



# **THE LINK**

**Tyndale Baptist Church  
August & September 2011**



## CALENDAR – AUGUST 2011

<b>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Communion service led by Keith Clements</b>
<b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship led by Roger Hayden</b>
<b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>All Age Worship</b>
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship</b>

## CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER 2011

<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Communion service</b>
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Deacons' meeting
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	<b>time@tyndale: Faith Matters</b>
<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning worship</b>
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Church meeting
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	<b>time@tyndale: Talkback</b>
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>All age worship</b>
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Home groups meet
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	7.30 pm	<b>time@tyndale: Communion</b>
<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Harvest Festival Morning worship Followed by "Bring &amp; Share" lunch</b>
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	<b>time@tyndale: Community Forum</b>

*All services led by Revd Michael Docker unless otherwise indicated.*

## ***From the minister ...***

In September we should be at the final stage of deciding to seek an Associate Minister for Tyndale. The long process of discussion and reflection that came to be known as 'Thinking and Praying' led to the drawing up of a number of priorities for developing the church's life and mission, and the first of these was the appointment of an Associate Minister.

It is hoped that such a person will conduct their own ministry in association with the church – not an assistant to do more of what is already done, but an associate – who will work, with help, to 'build up the congregational life of the church by 'reaching out'.

This clear aim is laid out in the draft job description that was prepared in June and discussed by the Deacons and Church Meeting in July. But although it is clear, we should not underestimate the extent of the challenge.

The fact is, church congregations in general are not growing much these days. There are exceptions but in an area such as Clifton, where there are many churches of different flavours and styles anyone who comes looking for a church has a considerable choice. No one congregation is likely to attract all such people. This means that the traditional way in which well-established churches grow doesn't work so well any more. It can still happen – praise God – but it doesn't happen so often or so easily as once it did.

Which leaves, of course, the possibility of 'reaching out' to people who currently have no interest or involvement in the church at all. In fact, this is what lies behind the aim of this associate ministry. It is, in effect, a work of evangelism. We are hoping to find someone who will help us as a church to communicate the gospel to people in the area. It would be wrong to imagine that people are no longer interested in hearing about the things of God. I had a conversation just a few days ago with someone who, in their twenties, is beginning to think about faith. How many more such people might there be 'out there', if only we could find ways of reaching them?

But this is where the challenge really comes. If such people were to come to church, what would they find? What would they like and what would they find strange? What would they come to accept, and what they would want to change – and if our first thought is, 'nothing needs to change round here' then maybe we need to ask some hard questions. For instance, do we *really* want to see new people taking a part in the life of Tyndale?

We need to be realistic about all this. Of course appointing an Associate Minister will bring expectations. If we talk in terms of 'reaching out' we are bound to want to see some results. To put it crudely, are we getting value for money? But this is about the hardest and most dangerous kind of question to ask in relation to a church and its ministries. The gospel works it work in the heart and the results, ultimately, are known only to God. This doesn't sit very easily in a cost-conscious, financially cautious world, but it is the reality: our commitment will be to support an Associate Minister in his or her ministry *however* things turn out (as long as they show that they also are committed to that ministry).

As I say, quite a challenge; I am conscious that we are proposing to take a huge leap of faith - a risk, indeed. May I ask everyone who reads this over the summer to pray (if you haven't seen them, ask a Deacon for a look at the documents) that we will be led to the right person at the right time who will be able to carry out the right ministry in this place - not just for the sake of Tyndale's congregational life, but for the sake of God's Kingdom.

***Michael***

---

## **Update on the Church Meeting held on Tuesday 10 May 2011**

### **Special Item**

Bruce Lloyd explained that at the March Church Meeting, it was agreed that a short period should be set aside at this meeting for people to speak freely in Michael's absence. The subject of leadership was raised. How important is it for a Baptist minister to show strong leadership to their congregation? It was agreed that Baptist churches would expect to rely on the church membership discerning God's will for us as a fellowship. Michael's style of leadership is to work with the church membership on whatever we decide is the way forward, rather than leading 'from the front'. So the membership needs to be vocal in its views.

The difficulty is that the best way forward is not obvious at present. It was agreed that, if it is felt that extra paid help is needed, the person appointed should be able to help Michael carry out those tasks which he himself feels are not his forte, or those tasks which he currently feels he does not have the time to carry out adequately.

The meeting was in complete agreement that we count ourselves blessed to have Michael as our minister, and there should be no perceived criticism of him or his ministry in the above comments.

