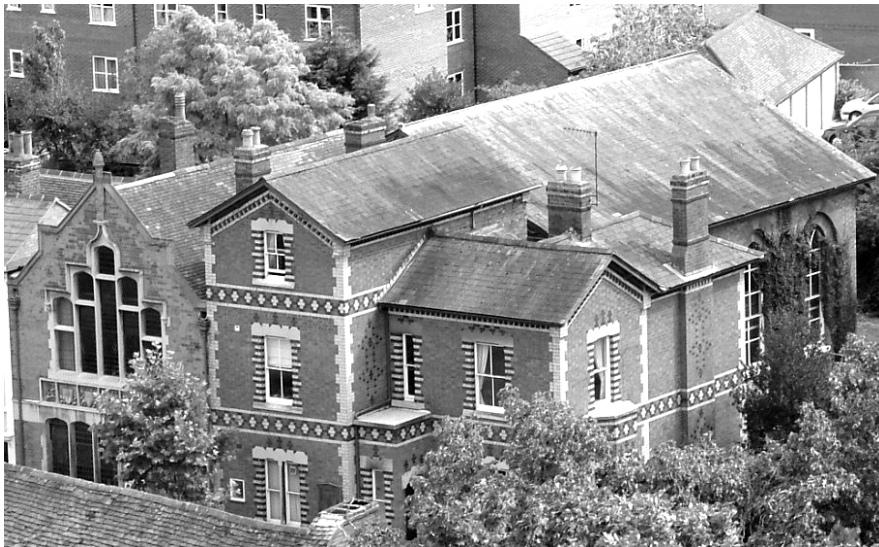


Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

July 2008

www.pershorebaptist.org

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Dear Friends

It seems fitting and significant that my first 'official' service as your minister should be a baptismal service. Hallelujah! Helping candidates prepare for their baptism and sharing with them on such great God-honouring occasions is for me one of the most joyful privileges of ongoing pastoral ministry. For there to be one so soon is a real honour, it maintains momentum and, I pray, also helps set the tone and focus for our ongoing life and mission together in God.

Without question, baptism is an important step of obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus as each one freely chooses to respond to God's gracious call to follow Christ's example by the help of the Holy Spirit. Yet I have also come to realise that to be baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is to be immersed into Trinitarian dynamic of the life of God. The implication is that our discipleship ceases to be just a response of duty and becomes a participation in the creativity, compassion, energy and life of God, the missionary God. Therefore, the Great Commission is not merely something God commands and that we do. It is something God initiates and we are invited to partner with him in what he is doing.

John's version of the Great Commission captures this sense of movement well: 'As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. And with that he breathed on them and

said 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' (John 20:21). Think also about Jesus' own baptism as described in the synoptic Gospels. Mark uses striking language 'As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my beloved Son, whom I love: with you I am well pleased' (Mark 1:9-11). As it was for Jesus, so it can be for us too in baptism and beyond. Although the relationship between the believer and God has already begun before the moment of baptism, it can now be deepened in a special moment of encounter.

It has been a great honour to support Ema, Josh and Nathan as they journey on in their vibrant and growing Christian faith. And I have to say I have been greatly encouraged and always learn much as I listen and share in such preparations. It is essential to realise that baptism is not reserved for mature, 'got it altogether' Christians (and I seriously doubt if there is such a thing!?). No, it's for people who, knowing that their shortcomings, have been covered by Christ's righteousness come, knowing that their deepest needs are and will always be met in God's tender and strong embrace. Baptism is about new beginnings, about washing away the past, wiping the slate clean. It is about dying to the past and rising in newness of life. As a person comes in faith to the baptismal pool, the triune God meets him or her with gracious

presence which transforms his or her life. So if anyone is questioning 'Am I really ready to be baptised?' The kind of things to ask include: 'Am I...

- Turning from my sins to God in repentance (Acts 2:38)
- Trusting in Jesus as my Lord and Saviour (Mark 16:16)
- Teachable – knowing a little, am I hungry to know more and to allow His Spirit to fill, shape, empower and guide my whole life. (Matt. 28:19-20)
- Taking my place, playing my part in the family of God's people and in the work of God's mission. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:26-29)

Baptism is like passing through customs at the airport and entering the departure lounge. Baptism is not our destination, but it surely denotes our journey with Jesus is well under way. It is, as Ema said to me, 'the end of the beginning.' In baptism, we anticipate God's future in the here and now.

