported and prayed for by this ministry. Brook, another IJM intern, also related some of her vivid experiences whilst on a recent visit to Iraq.

There followed an opportunity to look at literature and a time of prayer for those engaged in these wonderful ministries.

Our morning offering was given to IJM. With a small top up from church funds, this amounted to £500. It was an interesting and very worthwhile occasion, and gave us a better understanding of how the love of God is being expressed to needy, suffering communities across the world.

David Brett

Letter, 7 July 2016

On behalf of International Justice Mission and the slaves we rescue, I want to thank you for your recent donation of £500. We are honoured that you took part in the *Fight the Good Fight: IJM Sunday* and chose to stand with us, helping to *end slavery for good*. All of us at IJM UK are deeply grateful for your support as we rescue and restore the enslaved and the oppressed. Please extend our thanks to all at Bethel Christian Fellowship.

Yours gratefully

Steve Webster  
Chief Operating Officer, IJM UK

## Answered Prayers

We recently prayed for Ian Siggers' mum, Pauline, who had a nasty fall in the shower and was shaken up quite badly. She had been suffering with a painful back previously and the fall had resulted in a good deal of pain.

Ian asked us to pray for Pauline - that the pain would go and she wouldn't need to go to the hospital.

After a few days Ian responded :

"Just to let you know your prayers have been answered. My mum has been to A and E this morning and she has just bruised her back. Nothing broken, praise God."

Thanks for your prayers.

Ian

FAITH...  
Sees the invisible  
Believes the unbelievable  
And receives the impossible

Corrie ten Boom

Margaret Brannan asked us to pray for her sister Jane, as she was in Broomfield hospital with breathing difficulties. Frances Battley also visited her whilst doing her chaplaincy visits at the hospital.

Margaret replies:

Jane is doing well in spite of her COPD. Since she asked Frances to pray for her she has not even wanted a cigarette and feels sick at the thought - a real answer to prayer.

Thank you for praying.

*And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.*

Romans 8:11

Maureen Wiseman's Daughter in Law Louise has been suffering from a particularly nasty form of ovarian cancer. We have been praying for her now for 9 months or more.

Louise had a major operation, followed by 3-4 months of difficult chemotherapy treatment. Most recently she has had to have a second operation to remove a cyst, but before the operation doctors told her she had a shadow on her liver. The operation was very successful, and tests have shown that the cyst was benign, both further tumours removed, and the "shadow" contained only dead cancer cells.

Louise is now making a very good recovery.

Praise God!

*A Big Thank You to  
Steve Brett!*

BCF would like to extend it's deep appreciation to Steve Brett for his faithful, tireless and effective work as the Fellowship's treasurer for the 27 years since his appointment in 1989. Chris Cottrell will now continue this important work.

## *Sermon Round Up*

To listen again go to

[www.bethel-witham.co.uk/index.php/sermons](http://www.bethel-witham.co.uk/index.php/sermons)

13 Mar - Christiana Moon Easter Reflections  
20 Mar - Gordon Crick on Easter  
27 Mar - Gordon Crick & Gary Fisher Easter Service  
17 Apr - Alan Battley Bethel Values: Worship  
24 Apr - Gordon Crick Bethel Values: Praise & Worship  
1 May - Bethel Values: Giving  
15 May - Gordon Crick & Chris Cottrell on Pentecost  
22 May - Gordon & Liz Crick Bethel Values: Prayer  
29 May - Alan Battley Bethel Values: Holy Living  
5 June - Chris Taylor Bethel Values: Evangelism  
12 June - Liz Watts' Testimony  
19 June - David Brett IJM Talk  
26 June - Gordon Crick Bethel Values: The Holy Spirit  
3 July - Chris Taylor on Communion  
17 July - Gary Fisher on Marriage

Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn.

John Wesley

## *Communion Services*

Sunday 7 August  
Sunday 4 Sept  
Sunday 2 October

## *Help Needed!*

The Fellowship's Finance Team currently consists of Chris Cottrell, Steve Brett, David Cameron and Gordon Crick. The Team wish to recruit another suitable person to assist them in their work. Please talk to Gordon if you are interested!

## *...and Volunteers Needed...*

...at the Bethel building for refurbishment works in August. Can you help? Please contact Gordon if you can!

## *Baptismal Service*

A water baptismal service is planned for Sunday 21st August. Further details to follow.

## *Bethel Website*

Apologies to anyone who has attempted to access the Bethel Website over the last month or so. We have been working on the problems for a while (!) and hope to have it up and running again soon. Thank you for your patience! Please email us if you have any specific queries, or pop in to The Well.

# THE WELL

...born again in  
new colours...

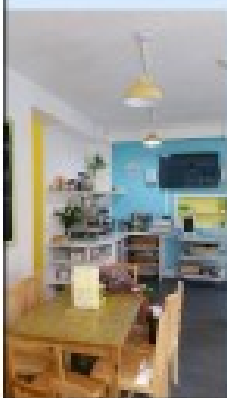


## Community Coffee Shop

Come and visit us at our newly  
renovated coffee shop!

We can offer you fresh coffee, teas,  
cakes and light lunches as well as spiritual  
refreshment and encouragement.

We are here every day between 10am and 2pm, except Sundays  
when we are celebrating at The Maltings Academy, Witham.



Find us at  
One Penhaligon  
Court, Guithavon  
Street, Witham  
— just off  
the high street.



For details see  
our website  
[www.bethel-  
witham.co.uk](http://www.bethel-witham.co.uk) or  
find us on  
 Facebook.



### *BCF Leadership Team*

Gordon Crick (Leading), Gary Fisher, David Cameron, Chris Taylor.

### *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](http://www.bethel-witham.co.uk) [bethelwitham@googlemail.com](mailto:bethelwitham@googlemail.com)*

*01376 520705*