

Bethel Christian Fellowship

Vital Signs

The
Truth
Is
Out
There

October 2017

He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Proverbs 19:17

What is Foodbank Sunday?



Each Sunday for the last three years we have been donating food and cash to the food bank appeal. There has been a plastic box by the welcome desk and information leaflets on the table. On many Sundays there have been specific details of what donations are urgently needed. Over this period the number and quantity of donations has gradually diminished, and on one Sunday this year there were no donations at all.

I completely understand that it is not always easy to remember to pick up an extra packet or tin when you are shopping, but I refuse to believe that you have stopped caring about those who experience food crisis through no fault of their own!

So sometimes you have to try something new! For the last few months there has been no collection box and no food request details,

just a reminder on the notice sheet that we are trying a new system. I hope you have seen it!

The new system is to only ask for donations on the first Sunday of each month, either food items or cash. A reminder the week before on the notices and via the Bethel email helps you remember to respond.

I was pleased to take away the contents of five bags on the first 'Foodbank Sunday' and I would like to thank the donors for their kindness to the poor.

It is my hope and prayer that more of you will feel able to make a contribution on future 'Foodbank Sundays' and know the joy of sharing God's love in a very practical way.

God bless you all.
David Brett

Thank you to all who gave to the Amani Orphanage Borehole Appeal at the beginning of October. We raised £792, rounded up to £800, to send to Chris Saunders at the Amani Village of Hope in Kenya.

Community or Fellowship?

Two words that almost mean the same. Community a modern buzzword, fellowship a dated, old fashioned word. We call ourselves Bethel Christian Fellowship, but we are also a community of believers in Jesus Christ. To be a community means we have interests in common, to be a fellowship implies more: friendship, sharing, a common direction.

The ideal is the revolutionary principle of fellowship around a common cause, as Luke describes in Acts 2: *They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* That in a nutshell describes the launching pad for all Christian communities. For us today, the reality often feels different. As the old rhyme puts it:

*To dwell above with saints we love,
that will be grace and glory.
To live below with saints we know;
now, that's another story!*

Many might say that community is an 'impossible possibility'. Community is what we're created for and yet we never quite achieve it, at least not in this world. Community is something almost everyone longs for but everything we call "community" falls short of our hopes. Still, followers of Jesus find it is in our mental and spiritual DNA to hope for that loving, grace filled community of Christ.

We know that the original community is God himself. Or should I say "Themselves?" Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the perfect community in whose image we are created. Jesus prayed that the church would be a reflection of that divine community. In John 17 he asked the Father to make his disciples one as he and the Father are

one. But we know from church history how, for the most part, the church has failed miserably in that calling.

Even so, here and there throughout history, maybe in our own experience, real community has appeared. People have for a few brief hours, days, months or even years experienced the beauty of true community – in part, imperfectly, but truly and sweetly nevertheless. Real community is a gift, it isn't an achievement. That's why there's something paradoxical about the term "intentional community." We can intend community all day but we'll never have it just by intending it. We have to receive it. But that's not as easy as it sounds.

One of the most challenging writers on community is Dietrich Bonhoeffer- the German theologian killed in World War 2. He wrote these words-

"Christian community is like the Christian's sanctification. It is a gift of God which we cannot claim. Only God knows the real state of our fellowship, of our sanctification. What may appear weak and trifling to us may be great and glorious to God. Just as the Christian should not be constantly feeling his spiritual pulse, so, too, the Christian community has not been given to us by God for us to be constantly taking it's temperature. The more thankfully we daily receive what is given to us, the more surely and steadily will fellowship increase and grow from day to day as God pleases."

We love each other, because Jesus first loved us and gave his life for us. In response we must give ourselves, and forgive - recognising that we all stand equally sinful before the Father. In all we do we must make the love of Jesus our heart's desire and life's goal. In receiving Jesus, humbly and in unvarnished truth, we receive the seeds of true fellowship.

Gordon

WHAT NEXT?

What happened when you became a Christian?

If you've recently become a Christian, then you're at the very beginning of a new life with God. At first, you may have many questions, doubts and confusions; this is hardly surprising when you realise what's just happened to you. Don't worry, as you live your life the way God wants you to, these questions, doubts and confusions will be answered in His time. You're like a new-born child who needs to learn many things; you must also remember that you've lived life as you please up to now. There will, therefore, be many things which you need to unlearn as well.

Upon becoming a Christian, there are a number of life-changing things that have happened to you which you will need to know in order to grow and mature, and the following short Bible study will bring you up to date...

You are a child of God: John 1:12-13. You have eternal life and you will not be condemned, because you have crossed over from death to life: John 5:24. God will never leave you or forsake you: Hebrews 13:5. You have the power available to overcome the world: 1 John 5:4-5. You have received part of God Himself, the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 1:13-14.

