

Bethel Christian Fellowship

Vital Signs

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

Martin Luther King

July 2017



Summary of the Annual General Meeting of Bethel Christian Fellowship, held 14th May, 2017.

Pastor's report

Gordon Crick expressed his thanks and appreciation to the many people in the Fellowship who are involved in a wide range of our activities.

He then spoke about his plans to hand over leadership at Bethel. When he started leading the Fellowship in 2010, he had a distinct sense of a purpose and finish point for his ministry (Col 4:17) and he now believes that the mission God has given him is to "take the leadership at Bethel and hand it over to a younger generation" and that the point had now come to start talking openly about this. Chris Taylor has sensed a call into leadership, and is following this up with training to become an *Assemblies of God* accredited minister, thus Gordon believed the right date for him to step down was September 2018, allowing time for the Fellowship and leadership team to plan and prepare.

Gordon moved on to talk about our home groups which from September this year will be revamped. Gordon concluded by saying that he was looking for growth in this year - in our numbers, our giving and in our love.

Elder Reports

(a) Chris Taylor shared how he was confident that it was in God's will for him to succeed Gordon in the position of Senior Elder. Chris also spoke about home groups and how he felt that the groups were very important in the process of discipling individuals in their faith.



(b) David Cameron expressed his thanks for the support his family had received during a difficult year, and also for the support within the Fellowship for those attending NewDay. He felt that the confidence gained participating in home groups could lead to a greater contribution into the main meetings of the Fellowship.

Financial Report

Chris Cottrell, the Fellowship's Treasurer, presented a brief report providing an overview of income and expenditure for 2016/17. Chris mentioned the importance of giving and explained that there are a number of ways in which giving can be done such as by standing order. He also stressed the value to the Fellowship of Gift Aid for those who are liable for income tax.

Other Business

- * The timing of the offering in meetings to be re-addressed.
- * The continuing need for volunteers to organise the Sunday morning children's work in the Fellowship was acknowledged.

The meeting concluded with a time of prayer for both Gordon and Chris. Many thanks to those of you who attended.

Putting Jesus First



We make decisions all the time. Most are quite small, some are quite big. The more interested we are in the outcomes, the more we research and try to be best informed. And yet we are strangely human about this. For example, Liz and I recently invested in a new washing machine. I left this to Liz and she made a decision in nano seconds, based on her instincts and the price. On the other hand, we talk endlessly about the pros and cons of buying a new car, try to look at costs, reliability and so on. And then, after all the research and talking, I decide we should keep the old one.

The decisions we make are so influenced by who we are, what we have experienced in the past, and what our values are. Our values are shaped by how we look at the world, and how we perceive our place in the world. We may get recognition through having a responsible job, we may be a single mum with three part time jobs, trying to make ends meet. The decisions we make show clearly what we value and what is most important to us.

According to the Mirror newspaper, 96% of British people believe that strong family values prepare children for a happy life. Interestingly too, an article in the Telegraph in June this year pointed out the gap between the number of people marrying rather than divorcing is now wider than at any time

since 1992. Numbers of marriages are increasing, divorces are falling. These facts can be seen as being encouraging for Christians, but on the other hand there is the fact that more couples are co-habiting without getting married than ever before.

Life is complicated! I need some help. I ask myself, what is the value in the Value? The Bible is a source of truth. At the root of the Christian's value system is a radical statement from Jesus: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* (Matt 6:33)

Many Christians are very practical about everyday decisions, "It really is not necessary to pray about these." But anybody who has lived on the edge knows, small things become big things, and God does answer prayer and help us when we seek him first.

As you put Jesus, his will and his work first in your daily life, you will begin to fully experience God's love and care, for he has promised to provide all your daily needs. Do not spend too much time agonising over the evidence, have faith, step out.

Make the decision to put Jesus first.

Gordon



The Future Ahead

Where do I begin? God has moved mountains in me to get to the place I am now. It's hard to imagine the journey God has taken this timid school child, who was constantly being told was too quiet and who failed his GCSEs, to the person I am today.

I am an introvert who loves to refresh in the quietness of my own and God's thoughts. It's just when it comes to God, I must stand up for Jesus which is why I love to worship the Lord.

Who Am I?

I am a family man who was saved in 2001. My wife, Suzy, is wonderful and my two boys, Luke and Arran, are great. My chosen career was electrician, just like my Dad, which I was for 20 years. This is where the importance of risk management and how to lead from the front was grasped. God revealed a change in my career 4 years ago and I took full time employment with London Underground working for the lift and escalator department. It's funny how, when I look back on my life, I can see how God has been equipping me for ministry my whole journey with Him.

