

Church Calendar: May 2012 to July 2012

Prayer is vital. We have set aside every Thursday to particularly pray for our church and community. Every Thursday there are prayer gatherings in the church at 6.30am and 10am and on the 3rd Thursday evening of each month at 8pm. We encourage you to pray wherever you are if you are unable to join with others on any of these occasions. Regular prayer events also take place at TBC: prayer before 9.15am service in the Prayer Room; AIM on Mondays at 7pm each week in the Crèche; 8 am on Saturday mornings in the Crèche.

May	June
Sunday 6 11.00am Community Service and meal: Philip Jinadu: A new hope (Mark 16:9-13) 6.30pm Prayer for healing, and communion: Terry Wicks	Sunday 3 11.00am All Age Community Service & Meal: Paul Ferguson 3pm Jubilee Civic Service at St Mary's Church
Tuesday 8 10.00am Men's Fellowship	Tuesday 5 10.00am Men's Fellowship
Thursday 10 7.30pm Welcome Evening	Wednesday 6 7.00pm Mission Strategy Group
Friday 11 7.30pm Worship Central Course	Saturday 9 8.00am Men's Breakfast
Saturday 12 8.00am Men's Breakfast	Sunday 10 9.15 & 11am Terry Wicks 6.30pm David Finney
Sunday 13 9.15 & 11am Paul Ferguson: Ascension (Mark 16:19) 6.30pm David Law	Monday 11 1.00pm Inside Out trip to Highnam Church and Newent
Monday 14 1.00pm Inside Out trip to Purton and Saul	Sunday 17 9.15 & 11am Paul Ferguson 6.30pm Dave Ling
Thursday 17 8.00pm Prayer Evening	Tuesday 19 10.00am Men's Fellowship
Sunday 20 9.15 & 11am Dave Day 6.30pm Sally Heath	Thursday 21 8.00pm Prayer Evening
Tuesday 22nd 10.00am Men's Fellowship	Sunday 24 9.15 & 11am Mike Levy 6.30pm Dave & Heather Staley feedback from Nicaragua
Sunday 27 9.15 & 11am David Lawrence 6.30pm Peter Hatton: Ezekiel, Dry Bones	Wednesday 27 6.15pm Adventurers
Monday 28 12.30pm Ladies That Lunch	July
Tuesday 29 2.00pm Holiday at Home planning meeting	Sunday 1 11am Community Service and meal: David Lawrence 6.30pm Prayer for healing, and communion: Paul Ferguson
Wednesday 30 6.15pm Adventurers	Tuesday 3 10.00am Men's Fellowship
Friday 1 7.30pm Worship Central Course	Friday 6 7.30pm Worship Central Course

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IN HOUSE



The Magazine of Thornbury Baptist Church May 2012

Excuses

MRS ROBINSON WAS A BRIGHT, TOTALLY ALIVE WOMAN, who giggled uncontrollably whenever Jesus was mentioned: such was her infectious love for him. She was a lone parent, with two teenaged daughters. But she would soon be dead - the cancer in her a quiet, expanding labyrinth, uncoiling itself and spreading its deadly venom every day - not long now.

I used to visit her every week, and she never failed to cheer me up. She told me her stories about her homeland, the West Indian island of St Vincent, and laughed at the thought of dying. This was no brave face, no denial. She knew that she was going to die, and she knew that Jesus had gone ahead of her. Her excitement about seeing him was palpable.

'No, Pastor, I'm not worried about dying, you see. But I am worried about my girls, Hazel and Denise. What will become of them? Oh Lord, oh Lord!'

And then her bright eyes would cloud over, and she would come back from heaven and land on earth again, real worry about her children causing her to rock back and forth, crying out to God. 'Oh Lord, oh Lord ...' And I would do my best to encourage her. 'Don't worry yourself now, Mrs Robinson, hasn't the Lord promised that if we cast our cares upon him, he would care for us?'

I would open my Bible and show her the scripture, 1 Peter 5:7. She knew it by heart, but would always look, as if checking to see that it was still there.

Week in, week out, she would laugh and fret, and I would quote another scripture each time. One day I found a scripture that talked about God looking after the widow in her plight, and told Mrs Robinson that the Lord would make sure that Hazel and Denise were cared for. She seemed assured again.

As I came out of her house, God spoke to me, as he often does, by asking me an uncomfortable question.

