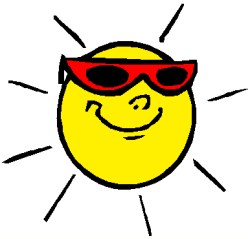




In House

Thornbury Baptist Church

June/July
2009



Page 1:
Seize the day

Page 2:
Community
week

Schools out-
reach

View from the
front

Page 3:
Rooted and
grounded in
love

Page 4:
Church
calendar



Seize the day

The other evening my wife Dianne and I went to a 'Sounds of the Sixties' concert. Just looking at the publicity filled me with anticipation. For two hours I was going to be breathing the same air as some of the greatest names from my teenage years. As I walked into the St David's Hall in Cardiff on a rainy Tuesday evening I felt as if I was about to step straight back into my wonder years. Happy days, here I come!

The first shock was the audience. They were so *old*. What were all these ancient people doing at a pop concert to hear my groups? At least, they were old from the neck up. Everywhere else they looked as if they were 16: leather bomber jackets, gold chains, winkle picker shoes and pink socks. If I kept my eyes low, I could believe I was still in the Kennards dance hall years ago; lift my eyes and concerns about how to keep false teeth from slipping flooded my mind.

But the really big shock was the groups themselves. They looked older than the audience. The lead singer of the 'Swinging Blue Jeans' apologised that he couldn't leap about because he'd hurt his back. No amount of make-up, toupees, and on one ancient rocker, brown head paint, could hide the dreadful fact that time had touched my heroes too. The music was still great, but as I walked back through the rain to the car park I was in a sober mood. And it was then that an even deeper shock hit me: those teenage days weren't as great as I'd tried to remember them. Girlfriends finished with me, maths teachers scared me, best friends hurt me, and pimples attacked my face like barbarian hordes descending on Rome.

The book of Ecclesiastes has a fascinating warning in it: 'Don't ask. "why were the old days better than these? ". It is not wise to ask such questions.'

There are two thieves of joy and they are twins. The first is the one warned against in the old wisdom book: a rosy-tinted yearning that the past returns—better summers, snowier winters, church life as it was when we first joined. We sigh as we tell people what it used to be like: "In those days, the place was packed; the sermons were deep, yet fascinating; the sense of love among us was tangible; and the wrong words never went up on the screen."

It's twin turns our eyes not back, but forward. We are always waiting for something to happen that will make life better: "When I get a new job, I'll be happier." "When we move house, we'll be so content." "When our kids are born/go to school/leave home life will be better." "When we join a new church, the teaching/fellowship/worship will be fantastic."

A friend of mine who is a clinical psychologist told me that most unhappy people who came to see him believe that a single change in their circumstances could give them the joy they seek.

But if these are the twin thieves of joy, then what is it they steal from us? The truth is so terrifying we can hardly face it: they steal our only opportunity in life to find fulfilment, happiness and peace. They steal today.



Rob Parsons

Community week

This summer, from Monday 27th to Friday 31st July we will be holding a week of outreach into our local Community based mainly around Streamleaze.

This is the first week of the school holidays and we will be holding lots of fun activities that we hope will be a blessing to the whole community.

We hope there will be something for most people in the church to join the relevant team and be a part of, or be part of a prayer team covering them in prayer-please let us know which team you would like to join. The week will culminate in a big free BBQ that hopefully everyone we meet through the week will be invited to. This is what is planned so far:

What: Infants Holiday Club
Who: Current Year R to current Year 2
When: 10am-12pm Tuesday-Thursday
Where: Thornbury Baptist Church whole building

What: Outdoor Kidz Road shows
Who: Children in current Junior age range (7-11s)
When: 10am -12pm Monday-Friday
Where: Streamleaze Green

What: Basement Cafe Chill out
Who: Years 7-9 (11-14s)
When: 6-8.30pm Monday-Thursday
Where: TBC Youth block

What: Attic Cafe Chill out
Who: Years 10 and over (15+)
When: 8.30-10pm Monday-Thursday
Where: TBC Youth block

What: Community BBQ
Who: For all ages
When: Friday 31st July 6pm onwards
Where: Streamleaze Green, weather permitting