## **Tyndale's Future**

Michael gave a brief presentation on the group discussions at the Open Church Meeting on Sunday 10 April. Following these discussions, three priorities have been identified for further consideration:

- 1) Associate minister
- 2) To develop the life of Tyndale
- 3) Clarity of message

*Associate Minister:* What kind of ministry are we looking for? What needs are not currently being fulfilled? It was noted that the BU now has an accredited list of other types of workers, e.g. evangelists, youth workers, etc.

*To develop the life of Tyndale:* It was pointed out that there is a small core of people who do most of the work, but our resources are diminishing year on year. It is essential to attract new people who are willing and able to get involved and enable us to continue the various outreach groups which already exist.

*Clarity of message:* Communication, extension, outreach, mission statement. There is a very wide variety of beliefs within Tyndale. There is a need to communicate better with the wider church family - many people are resistant to attending meetings!

The deacons will carry out more detailed work on the three priorities listed and report back.

## **Annual Reports – Church Appointments:**

Thanks were expressed to all those who serve in the life of the church in so many ways, as evidenced by the breadth of the reports.

*TYC:* The meeting was concerned at the lack of young people attending TYC regularly. Of those who do attend, the majority have no other link with church.

*Dorothy Porteous Fund:* It was encouraging to note that the Dorothy Porteous Fund was able to give financial help to a group of Baptist College students who visited Peru in April.

*Appointments:* The following people had asked to stand down:

Margaret Clements - Home Group Leader

Rosemary Cooper - Cradle Roll Secretary

Andy and Lucy Drage and Alison and Bruce Lloyd - TYC leaders

Rita Jones - Friends of Tyndale Court (although she will continue to support Chris Owens in a private capacity).

The resulting vacancies were noted, along with the existing vacancies:

Communion rota co-ordinator

Flower rota co-ordinator

Home Mission representative

It was noted that Debbie Pinfold and Michael Docker should be added to the list of **time@tyndale** leaders.

The reports were received and the list of appointments approved. The meeting expressed its gratitude to Bruce and Ali for producing all the documentation.

## **Finance:**

Julian West briefly ran through the figures which were appended to the reports, and answered some queries. The meeting expressed its thanks to Julian for producing the accounts, which have been formally received by the deaconate.

## **Officer's Election:**

One nomination had been received for the post of Church Secretary, namely Bruce Lloyd. Bruce was duly elected. The meeting recorded its thanks to Bruce for his time of service and for agreeing to stand for re-election.

## **Update on the Church Meeting held on Tuesday 14 June 2011**

### **Tyndale's Future:**

Michael Docker reviewed progress on this item that had now been running for about a year. He reminded the meeting of the three priorities that had been identified (see previous meeting report).

With regard to (1), there were four possible models for this. One was the 'Alan Smith' model, another was a minister who took part in the overall ministry of the church. The third option was a 'chaplain' model where the person would work in the community and the fourth was a specialist worker (in youth or family work). The deaconate had decided to appoint a subcommittee to develop a person profile for this prospective appointment. There is a need to be clear about our needs and expectations. Michael Docker, Margaret Clements, Bruce Lloyd and Denise Lewis were appointed to this.

There was also a need to develop a new church profile and Edward Duffield and Janet Gerrish agreed to do this. It is hoped that both will report initially by the next deacons' meeting. Keith Clements asked whether applicants would have to be a Baptist minister and no one felt this was essential.

Some time was spent thinking about how we would address (2). Various ideas were expressed and it was good to note the new 'walking' group. The suggestion was made that there should need to be a 'diary secretary' who would coordinate the various meetings as they develop and that such a person should have a place on the Church Life group.

The 'clarity of message' (3) issue was left for a subsequent occasion.

### **JPIC:**

Gordon Luton informed the meeting that 20-27 June has been designated Refugee Week and Bristol's City of Sanctuary status is being celebrated. There is to be a meeting in the Council House followed by a meeting in the Cathedral. On Thursday the Refugee Centre in Easton will be open and there will be a chance to talk with refugees. JPIC have created a small exhibition that will be on display at Tyndale for the next two weeks.

## **Easter Review:**

A discussion took place about Holy week and many expressed views about the various services that took place. There was some negative comment about the Wednesday evening service at Redland Park and the long service at Victoria on Thursday but the services generally were appreciated.

