

CALENDAR – JUNE 2010

Sunday 6th	10.30 am	Communion
Tuesday 8 th	7.30 pm	Deacons' meeting
Wednesday 9 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale: Talkback
Sunday 13th	10.30 am	Morning worship
Tuesday 15 th	7.30 pm	Church meeting
Wednesday 16 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale: Moral Maze
Sunday 20th	10.30 am	All age worship
Tuesday 22 nd	7.30 pm	Home Groups meet
Wednesday 23 rd	7.30 pm	time@tyndale: Communion
Sunday 27th	10.30 am	Morning worship
Wednesday 30 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale: - Meal

JULY 2010

Sunday 4th	10.30 am	Communion service
Tuesday 6 th	7.30 pm	Deacons' meeting
Wednesday 7 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale: Faith Matters
Sunday 11th	10.30 am	Morning worship
Tuesday 13 th	7.30 pm	Church meeting
Wednesday 14 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale: Summer Soirée
Sunday 18th	10.30 am	All age worship
Tuesday 20 th	7.30 pm	Home groups meet
Sunday 25th	10.30 am	Morning worship

From the Minister ...

Who belongs? It's been some years now since churches in our neck of the Christian woods began to talk about 'believing and belonging' but the issue is even more sharp now. Baptist churches experience a phenomenon that's known to the whole Christian church in a particular way. The *membership* of many Christian churches is in decline. For many Baptist churches this is happening at the same time as *attendance* is going up!

In the old days Tyndale had a membership secretary – someone whose job it was to keep the church's membership under review, and to work with the minister at encouraging folk to take up membership, as well as to oversee that classic way by which Baptists organised themselves – membership *transfer*, as people moved around from place to place.

More recently along with the trend across the Church there has been a reduced emphasis on people taking up membership of this church. Partly that's because fewer people seek to take it up. Partly it's because the variety of Christian background and experience amongst us means that Baptist membership *per se* can seem less relevant. Partly it's because there aren't young people coming through what used to be the 'natural' route into membership – baptism. And partly because, and here's the nub of the issue: who belongs to Tyndale?

At the recent Church Weekend we began looking at this, by reminding ourselves of what Christians believe and then by considering the different ways in which we belong to different groups in society and the different ways we belong to the church. Membership is one thing, then there is the fact of belonging to Tyndale by virtue of being a regular attender at worship or one of the church's activities. A number of people come regularly to Tuesday coffee shop; how does their 'belonging' differ from the way in which folk who come on Sunday belong. As well as this there are others who play an active part in the life of the church, helping with fabric, with one of the church's groups, but who for various reasons are not *members* of the church.

Then, and finally, there are that wider group of people for whom Tyndale is 'their church' even if they are rarely seen at any of the church's events - maybe they have a family connection, or live locally (Tyndale Court, for instance) or have made a connection through a wedding, or funeral.

In all these ways people can be said to *belong* to Tyndale. Yet, being a Baptist church, the decisions that affect our life, to do with money, fabric, ministry, mission and a hundred and one other things are taken by the comparatively small number of *members*.

Now Membership is important. Members are folk who have made a particular commitment, and who can be said to 'carry the church's identity' – in that they have assented to the principles of belief and practice of this Baptist church in a public act of witness – and in many cases have done so in conjunction with that dramatic and profound act of faith, baptism. Nevertheless the wider sense of belonging that we have described does mean that a wider group than the members have a real stake in what goes on here. How to give better expression to that reality, without just overloading everyone with more meetings to attend?

That's a real challenge, and one that this process (illustrated elsewhere in this month's Link by material produced at the Church Weekend) is intended to address. Watch this space, as they say.

Michael

How would Jesus vote?



He'd be there on polling day
In his local library, refusing to say
Anything before or after to display
His choice. So how would he vote?

Could've been Labourite -
His dad was a working class
Horny handed son of toil, but if his son was
Would he have been quite so careless
With nails, or that widow's mite?

