

Bethel Christian Fellowship - April 2019

# Vital Signs

**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WITHAM**  
invites you to support the 32nd

# **EASTER MARCH of WITNESS**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

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

\*

Bring your family and friends on our 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.

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For more information phone David Brett on 01376 617308

## Easter Thoughts from Pastor Chris Taylor



Hello all,

God has been very good to us as a church and is blessing us! Every week I am amazed by the way that God answers our prayers and fulfils promises.

I was given a prophetic word before my appointment as Pastor that God will abundantly bless us with growth, and this is what I witness week in, week out. We have had three people become believers in Christ since the New Year, I have witnessed physical and emotional healings and God's people are responding with growth in themselves.

The Apostle Paul said in **Hebrews 12:1**

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

We are on a journey that God has

prepared and having our eyes fixed upon Jesus is the best way to run it.

This year we have a great opportunity to pray for our friends & family. To pray they accept the free gift of grace with Jesus Christ. Keep enduring and run that race! I believe in a God who does fulfil His promises and I believe God said to reach out to those around us. Use this opportunity to be bold, pray the prayer of the apostles in Acts 4. I love the answer to this prayer in **Acts 4:31**

*And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

Be blessed, Church, at this Easter time, as we remember that Jesus died and was risen for us.

Chris



BCF Leadership team:  
Chris Taylor (Pastor)  
David Cameron, Gary Fisher

## THE TRUE DAYS OF EASTER WEEK.

If we want to consider accurately how the first 'Easter Week' went, the first thing to remember is the difference in how time was reckoned by the Romans and the Jews. The Romans reckoned a days time from midnight to midnight - the same as us - 12pm to 12pm. The Jews reckoned time from sunset to sunset - 6pm to 6pm. Thus 6pm Saturday was the end of the Jewish Sabbath, and would begin Sunday, the first day of their week. Whereas our Saturday ends at midnight, and the first day of our week, Sunday, begins from then.

THIS IS IMPORTANT WHEN LOOKING AT EASTER WEEK IN THE BIBLE.

The next important thing pertains to the Jewish Sabbaths. Israel kept weekly Sabbaths on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, however besides the weekly Sabbath there were Festival Sabbaths. When these fell during the ordinary week, the Jews counted it as an extra Sabbath for that week - so sometimes there were 2 Sabbaths in one week. There were 3 such special Sabbaths - Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

From what the Bible shows us of the general order of events in Easter Week, we can see that there were 2 Sabbaths in that week - the Passover Sabbath and the weekly Sabbath.

John 19:31 says that the day following Jesus' death was a Special Sabbath - the first day of the Passover Feast.

Leviticus 23:7 says that the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month - Nisan - was the Special Sabbath for Passover, and it commenced at sunset on what we would call the 14<sup>th</sup>.

John 12:1, "Six days before the Passover", takes us back to the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan.

Matthew 26:2, "...the Passover is two days away..." takes us to 13<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan.

Matthew 28:1, "After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week". Resurrection Day was from our Saturday sunset to our Sunday sunset and this fixes the days of the week just as the previous Scriptures fix the days of the month.

So, calculating back from this, three days and three nights, we arrive at the day of Jesus' burial, which must have been before sunset on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, that is, before our Wednesday sunset. This, in turn makes the 6<sup>th</sup> day before the Passover - the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan - to be our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset. Therefore, Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan (commencing on the Tuesday at sunset) was "the preparation day" on which the crucifixion took place - all 5 Gospels definitely say that this was the day on which Jesus was buried (before our Wednesday sunset). Because it was the preparation day, the body shouldn't remain on the cross during the Special Sabbath Day - not an ordinary seventh day or weekly Sabbath.

It follows that if Jesus was crucified on the preparation day, he couldn't have eaten of the Passover Lamb, which wasn't killed until the evening (that is, our afternoon) of 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan. On that day the daily sacrifice would have been killed at the 6<sup>th</sup> hour (noon) and offered about the 7<sup>th</sup> hour (1pm). The killing of the Passover lambs began directly afterwards; so it's clear that if the killing of the Passover lambs didn't

commence until about 4 hours after Jesus had been hanging on the cross, and wouldn't have been concluded by the 9<sup>th</sup> hour (3pm) when He "gave up His spirit", no Passover lamb could have been eaten at the last supper on the previous evening.

