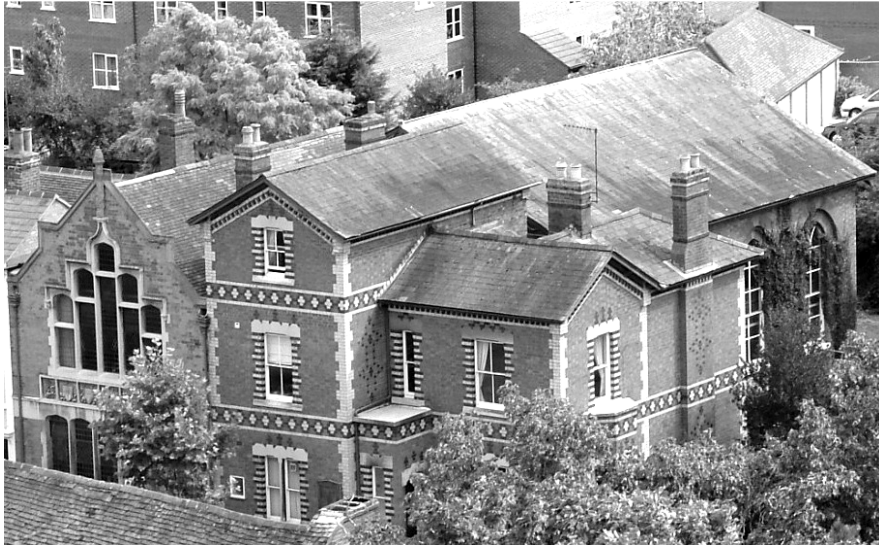


Minister Rev Mark Jennings
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Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

May 2009

www.pershorebaptist.org

Dear Friends

I suspect that for Jesus' first disciples, the days following his glorious resurrection might well have felt, at times at least, somewhat frustrating, maybe even confusing. One moment he is with them, the next he is not. Now you see him, now you don't. Is he with us or is he not? It seems like they never quite knew when Jesus would next show up, how long he'd stay or when he'd be gone again. For sure, they knew they were dealing with a real person, with flesh and bones. With their own eyes, they saw actual wounds visible in his once crucified yet now risen body. Again, at various times, he'd eat bread and fish with them, for supper or breakfast. But why didn't he use the front door! This was truly Jesus, their Jesus, but something awesome had happened to him.

So when he did appear, such encounters were, without exception, life giving, wondrously transformative moments of grace and glory. Mary's grief is eased, Peter's guilty regrets are blown away, Thomas' doubts and questions are now caught up and offered back in worshipful surrender. The Emmaus couple, in recognizing their hitherto unrecognised travelling companion, are so reinvigorated by their table fellowship with the Lord as to be willing, at the end of such a very

long, emotionally draining day, to immediately return to Jerusalem. They revisit the very people and places of pain, loss, disorientation and deep hurt yet now with their confidence restored, their hopes rekindled and their energies revitalized. This can be our own life experience too, a precious part of our testimony. Yet this risen, transformed Jesus kept on disappearing again. Why didn't he linger longer? Hmm, I'll come back to that in a moment.

We are also told that these post resurrection appearances were educational. According to Luke 'after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.' (Acts 1:1-3) In his gospel, Luke repeatedly tells us that 'He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures' and again 'beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.' (Luke 24:26-27, 45-49)

It is clear that for all such marvellous encounters, many of the disciples still retained an inadequate, even wholly mistaken mind-set, one which needed to be thoroughly overhauled. Many still seemed unhelpfully wedded to a world-view of a powerful all-conquering Messiah who would imminently overthrow Roman rule and restore an earthly kingdom to Israel. Sadly, they were missing God's timing and more especially missing the mystery of a suffering

Messiah, who would rise from the dead and once 'exalted to the right hand of the Father' then bestow the gift of God's abiding presence and enabling power, the precious Holy Spirit of God. It seems that this was a period of significant adjustment and preparation for the disciples. Am I wrong to sense an echo of this among us too in our lives and life together? Can I encourage a posture of openness among us, to hear, to learn, to adjust and to receive from the Lord all he desires to generously bestow and to graciously do among and through us?