Conservative then -
The way he carried on with wine
Makes you think Bullingdon
Club, and his cloak, it seems, was fine
But – tax-collectors? - there again..

Lib Dem might make sense -
All that talk of making peace,
Giving today's mourners the promise
Of joy tomorrow, proclaiming release;
Bringing a sword, though, might cause them offence.

The Greens find common ground
With Jesus easily enough;
Sandals, lilies in fields, a tough
Line on storms at sea, telling cities off -
Still. Moving mountains? Destroying temples? Sound -

Not! The BNP've got this ad -
Jesus misunderstood,
Like them, see, as if it's good
Being persecuted. I should
Coky - asylum seekers, his mum and dad.

Europe, then – agin it,
UKIP style; Jesus the great
Patriot, making Samaritans wait
For crumbs? But outside the gate
He was bruised for *all* iniquities, innit?

Still we can safely assume
He would be against *greedy* bankers
Or anyone! *Unfair* taxes
Or anything! *Unjust* laws
Or yours and mine. So come

On, what *would* Jesus do?
He would call us all to justice, love,
forgiveness – Labour, Conservative,
Lib Dem, the rest – service before power and above
All – *dying* for them; and me, and you.

Michael Docker

Update on the Church Meeting held on 9 March 2010

Ministry Review

Keith Clements confirmed that, following the discussion started at the last church meeting and the last deacons' meeting, we should continue the process of identifying our needs and considering which options may be available to us.

Several years ago it was suggested that we should arrange for a professional survey to be carried out of the local area to identify the demographics and potential needs. This was taken up by the Three Churches and eventually Victoria Methodist was going to incorporate this exercise as part of a major review. However, due to various factors the process stalled and the survey was never carried out. It was agreed that without knowing exactly what the local needs are it is difficult to know where to start. It was acknowledged that many families live in the vicinity of the church, as evidenced by the fact that the 'Babes and Toddlers' and 'Music with Mummy' groups are thriving, and the local primary school is oversubscribed. It was suggested that, rather than thinking of employing a youth worker, a title which could be considered by some to have negative connotations, it may be more effective to consider taking on a 'family worker', who could engage with the whole spectrum of ages within the church and the neighbouring area.

These discussions will be continued at future meetings.

Nurture/Discipleship/Education/Membership

Keith Clements reported that following a wide ranging discussion on this subject at the last deacons' meeting, he came across a very topical article from the website Ekklesia on the subject of church membership, which was printed in the last edition of the Link. Clearly the decline in membership is a widespread phenomenon which is particularly troubling for Baptist churches, because of the way in which the decision making process occurs. A number of people are very actively involved in church, but because they are not church members they cannot be approached to stand for the deaconate. (It was asked whether the church directory could indicate in some way whether people are church members). Another difficulty is that church meetings are attended by a very small proportion of the church family. What is the solution? Do we change the way church meetings happen so that some are open to all?

It was agreed that church membership should be encouraged. Maybe the time is right to consider holding a series of enquirer's classes, or even to consider an Alpha course, to encourage everyone to consider

how to grow in maturity on their Christian journey. It was also agreed that a personal approach is usually more effective than a sermon or a general appeal.

It was agreed that the welcome leaflets produced by Andy Scott should be updated and made available to give to newcomers.

Fabric

Bruce Lloyd reported that the planning application we submitted some time ago was declined in January. An informal conversation with the Planning Department indicated that a modification to the design of the steps outside would result in the application being approved. This was done and the application has been resubmitted.

Holy Week/Easter Arrangements

Bruce reported that the Three Churches have organised an event for younger people who are on the fringes of church life and their friends. This will be held at the Boston Tea Party on Park Street on Monday 29 March. David Fuller and Geoff Sims will be representing Tyndale. A DVD will be shown, followed by an informal discussion.