This past Easter, I had the joy of leading worship and preaching on Resurrection Sunday morning at Chester Road Baptist Church in my home town of Sutton Coldfield. As I prepared, I recalled from College that it was customary in the early patristic period for churches to hold baptismal services on Easter Sunday. It dawned on me that it was exactly 25 years since I had been baptised as a believer and in that church too. With this as my cue, I took the opportunity to preach from Colossians 3:1-3 on the challenge of not just holding firmly to the historical facts of Christ's resurrection (credibility firmly based on the twin pillars of the absent

body/empty tomb and the many witnesses to his risen presence) but more especially to the living out of a vibrant Easter faith in our ongoing, everyday lives. The danger is that we robustly defend the Easter fact but fail to adequately demonstrate the life of Easter faith.

This 'Easter faith' is expressed and encountered and experienced vividly and vitally in the baptismal waters. (Romans 6:1-11, Colossians 2:11-12). In application of the message, I encouraged the worshippers at the service to renew their baptismal vows, something they did with surprising enthusiasm. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to notice that baptismal services are memorable and meaningful occasions and, I believe, this is intentionally so. It's kind of difficult to forget the time when you got 'dunked' and in consequence thoroughly soaked in the presence of friends and family baptism, we are surely challenged to recall our own baptismal vows, and to allow fresh opportunity for our life's purpose to be shaped and sustained by the central foolish message and claims of the cross.

There is one added dimension to baptismal services held at Pershore. You'll know better than I that it is the necessary to rearrange the lay out of the church to face the doorway for this is where the baptistery is situated. In some ways this may seem inconvenient or point to an ill thought out baptistery. I strongly beg to differ. It offers us a profoundly simple and prophetic symbolism. Baptism, properly viewed, is the historic entry point into the life of the

faith and of the faith community. Yet, as we witness each baptism, we are also turning again to recall the central truths of our faith, namely the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-3) Moreover, we turn to face outwards, toward an open door (Colossians 4:2) of manifold opportunity to share together in God's own mission.

Megan Turver

2nd July 1916 – 8th May 2008

With familiar Welsh hymns being played quietly in the background the little church of St Nicholas, Peopleton just about filled to capacity on 16th May as people gathered to celebrate the life of Megan (Meg) Turver. Known as 'Meg' by the Joneses and 'Megan' by the Turvers, she died on 8th May 2008 about 7 weeks short of her 92nd birthday. Following readings by Anne Turver and Jeffrey Jones, her younger brother Elfed shared memories of Meg with us. Born the second daughter of James Jones in 1916 she married her first husband James Jones in 1933 and, as well as bringing up a young family, she managed a shop which her father had bought from yet another James Jones – it could only ever happen in Wales Elfed said, pointing out that there were at least 5 James Jones in the congregation!

As a young girl she went away to school in Cardiff with her sister where she enjoyed sport particularly tennis, hockey and cricket. From school she went on to secretarial college before returning to Pontypridd to help her father in his

If you forget all else, remember this: We are baptised into the life of the triune God and live to share God's mission, his amazing movements of love in Christ and by the Spirit to transform the whole cosmos. This includes you and me!

Yours because we are His

Mark

minister@pershorebaptist.org

shop, putting her accounting and secretarial skills to good use. Although Megan had a very happy and fulfilled life it was not without its sad times. Her firstborn son died of whooping cough and a second son died as a young boy after an accident, followed two years later by the death of her husband James. Megan bore these losses with dignity and fortitude. It was while on holiday some time later that she met Ed Turver – after two years they were married and lived in Lincolnshire where they enjoyed 11 happy years together. With the passage of time Megan decided to move to Worcestershire to be closer to Roger and his family. She became a member and regular worshipper at Pershore Baptist Church and joined in many of the activities and group meetings. She endured the loss of another son and also her sister with courage sustained by her faith.