## **Church Life Report:**

Various dates of future events were given including:

- Soup Run: the four Saturdays in September.
- 25 September: Harvest service and bring and share lunch.
- 5 October: Bacon and Burger Butties to be served from 3.00 - 5.00 pm on the forecourt during Freshers' Week.
- 12 October: Celebration event to commemorate the anniversary of the death of William Tyndale including a meal and a talk by David Roberts.
- Saturday 22 October: Open Morning

## **Three Churches:**

Julian reported that the normal Christmas Day Service for Redland Park and Tyndale will take place at Tyndale. Victoria will be hosting a joint service on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012.

It was reported that Victoria Methodist are going to change their focus towards a Media and Arts ministry and are beginning to work with the West of England Academy. There is a new church meeting in the Academy on Sundays.

## **Christian Aid:**

Michael Whitfield reported that, in spite of having fewer collectors, £645 had been collected and Bruce reported on the successful event at Redland Park where over £700 had been raised for Christian Aid with the largest contribution coming from the bookstall that was run by Tyndale folk. Thanks were expressed to all who had helped.

## A Missionary Tea....

On July 16<sup>th</sup> Tyndale hosted our Link missionaries, Tom and Caroline Howell, to a missionary tea. The Howell family (pictured right) are Tom and Caroline (early-mid 30s (maintaining a sense of the mysterious...), Abigail (7) Bethany (nearly 5) and Matthew (1).



For the last few years we have heard a lot about Uganda from our previous Link missionaries, Steve and Caroline Sanderson, who had to return to the UK following the serious health problems of their younger daughter, so we were not unaware of that country. But Tom and Caroline were able to take our knowledge and understanding to greater depth. We were informed about the further developments in Gulu in the north of Uganda, where formerly displaced people were slowly re-establishing themselves. We heard about the challenge of improving agriculture and the work of the Howell's soil scientist colleague in this. Tom's dream is of introducing churches in the UK to their fellow Christians in Gulu by taking short term Action Teams from UK churches to that area.

Our teatime experience, though, was much more than simply listening to a talk about the challenges in Uganda. We were introduced to a young couple who enthusiastically told us about their spiritual journey that has taken them and their young family of two girls and a boy to a very different place. We learnt a lot about the challenges they face, with learning a new language, coping with the perilous driving conditions and watching their children adjust to a very different culture. Tyndale's first contact with the Howell family was just great!

Our Link with the Howells is shared with the other Bristol churches in the North West cluster. The weekend was therefore an opportunity for Tom and Caroline to meet our fellow Baptists at Horfield, Westbury, Lawrence Weston and Pill together with visiting a school. During the course of a single weekend they enjoyed a church meeting (!?), a barbecue, two church services on Sunday and a missionary tea – what a challenge!

We hope that our link with the Baptist churches in Gulu will go from strength to strength. If you want to keep up-to-date with Tom and Caroline's work in Uganda, why not bookmark their address: [www.bmsworldmission.org/cthowell](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/cthowell).

*Michael Whitfield*

## Remembering Gwyneth Merrett

*We held a thanksgiving service for Gwyneth's long life in June. The address from that service gives a flavour of her life and acts as an obituary as we mark her passing and give thanks to God for her life.*

I was sitting in Duncan House the other day in a moment of quiet before a committee meeting and I remembered conversations I had had with Gwyneth about her time there, in the days when it was a school, and the picture Gwyneth had on her wall in Hurle Crescent of the House and for a moment, as I looked out over the garden, I had an image of the world that Gwyneth belonged to, represented and exemplified through her long life and in her many gifts and her character:

A world of genteel homes, robust individuals, arts and crafts, well-formed minds, great energy for the making, building and mending of society: a world of tennis and croquet, flowers, needlework and cream teas, of raising funds to help others; of using god-given gifts of mind, body and spirit to their best. The world of Clifton, really, that Betjeman called 'the finest suburb in England'.

This was Gwyneth's world her whole life long. She lived on the Clifton side of Whiteladies Road for some 88 of her 98 years. I think if you were to go into the drawing room of 18 Hurle Crescent now you would almost be able to reach out and touch that world for it still bears the character of Gwyneth and her family – unchanged, almost in all that time

So imagine with me Gwyneth moving in there as a young girl in the 1920s and beginning to learn there, and at Duncan House School, the great range of skills and interests that would occupy her for all the decades to come...