There is no way for us to know for sure why Jesus did not stay with the disciples continually during those forty days. I think RT Kendall is right to suggest that 'a good guess is that they needed to get used to his absence.' He was also preparing them for something very special, the coming of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Earlier in the Upper Room, Jesus had sought to reassure them saying 'I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you ...' (John 16:7) So, the end of the forty days of 'on/off' appearances, culminates with Jesus commanding them not to leave Jerusalem but rather to 'wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.' He wonderfully promises 'you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses ...' (Acts 1:4, 8)

At this point in the Christian year we are encouraged to celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into heaven and anticipate the wonderful gift of the

Spirit given at Pentecost. In some ways, it's a pity that Ascension Day falls on a Thursday, ten days before Pentecost Sunday, as it can so easily pass us by without much notice or attention; and its vital significance not be fully grasped. That said, maybe the Ascension Day falling midweek, actually prompts us to find significance in it which has a *daily* application. I truly believe it holds fresh promise which is to be consciously appropriated in the ordinary details of our everyday life.

To illustrate, Christ's posture at his Ascension is noteworthy. '... He led them out ... lifted up his hands and blessed them.' (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9) The lifting up of hands in Scripture signifies victory, intercession, blessing and the bestowing of gifts. The glorious truth of the Ascension is, as A.W. Tozer captured it, that we have 'Jesus, our man in glory.' So, because of the Ascension, in Christ, we too can receive and enjoy ... victory and breakthrough (2 Corinthians 2:14) a position of rest (Ephesians 2:6) full assurance in salvation and prayer (Hebrews 7:24-25) manifold blessing (Ephesians 1:3) and the promised Holy Spirit as our helper (Acts 2:33, John 14-16).

So may we like Stephen be filled with the Holy Spirit and lifting up our gaze to heaven and see 'the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.' (Acts 7:55-56) He goes ahead of us and truly is 'our man in glory.'

Yours because we are His

Mark

minister@persshorebaptist.org

The Bible for health

Do you eat healthily, with a good mixture of carbs for strength and energy, protein for growth and vitamins to keep disease away?

A healthy body is really important, but Deuteronomy 8:3 tells us that 'people do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord'.

So where do you get the nutrition you need from God's word? Strength and energy are crucial if we're to keep on living the Christian life day after day, year after year. The letter to the Hebrews says, 'Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us' (12:1), and Paul says, 'I press on towards the goal to win the prize' (Philippians 3:14). Reading the many stories of people in the Bible who loved God and gave up everything to serve him, from Abraham through to Jesus and his followers, strengthens us to keep pressing on in our faith.

We need to keep growing, too. Peter urges us, 'Make every effort

to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love' (2 Peter 1:5-7). Does that sound like a tall order? Well, reading the Bible regularly can help us add a little bit of growth each day.

What if we fall ill? Fear, worry, resentment, pride and greed can all take hold of us and weaken our ability to live for God. 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,' says 2 Timothy 3:16. The Bible shows us where we're going wrong, so that we can put it right and ward off the 'heart disease' that harms our spiritual lives.

Do you need more nourishment, to live a healthy spiritual life? Then take a helping of the Bible every day!

Talk talk

Here's no surprise: girls tend to play less energetically than boys, because they are more interested in chatting. Research has discovered that from the age of 10, girls tend towards talking and socialising in small groups while boys tend to active games in larger groups.

Furthermore, researchers at Liverpool John Moore's University warn that this trend could last their entire lifetime.

No surprise there, either!

Humility is the beginning of true intelligence

John Calvin



BEDE

Why should someone who joined a group of monks when he was only seven years old, lived all his life in a monastery and who died in 735, nearly 1300 years ago, be important to us now? The 27th May is the Feast Day of the Venerable Bede and it is because he was interested in finding out the truth that we remember him now.