Schools outreach

Many people wonder what there is to do in school as the students have full timetables with the huge group of teaching staff needed to make a big school like The Castle School function. But throughout the last six years I have become a regular face at Castle School, involved in RE lessons, Assemblies, Lunchtime groups, after school groups, school trips, Sports coaching and fixtures, one-to-one support, and even invigilating exams (not really Youth work but still..!) There are so many opportunities to get into the school and I really appreciate the openness I experience. In my previous Youth work I worked in schools a great deal doing similar things, where they were more used to a model of Youth workers being in the school full time. I would love to develop this area of my work more, but don't currently have the time, so am hoping with the start of a

Student Youth worker in September for three years, I might have more chance to pursue this.

I thought maybe you would like to know more about the main two pieces of work I do in Castle school at the moment; Morph (for Year 7-9) on Wednesday and MorphED (Year 10 and over) on Thursday lunchtimes. These are groups for any Young People to come to-Christian Young People can find support there and bring along friends where it would be harder to start a conversation about faith issues on their own, for Young People keen on discussions and interested in faith on their own accord, and for Young People who find lunchtimes hard and are seeking friendly faces and safe environment to eat and gather the emotional energy to face an afternoon of school! So we have a mixed bunch at both the groups but a great bunch of Young People who get to know each other well during the year.

They both start with a catch up as they eat their lunch, cut short if anyone has detentions to do first! Then we play a game, usually related to the topic we are about to cover. Then we look at a particular topic or issue, and add a Christian perspective at an appropriate level. These can range from a straight forward Bible passage and discussion, to topics like Heaven and Hell, Alcohol, Miracles, how being a Christian influences us when we play Sport, prayer...

From these groups, I find I am privileged in Young People opening up to me and sharing their lives. I can then build on these relationships (with some Young People we have no other contact with) and they come to the two Cafes we run in the evenings in the Youth block, and trips to Christian gigs, camps like Soul Survivor, and events like the Mix. I have known at least three of these young people I met in school start a relationship with Jesus over the last three years. It's the most exciting opportunity! Please pray for them!

Helen Smedley

View from the front

The Pastor knew that he was inclined to go on too long with his sermons so he asked one of the Elders, who had a large old-fashioned watch, to give them a signal by taking out and looking at the watch in order to give a signal if the sermon seemed to be going on too long.

After some forty minutes the Elder did this and was surprised to receive a particularly strong glare from the Pastor that pinned them to the back wall of the building.

"But that was just what you asked me to do" the shocked Elder said reproachfully after the service. "I didn't mind you looking at your watch" said the Pastor, "but I didn't expect you to put it to your ear to see if it was still working".

Rooted and grounded in love

Picture this: you wake in the morning to golden sun in a cloudless sky. For no reason that you can fathom there's a happy glow inside and as the day passes it just gets better. The postman brings an unexpected letter from the Inland Revenue saying you're due a tax rebate; you try on those jeans which were too tight a month ago and today they fit like a glove; your neighbour, who sometimes makes snide remarks about your untidy garden compliments you on your hanging baskets; the shop assistant smiles, the children play like little angels, and even the dog's breath smells sweet.

Now picture this: you wake to rain pouring from a leaden sky; for no reason you can fathom you feel grim and as the day passes, it gets worse and worse. The postman brings you an unexpected letter from the Inland Revenue saying you owe them money.....a lot of money; you try on those jeans which were too tight a month ago, and today the zip breaks; the neighbour who sometimes makes snide remarks about your untidy garden threatens court action if you don't cut down that huge shrub; the shop assistant scowls, the children are feral and as for the dog.....

Most of us, if honest, would admit to having days when God seems far away. When life is going well it's easy to believe in the goodness of God - to feel sure of his love, his benevolence, his care. But at other times the circumstances of our life are difficult to reconcile with our belief in a good, all-knowing and all-powerful God. During times of stress or sickness, loss or bereavement, we can feel as if God is more absent than present – a distant and silent spectator as we struggle, stumble and fall.

Many within the fellowship are facing significant challenges in one way or another at this time. Some have lost loved ones; some are battling serious illness or disability; some have lost their jobs or fear that they will before long; some pray week after week for situations that seem not to change; and many simply struggle with day-to-day pressures that leave us weary and wondering whether this really is the 'full life' which Jesus promised he would give.

