



Newsletter

JANUARY 2016

**Following God to be a Kingdom-focused,
missional church**

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JANUARY TEACHING PROGRAMME

Act Your Age

I remember as a child being told numerous times to “act my age” whenever I was doing something that I shouldn’t (sometimes this was swiftly followed by a sharp, stinging sensation on my behind). I thought that the older I got, the less this would happen, but I was wrong because as each year passed the expectations for me “acting my age” were raised.

If you think about this logically you can see that this is perfectly reasonable because you wouldn’t expect the same actions from a 2 year old that you would from a 20 year old. As we grow older we see changes in our actions, our thoughts and our ways – this is called maturity. This is not something that only happens as children but as we grow older, maturity keeps happening (or, at least, it should do). With every life event, every tragedy, every success, every tear and every smile our lives are being shaped and moulded into who we are now, and who we are likely to become. Our life experiences direct and influence us down paths that we ‘can’ feel helpless to control, but this is not the case. The same is true for Christians.

Being a Christian is not just a one-step event that happened to you many years ago - it is a life-long journey of learning and growing and doing and maturing into the life that God has set out for us. This does not mean that the journey will be an easy one to walk, but this is because trials and learning are very closely connected. At the very start of Jesus’ ministry we see Him alone in the wilderness being challenged and tempted – if this was right for Jesus why would it not be good for us also. We all may have faced a ‘wilderness’ experience where we felt alone, helpless and tested but this is not a bad thing. We can be allowed to walk these challenging paths so that, as we struggle through, we can learn, grow and lean more on our ever- loving Father than on ourselves.

James put this in alarming clarity in the first paragraph of His letter – “Consider it pure joy.....”. This was not something he tried to shy away from by hiding it near the end of the letter, but it took pride of place as something to be faced head on and, rather frighteningly, be joyful about it.

This month we are going to be looking at some of the challenges and trials we all face and rather than explore how we can avoid them, we will look at how we confront them and the lessons we should be holding on to.

Sunday Teaching Programme

3rd of January - In the Wilderness

Immediately after Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit, He is led into wilderness by the same Spirit to be tempted alone. The greatest moments of temptation often follow the greatest moments of joy. The blessing of new marriage, a promotion, being baptised, even a new child can create environments ripe for temptation. We see that it is not by accident that Jesus finds himself in the wilderness—it is by design. God does not lead Him into temptation, but He does lead him into a place to be exposed to temptation. We appreciate that God often leads us into good things; but we need to learn to appreciate the times when He leads us into confrontation with bad things.

10th of January - When the Storms Come

Sometimes in the face of trouble, we foolishly ask, "Why me?" when it might be more appropriate to ask, "Why not me?" We suffer because we are human. Jesus declared that a blind man's inability to see was not caused by his sin or his parents' sin, but was an opportunity for God's power to be revealed (John 9:1-4). The trials we face may contain lessons we need to learn, and suffering often helps us grow spiritually (Romans 5:3-4).

17th of January – Contentment on all things

Paul, the apostle, wrote, "I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Phil. 4:11). How could he make such a bold statement? Because he knew that contentment lies not in what he has, but in whose he is. When you come into a relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ, you should understand whose you are and what you have. A lack of contentment causes people to look horizontally - at what others have so you are never satisfied. Contentment is looking vertically - at what you have in God.

24th of January – Fear

Financial crisis, war, ISIS, redundancy, repossession, evangelism, death – we all fear something. Fears are real feelings that we cannot deny. All of us have felt "butterflies" in our stomachs at time - the nervousness

that comes when you are just about to do something different, but this is a kind of "good" fear that helps us be more alert and to perform better. However, if we allow the enemy to deceive us with lies we can become open to a "spirit of fear." In 2 Timothy 1:7, this spirit intimidates us and keeps us from being bold and courageous.

31st of January – Rejection

Rejection - no one is immune to it and everyone will experience it to some degree and no matter who you are, your life is changed because of it. The question is, will rejection take you down or will you use it for good in your life? Rejection can create a "bubble" around you that prevents people from getting near - the worse the rejection, the larger and the stronger this bubble becomes. It is easy for the bubble to creep up on us when we are not looking, but very hard to burst it when it has been there for many years.

WEDNESDAY CHURCH FAMILY EVENINGS

These evenings are a mix of Bible study/ discussion, prayer and growing in faith as well as time to just chill out together.

They are open to anyone who wishes to come along, whether you would like to be part of small group learning, sharing and growing together, or just wonder what happens on Wednesday evenings. You are very welcome.

If there is a particular subject you would like to explore, please speak to Mick or Spero.