Megan (Meg) was dearly loved by both her families. Her outgoing personality, kindness and generosity warmed the hearts of all who knew her and we will all have our own special memories. I can picture her now one Bank Holiday Monday, sitting on a shooting stick at the end

of the pavement outside The Brandy Cask, glass in hand having been determined to get a good vantage point to watch the carnival procession. We give thanks for her life and Christian witness and rejoice that she is at peace with the Lord.

Ann P Taylor

PS Sincere apologies to both families for any factual inaccuracies in this article.

It is with great sadness that we report the deaths of **Peggy Whitem** and **Christina Haworth**. There were dear friends and died within days of each other. Our prayers and sympathies go to both families.

Lynne Gosney's brother has also died. Our thoughts are with all of his family.

When I sent a copy of the June Messenger to America, I received an e-mail to say that **Marjorie Barbour** is well.

4 July

Elizabeth of Portugal (1271 - 1336)

Elizabeth of Portugal could be the patron saint of all well-to-women who have compassionate hearts. As wife of Denis, the King of Portugal, Elizabeth became a byword for her acts of piety and charity to the poor. She founded convents, hospitals, and shelters for prostitutes. After Denis died she became a Franciscan tertiary at a Poor Clare convent.

Bibles - made in China!

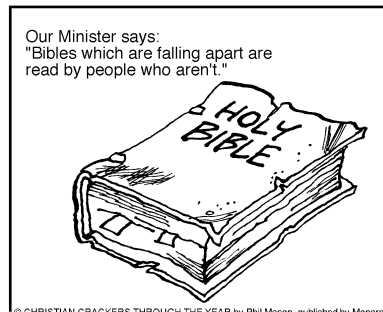
A new, expanded printing facility seems set to make China's ancient capital, Nanjing, the Bible centre of the world.

The Amity Printing Company - a joint venture with the Bible Societies - can now produce 23 Bibles every minute to keep up with growing demand for the Bible in China. In 2007 it printed six million Bibles. With the new press, the potential will be 12 million - most of which will be distributed throughout mainland China.

About 55,000 churches distribute the Bibles. According to experts, there is a real increase of interest in Christianity in China, where now an estimated seven per cent of the one billion population are believers. A pocket edition of the Bible costs about 68p and Chinese Christians can receive the full-size Bible at a subsidised cost of £1.16.

If you would like to help fund this effort, visit

www.biblesociety.org.uk/china.



© CHRISTIAN CRACKERS THROUGH THE YEAR by Phil Mason, published by Monarch

Billy Graham's daughter was being interviewed on the Early Show (US National TV) and Jane Clayson asked her "How could God let something like this happen?"

And Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response.

She said, "I believe that God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman that He is, I believe that He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand that He leave us alone?"

I know there's been a lot of e-mails going around in regards to 9/11/01, but this really makes you think. If you don't have time, at least skim through it, but the bottom line is something to think about....

In light of recent events...terrorists' attacks, school shootings, etc.

Let's see, I think it started when Madeline Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body was found recently) complained she didn't want any prayer in our schools, and we said OK.

Then, someone said you better not read the Bible in school... the Bible that says thou shall not kill, thou shall not steal, and love your neighbour as yourself. And we said, OK.

Then, Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when

they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide)

And we said, an expert should know what he's talking about so we said OK.

Then, someone said teachers and principals better not discipline our children when they misbehave. And the school administrators said no faculty member in this school better touch a student when they misbehave because we don't want any bad publicity, and we surely don't want to be sued (There's a big difference between disciplining and touching, beating, smacking, humiliating, kicking, etc.)

And we said, OK.

Then someone said, let's let our daughters have abortions if they want, and they won't even have to tell their parents.

And we said, OK.

Then some wise school board member said, since boys will be boys and they're going to do it anyway, let's give our sons all the condoms they want, so they can have all the fun they desire, and we won't have to tell their parents they got them at school.

And we said, OK.

Then some of our top elected officials said it doesn't matter what we do in private as long as we do our jobs.

And agreeing with them, we said it doesn't matter to me what anyone, including the President, does in

private as long as I have a job and the economy is good.

And then someone said let's print magazines with pictures of nude women and call it wholesome, down-to-earth appreciation of the beauty of the female body.

And we said, OK.

And then someone else look that appreciation a step further and published pictures of nude children and then stepped further still by making them available on the internet And we said OK, they're entitled to their free speech.

