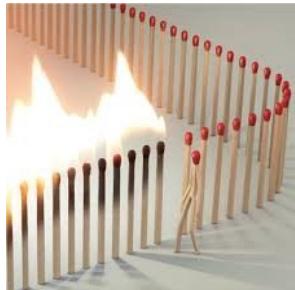


Sittingbourne Baptist Church

April Magazine 2020



“Self isolating” **“Social distancing”** These are the new phrases and the new patterns of behaviour that have crept into our vocabulary and daily lives as we navigate our way through extremely difficult and disturbing times.

We are surrounded by a sea of fear as infection rates soar and death tolls rise; by walls of isolation as people shut their doors, stay at home and do battle with boredom; by inconvenient disruption to our daily lives as our habitual practices are suspended and normal life is put on hold; and by acts of greed and selfishness as people “panic buy” and flout the recommendations designed to combat Covid - 19.

And yet, in these unprecedented times, people are singing to one another across empty squares; showing their appreciation of health workers battling the disease on the front line; loving their neighbours in selfless acts of practical kindness; going the extra mile by working that additional shift; as well as slowing down and quietly reflecting on what is really important and what ultimately matters.



And, speaking of reflection, one question being asked is - What might God be saying to us through all of this?

Claims that he is punishing us, and assertions that he will deliver us from this plague are already being made; while current events are a timely reminder of how small we really are, and of how little control we ultimately have over our own lives. But if the truth be told, it is probably too early to be able to provide an adequate answer to such a complex question.

However, as Easter approaches what we can say with certainty is that we have a God, who in Jesus, has lovingly reached out to us from all eternity. Who on Good Friday endured the darkness of suffering, death and burial; but who, on Easter Sunday came out the other side, risen and victorious, offering light and immortality to all who would believe.

Jesus “came out the other side” and no doubt we will too. But in the meantime, we can rest in the knowledge that he understands what we are going through – **“for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses”** (Hebrews 4 v 15); that his presence is forever with us – **“Nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 8 v 39); and that through it all he will sustain us – **“but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength”** (Isaiah 40 v 31.)



Have a blessed Easter, and although things will be a little different this year the truth and reality remain the same – “Christ is risen – he is risen indeed! Hallelujah.”

Yours in Him – Chris (virtual Pastor/preacher!)

CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Minister



REV CHRIS HUGHES

Minister in Training



NATHAN GORDON

Deacons



GRAHAME ATKINSON



MILES ATTWELL



SHAUN HENDRY

ADMINISTRATOR



FIONA COWAN

TREASURER



PAUL BLAKE



DAVID CASSE



ADRIAN CHEESMAN



IAN DERHAM



KUDA OSOBA



DORIS THOMSON



JACKIE KEMP



GARY HEARN

Church Office details

Opening hours: Mon 10-4, Tue & Thurs 9-3, Wed 5-9, Fri 9-2.

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Email: office@sbc-church.org.uk **Web:** www.sbc-church.org.uk



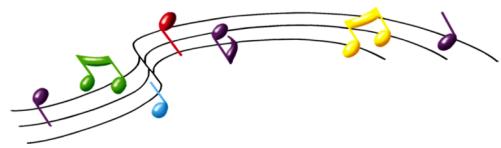
BEV SILLS

Preachers for April Sermons

5th	am	C. Hughes (Palm Sunday - John 12v 12 - 19)	Sermons will be on our website and on our facebook page
12th	am	April 12th - C. Hughes (Easter Day - John 20 v 1 - 9)	Please contact Bev if you require a CD-these will probably be produced on a fortnightly basis to get two sermons on one
19th	am	Chris Hughes	Our Youth Worker gift day has been postponed
26th	am	Nathan Gordon (1 Tim 4v1)	Kicking off the new sermon Series!

Worship Corner

By Brian Dickson
(Worship Co-ordinator)
April 2020



Scripture Reading

1 Timothy 1:1 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope

When all around you is in despair

Are you shaken by what is happening all around you? A true pandemic spreading around the world at great speed, and now our own country is in lockdown. Drastic measures for a drastic situation. No doubt we are all coping the best we can, but many are in despair, gripped with fear with ensuing panic at our supermarkets, resulting in empty shelves and no loo roll.

Paul says in 1 Timothy that Christ is OUR hope. He is our rock, our cornerstone on which we can lay hold.

We cannot say with any certainty how long this crisis will last, but what we can know is that in Christ alone our hope is found, and when people ask why we can have such hope and confidence, we can tell them we have a blessed assurance, and point them towards the risen Saviour.

Focus Songs for April

Song: Cornerstone – Hillsong

Focus words: My hope is built on nothing less, the Jesus' blood and righteousness

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/izrk-erhDdk> (copy and paste into a browser or YouTube)

Song: In Christ Alone – Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

Focus words: In Christ alone my hope is found

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/5mPrqltkJyw> (copy and paste into a browser or YouTube)

Song: Blessed Assurance – Fanny Crosby

Focus words: This is my story, this is my song; Praising my saviour, all the day long

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Sli0N4THnmE> (copy and paste into a browser or YouTube)

Interested in joining the worship team?

