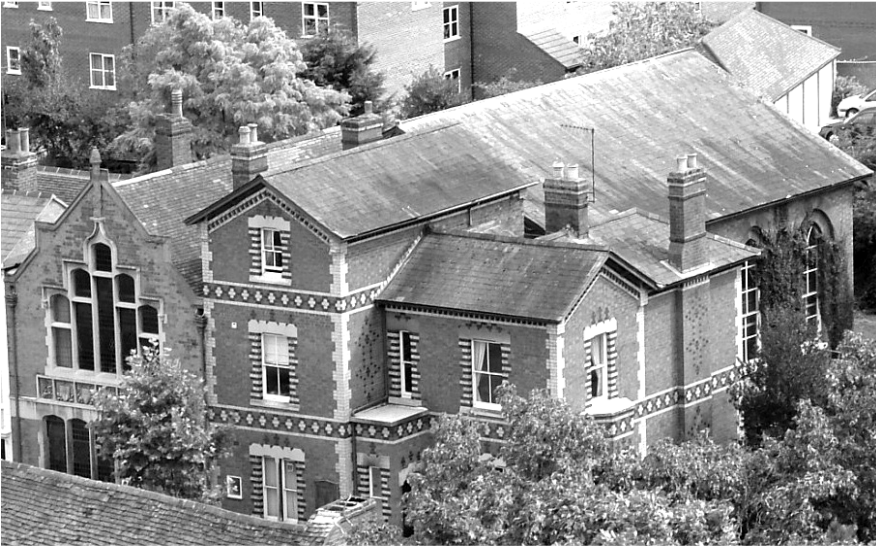


Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

August 2009

www.pershorebaptist.org

Minister Rev Mark Jennings
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Your Life, Your Choice:

Solitude

If we are to hear God effectively, we must be prepared to spend time alone with him. *'Solitude is a time when we withdraw from the company of others in order to give God our undivided attention'* (John Ortberg). This practice was certainly a priority in Jesus' life and ministry:

'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed' (Mark 1:35).

Solitude is not so much about what we *do* as what we *don't* do! If we are listening to God, we have to consciously shut out the external noise in our lives and focus on the quiet on the inside. However, if we are honest, spending time alone with God can be a real struggle. We want to do it, but other things can easily get in the way:

Distractions * Tiredness * Jobs to do * Wandering thoughts etc
reality these, our times with God, can feel like a duty rather than something to enjoy. So God becomes a person we're *supposed* to see, like the dentist, rather than somebody we *want* to see, like our best friend.

How do we approach the discipline of solitude? Solitude is an opportunity rather than simply an obligation. It's an opportunity to enjoy God as somebody who we really want to spend time with. So how can we make our times of

solitude a place to enjoy God's presence? When we spend time with a spouse or friend, we will usually make plans that include things that we enjoy doing together. For example, we may choose to go out for a meal, go to the cinema, take a walk or just spend time talking together. The choice of activity will usually depend on the state of our relationship and our needs at the time.

The same principle can be applied in our relationship with God! We need to plan carefully how we use our time with him. It might include giving time for silent listening, meditating on Scripture, prayer, keeping a journal, taking a meditative walk, or listening to a worship CD. Of course, we have to be flexible in our approach so as to respond to God's leading in the moment. However, a plan can help us stay focussed, so that we don't get sidetracked or distracted in the time.

Is your faith a bit shaky? Here's how to grow it...

From time to time we may come across people who say to us 'I wish I had your faith'. We may know deep down, however, that our own faith is rather shaky, not to say downright weak. So the challenge is: how can we build up our own faith to be a solid basis for how we live our lives? We can grow as Christian disciples in a number of ways – prayer, attending church, and especially fellowship with other believers. But what about reading the Bible? Bible reading can become one of those things we know

is good for us, but we can't quite get round to. We may feel we don't have enough time; we don't know where to begin; and when we do actually pick up a Bible, we can't make head or tail of it!