So, the week in summary:

The First Day of the Feast, the Special Sabbath, was on 15<sup>th</sup> Nisan. Our Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset. The first night and day in the tomb.

The Second Day of the Feast, was on 16<sup>th</sup> Nisan. Our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset. The second night and day in the tomb.

The Third Day of the Feast, the weekly Sabbath, was on 17<sup>th</sup> Nisan. Our Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The third night and day in the tomb.

The First Day of the Week followed on 18<sup>th</sup> Nisan and after our Saturday sunset, Jesus was seen alive.

From Wednesday 6pm to Saturday 6pm we have 72 hours, or three days and three nights, thus fulfilling the words of Jesus, the Son of God:

Wednesday	the 1 <sup>st</sup> night	}	6pm to}	Crucifixion and burial
Thursday	the 1 <sup>st</sup> day	}	6pm to}	3 Nights
Thursday	the 2 <sup>nd</sup> night	}	6pm to }	
Friday	the 2 <sup>nd</sup> day	}	6pm to }	and
Friday	the 3 <sup>rd</sup> night	}	6pm to }	3 Days
Saturday	the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day	}	6pm to }	
Sunday	(the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of the week)			Resurrection

*Keith Taylor*

### #Food Bank Sunday

The first Sunday of each month is Food Bank Sunday!

Bring your food donation to the Welcome Desk in the morning or pick up a brown envelope, put some cash in it and pop it in the offering when it's taken during the service.

Your donations make a big difference to local families.

Thank you!





## What are you thinking of?

There was a film released recently called 'What Men Want'. After an accidental drug induced event, the lead character, an attractive young lady, finds that she can hear men's thoughts... yes, you can guess what many of those were! I have only watched the trailer, by the way!

Our thought lives are, thankfully, usually hidden from other people, as this protects us and others from potential embarrassment and even emotional hurt. It allows us to think honestly too, without offending others. However, it is not hard to see how our general behaviour is connected to what we think about life, and specific actions can be seen to be the direct result of certain thoughts, whether considered, deliberate, or instinctive, unpremeditated. Either can be positive or negative. Some extreme religious groups have been accused of mind control, but in truth we are all subject to some form of this. The way we have been brought up, the type of schooling we have had, the influence of people important to us - and even our particular brain functions, all 'control' our thoughts in various ways.

The Bible has something to say on the subject as well. Paul the apostle realised that for us to be disciples of Jesus, we need to make a deliberate choice to replace the attitudes, thoughts and actions of our natural self - he calls

it our 'old' man - with those taught by Jesus. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind", he wrote to the Christians in Rome and he was more specific in his letter to the Philippians: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

The only way we can hope to make progress in this 'renewal' is to WANT to do it, as trying to follow a set of rules approach will never work! The only way we can want to do it is to be captivated by the God who loves us more than we can know and who offers us His grace and the help of His own Spirit. As we then become more like our master, Jesus, this will mean that the thoughts and actions of the 'new' man will be our natural way of living.

Over the centuries, men and women who 'walked with the Lord' have developed a range of activities that can deepen our spiritual lives - a kind of spiritual 'tool box', so to speak. Over the coming months, some of our breakfast church talks will have a look at these. Some will be very familiar, some less so. They are designed to help and maybe they could help you to a deeper 'walk with the Lord' as well.

*David Brett*

## Prayer For The Fringes

On the 6th January, I stood up in church to share that we as a church should focus on the fringes. A word that I believe God shared with me for the whole church. God has been good with answers to prayers but there are so many more souls to pray for!

We now have even more opportunities to pray together outside of the service. You can join us on a Sunday morning an hour before the church service, or on Wednesdays at 6:45am at The Well, and we have also brought back Thursday evening prayer in the hut on Church Street at 6:30pm - 7:30pm each week. The focus of this session will specifically be the fringes of church.

Please come and join us and to pray for those around us.