Deacons' Election

Margaret Clements, Janet Gerrish, Ian Holyer, Cilla Morris and Karen Wallington have all come to the end of their term of office. The meeting recorded its thanks to them. There are six vacancies on the deaconate and three nominations have been received, namely Rachel Molyneux, Dorette Morgan and Karen Wallington. The scrutineers were Julian West (appointed by the deacons) and Alison Lloyd (appointed by the church meeting). All three were duly elected, and were thanked for their willingness to serve. It was pointed out that the new deaconate is smaller than it has been for many years.

Baptist Assembly

Keith Clements reported that no nominations had been received for the post of BU Vice President.

The Baptist Assembly will be held in Plymouth over the Bank Holiday weekend at the beginning of May. Michael will be attending and we are eligible to send two delegates.

Read Book Project Bristol

Bruce reported that this is a project led by a charity which collects second hand books from the local community and sends them to schools

in Africa. Any books which are not appropriate for use in schools are sold in the UK and the proceeds used for buying text books for Africa. We have been asked if we would be prepared to have a collection point for books to be donated at the back of the church. This was agreed.

Update on the Church Meeting held on 20 April 2010

Finance

Offerings: On a positive note, Julian West reported that last month ended £44 ahead of budget. However, February ended £173 below budget, resulting in a shortfall of £1,405. Julian presented slides showing the financial position. It looks as though we will be under budget for expenditure. At the next meeting there will be a fuller presentation on finance to mark the end of the financial year.

Ministry Review

Michael Docker expressed his thanks and appreciation to Keith Clements, the deaconate and the church meeting for opening the discussions on this important topic during his sabbatical.

He presented a short presentation on the discussions so far:

The needs of the area

- The various attempts to carry out a survey to identify the needs of the area surrounding the church were recalled.
- Should the nature of the work be identified before a call is issued to a specific type of worker or should it be the other way around?
- Do we have the manpower and expertise to conduct an in-house' survey? Michael Whitfield has done some preparatory work to identify what this would entail. A simple questionnaire can be prepared to give to local carers, members of groups who use the premises and other local churches.
- A smaller group would be set up to ask questions relating to the kind of information we are trying to identify that and analyse the results. Anyone interested in volunteering for this task should speak to Michael Whitfield.

The needs of the church

- *Family work:* Michael Docker reported that the Centre for Youth Ministries, based at Bristol Baptist College. Michael has arranged a meeting with Sian Hancock, who worships at Horfield and is responsible for leading a new course to train youth workers and family workers, with the objective of attracting new people into church and building congregations for the future. Sian may be able

to put us in touch with other churches who have taken on a worker to carry out this type of work. It was suggested that Sian should be invited to a church meeting to talk about her work.

- Would this type of work be practical in our congregation, which now has few families attending regularly? It was pointed out that we do have Babes and Toddlers and Music with Mummy sessions which could be a good point of contact for a family worker.
- Should we involve other local churches in this initiative? It was felt that involving them at this stage might slow down our progress.
- Should we be only thinking of local initiatives? After all, many people travel some distance to attend Tyndale. The role of so called 'honey pot' churches was briefly discussed. How does this concept fit with the Baptist ethos of local churches?

The proposal to proceed with tasking a small group to draw up the questionnaire was approved.

Café Church Review

Michael Docker reported on the recent experimental event held at the Boston Tea Party, which was attended by 59 people, most of whom came from Redland Park. Eight people attended from Tyndale. Only about six people who attended had little or no connection with a church. The evening consisted of watching a short film, followed by a brief discussion. Geoff Sims sang and played the guitar at the beginning. There were some technical difficulties with the film. Michael Whitfield reported that another church already holds this type of event regularly at the same venue. Also, there is a cost involved (approximately £150 for the evening). A group from the three churches will meet to review the evening, but it is not intended that these events should be held regularly.

Why I like the Women's World Day of Prayer

Just before this year's Women's World Day of Prayer service began the leader asked all those taking part in the service to come to the back of the church so that we could process in. The nave at Redland Park was fairly full, and I'd say at least half of the congregation joined the procession. That's one of the first things I like: the service feels like lots of people collaborating.