Bede was a historian – the first person to take a real interest in the history of this country. His most valuable work was his 'History of the English Church and People' which is still in print today. Bede took care to separate historical fact from made-up stories and noted all the places and people that he got the information from so that it could be checked. And all of this was written out by hand with ink made from ground-up oak gall on vellum (animal skins).

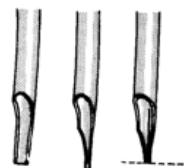
If you visit Jarrow you can see how Bede and his fellow monks lived in a special exhibition.

WRITE LIKE BEDE

Before felt tips, biro and pencils, people wrote with quill pens. If you would like to try this you will need a large feather like a wing feather from a goose, turkey or crow (keep your eyes open for one while on a walk in fields or a park). You must have adult help for the next 2 steps:

Ask an adult to heat a small amount of sand in the oven for you but be very careful with this bit because you mustn't burn yourself or anyone else. Put the end of the quill in the sand for a few minutes (this dries out the oils and hardens the feather).

With a knife, ask your adult to cut the end of the quill at an angle to form a writing point and then to make a vertical slit to finish the nib. Follow the pictures below...

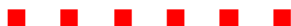


Now you can start to write using your pen and some ink: try making some 'v' and 'w' shapes and then go onto curves up and down.



Where is your essay on time travel?

I haven't done it yet, Miss, but I promise I'll hand it in yesterday.



Statistic of the month: More ministers on the scene!

At the beginning of 2009, there were 48,000 churches in the UK of all denominations, and they were served by 36,000 ministers. Some ministers look after several churches - and in some parts of the UK, such as East Anglia, they may be responsible for over a dozen churches. Larger churches have several ministers - on average about one minister for the first 200 churchgoers and then about one for every 150 after that.

Since the beginning of the new century, the number of churches has dropped by 400, or 1%. This is a net figure, of new churches opening offset by churches closing. The average number of new churches opening has probably averaged about 150 churches a year since 2000, but there have been some 200 churches a year which have closed. The net result is that there are 400 fewer churches than there were however, the number of ministers has increased by 600 or 2%, to give the total of 36,000. This again is a net figure as ministers retire or leave the ministry and new ministers are

ordained. Getting a sense of how many new ministers there are each year and how many leave is much harder to ascertain, however. New ministers tend to be much older than those entering the ministry say 10 or 15 years ago, and hence their length of ministry is less. Many of those now retiring will have had a life-time of ministry, as much as 40 years, but the average length of ministry taking all considerations into account could be perhaps only 30 years - meaning one needs an extra 1,200 new ministers each year just to keep level. The Church of England provides about a third of these new ministers. However, a significant number of new ministers over the past 8 years have been Pentecostal ministers, especially those looking after black churches. They have seen their ministerial numbers increase by more than 2,000 people in this period, almost doubling the number they had in 2000. The black, and other ethnic, churches are growing rapidly, and they often appoint more than one minister per church, significantly contributing "more ministers on the scene".

News of the Family

I would like to thank everyone for all the kind thoughts, prayers and cards I received upon the death of my mother; **Marjorie Barber**. Mother had a new grand daughter born just 4 weeks after her passing, and she has been called **Ewyn Jorie** in honour of her. Thank you. *Arlene Taylor*

Please keep the following in your prayers: **Jim & Grace Fasey, Carol Palfrey, Claudine & Alan Mee, Tony Beaton, Pat & Mick Hooper, Sylvia Christian and Frances & Brian Collingbourne**. Uphold **Hanah Cheung** in the loss of her **Gran**. Remember prayer **does** change things.