God Bless,  
Pastor Chris

## HELP NEEDED!

Would you be able to spare some time at the end of our Sunday morning meetings to help pack away equipment? There is nothing complicated to do, and the more people we have helping out the quicker the job!

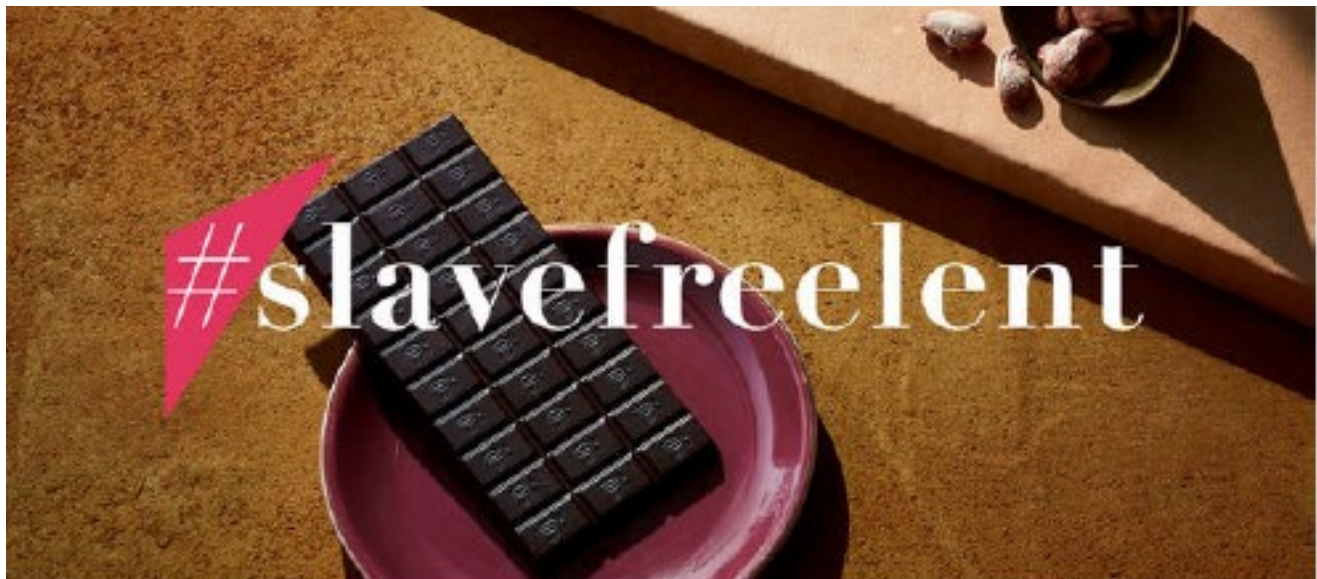
If you think you could spare some time to serve the church in this way, please speak to Andy Brett or Pastor Chris. Thank you.

Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.

Luke 24:5

When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son.

Romans 5:10



Some of you may recall that I got up to give a notice about #SlaveFreeLent just before Lent started. It is an initiative which International Justice Mission (IJM), a charity which fights for the freedom of modern day slaves around the world, are running. They have encouraged people to give up something which may have been affected by slavery, during Lent - in other words, a product which slaves may have been involved in the production of - I mentioned chocolate, caffeine, make up, and new clothes. There are of course countless others too.

I know some of you have taken up the challenge and given up all kinds of things! That's fantastic. Hopefully we will all remember to donate what we would have spent on those products to IJM so they can continue their fight.

For those of you who may have been interested/participating, but not able to access What's App which IJM are sending out daily updates on, I've amalgamated some of the texts I've received so that we can all learn more about this:

*\* When consumers like us speak, retailers listen! Could you get in touch*

*With your favourite clothing brand or go-to supermarket asking what they are doing to ensure slavery is not in their supply chains? Whether it's tweeting, sending a letter or tagging them in an Instagram story - check out our example posts here: <https://www.ijmuk.org/documents/Twitter-and-letter-Example.pdf>*

*\* It's really difficult for companies to achieve 100% transparency in their supply chains but there are some brands who are up for the challenge! For one voice who is leading the charge towards a slave-free supply chain in our fashion industry, check out our friends at [knowtheorigin.com](http://knowtheorigin.com)*