Before you became a Christian, you were a two-part person, you had a body and soul (consisting of will, mind and emotions); upon becoming a Christian, you became a three-part person. You still have your body and soul, but your spirit, which once wasn't active, has now been made alive by the
4 Holy Spirit. So, instead of just relying

on yourself, and on what your five senses teach you, as you did before, you can now rely on God, who's dwelling within you in the form of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is too full of God-given, helpful instructions to Christians for me to list them all here, but unless you put the following principles into action in your life, you won't grow and mature as a Christian:

* A Christian is a disciple, or follower, of Jesus and from now on you should put the claims of Jesus first in your life regardless of the cost to yourself. When you gave your life to God, you made Him Lord of it, which means He's the boss, not you; you need to obey everything He asks you to do, but remember, God is love, He'll only ask you to do things which grow out of the love that He has for you and for other people.

* The Bible is the God-inspired book which needs to be read and studied regularly by every Christian; it's God's handbook for successful Christian living.

* All Christians need to pray to God, and prayer is simply talking with and listening to God. Regular prayer will enable your relationship with God to grow.

* You cannot be a Christian on your own. Christians are like coals glowing in a fire; together we'll give warmth and light to each other, as well as to those outside the fire. If we don't get fellowship with other Christians, we'll begin to lose our fire, we'll begin to go cold. The best place to be with other Christians is in the local church where you'll find help and encouragement.

* The Bible teaches us to tell others

about Jesus and all He's done for us, don't keep your Christianity to yourself; it's a matter of life and death to others just as it is to you.

* Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit on a daily basis; you need the Holy Spirit to empower you and to enable you to serve God effectively.

* *Finally*; it's no good only giving God the bit of your life that you want to give Him, God wants you to follow Him whole-heartedly. You need to continually keep your eyes on Him and not let yourself be distracted from following after Him. He's given your life meaning and purpose, you need to give your life totally over to Him, and obey Him, knowing that He's promised to be with you always.

Keith Taylor.



I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

John 8:12

Funny Old World

Isn't it funny when facing something so cruel your coping mechanism steps up....

Isn't it funny how there is always someone who has been on this journey and guides you along the path that is set....

Isn't it funny however much you are having to handle in life you manage....

Isn't it funny however dark it may seem there is always light....

Isn't it funny how you never feel alone....

But actually none of this is funny happenings. It is God. It is God who works within and gives inner peace...

It is God who sends someone to guide you, to lead you in the right path....

It is God who never gives you more than you can handle at any one time....

It is God that shines a light in your heart....

It is God that upholds you with His righteous hand.

Whatever you are going through in life, however big or small, God is with you always. He is faithful. He is with me on my journey and I am loved by Him. He wraps me in His blanket and I feel safe. He gives me protection. He shines His light within. He does not fail or forsake me. He is knowledge. He is Love.

Trust in the Lord..... He will not let you down.

Angela White

A Prayer For Peace

God's peace doesn't mean we'll have a perfect, stress-free life. Instead, it gives us the security of knowing that when problems do come along, we don't have to be anxious, because God's there alongside us, supporting and helping us through tough times. So let's take a few minutes to pray this prayer for peace this month:

Lord, Your Word says, "God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ" (Philippians 4:7 NCV). Today, I need this amazing peace to settle my nerves and calm my mind. Please fill my heart with your peace, until there's no room left for stress and worry. Your Word says, "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust you!" (Isaiah 26:3NLT). Instead of thinking about my fears and

worries, help me to focus on Your goodness, Your faithfulness, Your healing power, Your overflowing resources, and Your forgiving heart. Jesus said, "I leave you peace; my peace I give you, So don't let your hearts be troubled or afraid" (John 14:27 NCV). Lord, show me what can rob me of Your peace. I really want to know, so I'm aware of exactly what I need to confess, what I need to commit to, and what I need to change. Your Word says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:15 NIV). Today, I want to be ruled by Your peace instead of my fears and worries. So I give all my concerns to You, because I trust You to work them out for my good and for Your glory. Thank You for the gift of peace that You offer me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

From Encouraging Words Everyday, (UCB), submitted by Brian Pease.

© Microsoft clipart

My Husband, Normand

My husband, Normand, was admitted to Broomfield Hospital in July, and then to Madelayne Court Care Home in Chelmsford in August. He suffers from Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia, and his needs became so acute that I could no longer cope with him at home.