If we think of it another way, though, Bible reading is not a chore like weeding the garden, but essential for spiritual health and well-being, rather like a well-balanced meal. If we're really busy, it may seem too much bother to stop for a decent meal. Or we may be tempted to grab something on the run, which ends up giving us indigestion. Like reading the Bible, eating well is an essential part of keeping healthy and we neglect it at our peril.

What practical steps can we take to do something about this? First of all, we should admit to ourselves that reading the Bible may well be more than simply a matter of opening the book and reading it. Some parts of Scripture are very accessible to most people while others are far removed from our world and our personal experience.

Secondly, we can make use of the wide range of Bible reading aids available. Study Bibles, commentaries, daily notes and other resources all teach us about the Bible and help us apply it to our lives. As we continue to read the Bible, whether alone or in the company of others, so the Spirit works within us to instruct our hearts, inform our minds and strengthen our faith. And as we become more and more familiar with God's written Word, almost imperceptibly we find the presence

of the living Word transforming our walk of discipleship.

There are many Bible reading resources. For just some, visit: www.biblereadingnotes.org.uk.

What laughter does to you

When the writer of Proverbs observed that "a cheerful heart is good medicine" (20:22), he was really onto something. Doctors have now discovered that 'mirthful laughter' can quite literally reduce people's risk of having a heart attack.

Doctors in a recent study at Loma Linda University in California formed a group of people with problems ranging from diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol. They asked half of the group to watch comedy programmes or films that they found funny for at least half an hour a day for one year.

Now the results are in. The half of the group which watched comedy TV have had a 26 per cent rise in their good cholesterol. The level for the group that took medication without the laughter rose by just three per cent. Good cholesterol in the blood is known to protect against heart disease.

So it seems that laughter is literally good for the heart. As one doctor put it: "there is an intrinsic physiological intervention brought about by positive emotions such as mirthful laughter, optimism and hope." In other words, a cheerful heart is good medicine!

Cereal just as good as any sport drink...

Next time you return from the gym or a long run or whatever, reach for the wholegrain

cereal and some skimmed milk. They are just as good for you after strenuous exercise as are the far more expensive sports drinks you can buy.

Researchers at the University of Texas have found that wheat flakes and skimmed milk do just as good a job at rehydrating and re-energising the muscles. Cereal and milk are also equally good at replenishing your blood sugar and insulin levels, and even better at protein production. The milk helped reduce lactic acid levels in the blood – these cause stiffness after exercise.

Blooming gone!

These are true stories: a woman went down to her local garden centre and bought 20 hardy fuchsias. She spent an entire day carefully planting a fuchsia hedge across the front of her property. It looked great. Next morning she went down to make her breakfast tea and stared out the window in sheer disbelief: her brand new hedge was gone. Simply gone.

Another family spent two days laying a new lawn... on the morning of third day, it was gone.

Garden theft is on the increase. In the summer it soars by 63 per cent. Thieves these days help themselves to everything from your

flowers, pots, shrubs, vegetables, turf, (and even lawns!) rockeries, tools, barbeques and furniture. They take olive trees, ornamental trees, huge garden ornaments, posh hoses, ride-on mowers, fish and flagstones. About the only thing they don't bother with are the weeds and the water in your garden pond. Also, no one has yet reported any slugs stolen...

Now Dureen Black, head of insurance at the financial comparison site Confused.com advises people to check their insurance policy very carefully indeed. "They vary very widely." Churchill covers garden loss up to £250, while Lloyds TSB Options covers up to £2,000, but not the lawn. It always pays to check that the cover you have bought really does meet your needs.

Want to lose weight? Get more sleep.

If you struggle to get enough sleep, you may also be struggling with your weight. Recent research has found that lack of sleep can affect hormone levels, which in turn can trigger hunger and slow the metabolism. If the level of leptin, known as the satiety hormone falls, you will be more hungry for more of the time. In a study of nurses, short sleepers were found to have a body mass index (BMI) of 28.3, as opposed to a BMI of 24.5 among longer sleepers. Obesity is when your BMI reaches 30 or more.