Do you sing? play an instrument? would you like to help with the sound desk or projector? Please have a chat with Brian— catch him by e-mail or in the flesh when we return to church based worship again.

Church Choir practice:

Postponed for the foreseeable future— but watch this space!



On... *House groups*

The Spotlight

Many of our church members and congregation are also members of a House Group—these meet fortnightly on a Wednesday generally but not always! Our Sunday service speakers not only prepare the Sermon they deliver but they also prepare questions which cause us to think more on the topic they have shared and to ask ourselves to apply the learning to our own lives—challenging; yet it is the whole point of the Sunday sermon.

Some of our house groups meet on the church premises—church is always happy to host and we can usually find a free room—some choose the Hub but the rooms upstairs are available and the Youth use the basement and the Lounge depending on the season for In Deep which is their 'house-group'.—

Some house groups feature worship some stick to Bible reading and prayer—most feature tea and biscuits although some have been known to indulge in cake occasionally!



Why would I join a house group as well as coming to church?? Well there are many benefits to appreciate in a smaller group—prayer points which maybe you would not stand up and share in the Sunday services can all be prayed for; no-one should feel foolish about not understanding a part of the sermon or a tricky Bible verse.

You get to know a smaller group of people much better than knowing the whole Sunday morning congregation—especially as the church continues to grow numerically!

Church Lunches



Spotlight on——Double whammy of information!!!

When we are up and running, the church hosts cooked lunches twice a month—the first and the third Thursdays unless it is getting close to Christmas and there may be a shuffle round! There are currently two teams who prepare and serve these—this means they read the list of attendees, shop appropriately and then peel, cut, slice, dice, and cook and bake everything needed for a lovely two course hot meal to be served in the church lounge at 12.45pm.

I thought I would include the lunches in 'Spotlight' as they are a really important time of fellowship and socialising for those who attend, and those who attend are not all members of our church, so there can be an opportunity to witness through kindness and conversation.

When we begin meeting again the process is that in the 'L' pigeonholes (L for Lunches) there is a book where those who would like to join for lunch write their name and then unless you ring and cancel a lunch will be prepared for you! People gather and chat from about 12.30 onwards and then we sit and share together—it's a little community but provides such a valuable service—please think about signing up and getting to know another group of people within the church community.



By Brian

Dickson

April 2020

Digging Deeper



Scripture Reading

Genesis 1:1–5 (KJV)

- 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
- 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
- 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
- 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.



In the Beginning God....

Where did life come from? Where did all the stars and planets come from?

The very first verse, of the first chapter, of the first book of the Bible gives us the answer; In the beginning **God**...

It was God who created all things and from this account we can determine what was important to God. Right at the outset the Earth is at the very centre of God's creation, it is his starting point upon which and from which all other things were created. All in a specific order and culminating in the creation of Mankind.

Of all of God's creatures, it is Mankind and Mankind alone that was made in the image of God. When God made all of the heavens; the sun, the moon the stars; all of the living things God created and put on the Earth, all the fruit trees and vegetation, all of this was created for the benefit of Mankind, and we were created for his pleasure: **Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.** (Rev 4:11 - KJV).

What's the answer?

In the previous edition of Digging Deeper (Mag edition) the question was asked:

What were the first things God created?

I should have qualified that by adding 'on day one'. So, what's the answer? Let's take a quick look.

Reading from the scripture verses above we see on day one there existed: (1) heaven (space) and the beginnings of (2) the Earth. There was also (3) water and finally, there was (4) light. All of these existed on day one of God's creation.

Scriptural food for thought

Q. Why did God create everything in six days?

Give some thought to the question above. Perhaps God could have done it quicker, but was there a reason God decided to create everything in six days? Was it because he could only get so much done in a day without getting too tired?

Get deeper into God's Word

Come and join us – When we re-start church activities we will meet again on Tuesdays at 7.30pm in the Lounge.

First Contact

.....David.....

What and when was your first contact with SBC?

That's easy. I come here because my brother Trevor comes here. It felt very good when I first came. Very relaxed.

Now having come for a while, what keeps you coming?

The people are so friendly and I feel at home here

(Editor' note— always use First Contact as a reason to pray for that person, their family and friends and their daily circumstances.)



On a regular basis Kuda will be looking out for people who are willing to be interviewed, and asking for their views on their first contact with Sittingbourne Baptist Church.