What is my passion? I love Jesus. This means wanting to see people saved and for them to know His love. That good news needs to be declared to the nations.

What is my style of leadership? I believe in leading from the front, by getting into the trenches but also by recognising the gifting of the team and helping to release brothers & sisters to develop ministries. I'm also a believer in Ephesians 4:11, that these giftings are needed for a church to thrive. God has given us the Holy Spirit to witness

Jesus to the nations and He has also given us spiritual and practical gifts as well. My primary gifting is evangelism but I have prophetic gifting as well.

What Is My Call?

I was baptised with Suzy on September 30th 2001 and the Pastor's wife said to me that God had revealed that I would go into the ministry. That began the countdown for me and over the years I have prayerfully considered many different opportunities. I first became a deacon in 2002. When we arrived at Bethel, we had been sent out from our church in Collier Row, Romford as missionaries, with a picture of us being pebbles in a big pond causing a ripple wherever we go.

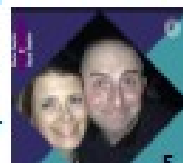
The calling needs to be so strong and testing for being a Pastor; it's not something to do for fun. When the tough times come, it's the calling that reminds us of God's promises when He called us. I have had my call to pastor at Bethel confirmed by personal conviction, scripture, words of knowledge and from outside of Bethel when I was assessed by *Assemblies of God* to become a Pastor.

What About The Future?

We are now in the transition of handing the baton from Gordon to me. For the next 13-14 months it will be a process of joining and working together. What will happen afterwards? God will reveal. But we are building upon a foundation which stands upon the shoulders of great ministries which have gone before me. I am just another brick in the wall to help equip the building of the Kingdom of God. I believe in clear vision, practical outworkings of the purposes of the vision, and communication. God Bless.

Chris

Feel free to follow me on Twitter
@chris7taylor



The Story of The Well

The Well opened in October 2008 as a result of a vision that Liz Crick had for Bethel to have a 'shop to the world' with a bay window, with the then pastor of the church, Tim Bedward Jones, looking out.

Paul Brooks (who still works there today) suggested the name of The Well. The meaning was twofold: a traditional place where men and women would meet to draw water and have fellowship, and after a café by Victoria coach station where travellers from all over the world would join for refreshment and then pray upstairs (which Paul and his wife had frequented many times in the past).

The Well was always intended to be a place of peace and spiritual refreshment for the people of Witham more than a business. Originally the shop was filled with Christian books and cds that could be borrowed on a sale or return basis, although in practice this proved difficult to manage.

The Well is Bethel Christian Fellowship's town centre presence, and our official church office is also situated here. It is also the mid-week hub for other church activities such as prayer meetings, alpha groups, musical evenings and Christian book launches.

We hope we have built a reputation not only for good food and coffee, but also a place to find spiritual peace, receive encouragement, be listened to, or to just relax and 'be'. Free bibles are available to anyone who wants one, and we do have a small selection of books we can lend.

Jenny Wijekoon is our award winning, fully trained pastoral care volunteer. Jenny uses the Well as a base and offers care in whatever form is needed: spiritual, physical, practical or emotional. Most of her work involves just being there to listen, both to church and non-church members, and this might mean at the Well or by home visits if more appropriate. Jenny is experienced at signposting those in need to relevant agencies, such as housing, CAB, counselling and the food bank if needed.

Jenny can be found at The Well on Wednesdays, no appointment necessary, just pop in.

We are
open
10am-2pm,
Monday-
Saturday



Our volunteers are a mixture of faithful and friendly Bethel Christian Fellowship church attendees.

We also have one volunteer per shift who may be recovering from mental health issues, has learning disabilities, may need language support or have other health issues.



"A hidden gem!"
- The Braintree & Witham Times

We are Fairtrade registered. We serve lovely coffee called Kingdom Coffee, which is an ethical and sustainable Fairtrade coffee. All our teas are Clipper Fairtrade, and we sell Cadbury's Fairtrade hot chocolate and use Fairtrade sugar and biscuits.

We believe in supporting local businesses. Our cakes come from talented Witham bakers and a local cake maker called Tracey McDonald (the Wickedly Indulgent Cake Company). Our bread is from Witham Greggs, and our milk from Witham Farmfoods. All our eggs are from free-range hens.