And then the entertainment industry said, let's make TV shows and movies that promote record music that encourages rape, drugs, murder, suicide, and satanic themes. And we said it's just entertainment, it has no adverse effect, and nobody takes it seriously anyway, so go right ahead.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out.

I think it has a great deal to do with "WE REAP WHAT WE SOW."

"Dear God, Why didn't you save the little girl killed in her classroom? "

Sincerely, Concerned Student...

AND THE REPLY

Dear Concerned Student, I am not allowed in schools".

Sincerely, God.

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says.

Funny how someone can say, "I believe in God" but still follow Satan who, by the way, also "believes" in God.

Funny how we are quick to judge but not to be judged.

Funny how you can send a thousand 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Funny how the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Funny how someone can be so fired up for Christ on Sunday, but be an invisible Christian the rest of the week.

Are you laughing?

*Stormont Stepping Stone
and March 2007 Messenger*

Edison

Coffee brings Baptists and Costa Coffee together

Two of the world's largest high street coffee shop chains have given a major boost to the Baptist-led 'cafechurch' network. Costa Coffee and Gloria Jean's Coffees have agreed to the set-up of cafechurches in their UK stores.

The formalizing of the partnership has given Baptist minister the Rev Cid Latty, the chance to dream big: of a café church in every high street, in every town, village and city.

Mr Latty says: "We never dreamed that what we began at Christchurch Baptist, Welwyn Garden City two years ago would mushroom into a national venture. It is now the responsibility of the cafechurch network to train churches nationwide, so they can utilize the opportunity to reach their communities in this innovative and fresh way."

Anyone who wants to set up a cafechurch, or just explore the idea, is encouraged to visit <http://www.cafechurch.net/>, or to email info@cafechurch.net.

There are currently six café church locations in England: in Gloucester, Trowbridge, Southend-on-Sea, Welwyn Garden City, Berkhamsted, and Bromley.

I have not failed, I have just found 10,000 ways that do not work.

Greetings!

Can I ask you to please encourage folk in your churches to join together on 12th July for prayer. Hopefully, they will already be aware of the date, time and nearest venue from previous notices but if you could also use services over the next three weeks to keep this in focus that would be great!

Four of our churches will serve as hosts for the gatherings, providing coffee/ tea/ cakes etc. and a variety of ways in which to pray – alone and together. We anticipate that there will be opportunities for praise and adoration as well as more reflective moments, prayer for our churches and communities, the wider Association etc.

People are welcome to take part for the whole two hours (10:00-Midday) or just call in for some of the time.

Additional copies of Prayer Watch will be made available at each venue but if there are additional, up-to-date prayer requests from your church please send these via e-mail by Sunday 5th July to the host Ministers:-

Worcester (Sansome Walk) - led by Kerry Birch

(manse@kappa-beta.org.uk),
Simon Harry and Jeff Porter

Kidderminster (Franche Road)

led by Simon Gudger

(minister@kidderminsterbaptist.com)

Redditch – led by Stuart Potter
(Stuart100@uwclub.net)

Evesham – led by Edward & Sarah Pillar
(edward.pillar@virgin.net)

Now to him 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! Amen. (Eph. 3.20-21)

Yours in Christ,
*Keith Judson HEBA
Regional minister Team Leader*

Baptists apologise for the slave trade

A delegation of British Baptists has gone to Jamaica to apologise to Jamaican Baptists for the transatlantic slave trade.

The decision to go was made following last year's Baptist World Alliance's annual gathering, at which American and Dutch Baptist leaders apologized for the trade, but not the British Baptists.

Last November's session of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) then decided to apologise "to God and to our brothers and sisters for all that has created and still perpetuates the hurt which originated from the horror of slavery." It was, says the Rev Jonathan Edwards, general secretary of BUGB, "an historic moment."

He went on: "Taking the apology to Jamaica in person seemed to many people a vital step on the journey."

Karl Johnson, general secretary of the Jamaican Baptist Union, said that BUGB's apology and visit "will underscore our sense of oneness and common journey."

Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side.

Lead your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.

Back to Church Sunday goes global

People in churches all over Britain, and for the first time, in other parts of the world, will be backing Back to Church Sunday this September 28th, and inviting a friend back to church with them.