When faced with suffering, the cry of the human heart is 'why?' There are no easy answers. No answer can adequately explain the death of an 11 year old boy returning from an evening with his church youth group. Bristol vicar Julie Nicholson, whose daughter was killed in the London tube bombings on 7/7 said that perhaps some tragedies are so terrible, so unimaginably awful that the only right response is silence. This requires humility: the willingness to admit that, in spite of all our sophistication, knowledge and insight there are some mysteries the human mind will never fathom. Henri Nouwen describes this as 'articulate not-knowing' – the humble acceptance of the limits of human wisdom.

Reflecting on the nature of suffering in Romans 8, Paul asks a question of his own: not *why* but *what*: 'What then, shall we say in response to this?' His answer comes in the form of another question, a surprising one: 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' It does not seem to cross Paul's mind to interpret his suffering as evidence of a lack of God's love. Instead, in one of the most glorious passages anywhere in the Bible he affirms that in spite of every possible hardship 'neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

God's love expressed in Christ: for Paul, nothing else was more real than that, nothing mattered as much as knowing it, experiencing it, being rooted and grounded in it. This is his longing for the Ephesians, to whom he writes 'I ask that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love.'

Over recent weeks this has been our prayer too. In our leaders' meetings we have been challenged again to return to these words from Ephesians 3, asking Jesus to reveal the Father's heart for us, his children. We are convinced that this revelation is the key to living the 'full lives' of which both Paul and Jesus spoke, and to our becoming free to love God, to love others, and to love ourselves as we should.

Whatever you are facing in your life right now, may you also know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge; may you know the height, depth, length and breadth of his amazing love for you; and may you never lose hope in the 'one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!'



Lis Pearce

Church Calendar : June to August 2009

JUNE

Tuesday 2nd

7.30pm European Election hustings

Sunday 7th

11am: Community service, baptism & meal.
Paul Ferguson

2pm: Cricket afternoon @ Rockhampton +
BBQ - over 15's

6.30pm: Sally Heath

Monday 8th

Inside Out visit to Chavenage

Wednesday 10th

8pm: Welcome evening

Thursday 11th

7.30pm: 'Economic downturn - the impact' @
Thornbury Golf centre

Saturday 13th

7.30am: Men's breakfast

Sunday 14th

9.15/11am: 'Down by the seaside'. Paul Ferguson

6.30pm: Mike Levy

Thursday 18th

8pm: Prayer evening

Friday 19th to Sunday 21st

Men's walking week-end @ the Jurassic coast

Sunday 21st

9.15/11am: 'Messiah's Dozen'. Lis Pearce

6.30pm: Mary Groves

Monday 22nd

7pm: Dance workshop

Saturday 27th

10.30am: Bring and buy for Calikids

2-4pm: Dance workshop

Sunday 28th

9.15/11am: 'Unforgivable'. Paul Ferguson

6.30pm: Neil Mobbs

JULY

Sunday 5th

11am: Community service & meal.
'Is blood thicker than water?'
Paul Ferguson

6.30pm: David Ling

Saturday 11th

7.30am: Men's breakfast

Sunday 12th

9.15/11am: 'Parable of parables. Paul Ferguson

6.30pm: Dave Day - Celebration

Thursday 16th

8pm: Prayer evening

Sunday 19th

9.15/11am: 'Attention!'. Lis Pearce

6.30pm: Ed Stuart

Sunday 26th

10am: Summer all age service

6.30pm: Mike Levy

Monday 27th to Friday 31st

Community week (see page 2)

AUGUST

Sunday 2nd

10am: Summer service with children's groups

6.30pm: Sally Heath

Saturday 8th

7.30am: Men's breakfast

Sunday 9th

10am: Summer all age service

6.30pm: Ian Taylor

Sunday 16th

10am: Summer service with children's groups

6.30pm: Mary Groves

Tuesday 18th to Thursday 20th

Summer holiday at home

Sunday 23rd

10am: Summer all age service

6.30pm: Paul Ferguson

Sunday 30th

10am: Summer all age service

6.30pm: John Moseley