Thursday Club

On May 28th Paul Harding will give a talk entitled "Discover History" – Everyday Life in Medieval Times. The meeting will be in the lower schoolroom and begin at 7.30pm. All are welcome

Women's Own

6th	Tracy Genever – "The History of the Blue Cross"
20th	Communion Service

The Prayer Watch churches for May are

3rd Alvechurch and Franche Church, Kidderminster
 10th Cookhill 17th New HEBA Office,
 24th Regional Team Selly Oak
 31st Evesham and Rainbow Hill

Would the people who are responsible for the rotas please let me have a copy of them. The list in the Messenger is getting ever smaller to such an extent that it is almost pointless printing them.

The lists can be as far ahead as you wish.

Thank you

Mike Taylor

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
7.45pm	Prayer meeting at Church
Tuesdays	
7.30pm	House Group – Main Street , Pinvin
Wednesdays	
2.00pm	Women's Own – Lower Room
7.30pm	House Group – 46 Holloway Drive
7.45pm	Prayer and Bible Study 21Ganderton Court
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.



Congratulations to Emma (Ann Taylor's daughter) on the birth of her son on 22 April – just missed St. George's Day!! Both are well.

May 1 (or 3) Philip the apostle

Is there someone in church whom you respect for their spirituality and common sense combined - someone you feel easy about approaching to ask questions? That person's patron saint should be Philip.

Philip came from Bethsaida, and was a disciple of Jesus from early on. He knew how to lead others to Jesus - he brought Nathanael (or Bartholomew) to him in a calm, kindly way. He knew how to do some financial forecasting: at the feeding of the 5,000 it was he who pointed out that without divine help, even 200 pennyworth of bread wasn't going to feed that crowd. He was the one whom the Greeks approached when they wanted to ask Jesus to show them the Father, but didn't quite have the nerve to approach Jesus directly. People had confidence in Philip's spirituality, common sense and kindness. Such a person is a gift to any church! In art, the Apostle Philip has been represented either with a cross, or with loaves of bread.

May 14 Matthias the Apostle

Have you ever happened to be in the right place at the right time, with certain qualifications, and suddenly realise that God is singling you out for a special task? If so, Matthias is a good patron saint for you!

In Acts 1 (15 - 26) the apostles had a task to do: Judas had committed suicide, and a new apostle needed to be chosen. He had to have been a follower of Christ from the Baptism to the Ascension, and also a witness of the Resurrection in order to qualify. In the event, the choice fell to one of two: Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. Lots were drawn, and Matthias was chosen. How confident he must have felt in his calling: what encouragement that would be when the going got rough in later years! Matthias is thought to have ministered in Cappadocia and even Ethiopia. His emblem is usually an axe or halberd, regarded as the instrument of his martyrdom. His supposed relics were translated from Jerusalem to Rome by the empress Helen.

Though conversing face to face, their hearts have a thousand miles between them.

Chinese proverb

God never puts anyone in a place too small to grow in.

Henrietta Mears

Darn it - except that we can't anymore

A recent survey has revealed that many people in the UK no longer have many handy skills once taken for granted.

The study, by internet search engine Ask.com, found that many Britons lack some basic skills once considered vital -- from sewing to DIY and even social etiquette. But could this change now that some of the long-forgotten arts of domestic life might be seen as potential money-savers in the current climate?

A survey of 1,000 adults found that only 49% of all ages could darn a sock, though this falls to 21% of the under-30s and rises to 68% of those aged over 60. Similarly, only 42% of Britons (and 22% of the under 30s) know how to knit, though a healthy 85% can, at least, sew a button and 91% can iron a shirt!

Around the house, many seem to have forgotten basic DIY talents, as only 32% can change a lock or tile a bathroom and, while 68% can wire a plug, this falls to just 34% of the under-30s.

Almost a third of this younger age group cannot even knot a tie in these times of open-collared and dress-down Friday working, while only 17% of all ages can tie a bow tie. These days of emails and greetings of 'hi' rather than 'Dear Sir' mean that up to a third of the under-30s no longer know how to formally address a letter and less than half of this age group admit

they can set a table properly for a four-course dinner.