The *flower-arranging* – she provided displays here at Tyndale for many years, passed on her skills to others, demonstrated them internationally;

the *making things* – she made clothes, gloves, handbags, lampshades, hockey jumpers and socks for Duncan House teams;

the *cooking* – she kept books of menus for the wonderful teas that she made at home, catered for family birthday parties, provided delicious drop scones for all kinds of occasions (her croquet club teas were legendary!); helped regularly at Tyndale Thursday drop-in lunches;

he *sport* – she was a county-level tennis player, taught tennis at Duncan House, played regularly well into her 80s, at the Beaufort Road Club and elsewhere, then took up croquet with a vengeance, even inventing a 'fast' version of the game – and was still enjoying visits to her club until very recently;

the *organising* – she helped to found the Duncan House Old Girls' Association and to run it & host annual lunches at Hurle Crescent for *decades*;

the *fund-raising* – she worked with the Bristol Council for Social Services collecting good quality second hand clothes and selling them on to raise money, she was an indefatigable collector for the British Legion, she used to drive out to collect large quantities of cream from a farm near Dundry, re-pot it and distribute it to friends (one time spilling a large amount in her car, which never managed to shake off the smell);

the *driving* – she didn't learn to drive till she was in her forties having been a bike-rider before, then continued driving until, after a bump when she was eighty nine she took the advice of a policeman that maybe the time had come to stop.

the *fun*, and *the fantastic way she had with children* - organising picnics plus treasure hunts and invented games for Henrietta and Tessa and enthraling Henrietta's children on their frequent visits to Hurle Crescent, always knowing just 'the right thing to say';

the *planning family holidays* - which usually began with one of Gwyneth's 'committee meetings';

the *sheer love of life* - never complaining; always ready with a warm greeting and chuckling about her ailments;

and the *simple, profound, deep faith* – that brought her through difficult times, even though she spoke of how she felt Colin's loss more keenly in recent months than ever before;

the *boundless energy*,

and the *independent spirit*.

Gwyneth never actually became a member of Tyndale but she was so much a part of things here for so long and such a great friend and help to so many that we will miss her terribly. She was always deeply interested in what was happening at Tyndale and in the world around.

All that Gwyneth did, all that she was, emerged from her lively, unstuffy but profound faith in God – and she would have wanted nothing more than to know that she had made a contribution to the enriching of human life and to the continuance of that faith in the world.

If, with Gwyneth's passing, a world has, largely passed – the world of schools like Duncan House (part of the building houses Bristol Baptist College now) and gracious homes like 18 Hurle Crescent, we can be sure that what was good in that world has been handed on as a gift to us and to those who follow through the life and love, the faith and fortitude of such as Gwyneth, who is at rest now, safe in the arms of the God she served her whole life long.

***Taken from Michael's funeral address***

## **The Way I See It - as the Duke of Edinburgh turns 90....**

This summer the Duke of Edinburgh reached his ninetieth birthday. Those of us who can remember the tall, fair-headed naval officer who married Princess Elizabeth in 1947 have become used to his figure walking just behind the Queen on royal occasions over the last 64 years, often raising a laugh as he follows her along a line of well-wishers with a few well-chosen (or occasionally not quite so well chosen) remarks. His has been a remarkable life and his continuing energy and individuality as the Prince Consort have been remarkable. It's hard to believe that he is ninety.

Yet the truth is, we are becoming increasingly aware that more and more people around us are reaching that once rare milestone. I remember being taken as a child to see a great-aunt who had just had her ninetieth birthday. We were ushered into the room to be confronted with a frail figure, mouth open, pale eyes almost invisible - a kind of living wax-work. Today among our friends, neighbours and fellow church members there will probably be many ninety year olds - and even centurions- who are far from being wax-works. People may not yet match Methuselah in the Bible, who (it is claimed) reached 969 years, but we are on average living longer, and that prolonged life more often retains a degree of good health and activity.

Yet we live in a world which worships youth! The reason the Bible lists all those legendary men of old in Genesis (chapter 5) is that old age was seen as the mark of wisdom, something to be valued and revered. The leaders of Israel, and the leaders of the early churches, were called 'elders', because it was inconceivable that younger men could do it. None of that 'too old at fifty' in those days!

It's an observable fact that congregations in our churches are, on the whole, well above the national average age. That probably doesn't matter too much, so long as they are constantly fed with the rising age-groups. As one shrewd observer commented to me, 'It's quite natural to mug up for finals!' St Paul told Timothy not to let the people among whom he ministered 'despise his youth' (he was well over thirty at the time). We now need the balancing advice. Let no one despise the elderly! We're not just hanging around. Like Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, we'll faithfully do our bit until we topple off the perch.