*\* Did you know the UK is one of the world's largest importers of prawns? An amount totalling a whopping £387 million-worth a year? Prawns are at risk of trafficking in their supply chains - particularly in places like Thailand, where 6% of people we surveyed had seen someone murdered in front of them on a boat. Please pray for the IJM office in Thailand, who are working with the Thai government to end trafficking in the fishing industry.*

*Anna Faro*





## The Well Coffee Shop, Guithavon Street

We would love to see you for a coffee and perhaps a snack at our community coffee shop in town! We will be closed Good Friday and Easter Monday, but otherwise we are open from Monday to Thursday and on Saturdays, 10am-2pm.

A small pot of tea is just 80p, a large pot £1.50.

A cafetiere of delicious Kingdom Coffee is £1.80.

A yummy hot chocolate, a large cappuccino or large latte is just £1.80.

Why not give us a try?

If you fancy socialising with us a bit more, why not be one of our volunteers? We have a variety of roles which you could fulfil., just ask at the counter when you are next in! A big thank you to our current staff who covered extra shifts over the last month when we needed them.

*The Well is Bethel Christian Fellowship's window into the town. We are here to provide good food, drinks and allow space for customers to enjoy the atmosphere of God's presence.*



## Future Bethel Dates

For more information about any of these events speak to Pastor Chris (07908 841307).

13th April - Engage (Worship Evening)  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 7pm

14th April - Palm Sunday Breakfast  
Venue: Maltings Academy Canteen @ 9.30am

14th April - Baptism Service  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 6.30pm

18th April - Maundy Thursday Prayer & Communion  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 6.30pm

19th April - Easter River Walk & Refreshments at The Well  
Venue: Meet at Bethel Car Park @ 1.30pm

20th April - Easter March of Witness  
Venue: Meet outside Tesco @ 11am

21st April - Easter Celebration  
Venue: Maltings Academy @ 10.30am

28th April - Park View Service  
Venue: Park View Care Home @ 4pm

5th May - Evening of Ministry with the Holy Spirit  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 6.30pm

7th May - Alpha Course Introduction (running weekly until 16th July)

11th May - Engage  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 7pm

12th May - Christian Aid Service (Churches Together)  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 6.30pm

21st May - AGM  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 8pm

26th May - Park View Service  
Venue: Park View Care Home @ 4pm

2nd June - Bethel Football Afternoon  
Venue: Colchester Football Stadium @ 4pm

8th June - Witham Community Day  
Venue: Maldon Road Park, 10am onwards

22nd June - Alpha Course Holy Spirit Away Day  
Venue: TBC

23rd June - Park View Service  
Venue: Park View Care Home @ 4pm

13th July - Engage  
Venue: Bethel Hall @ 7pm

14th July - Cricket Afternoon & Picnic  
Venue: TBC

28th July - Park View Service  
Venue: Park View Care Home @ 4pm





Bethel Christian Fellowship meets:

- \* at 9.30am on the second Sunday of the month  
for breakfast Church and
- \* at 10.30am on all other Sundays  
at  
**Maltings Academy, Spinks Lane, Witham.**

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01376 520705  
Facebook: @bethel-witham

Church office at The Well Coffee Shop, Guithavon St, Witham.  
Other activities at the Bethel Hall, Church Street, Witham.

Not been to church for a while or ever? God says:

*<sup>25</sup>After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and arousing his anger, <sup>26</sup>I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess....*

*<sup>29</sup>But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup>When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him. <sup>31</sup>For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors, which he confirmed to them by oath....*

*<sup>39</sup>Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. <sup>40</sup>Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time. (Deuteronomy 4).*

Got questions? Pop into The Well in Guithavon Street and chat with the staff. More in depth questions? Try our Alpha Course which is a chance to talk about the basics of Christian faith. Our next course will start on Tuesday 7th May at The Well, talk to Pastor Chris or again the Well staff if you'd like to come along. Just want to get a feel for church life? You are welcome at any of our church services at Maltings Academy each Sunday morning.



The one who gets wisdom loves life;  
the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper. (Proverbs 19:8)