Thirty eight Church of England dioceses from Cornwall to Newcastle will join with Churches Together in Scotland, the Church in Wales, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed churches nationwide, Elim Pentecostal churches and Anglican churches in New Zealand and Canada.

This represents exponential growth for Back to Church Sunday, which began in Manchester in 2004 with the message 'Missing You', and spread to Wakefield in 2005, nine Church of England dioceses in 2006 and 20 in 2007, when 20,000 people came back to church in one day.

Research by the Diocese of Lichfield after last year's Back to Church Sunday suggests that 6,000 people came back to church on that day and that, six months later, between 700 and 900 (12-15%) had become regular members. About a further 3,000 are still in touch with their inviting churches and may have come at Christmas or to a social event.

The 2008 resources centre on a special and personal invitation, with a place card bearing the emblem 'VIP'.

Weekly Church Events

Sundays	
10.30am	Family service with Sunday School Communion 3rd Sundays
6.00pm (5.00pm in winter)	Evening Worship Communion 1st Sundays
Mondays	
1.30pm	Little Fishes playgroup
7.30pm	House Group Middle Lane, Crophorne
7.45pm	Prayer meeting at Church
Wednesdays	
2.30pm	Women's Own – Lower Room
7.45pm	Prayer and Bible Study 21 Ganderton Court
8.00pm	Bible Study 48 Mayfield Road
Thursdays	
10.30am	Baby talk
7.45pm	Deacon's Meeting 1st and 3rd Thursdays

There is a **Monthly Communion service** on a Wednesday at 2.30pm

Impact- A generation Youth Event on 4th Sunday at 7.00pm

The **Thursday Club** meets in the Lower Room at 7.30pm on the 4th Thursday of each month.

Church Badminton is between 8-9pm on 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in Pershore High School. Details from Anne Sadler.

The **Multiple Sclerosis Group** meet on Monday mornings in the Worship area.

The **St John's Ambulance** use the Upper and Lower Rooms on Tuesday evening.

U3A Choir uses the Upper Room on alternate Wednesdays at 2.15pm.

THURSDAY CLUB OUTINGS

We are planning to go on outings for our meeting July. There will be an afternoon trip and we shall leave the Church at 12 noon, and travel in cars. We would like more people to join us to make up the numbers to constitute a group.

Thursday 24th July

A visit, with an introductory talk, to the garden of “**Woodpeckers**” at Marlcliff, Bidford-on-Avon, created and maintained unaided since 1965 by retired doctors Andy and Lallie Cox. The garden is open under the National Gardens Scheme and there is a charge of £5 per head. There will be an opportunity to take a picnic lunch or to have a lunch at the Cottage of Content nearby.

Please let Pam Rayner (01386-552892) know if you would like to join us or to ask for further information.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Woman's Own	
2	U3A choir
	Archie Nicholas
16	Communion service Summer tea afterwards

I do apologise for making a complete mess of the June Women's Own notice.

Signs found outside churches

- If you don't like the way you were born, try being born again.
- Looking at the way some people live, they ought to obtain eternal fire insurance soon.
- Forbidden fruit creates many jams.
- In the dark? Follow the Son.
- Running low on faith? Stop in for a fill-up.

The curate went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"

Sky at night

The scientific theory I like best is that the rings of Saturn are composed entirely of lost airline luggage.



**A RULE FOR LIFE
St. Benedict - 11th July**

From the earliest Christian times there have always been those who felt a special call to give their whole lives to God. Gradually these people came together with others who wanted to live in the same way. 500 years after Christ died, St Benedict set down a series of rules for these communities of monks and nuns.

St Benedict called his Rule one for beginners, a 'school of the Lord's service' where the student is 'to set nothing before the love of Christ'. The Rule sets out a life of prayer, study and work, living together as a community.

Many still live by the Rule of St Benedict today - in the Church of England and in the Roman Catholic Church. They keep the same Rule and Office (seven times for prayer each day) that St Benedict set down some 15 centuries ago.



B- QUIZ

All the answers to this Bible quiz begin with the letter B - can you find them all?