And despite the popularity of *Strictly Come Dancing*, only 30% of all British adults can dance a waltz, falling to 11% of adults under 30 and rising to 65% of those over 60. It is not a lack of talent, mental agility or concentration that is necessarily missing as there is no shortage of those who can master modern skills from computers to claims.

Seven in ten of all adults know how to set up a Facebook account, 92% can text on a mobile without a problem and 56% are familiar with the process of applying for benefits. Scots are most likely to know how to darn a sock (62%) and sew a button (91%) as well as wiring plugs (79%) and even lay carpet (43%).

Londoners are best at knotting ties but the worst at car maintenance - those in the West Midlands are the best.

The search engine commissioned the survey after noticing a big rise in searches for "how to" guides online, from car maintenance to baking bread, possibly to save cash in the current climate.

Rain

The little girl was anxiously watching the sunny sky for signs of rain. "Mum, didn't the weatherman on TV last night say there would be rain?" "Yes, dear," Mum replied. "Well," the little girl sighed with relief. "Thank goodness God didn't hear him."

The new road terror: pedestrians!

There is a new hazard on the road - the pedestrian. People who walk about with MP3 music players on headphones, straying into the road, unable to hear cars coming.

Now insurance companies say that more and more drivers are citing such people as a factor in minor accidents. One common scenario is when a pedestrian steps into the road, and a car slams on its brakes to avoid the person. But then another car slams into the car that has stopped....

People who text their friends while walking are another hazard. So beware anyone with headphones or mobile phones.... they may not see or hear you coming!

Want to keep the secrets on your hard drive?

When you next upgrade your computer, what are you going to do with the old one? Which?, the consumer watchdog, warns that deleting files or even wiping the hard drive is not enough to stop you becoming a victim of identity theft. Criminals search council tips and internet auction sites for PCs, and then use specialist software to make them reveal their secrets.

So, experts advise that the safest way to avoid ID fraud is to take your old computer and "destroy it with a hammer." "Smash your hard drive into smithereens!"

Alcohol abuse, eating too much, the pleasures of the flesh...

Samuel Johnson, (1709 - 1784) is famous for having compiled the first English dictionary. His private life was often dissolute, though, as the following prayer shows, he aspired to a better way.

O God, grant that I may practise such temperance in meat, drink, and sleep, and all bodily enjoyments, as may fit me for the duties to which thou shalt call me. And by thy blessing procure me freedom of thought and quietness of mind, that I may so serve thee in this short and frail life, that I may be received by thee at my death to everlasting happiness. Take not, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit from me, deliver me not up to vain fears, but have mercy on me.

Religion

The farmer told the minister that he had 'got religion'.

"Good, and about time, too" said the minister. "Are you going to stop sinning now?"

"Yes indeed," said the farmer. "I am through with sin."

"And are you going to pay up all your debts?" pressed the minister.

"Now wait a minute," said the farmer.

"You aren't talking religion, you are talking business."

No one can persuade another to change. Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be opened from the inside.

Marilyn Ferguson

A child shall lead them...

2009 marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations' International Year of the Child. Being young does not always mean being weak, as the story of Daniel and his three friends reminds us....

At the end of the first chapter of the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament are the words, 'Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.' The word 'continued' covers a period of around seventy years. Daniel lived to see the end of the Babylonian kingdom and the beginning of the Persian kingdom.

Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, were Israelite teenagers when they were captured by the Babylonian army and taken to Babylon. There their names were changed, they were given a strict Babylonian education and every effort was made to make them forget Israel and Israel's God. But from the beginning these four teenagers were determined they would not compromise their faith. They asked to be excused from eating the prescribed meals because they had been offered to Babylon's gods. Instead they choose to live on vegetables and water. After a trial period they looked better and performed better academically than those eating 'the king's rich food' (Dan. 1:15).

They had faced their first test and came through it triumphantly. Their second test came some time later. Refusing to bow down and worship

Babylon's gods when they heard the sound of music, Daniel's three friends were thrown into a roaring furnace. The Babylonish king Nebuchadnezzar was astounded when the furnace doors were opened and the three Israelites stepped out alive and not even the smell of fire upon them. Again their deep faith in Israel's God had brought them through.