In mid September I had a call saying he was ready to be discharged in two days time. My response was instinctive - "NOT AT MINE!" I felt so unable to manage Normand's needs. I met the manager of the home and the Welfare Officer. She asked Normand "How would you like to go home?" Normand

responded quite angrily, "Don't you know I have dementia? She", pointing at me, "cannot look after me anymore. The only time I will go home is when Jesus heals me, either here or in heaven!!" This silenced the room. The welfare officer replied, "I had heard you are religious" and Normand said, "I am not religious. I believe in Jesus".

This is a very difficult time for me. But Normand is settled in Chelmsford, and I am comforted by knowing that even though Normand's mind and nervous system are dysfunctional, his spirit is still aware of Jesus, his Lord. So I too can say, Praise the Lord!

Peggy Robertse

Whoever has the son has life

— 1 John 5:12

A testimony from Jules

The first real indication that something was wrong was when my G.P. called an ambulance after a routine visit. I knew I was unwell, but I was too scared to go to hospital. Whilst waiting for the ambulance I received a picture of Noah's Ark in the storm. It was in the ambulance I started to become fully aware that something was terribly wrong. My blood pressure was soaring, I felt like I was distant from everything going on. When I was alone in the ambulance for a few minutes (they had to pull over to wait for a third paramedic) I was really very scared. I thought to myself "Dear God, please don't let me die yet!" I begged God for more time – to put straight a lot of situations in my life, to walk with Jesus more closely. I was praying to God for a second chance.

After being told in hospital that I had a clot in my heart and had suffered heart failure, I felt very isolated. My heart consultant explained my enlarged heart was only beating 35% of my blood around my body. He said it would be a lifelong illness. I felt I was in the eye of a storm and I understood very clearly that only God's intervention would get me through. This was the first of many, really frightening episodes.

One particular evening, once home, I was really weak, sick, not knowing how long I had to live, and I felt true fear. I felt frozen, like darkness was surrounding me. I was petrified. I thought what should I do? So I prayed. Just a few words over and over again, "I belong to Jesus Christ, I belong to Jesus, I belong to Jesus!"

I have had many incidences of God answering prayer – prayer became vital. Sometimes a prayer in my mind, sometimes angry, tear-filled prayers, not understanding what was going on. Would I see my children grow up? Would I be able to live a closer life with God in thankfulness of Him seeing me through this ordeal? There were times when I wondered if I would live to see the next day. But other times, I felt that I could feel God's peace when praying. From my first A&E admittance in February to my diagnosis this October, God guided me with images brought about in prayer. Once when praying, God showed me a picture of a friend with cancer with Satan claiming his work, then God appeared in pure brilliant light and blew apart Satan and the image – God showing me He was in control of *Absolutely Everything!*

In mid-October, I revisited my heart consultant for the results of an ECG. He pointed to his computer screen – "Read that!" he said with a huge smile on his face. It said my heart was now beating normally, the clot had flushed through and the heart was no longer enlarged! I later understood why he was so amazed, enlarged hearts have never been known to reduce back to size! He went on to say he had never seen this before, and my case was being shown to other heart consultants and students. He said I was an 'enigma'! No, I thought, this is the work of my Living God. He is faithful and will never let us go! God used this situation to speak to my consultant, to show him, a man of science, that there is a living God, who we cannot limit to anything!

Because of what God got me through, I no longer fear anything, I know my God is 100% totally in control. Hand everything over to God in prayer! Amen!

Jules Coogan



The Well, Guithavon Street

We were thrilled to see some of our customers come to café church last month. A big welcome to you all and hope to see you again soon!

After listening to customer feedback we now have an additional menu for those who require smaller portions or who are pensioners. It's an extensive menu, generally cheaper than the main menu and includes our famous cooked breakfast with cup of tea for only £3.00.

Look out for our new specials each week. This week we are serving Heart Warming Tomato Soup with a Cheese Toastie to dip. Yum!

We have a new prayer board in the café. If you have something that needs prayer, please feel free to add it to the board. There are white cards and a pen by the side to write on. These prayers will be included in our staff daily morning prayers.

Did you know that we sell books, cards and CDs? We have a range available so if you would like to have a look please ask a member of staff.

Our Book of the Month is *Darkness to Destiny* by Gwynneth Sunshine (£10.00). It is such a good read and has received rave reviews such as the one from Rosy (see box).

5*****

Enjoyed freshly made coffee here today, welcoming and helpful staff made my first visit here an experience that I hope to repeat!

Rosalind on Facebook

See TripAdvisor for other great reviews!

We also have a range of books and other items available for free to bless our customers. Just ask if you would like to see any.

We currently have a vacancy for a chef to work every other Monday and Wednesday. If you are interested please contact me.

A huge thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who come in every week, they do such a great job and are a real blessing. Thank you, everyone.