This is underpinned by the way the liturgy is prepared by a group of women. Each year the material is prepared by women of a different country and this year it was women from the Republic of Cameroon.

Often when we hear about people in the developing world it is through Christian Aid or some such aid organisation. Well Christian Aid does do important work, but it's refreshing to make a connection with such people on a more equal footing. They told us something about their country and their daily lives in the liturgy, and it seemed they had also given careful thought to our situations as well. They clearly think of us as friends.

I should also add that the Women's World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical movement, and is organised locally by the Churches Together groupings. I remember one year at Tyndale a Catholic woman came out to do a reading and genuflected in front of our communion table. I thought that was nice.

And lastly, the worship material is always inspiring. This year the theme of the Cameroonian women was 'Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God'. They included a 'litany of praise', which began as follows: 'In the Cameroonian context people praise God even in, or especially during, difficult times in their lives. This is because generally we consider life to be God's greatest gift to us. As long as one has breath, there is hope.' I reflected how these words contrast with the words from Timothy Dudley Smith's hymn of prayer for our own society, 'spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care'. The insight of the Cameroonian women was, well, a bit like water in the desert.

So I think the Women's World Day of Prayer is a real highlight of the Church year, providing a little window onto what it means to be part of the World Church. It's always the first Friday in March.

Sarah Dodds

The Mission Supper

Our welcome guest at our recent “Spring Supper” was Steve Sanderson (pictured), our very own Missionary, or so we like to think. After the supper with its great variety of food the usual Twelve Baskets were collected up and we settled down to listen to Steve, who was introduced by Michael Whitfield. Steve and Caroline now have two daughters, Hannah and Bethany. As there have been concerns about Bethany's health; we were anxious to hear the latest news; well, so far so good but there are still some problems; we continue to remember them in our prayers.

Steve began by reminding us of Jesus' own agenda as set out in Luke 4 to proclaim good news to the poor.

He sees his mission as empowering the Ugandan people to witness to the Kingdom of God. As he and Caroline are lawyers it is via the Law that they make their contribution, through Legal Aid, through a paralegal advisory service and providing some national legal education. They have recently moved out of Kampala to the Nebbi district in the north of the country where they recently were consulted by 1200 people in 4 days. They have also spent some time teaching the Ugandan army about civil conflict resolution. They are now setting up a regional office in the area which has been ravaged by war and where 76% of the population live below the poverty line. Boundaries in the region are ill-defined and mapping is needed. Steve said that they see agricultural development as the way out of poverty. The churches in the area struggle to establish themselves; there are currently 4 teams reaching the different communities. Hannah enjoys life in this environment and is able to pick up some of the local language.

In the brief discussion which followed there were comments about languages and also about the law, which Steve said in the matter of marriage and morals was similar to England around fifty years ago. Altogether a very interesting and enjoyable evening and our thanks go to all who were involved.

Derek Parsons

Hazel Watson writes ...

My father George Smith was born in 1899. He put his age on two years and fought in the First World War. He was gassed and blinded at Ypres. After a spell in hospital his sight returned.

Before and after the war he worked first as under and then head gardener in large country houses in Berkshire. Part of his job was to grow flowers for floral decorations in the houses. Often he was responsible for arranging them. He then became head gardener at Reading University. Many times he arranged flowers at Shipfield Free Church, and he always had the same theme which I now copy. Recently I found the meaning of his arrangements which he had written for me four years before his death:

Plant life is a constant reminder to us of the promises of God.

Here the oak and bracken with autumn foliage show the end of the year and of life itself.

The heads of willow herb with their empty seed pods represent to us death but the berries of the holly and seed of the hogweed illustrate the promise of a future life.

The jasmine flowers breaking out show to us the resurrection of Christ and new life which belief in Him can bring to us.