January 2016

Wed 6th: 7-8pm meet, chat & pray – 8-9pm Let's talk about Christmas - Brian – Bring some nibbles to eat through the evening

Wed 13th: 7-8 pm meet, chat & pray – 8-9 pm Grace vs Works – Marolin

Wed 20th: 7-8 pm meet, chat & pray – MEMBERS' MEETING

Wed 27th: 7-8 pm meet, chat & pray – Can you lose your salvation- Spero

CAP UPDATE

We re-open the CAP Job Club on Tuesday, 12th January. We will begin with a new training module. This is more DVD-based but will allow time for individual coaching as well. A number of members have asked about exploring voluntary work first. We have a number of avenues to explore for this. Please pray for the members, that we can demonstrate to them their worth and potential.

UP 'n AT EM UPDATE

This is a partnership between Evergreen, Refresh, The Upton Centre and Charlton Athletic Community Trust. It was set up to see if we could help re-integrate elderly people who have suffered from anxiety or depression and have become reclusive, to get out of their homes and join with others in a self-supporting community.

The twelve-week pilot scheme has now ended. It has been far more successful than we could have imagined and the partners will meet together to consider the way forward. It is likely that Refresh will remain the meeting point on Mondays for what will be a growing number of people. This is such a needed provision for elderly people, and to see the transformation in their confidence and outlook makes the hard work well worth it.

Please pray that we will be able to create a place where people can feel safe, relax and learn new skills, or just enjoy making friends and realising they have much to give each other.

We do need more volunteers to help serve teas and food. If you have some time and would like to help people into a better quality of life, please let Mick, Pete or Charlotte know.

Thank you. God bless, Mick



REFRESH COFFEE SHOP

Refresh re-opens after the Christmas break on Saturday, 9th January
from 10 am – 12 pm

SOUP LUNCH



Wednesday, 13th January at 12:30 pm

The cost is £2.50 for a bowl of delicious home-made soup, crusty bread and butter plus a cup of tea or coffee. All the proceeds the month will go to the Falconer Trust which supports a Children's Home and Orphanage in Kabulamema, Zambia

MEMBERS' MEETING

A members' meeting will be held on Wednesday, 20th January.

The last meeting was not well attended and we want to encourage you to make the effort to get involved in this important part of church life.

At this meeting, we will be reporting on:

- progress with the Lead Elder selection process
- progress with charity registration
- refurbishment of the Refresh centre
- progress with improving energy efficiency of the building
- new developments in safeguarding
- former members who have moved on
- church finances
- forthcoming events

**CHURCH NEW YEAR PARTY
SATURDAY, JANUARY 30TH
4 PM—8 PM (APPROX)**



Celebrate the New Year with your church family at this themed party. Food will be provided.

Charlotte is organising this and if you can help, please contact her.

PRAYING FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Many of us don't have time to pray in great detail for the persecuted church, but these key points should help us to do what we can to support brothers and sisters in distress:

- There continues to be an increase in the persecution of Christians worldwide: in 2014 persecution became more intense in more countries of the world
- North Korea is still the most difficult place in the world to be a Christian
- Islamic State violence in Iraq and Syria has increased the pace of the exodus of the Christian population from the Middle East and is having a global impact
- Islamic extremism is a significant engine of persecution in 40 of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian
- The most rapidly growing area of persecution is in the countries of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa
- Iran, Sudan, Turkey, Mexico, Azerbaijan, India and Malaysia are countries of special concern; Asia and Latin America are areas of special concern; women and girls are people of special concern

(Taken from <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/>)



God V Dementia

Peter Kot—Evergreen Care Bexley

The other day I was rushing around my home getting ready to go to work. As normal, I went to put the house alarm on and...couldn't remember the number. I stood for what seemed like ages but the number just wouldn't come to my mind. In the end I had to phone Diane, and just as she answered the phone the number came back to me. Of course, I was busy and had a lot on my mind, and thankfully it has not happened since (as far as I can remember??).

But for someone who is in the first stages of dementia, these memory lapses can be quite frightening and, over time, become more frequent. I had experienced a small taste of the world of dementia.

Dementia is a cruel disease. It robs people of their confidence, their ability to make decisions and puts them into solitary confinement where even loved ones are not recognised. It is merciless and cold and a place where fear reigns in a bewildering world. For family members, the mother or father who looked after them as a child, who were always there for them in times of need, disappear and are lost long before death has its final say.

I have never heard of anyone being healed of dementia, either by science or by faith. So, in all the suffering we see through this terrible disease, where is God?