Daniel's wisdom and wise counsels were such that he was raised to high office but his enemies were busy. During a thirty-day period in which all prayers were to be offered to King Darius, Daniel continued his daily devotions to Yahweh, the God of his fathers. Thrown into a den of lions, he was protected by God's power and even King Darius admitted that Yahweh was the one, true God.

The strong faith of Daniel and his three friends preserved them from teenage years through to old age. Children and young people must be given every assistance to find faith in God for themselves and every encouragement to develop that faith as the foundation for their lives.

Smart

Ben, aged five, was getting ready to move up a class at school. He was happy, but puzzled. "Mum," he said, "I don't understand why my teacher doesn't move up, too. She knows almost as much as I do."

How we cut our household bills

The recession is changing our daily habits at home:-

More of us are taking showers than baths.

20% more of us are using shopping lists, instead of impulse buying.

We are throwing less away - who wants to feed a dustbin?

We are eating out at restaurants less.

We are cooking soup - the sale of stock cubes has gone up.

The sale of mayonnaise and spreads has gone up - we are making packed lunches.

Let sleeping teenagers lie - in!

Next time your teenager sleeps and sleeps... and sleeps... let them. They really do need it in order to function at their best. Recent research has found that teenagers who spend more time in bed have much better concentration levels in school, and behave better in the classroom.

It also found that the brains of young people perform better after 11am in the morning. As one researcher put it: "Teenagers aren't lazy. We're depriving them of the sleep they really need through biological factors beyond their control. We are making teenagers ratty by getting them up early..."

And really, who wants a ratty teenager around?

Social Events

June 7th – **Church Walk & Treasure Hunt** – Pershore

September 19th – **Barn Dance** – Peopleton Village Hall

October 17th – **Variety Evening** – Pershore Baptist Church

November 21st – **Quiz & Chips** – Pershore Baptist Church

For details of any of the above see Tracy Wheeler

Badminton May 15th, may be at **PERSHORE LEISURE CENTRE** – check with Anne Sadler

The next meeting of the **Cameo Club** is on Friday 8th May at 7.30pm.

Details from Mary Taylor

The wedding
of
Elisabeth Taylor
and
David Witter
will take place at 2pm
on Saturday 6th June
in
St George's Church,
Barbourne, Worcester.
They would welcome
anyone who wishes to
attend the ceremony.

Prayer Calendar for May 2009

1	Adrian & Ann White	
2	Vi Wilcox	
3	Not just when you think they are watching you	Ephesians 6:6
4	Ivy Winkett	
5	Tim & Emily Wood & family	
6	Marc & Kate Young & family	
7	Wesley & Muriel Adamson	
8	Peter & Sheila Allies	
9	Mary Attwood	
10	Christ...is your example. Follow in His steps	1 Peter 2:21
11	Betty Banbury	
12	Tony Beaton	
13	Stan & Joan Bell	
14	Mary & Norman Bowley	
15	Nick Bridges	
16	Les Brookes	
17	How long are you going to sit on the fence?	1 Kings 18:21
18	Peter & Wendy Burfitt & family	
19	Miriam Burton	
20	David & Brenda Cameron-Mitchell	
21	Eamonn & Kathy Canning & family	
22	Ann Chaplin	
23	Stephen & Cindy Chidlow & family	
24	Don't live...unthinkingly...	Ephesians 5:17
25	Sylvia Christian	
26	Chessie Coakley	
27	Brian & Frances Collingbourne	
28	David & Vera Davies	
29	Lorraine Dawes	
30	David & Sandra Dixson	
31	Whoever accepts anyone I send accepts Me	John 13:20

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the June edition to be in by **noon on Sunday 24th May**. Please observe this deadline.
2. If there are any serious errors/oversights, please tell me!
3. If you would prefer a larger print version of the Messenger, have a word with me.

Thanks

Mike Taylor