1. He was released instead of Jesus (Matthew, chapter 27)
2. When Jesus fed the 5,000, the loaves were made of this (John 6)
3. The youngest son of Jacob (Genesis 35)
4. A city where they built a tall tower (Genesis 11)
5. How Saul escaped from Damascus (Acts 9)
6. A village near Jerusalem where Simon lived (Matthew 14)
7. David ordered his men to stay away until these has grown again (2 Samuel 10)
8. Joseph and Mary travelled there because of a census (Luke 2)
9. God created them on the fifth day (Genesis 1)
10. Ruth's 2nd husband (Ruth 4)



Why do bees have sticky hair?
Because they have honey combs.



Why do bees hum?
Because they don't know the words.



ANSWERS: 1. Barabbas 2. barley 3. Benjamin 4. Babe (or Baby) 5. in a basket 6. Bethany 7. beads 8. Bethlehem 9. birds 10. Boaz

A tourist attraction with a difference

If you like visiting old churches, and if you also like books, here is an idea for a great day out this summer: why not head for London's Westminster Abbey - and the extraordinary book shop next door to it?

Church House Bookshop, situated in the heart of Westminster, is one of the major independent Christian bookshops in the country. Thousands of people visit each year, including many tourists from all over the world.

Church House Bookshop is the Hilton of Christian bookshops, and just the sort of place you could browse in for hours - if not days. After all, it stocks 8,000 books that cover the whole spectrum of theological thought, churchmanship and Christian experience.

For keen shoppers, there are also

A man wrote to a newspaper saying "I think I'll stop going to church. I have gone for thirty years and heard thousands of sermons, yet I can't remember any of them. I've been wasting my time."

Another churchgoer wrote back, "I've been married for thirty years. In that time my wife has cooked thousands of meals. I don't remember any of them, but they nourished me and gave me strength. Without them I would be dead and without a sermon I would be spiritually dead."

The first man continued to go to church.

compact discs, wafers, sacrament candles, church stationery, greetings cards and gift items on offer. Only your need for caffeine will finally drive you out - and up the road to one of the many coffee shops of Westminster.

If getting to London is too difficult, you can always 'shop' at Church House Bookshop via its website and mail order department. Simply ring 020 7799 4064 or visit

www.chbookshop.co.uk

The Church House Bookshop is managed by Melanie Tucker, whose team of six work hard to offer a first class service to their thousands of customers.

So - next time you are near Westminster, head for the Abbey, and then next door, to 31 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BN. There you will be most welcome!

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% of how you respond to it

Did it ever occur to you that nothing occurs to God?

Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Following the path of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked.

Pride is to character like the attic to the house, the highest part and generally the most empty.

Sydney Gay

Prayer Calendar for July 2008

- 1 Kath Parker
- 2 Jayne Pickering
- 3 Ken & Jill Porter
- 4 Mike & Wendy Porteus
- 5 Ken & Barbara Price
- 6 Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work**
Jeremiah 1:5
- 7 Nick & Yvonne Price & family
- 8 Barbara (Joan) Pritchard
- 9 Trevor & Elizabeth Pryce-Jones
- 10 Mary Pugh
- 11 John & Lee Rawson
- 12 Pam & Paul Rayner
- 13 ... Each one of you is a separate and necessary part**
1 Corinthians 12:27
- 14 Peter & Rosemary Read & family
- 15 Andrew & Anne Sadler & family
- 16 Hasnah Sheriff
- 17 Andy Smith
- 18 Gerald & Alvina Smith
- 19 Simon & Julie Smith & family
- 20 You will not receive because the reason you ask is wrong**
James 4:3
- 21 Phyllis Smith
- 22 Alan & Mary Taylor
- 23 Mike & Brenda Taylor
- 24 Pete & Ann Taylor
- 25 Elisabeth Taylor-Gowdy
- 26 Margaret Thomson
- 27 Save them...show mercy, mixed with fear...**
Jude 1:23
- 28 Richard & Alison Tisdall & family
- 29 Marina Townend & family
- 30 Simon Townend
- 31 Peter & Penny Wagner & family

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the August edition to be in by **noon on Sunday 20th July**. Please observe this deadline.
 2. If there are any serious errors/oversights, please tell me!
- If you would prefer a larger print version of the Messenger, have a word with me.
Thanks, Mike Taylor