Amanda Harrison

thesugarfloristscakeshop@gmail.com

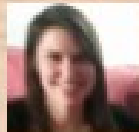
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Darkness to Destiny 5*

This is a testimony that holds the attention of the reader from start to finish. Gwynneth has an amazing heart for evangelism and an affinity with the people on the street who tend to be invisible to most of us. She already possessed this affinity before going through a very dark time, but because of this terrifying experience, she is, more than ever, able to identify with the homeless, the disenfranchised, the hurting, the suicidal and the unloved, bringing the love of Jesus to them and the promise of new life in Him. I could not put this book down!" - Rosy.



Autumn Sugar Fast For Tiny Souls



I am giving up all sugary treats for the Autumn to raise money for Tiny Souls. I started in September and won't be finishing until the end of November. This is an amazing project for bereaved families where my friend and professional photographer takes pictures of babies who have passed away. This service is free of charge to families and creates treasured memories. My photos of our beautiful Isaac, stillborn at 39 weeks, are such a precious keepsake to help us keep his memory alive.

Please support me raising money for Tiny Souls and to support other bereaved families, in memory of Isaac and all babies gone too soon.

Thank you.

Liz Watts

<https://www.gofundme.com/autumn-sugar-fast-for-tiny-souls>

But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.

Job 5: 8-9





Bethel Holiday Outreaches 2000-2017

First and foremost I must say I have been highly honoured that God gave me such an amazing job to do. I have loved every moment of it! When planning, I have always asked for God's help and this has made a great difference to everything that we have done.

We have travelled as far as America and Canada, and as near as Eastbourne. The holidays have brought the lonely together and many that have lost partners have made forever friendships. I am very thankful that lots of church people have joined us over the years and supported me. I would like to give special thanks to Steve and Angie Brett, and Alan and Frances Battley, who have given me great help and support always.

There are too many to mention so just a bit about some special trips.

2009

33 people visited the USA and we were able to go on a helicopter to the Grand Canyon.

2013

We went to Pennsylvania to stay on an Amish farm, this was a very special experience. We would all sit



around a large table for breakfast with the farm workers. After singing a morning prayer we all shared a bit about ourselves. We also had music mornings when David, Alan and Frances joined in. On the Sunday, we all went to church, and David (Brett) walked down the front, sat at the piano and played *Amazing Grace*, that was very special.

2017

The most recent holiday was a few weeks ago when we visited the small country of Montenegro. This is my very favourite place out of everywhere else we have been. It shows the majesty of God in it's beauty and the peace all around, with mountains and lakes in abundance, and from our villas in the view you could see.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

Margaret Brannan

If you are interested in any of our future trips, please contact Gordon or Margaret.



Answered Prayers

I was in the waiting room waiting for the operation on my leg. I was the last of the list, but as the Bible says, the last ones will be the first. God kept me the only private room on the floor, everyone was in common rooms except for me. God is good. I'm waiting.

The operation was perfect. I didn't feel any pain during or after. Waking up after anaesthesia was quite hard, I was very dizzy, with vomiting, disorientation and with cramps in the chest. The anaesthetist decided to give me more painkillers and I slept another three hours. But I slept quite well so was ready to go home .

Thank you all for your prayers and support. Love you all.

Juan Carlos
September 2017

In August I was seeking urgent prayer for my grand-daughter, Piper. Piper had fallen from a bouncy castle and was rushed to Broomfield hospital by ambulance. She was complaining of back pain and couldn't move her arms or speak at that time. The paramedics felt the situation was very serious.

I am pleased to tell you that Piper suffered no more than bad bruising, praise God, and has made a complete recovery. Thank you for your prayers.

Beryl Spiers
August 2017

I am pleased to say that I am making progress in my cancer treatment and feeling well. The nerve tingling is also much better but my hands do get cold!

The eighth and final session of chemotherapy should be on the 2nd of November, followed by a CT scan on the 22nd of November.

I can say in all sincerity, I am blessed.

John Appleton
October 2017

My journey with breast cancer is ongoing but I remain positive throughout. I am uplifted by your prayers and support. The Bethel family has been my rock. A special thank you to Jenny W.... as she has been guiding me along this chosen path. The kindness you have all shown is overwhelming. I have had many signs indicating that the angels are close and I am constantly wrapped in God's blanket. My first chemo was challenging but I got through it and am preparing for my next one on Friday 3rd November. For every day that passes I am getting closer to God and am thankful for His protection. God Bless.

Angela White
October 2017



Breaking of Bread
First Sunday of the month

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

Donations for Witham
Foodbank on the first Sunday
of each month please!
Food or cash accepted!

#foodbanksunday

*For he is the living God
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.
He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.*

Daniel 6: 26-27

Bethel Christian Fellowship meets:

- * at 9.30am on the second Sunday of the month
for a café 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

Church office at The Well Coffee Shop, Guithavon St, Witham.