I have a friend who is a Pastor, whose mother-in-law, whom I shall call Jean, entered the battle with dementia. Being a non-believer all her life, salvation seemed out of her reach, as making sense of this world was way beyond her understanding.

On occasions, my friend would take Jean to one of his outreaches, as she likes music. On this occasion, at the end of the meeting, he gave an altar call, to which Jean responded and, to the day she died, had a friend called Jesus, and was so grateful to the charming young man who preached that day.

Dementia is no barrier to God, and neither should it be to the church. God's hand can reach through the fog of confusion, and our arms should be open wide to welcome those who, once upon a time, may have fellowshiped alongside of us. With a kind and gentle word, a touch and

a smile, we can let them know they are loved and cared for, and not alone. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will truly be their comforter as it speaks life through the confusion.

And what of us, God's children, we who have been called to faith? Don't we also have memory loss? Do we not forget God's promises in difficult times? All through the Bible, after all the miraculous things God had done, the words 'they forgot' can be found. Do we not forget what He has done for us? Even thinking back on times when God has really been involved in our situations, don't we sometimes even doubt ourselves as to what really happened?

Thankfully for us all, God, who created us, is fully aware of how unreliable our memories can be. That is why one evening, not long before His death, Jesus stood and broke bread, offered wine, and said 'do this in remembrance of Me'-lest we forget.



If you would be interested in helping or befriending older people in your community, or supporting the work of Evergreen Care Bexley, talk to Pete or Diane or ring the office at 01322 431765



NEWS FROM HEATHER ANDREWS

Hello BBC family,

I'd like to start by saying a huge thank you to Freda for being so faithful in creating the newsletter for such a long time. It was so wonderful to be in regular contact with her and she made it super easy for me to share my news with you. I'm excited that Marolin has taken over the task and I hope you'll join me in praying a big blessing on her as she serves.

Thank you all so much for your prayers for Srikant (my little guitar playing bro from Delhi). I'm in the process of trying to help him get a music teaching job here in Mumbai. He's excited to make the move and has the right qualifications. So please pray on that. If he gets the job it will be a big move for him and his new wife and I'll be trying my best to help him get set up and find his feet.

I've been having a very busy time with music. It's the main season for events and gigs happening and I've been blessed with a lot of work. This week alone I'm performing 4 days in a row in 3 different cities. So lots of travelling which means I'm missing church for a few weeks. Please pray for health and safety as I travel.

Another important thing to pray for right now is the birthing of the Arts Collective. After our last conference some of the leadership team are feeling it's the right time to establish a new organisation that will facilitate future conferences and events for the Artists and Pastors of Mumbai. So, Mark Davidson (our pastor), Advait Praturi (the main leader of the last 2 conferences), Ashwin Andrew (our worship team leader) and myself have started the process of writing down the vision, purpose, mission and values of the Arts Collective. We all feel quite inadequate for the task and calling God has given to us, but I know that God will be most glorified this way. So please pray for unity of spirit among us, strong relationships and clear vision from God. I believe this is a foundation being set for something much larger.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a very blessed New Year.

Heather



JANUARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday, 27th Dec	10:30 am	Sunday morning worship service
Sunday, 3rd Jan	10:30 am	Sunday morning worship service
	6:30 pm	Communion
Monday, 4th	10:00 am	Calligraphy
Weds, 6th	10:00 am	Flower arranging
	7:30 pm	Church Family Evening
Thursday, 7th	2:30 pm	Women's Own – speaker Dennis Roberts
	7:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Friday, 8th	9:30 am	Tots' Club
Sunday, 10th	10:30 am	Sunday morning worship service
Weds, 13th	12:30 pm	Soup lunch – proceeds to Falconer Trust
	7:30 pm	Church Family Evening
Thursday, 14th	2:30 pm	Women's Own – speaker Linda Tythe
	7:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Friday, 15th	9:30 am	Tots' Club
Sunday, 17th	10:30 am	Sunday morning worship service and Communion
Weds, 20th	7:30 pm	Members' meeting
Thursday, 21st	10:00 am	Evergreen Knitters & crochet lesson
	2:30 pm	Women's Own – Members' afternoon
	7:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Friday, 22nd	9:30 am	Tots' Club
Sunday, 24th	10:30 am	Sunday morning worship service
Weds, 27th	7:30 pm	Church Family Evening
Thursday, 28th	2:30 pm	Women's Own – Richard Barrell
	7:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Friday, 29th	9:30 am	Tots' Club
Saturday, 30th	4:00 pm	Church New Year Party
Sunday, 31st	10:30 am	Sunday morning worship service