'So, then, how exactly am I going to take care of these children?'

I realised in a millisecond, that all of my praying flowery prayers and my quoting of Bible verses could be reduced to cliché if I didn't face the issue that God was raising. I considered the possibility that God was asking Kay and me to invite Hazel and Denise to be part of our family when their mother died. We had a young child of our own, and a very small house. This would mean disruption and inconvenience, and the 'how exactly am I going to take care of these children' question just wouldn't go away.

I decided to lay an impossible fleece before God. For those of you who are blessedly unfamiliar with this approach to guidance, it works like this: you ask God to fulfil a certain set of circumstances, and if those circumstances come to pass, then you agree that this will serve as a sign that God wants you to do something. It's a very useful strategy for those who are worried that God might be asking them to go to the mission field. You can ask for the impossible.

Beware. God is about . He may just interrupt your life.

'Okay Lord, I will indeed go to Burma if, next Wednesday, when I am in the frozen food section of Sainsbury's, a Burmese soldier dressed as a leprechaun jumps out from the fish finder freezer chest,

crying 'Okay then, begorrah. Come to Burma and make it sharpish'. If the leprechaun is carrying a yellow bassoon and has wooden Dutch clogs on his feet, then I will take this as a sign of your call, and will head off for Burma immediately.

I hit on the idea of a slightly more subdued, but equally impossible, fleece. I advised God that I was going to walk into our house and, without any discussion or prelude would simply announce to Kay that I felt that we should become foster parents to Hazel and Denise. The catch was that Kay was to say, without any deliberation or hesitation, 'sounds like a good idea to me'. Kay is a thoughtful, sensible person. Impulsive is not a word I would ever use to describe her.

I walked in to the house, pecked Kay on the cheek, and said 'I think we should foster Hazel and Denise'. Without a moment's pause, Kay

gave her response. 'Sounds like a good idea to me.' And so we did.

Mrs Robinson died without any concern about the future for her children, and we became five. It was a wonderful time, although the neighbours surely wondered how we had managed to get two black children and one white. Perhaps there was something in the milk.

I don't recommend the 'fleece' approach to guidance, although it works for some. But then again, I don't recommend clichés, pass-the-buck prayers, and making excuses for doing nothing either. Beware. God is about . He may just interrupt your life.

(Taken from Lucas on Life by Jeff Lucas. Used with kind permission.)

Competition at Thornbury Skate Park

The skate park, behind the leisure centre car park, will play host to the latest competitors on skateboard, BMX, and scooters. On Saturday 12th May 2012 the latest tricks will be shown off by local young people getting ready to compete for prizes from local and regional sports shops. There will also be space for families to come along too and enjoy the skating, free food, music and a few traditional fun-day stalls. Please come along! Any funds raised will go towards the maintenance and development of the skate park.

Dan has organised this competition with input from young people - it is a chance to showcase some of the skills that they have learned in an area that they are passionate about. It's hoped that it will also provide momentum towards doing some fundraising for the upkeep and expansion of the skate park. The event is being supported by the Town Council, NGM and others, but there is plenty of opportunity to join in and give your own support - if you want to help out by offering your time to help set-up, bake cakes, be on the steward team (current CRB check needed), commit to regularly praying, or any other way you can think might be helpful, please contact Dan Potter at the church office on 419118.



TBC through the week

If you only have the opportunity of coming into the building on a Sunday you will be unaware of the vibrancy of the place throughout the week.

From 9am on Monday morning until about 10pm on Friday evenings there are groups and individuals in and out. Two by Two kicks off the week – tables, chairs, toys and coffee are prepared for the adults and children in the Lower Lounge. While upstairs there is tidying up from Sunday and the offering to be counted. Once Two by Two has left the Lower Lounge is quiet until one or other of the U3A groups come to play Scrabble or Mah Jong. Mondays are usually the quietest day but once a month Inside Out meets and about every 6 weeks Ladies that Lunch. Sometimes these occur on the same Monday, which requires some logistical negotiations! In the evening French classes take place in the Lower Lounge.

Tuesdays start with someone delivering meat for the Lunch Club while someone else takes the meat away to cook it, and also the weekly staff prayer meeting – preceded by putting out the soft play equipment and tables ready for the Coffee Shop. In the kitchen there is usually a trifle being made and shopping decided on for Lunch Club, while the cakes, buns and drinks are got ready for the coffee shop.