CATHEDRALS

It is nice to visit other people's places of worship and see what parts are like our own church at home. But a visit to a cathedral is special.



In a cathedral everything is usually so much bigger – the roof is higher and there are lots more corners to explore.

They were built in stone at a time when most people lived in small houses made of wood and mud or brick. How did those who designed it know that the huge building would actually work?

The architects could imagine the finished buildings but it took a whole army of workers of workers to make the vision come true. Hundreds of people worked for hundreds of years to build these wonderful buildings. Hundreds of people all working together, not for themselves but for the greater glory of God.

CHURCH BITS

There are lots of things that you will only see in church buildings – do you know what these are? Answers at the bottom of the page.

1. PISCINA

- a) is it a niche in a wall that drains outside the church or
- b) a type of organ?

2. REREDOS

- a) is it a type of column
- b) or a screen behind the altar?

3. PEW

- a) is it a long wooden seat
- b) or the large hinges on a heavy wooden door?

4. APSE

- a) is the curved space at the eastern end of a church or cathedral
- b) or a curved roof

5) AMBO

- a) the framework that supports the bells or
- b) a raised platform, a predecessor to the pulpit?



Who are the 2 ice cream firms in the Bible?

Walls of Jericho and Lyons of Judah.

Who was the most popular person in the Bible?

Samson - he brought the house down.



Answers: 1: a 2: b 3: a 4: a 5: b

CHURCH FLOWERS

As two of our pedestal flower arrangers have now asked to come off the rota I am appealing for more helpers.

At the most you would only be required to do an arrangement 3 or 4 times a year. If you are interested please speak to me.

KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

It seems that several white mugs have disappeared from the kitchen cupboard.

In the inventory of kitchen equipment made in February this year, 19 white mugs were listed. Now there are only 5!

Can anyone shed any light on their disappearance please?

A number of coloured mugs have appeared in the cupboard, where have they come from?

Please remember,

(1) nothing must be put into the kitchen without first checking with me;

(2) any breakages must be reported in the kitchen log book.

Look forward to hearing from someone soon.

Eileen Merry

News of the Family

Sylvia Christian is recovering from surgery. Pray for healing for **Jim** and strength for **Grace** to cope.

Francis Collingborne needs a healing touch on her body. Prayer and praise for **John Gosney**. Keep **Pat Hooper** in your love and prayers and all those who need healing from a recent bereavement. Not forgetting dear **Mary Pugh, Tony Beaton and Les Brookes**.

Dear **Carol Heath** very much needs our love and prayers right now. We prayer that the change over in **Nathan John's** medication will go smoothly.

Sadly **Georgina Klee** has died. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.

Thy kingdom come – Thy will be done.

Stressed? When?

At what point in the week do you feel most stressed? Think about it. Could it be Tuesday mornings, about 11.45am?

That is when, according to a survey by a health supplement firm, nearly half of all workers feel under pressure: late morning on the second working day of the week. It seems that most of us coast through Monday trying to get our brains just into gear. By Tuesday morning we are finally 'revved up' – and by Tuesday lunchtime - all stressed out again.

Men's Conference - 26th September

Lenchwood Christian Centre,
Spiiten Farm, Ab Lench, Evesham, WR11 4UP

3.30pm – 8.30pm ish

£10, includes evening meal

Guest speaker David Carr

For more information contact synergy2010@live.co.uk

Volume

"Why, he's the loudest-mouthed preacher I ever heard!" the pastor on holiday said indignantly as stepped out of the church.

"Shush – dear," his wife soothed. "You forget yourself."

Game

Woman over telephone: "Are you the game warden?"

Game warden: "Yes, madam."

Woman: "Well thank goodness, I have the right person at last! Would you mind suggesting some games suitable for a children's party?"