*From "Parish Pump"*

## **Youth**

*Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind;  
it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees;  
it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination,  
a vigour of the emotions;  
it is the freshness of the deep springs of life.*

*Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage  
over timidity of the appetite,  
for adventure over the love of ease.*

*This often exists in a man of sixty more than a boy of twenty.  
Nobody grows old merely by a number of years.  
We grow old by deserting our ideals.*

*Years may wrinkle the skin,  
but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.*

*Worry, fear, self-distrust bows the heart  
and turns the spirit back to dust.*

*Whether sixty or sixteen, there is in every human being's heart  
the lure of wonder, the unfailing child-like appetite of what's next,  
and the joy of the game of living.*

*In the centre of your heart and my heart there is a wireless station;  
so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage  
and power from men and from the infinite, so long are you young.  
When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows  
of cynicism and the ice of pessimism,  
then you are grown old, even at twenty,  
but as long as your aerials are up,  
to catch the waves of optimism,  
there is hope you may die young at eighty.*

**Samuel Ullman**

## **UK Church Membership – Going Down .....**

The recently published volume UK Church Statistics 2005-2015 gives some up-to-date information about the church in this country. In 2005 there were 5.8 million church members in the UK, some 12.3% of the adult population. By 2010 this had dropped to 5.5 million or 11.2% of the adult population. If present trends continue, this will most likely be 5.2 million in 2015 or 10.3% of the adult population.

So - while the English church membership drops a projected -2% in the ten years 2005 to 2015, Welsh membership drops -23%, Scottish membership -32% and N Ireland membership drops -24%, all massively greater than the predicted decline in England. Why the difference?

One possible answer is that in England, the largest two denominations, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, are declining much more slowly now than they used to. This is partly because of the numbers of Fresh Expressions being started in the Church of England, and the influx of over half a million Roman Catholic Polish immigrants into the UK in the last few years.

In addition, there are some growing denominations in England, which compensate for the serious decline in Methodist and United Reformed Church numbers. As well as rapid growth in the black Pentecostal churches, the New (or House) Churches are growing, as is the Orthodox Church. Collectively these three denominational groups are predicted to grow by a third (+32%) between 2005 and 2015 against the overall decline of -11% for the others, making the overall decline -2%, as noted above.

So what does this mean? The growing denominations in England are starting new churches which are not just a replication of the old, but an adventure into re-expression and relevance in this new century. The average congregation may be getting smaller, but more units, or church plants, are being started. It is this which is making the key difference.

## **We are Survivors (for those born before 1940)**

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, photocopiers, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens, before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioning, drip dry clothes ... and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint!) We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' was what we had for tea. We existed before house husbands and computer dating and 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for the bus.

We were before day care centres and disposable nappies. We had never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors or young men wearing earrings. For us 'time share' meant togetherness, a 'chip' was a piece of wood or fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word. Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, 'making out' referred to how well you did in your exams, a 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on the bus to the terminus.

In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coalhouse, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. Rock music was a fond mother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay person' was the life and soul of the party, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatments or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of how the world has changed and all the adjustments we have had to make along the way. No wonder there is a generation gap today BUT

By the grace of God ..... we have survived!

**Submitted by Thelma Molton**

## ***A Musical about William Tyndale ...***



On July 16<sup>th</sup> there was a performance of 'The Commission,' a musical about the life of William Tyndale, performed in the council chamber of the Bristol Council House. This was an unusual place for a musical, but was significant in that Tyndale had been killed and burnt in 1536 on College Green, next to the site of the present Council House.

The musical was written and produced by members of the Christadelphian churches in and around Bristol. There was a small orchestra and choir and the performance showed what is known about Tyndale's life. It was, of course, a little elaborated over what is actually known, even to the point of an emotional entanglement that is difficult to substantiate! Nonetheless, the important parts of his life, such as his relationship with Bishop Tunstall and the Englishman, Henry Phillips, who betrayed him, were clearly described.

His work as the translator of the bible was the main part of the story and it was good to see the way the performance kept this as the central theme and showed Tyndale's courage and persistence in his task.

***Michael Whitfield***

### ***Advance notice for your diary:***

#### **The People's Bible: 23-26 October**

In the year of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, we aim to reconnect the British public with the Bible. The Bible Society will be bringing Scribe Pods to College Green from 23rd to the 26th October.

Over a four day period anyone can turn up and hand write two verses of the Bible, personalised with a comment, doodle or signature. The verses will be displayed to each writer on our specially-built iPad writing stations, and then written out with a digital pen and paper – creating a searchable online archive of everyone's contribution.

Prince Charles has written the first two verses, and the whole tour will wrap up with an event in Westminster Abbey, attended by the Queen, where we'll be presenting a bound copy of some of the handwritten verses.

See <http://www.thepeoplesbible.org/> for more details.