The evergreens with their gold markings represent the promise of eternal life made possible represent the promise of eternal life possible by the spilt blood shown by the red of the berries.

In this we have a picture of the life of a believer, accepting God's premises.

George Smith 1967

Brunel Manor 2010

Around 45 or so members and friends of Tyndale gathered at Brunel Manor in Torquay on Friday 7th May for a time of relaxation, conversation, prayer and study. After dinner the opening session was taken by our Minister, Michael, as an introduction to the weekend. The day ended with an Epilogue. Strangely, there was little enthusiasm for the usual late night film – possibly something to do with a general air of sleepiness caused by staying up late to watch the election results the previous night!

Saturday began with a prologue and, suitably fortified by the famous Brunel Manor cooked breakfast, we launched straight into our theme for the weekend, Believing and Belonging (see Michael's letter and article).

In the first session we were invited to think about what we believe by following in the footsteps of many and compose a Creed or Doctrinal statement of faith. In the second session we thought about Belonging; what do we belong to, what are the conditions of membership and so on. In the final session of the morning we considered believing and belonging and in three groups tried to represent this diagrammatically - the Venn diagram was very popular!

Saturday afternoon was designated free time with a chance to spend some time in quiet with some printed prayers for guidance. The evening entertainment, a quiz compiled and presented by Mike and Sue Garnier, gave the brain cells a good workout and the prologue was followed by the late night film.

On Sunday morning we joined together for worship, during which we learnt some new songs, and after a splendid Sunday roast people began to drift away, although many waited until after tea to make their way home.

The accommodation was its usual high quality and we are fortunate to be able to go to such a lovely place. Finally we are indebted to a number of people; our minister as ever, David Bell who led the prologues and epilogues, Rachel for the music and Julian for organising the accommodation. I've no doubt omitted some deserving people to whom I offer my apologies.

Derek Parsons

Church Weekend Workshops

At the recent Church Weekend, the company worked in three groups in a series of short 'workshops' – they were, as well as being good fun, a simple way of thinking through some of the things that as Christians in a Baptist church we believe and some of the ways we belong to Tyndale.

The results of those workshops are here included:

First, there are the three alternative forms of 'creed' – using a lot of words the groups were asked to choose some of them and put them together to form a basic statement of faith. In some cases a group introduced some 'joining words' and in some cases added other significant words that it felt were needed to say something contemporary about Christian belief. Needless to say, since the work of creed-writing has been a part of the history of Christianity since the first centuries, it was never going to be possible to produce anything like a finished 'Creed for Tyndale' in the space of forty minutes!

Still the exercise proved worthwhile, even a little controversial in some respects, but also helpful in getting us to talk with one another about what seemed to us to be essential or peripheral in what, as Christians, we believe.

The resulting “Creeds for Tyndale” are shown on the following page.

The second workshop exercise had to do with belonging. The groups were asked to draw 'circles of belonging' to illustrate the different and often overlapping ways in which the variety of folk present felt about their relationship to the church, and about how folk could be encouraged to belong, or to move from one 'stage of belonging' to another. The basic drawings were remarkably similar, but the detail and some of the insights into ways of moving, ways of experiencing and expressing, 'belonging', are varied, and fascinating.

Michael Docker

Creeds for Tyndale

We believe...

God Jesus Holy Spirit

Faith Life

Love Justice Truth Honesty Vision

Society Community Humanity Peace

Suffering Healing Change World

Freedom Laughter

Equality Resurrection

Free Love Electoral Reform Heaven Kingdom

We believe in God Jesus Holy Spirit 3 in 1

We try to follow the teaching of Jesus

We believe through his death on the cross

and his resurrection we are part of His Kingdom

We serve him in the world in love and peace

I believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ his Son and the Holy Spirit.

I believe God created the world.

I believe Christ died on the cross for my sins and rose again and is with us today.

Truth Love Bible Followers Freedom

Kingdom Justice Heaven Peace Obedience