The Coffee Shop takes place Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 10.30 and 12.30. There are tables in the Foyer and also in the Book Lounge, where the soft play area is set out. The latter has been a massive hit. Parents frequently thank us for providing a place where they can enjoy a drink and cake in a place where their children can safely play – some have said they have been looking for such a place for ages. A drink and tea cake for them and their child costs just £1. They have started arranging to meet family and friends here. We put out flyers for things like Alpha and Fun Factory and the Lent books on the tables and one or two have started chatting to us about issues in their lives. They are fantastic at helping clear away the soft play on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Back to Tuesdays – every other week the Men's Fellowship meets, with a large number of men not only from our fellowship but from others

around. They even invite the ladies on occasions! A number of them then migrate to the Coffee Shop, although I'm sure they have had refreshments already! Once the soft play is cleared up Steve comes in to get the tables and chairs out for Lunch Club the next morning.

Wednesdays are very busy from before 9am with Lunch Club preparing upstairs and another Two by Two session, followed by a small group, downstairs. From about 12.00 people start arriving to enjoy their lunch and entertainment, while in the kitchen the meal is cleared away and washed up. Every other week another U3A Scrabble group meets in the Lower Lounge in the afternoon. And once a month Adventurers has re-started for Junior school children.

Thursdays start with prayer meetings at 6.30am and again at 10am. They also see the Coffee Shop again in the morning, while in the Lower Lounge the Ladies Group meets for fellowship, prayer and Bible study. In the afternoon strange noises can be heard – the Open the Book team practicing before going to Christ the King to take assembly! Downstairs the Arts and Crafts group create. In the evening Attic Café supply the noise upstairs while French is again heard in the Lower Lounge. Leaders meet on the second and fourth Thursday evenings with a prayer evening on the third Thursday of the month.

On Fridays Bumps and Babies (part of the National Childbirth Trust) use the Lower Lounge. They usually end their session by joining those already in the Coffee Shop, which takes 3 people in the kitchen to get them served. Friday afternoons see a lady called Joan holding a 'gentle' keep fit class for the older person – if you sneak down there she will try and make you join in! In the evening Basement Café meets and the worship group practice for Sunday morning.

In addition to all this there are people in to buy books and cards, to have a chat or wanting a shoulder to cry on, to book a room or borrow something. There is a small but wonderful team who do repairs and improvements, who clean and move furniture. There are the office and finance staff; Paul and Dan; there are planning meetings for events, visits from schools, funerals. Recently there has been a 6 week parenting course called How to Drug Proof Your Kids and the Easter Fun Factory

Eggstravaganza. In the summer there will be the Community Week, with the Fun Factory, Kidz Roadshow and Youth Cafes, ending with a Family Fun Night, which will include a screening of the opening ceremony of the Olympics. Later in the summer will be the Holiday at Home, also with an Olympic theme. We also receive a number of outside bookings during the day, in the evenings and at weekends, which we try to accommodate.

This doesn't touch on all that happens on Sundays. People leading services and preaching are obvious but there is a large team of people making sure everything runs smoothly –



stewards, those who project the services, the PA techies, those who greet and hand out the newsletter, the many who work with the children and young people, the skilled musicians, the flower arrangers and coffee makers, and once a month those who prepare the Community meal. On communion

Sundays folks prepare and clear up the bread and wine. And during the week people lead small groups, prepare food for Alpha or families in need, or for events such as weddings and funerals. Some go into Bristol to help at the night shelter, others visit local prisons, while others visit those who can't get out or who are in need of some extra love. There are lifts to hospital, driving the minibus to take groups to places. There are mission trips in this country and abroad and detached youth work around our town. Mission Strategy Group and Thornbury Churches Together hold regular meetings and New Start Debt Advice meet with clients.

We are very blessed to be part of this vibrant community. Recently we had the police in to interview a number of us following the vicar's murder and one, commenting on how busy the church was during the week, said that is how she thought church should be. Like any family we all have our place. Sometimes someone else is taking up space or using the equipment we would like, so we have to negotiate and compromise. There are many things which need doing but I would suggest that we don't view these as burdens but as opportunities to serve one another, our community and, ultimately, God. And like any family – the more you participate the more you feel part of the family. With so much going on no one needs to feel that there is nothing they can do. If you would like to get involved in any way, ask at the office.