Summer Specials!
Iced Caramel Latte
Cream Teas
Ice-cream Sundaes
Quiche & Salad

BUT We Need You!

The Well is a great asset to our community - but as with all things, we are only as great as the people who work here.

We have recently been so short of volunteers that we have had to close on Wednesdays. Our vision was obviously to be available to the people of Witham throughout the week and we are not able to do this at present.

Could you be available for a rewarding and enjoyable position within your local community? We have ongoing volunteer positions to fill on Mondays and Wednesdays (9.30-2.30), as well as hoping for some more flexible staff who can come in when cover is needed. Ideally we would like to have enough people on hand not only to serve coffee and snacks but also to be available to talk and pray or just be with customers who need it.

Does this sound like you?

Permanent volunteers should be over 18 and a Christian, but we'd also love to have some of our teens in to help out on Saturdays or during school holidays.

If you feel like God wants you helping more in your local community and being there for those who need a friend, perhaps this ministry is for you. Please contact Amanda Harrison if you'd like to discuss further.

Email: thesugarfloristscakeshop@gmail.com
or find me in The Well x



By Michael Stern - 1000000041804_D01_600, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4873214>

What's going on at Café Church?

At the last Church Council meeting it was decided to review our 'Café Church' to see if the original aims were being met and to respond to some practical issues.

The two original aims were (a) to develop 'fellowship' and (b) to provide a less formal service that would be attractive to non-Christians.

The present format has gone down well with most people and the current table-top provision for children means that children's workers get a one-in-four week break, which has been much appreciated. Visitors have been impressed with the friendly atmosphere and the lovely croissants, toast and pastries, cheerfully provided and served by a wonderful team of helpers. The aim of developing fellowship seems well served.

Some reservations have been expressed about the suitability of the café format for worship, and speakers have sometimes struggled to keep to the shorter time frame and the type of talk suitable for non-Christian visitors. The content has been too similar to our normal service, it has been suggested.

Achieving a good clear sound system

has also been difficult in the unusually high-ceilinged café area and the (literally) heavy burden of moving all the PA and musical equipment down to the café and back up again afterwards takes a lot of effort.

A new format has been proposed which tries to focus on the second aim and to alleviate the set up issues. Congregational worship gives way to the performance of spiritual songs by a much smaller musical group. Ten minute talks on topics of wider interest, testimonies and book reviews make up a more visitor-orientated programme, to which church members could feel confident inviting non-Christian family and friends. It was agreed to alternate this new format with the existing one for a few months before deciding on its future.

At our recent AGM Gordon identified the vision for BCF going forward as GROWTH. It is our prayer that being willing to try new approaches to 'doing church' will encourage us all to invite others to our monthly café church - a real contribution to our evangelistic ministry.

David Brett,
For the Church Council & Elders.

Recommendations to Inspire

©CarolBowerman

YouTube - new music

Search for: Hillary Scott -
Thy Will Be Done



Search for: Lauren Daigle -
Trust in You

Anna Faro writes:

I was really blessed by a couple of songs I came across on YouTube. One is by Hillary Scott which is called *Thy Will Be Done*. It's got a beautiful, memorable tune and words which have really impacted me. Among them: "I'm so confused, I know I heard you loud and clear, so I followed through, somehow I ended up here. I don't wanna think, I may never understand, how my broken heart is a part of your plan. When I try to pray, all I got is hurt and these four words: Thy will be done...."

Another verse says: "It's hard to count it all joy, distracted by the noise, just trying to make sense of all your promises. Sometimes I gotta stop, remember that you're God and I am not..."

Lauren Daigle has a really distinctive voice and I love her sound and her honesty. Her song *Trust in You* says "I've tried to win this war I confess, my hands are weary, I need your rest. Mighty warrior, King of the fight, no matter what I face you're by my side...When you don't move the mountains I'm needing you to move, when you don't part the waters I wish I could walk through, when you don't give the answers as I cry out to you: I will trust, I will trust, I will trust in you..."

I'd really recommend a listen.

Website:

www.pray-as-you-go.org



A daily prayer session designed to help you pray whenever you find the time, a framework rather than a 'thought for the day'. There is a 15 minute reflection on a passage of scripture which is beautifully put together, read aloud, and includes an excerpt of appropriate music too.