She cleverly alternates between male and female and tries to encourage our quieter members to participate! Thanks Kuda x

As you are aware we aim to pray for and mention Wedding Anniversaries which are in the relevant week— that is a little difficult without our weekly meetings taking place— plus we would normally mention birthdays and special (Big) birthdays in our adults too—if you are willing to be mentioned by first name only in this section, as we go forward please let me know by e-mail, as the source of my information about the dates and years of marriage/birthdays is not stored on the computer I am currently working on. We still want to celebrate with you all the special occasions we would normally recognize and as we are dispersed at the moment we can hold the people mentioned in prayer for that month- 'Brucie Bonus' on the whole month of prayer!!!



Our marriages are very special and in these days of social isolation the range and the variety we can add to our prayer lives is really important.

Let's use the familiar words from Ecclesiastes 4v12 to pray for the marriages within our church- "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken"

If God is the third strand in our marriages then we can defend our relationships against the wiles of the evil one, especially at this time when we may be spending more time in the same place than we normally do— don't let Satan drive a wedge between us.

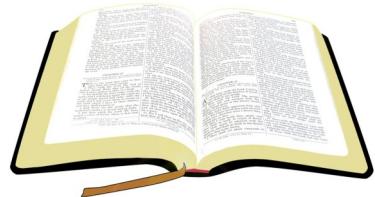
Let's get the ball rolling with Abbie and Marek— one year on April 17th! Until we have more sent in please write any you know about for the rest of April below and make every effort to pray for the couples and the birthdays we would have celebrated this month!

Activities and Events



As we are currently not running any of the church activities for the children and young people staying in touch has become even more important:-

The Sundays element of our children and youth provision is still very much going on!!



Listen via the website for the teaching and weekly sessions for each age group— there will be additional paper based activities and craft ideas to download and print off for your children.



Kudu will have an ongoing memory verse which is emphasized each time!

If you think a phonecall from your child's Ignite or Way leader would be encouraging then contact youth@sbc-church.org.uk to give your phone number and then this can be provided hopefully at a time which is beneficial to all.



Topics for **Ignite**—Listen in on the website for audio and download resources!



Topics for the **Way**— young people can access the teaching via the church website sbc-church.org.uk



29th March Jesus the superhero - how Jesus can help us today and how we can help others with our super powers

29th March Big Boys don't cry? Talking about our emotions and what to do when we feel sad.

5th April Palm Sunday - two sides to everyone. Talking about our emotions

5th April Palm Sunday - two sides to everyone. Talking about people letting us down

12th April Happy Easter - what Jesus's resurrection means to us

12th April Happy Easter - looking at death and dying. What does the Bible teach us this?

19th April Transfiguration - who is Jesus to us as individuals?

19th April lessons at Easter - the heart of our faith

26th April Here I am! How does Jesus show Himself to us?

26th April But Why? Looking at why there is suffering in the world

3rd May A job to do. How can we work with Jesus to tell more people about His love?

3rd May Looking Ahead. Facing an uncertain future with God who is sure and can be trusted

APRIL 2020

Until SBC are up and running again on activities I thought I would use this page to bring you little snippets which may well have appeared in the Sermon Notes— but now they will appear here as an encouragement to pray for the person mentioned— if you have testimony or brief entries for next month please e-mail them to me on office.manager@sbc-church.org.uk



Hopefully Sally won't mind me sharing how encouraging a text from her was that she had climbed the stairs without a crutch over the last week—our prayer support has clearly been in action there— God Bless for your continued recovery Sally!

"I would like to say Thank You for your prayers, thoughts and cards following my recent operation and period of recovery. I had hoped to report back to you after my follow-up appointment - due about now - but have just received that appointment which is not until July. So I can tell you that, subjectively, I feel fine and fully able to resume all of my normal activities, if normality had not been put on hold temporarily.
Once again, I thank you for your kindness and God for His goodness. Trevor Waters"

Written by Chris to guide those who wish to join the Church prayer time on Wednesday evening 7.30-8.30pm

Fools Partnering in Prayer!

Here are some prayer pointers for Wednesday evening's April fool's prayer meeting. They are designed to provide a unified framework, but please feel free to add your own, and to pray individually or in a family context. I have also included a couple of helpful songs that you might like to listen to in the middle. For the sake of balance, the prayer material is based on the acronym – ACTS:-

A – DORATION.

God as creator.
God as unchangeable & faithful.
God as holy & loving.

C – ONFESSION.

Selfishness.
Complaining & grumbling.
Your own personal sins.

SONGS – “In these days of darkness” <https://youtu.be/5GZpS1PFo0M> (written by a Baptist Minister in response to the present predicament.)

“He will hold me fast” – www.faithspace.org.uk/virus.php (A reminder of who will hold us during these difficult times.)

T – HANKSGIVING.

God’s presence & providential care.
The technology that enables us to connect with one another.
Those working on the frontline to keep us safe.

S – UPPLICATION.

The government and their policy and medical advisors.
All who are suffering as a result of this crisis – e.g – financial/ health/ job loss.
The church as it experiences a time of physical separation.

Finish with a time of **SILENCE** enabling God to say something to you, having heard all that you have said to him!

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” (Colossians 4 v 2.)