Book:

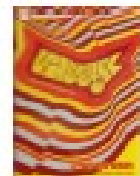
Darkness to Destiny
by Gwyneth Sunshine



Gwyneth comes from Chelmsford and recently gave her testimony at The Well. This is an unputdownable book exploring how God turns lives around, and brings us through our darkest times.

DVD:

Unusual
by Louie Giglio/Passion City Church



An inspiring watch that coincides with recent sermons at Bethel, focusing on the unusualness of God and our responsibility for excellence as followers of Him.

App:

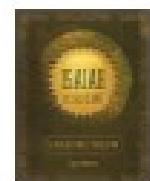
iDisciple

iDisciple - available for free on Google Play and the Apple App Store

Offers everything from music to sermons, life changing content from relevant authors, speakers and ministries, customisable to your areas of interest.

Book:

Isaiah by the Day: A New Devotional Translation (Daily Readings) by Alec Motyer



An inspiring and thought provoking daily read through Isaiah, linking historical themes with up to date issues.



Answered Prayers

By Brown - Own work, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunset_1539176

Maureen Wiseman's daughter, Louise, has recently gone through some final medical tests and has been confirmed as clear of cancer. This is a great answer to prayer. Louise was diagnosed with very serious, aggressive ovarian cancer in 2015 and needed extensive surgery and chemotherapy. Thank you everyone who has prayed for her over the last two years.

Anna Faro

I am the co-chair of a committee running the nursery my youngest daughter, Tilly, goes to. This involves regular volunteering, meetings, fundraisers and behind the scenes decision-making on how the nursery works.

Recently, after only being co-chair for a month or two, I found myself having to prepare for what felt like a very serious meeting about finance with the landlords of the nursery. They are good people, but they don't know me or any of us very well, and when I took the leading role on, I didn't envisage having to be a spokesperson so publicly and so quickly. Especially in matters of finance. Anyone who knows me well knows that my strength lies with words and not numbers! Maths is my Achilles heel!

The meeting loomed and it became obvious that I was going to have to do most of the talking. Even the treasurer couldn't be there as his children were unwell that night. I had asked two experienced past committee members to attend but neither of them could make it either.

It felt like I had been entered for an exam
10 without my permission which I had no

expertise in!!

Prayer being my only back-up, I contacted a few trusted people and asked them to pray hard that all would be well, my words would be well received and the atmosphere better than the meeting before which had been a little tense.

Right from when we entered the building, the atmosphere was better than before. We were in a more relaxed room, with refreshments (where there had been none before) and a greater number of people representing the landlords, several of whom very quickly put me at ease. Without going into details, I want to thank God that the conversation went well and was openly and honestly received. If I'd had to rely on my own strength that evening I would have buckled under the pressure. It felt intense. But only God can go before us and prepare hearts, and knowing that several Godly people were praying made so much difference.

Often the battles we face are psychological, not physical. Thank God that he sees where we are and loves to provide for his children. I am so grateful.

Comments from John Appleton

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In Gordon's recent talk he mentioned the old down and out singing: "Jesus' blood has never failed me" - yet it has touched the hearts of so many, including mine because throughout my cancer treatment, Jesus hasn't failed me!!

The joy of knowing the promises recorded in scripture is one thing, but I can testify the experience of the love and peace of Jesus filling your whole being is eternal!!

My sincere thanks to all the fellowship for your love and prayers on my behalf at this time.

Our God is good.

Every blessing to you all.
John



Lead with excellence.
Back it up with character.
Fuel it by faith.

What will this say to the
world about God?

Louie Giglio
Passion City Church

We should be in the habit of giving thanks and giving God the glory for answered prayer.

Anna Faro, BCF



Sermon Round Up

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

Diary Dates

Sunday 23rd July. Cricket match and social in Hatfield Peverel.

Sunday 13th August. Picnic at West Mersea at Steve and Angie Brett's beach hut. There will be no meeting at Maltings on this day.

Sunday 3rd September. Bethel building at 6.30 p.m. Visit of Gabriel and Daniele Corradini whom we have supported for many years in their work for God in Spain.

Help Needed With Set Up/Set Down Each Sunday!

Can you spare some time either before or after the Sunday meeting to help us set up or put away? We urgently need some extra hands!

There are many other areas where your talents can be used for the benefit of the church if set up isn't for you. Please contact Chris Taylor if you feel you can help out in any way at all.

Email: taylor-chris@hotmail.com

Support Christiana's YWAM mission to Ukraine by going to www.justgiving.com and searching for Christiana Moon. Thank you!

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

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
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