Bread

The head of a retreat house received a complaint about the bread that was served for supper. "People on retreat should not make a fuss about such trivial things," he said. "St Benedict would have eaten it with delight."

"Yes, father, but it was fresh then."

Happiness

Our feelings of 'wellbeing' are very subjective, say psychologists. For example, did you know that Olympic bronze medallists usually report higher personal satisfaction than silver medallists? Presumably the silver winners feel failures because they missed the gold... while the bronze winners are delighted – indeed astonished - to have won anything at all. It seems that if all you have got is all you are going to get, it is smartest to be grateful for it!

Make a film for us!

A unique competition is offering a £1000 award to under-thirties who can make a film about faith. Whilst the organisers are particularly hoping to attract young media students and graduates, entry is also open to any faith groups and making an entry could be an ideal project for youth groups, etc. The film cannot be longer than 30 minutes, but can be as short as you like. The winner will be offered an international stage as well as the prize. Entries need to be in by mid September 2009 and all the details can be found at www.insightfestival.co.uk.

Early Morning

In the quiet of early morning
As a new day is unfurled,
It's a privilege to sit and gaze
At the beauty of God's world.

The golden rays of sunshine
The grandeur of the trees,
The nodding of the flowers
In the gentle morning breeze.

A carefully woven tapestry
With joy in every strand,
A vision of sheer loveliness
Created by a master hand.

Colin Hammacott

Hands off

You have been speaking to me,
Lord, about my children and grand-child.
You loaned them to me for a season.
Now I am to take my possessive,
managing hands off – strictly off.
You will perfect them in your way
and in your timing. Years ago you began
this work. It is your business to complete
what you start. You have promised that you
will. It's as good as done.

Catherine Marshall.

Eating prayer

Each time we eat, may we remember God's love.

A prayer from China

First Love

Young bride in tears: "You love cricket more than me!"
Honest husband: "Maybe so, but look at this way: I love you more than I love rugby."

Those teenagers around your house this summer...

Have you ever thought how much they have in common with cats?

1. Neither teenagers nor cats turn their heads when you call them by name.

2. No matter what you do for them, it is not enough. Indeed, all humane efforts are barely adequate to compensate for the privilege of waiting on them hand and foot.

3. You rarely see a cat walking outside of the house with an adult human being, and it can be safely said that no teenager in his or her right mind wants to be seen in public with his or her parents.

4. Cats and teenagers can lie on the living-room sofa for hours on end without moving, barely breathing.

5. Both cats and teenagers eat some very odd things – at very odd hours.

6. Cats are obsessed with themselves and their appearance. Teenagers...!

7. Cats have nine lives. Teenagers act as if they did.

Volume

"Why, he's the loudest-mouthed preacher I ever heard!" the pastor on holiday said indignantly as stepped out of the church.

"Shush – dear," his wife soothed. "You forget yourself."

There are too many Catholics and Protestants and not enough Christians.

*Frank Carson – comedian
Songs of Praise from Belfast*

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.

Archbishops' Zimbabwe appeal raises almost £300,000

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York say they have been humbled by the response to the appeal launched at the beginning of Lent. It highlights the support needed by churches who are struggling to feed the hungry and provide health care.

In a joint statement, the Archbishops have said: "The support of the general public has been overwhelming. We know that rebuilding Zimbabwe is a long-term aim, and this short intervention is still only reaching a small number of the many millions in need. Thank you for enabling us to do this."

"Our brother Bishops in Zimbabwe have highlighted the need for immediate relief activities to address the cholera epidemic and starvation, but also that we support programmes that provide long term solutions to poverty. So at their request we will be providing seed-corn for crops in time for the planting season which normally starts end of October.

"More of the dioceses of Zimbabwe are expected to send in their specific requirements in the next few weeks, and they have told us that their focus will be on the most vulnerable in their communities; those living with HIV, the elderly as well as children.

Three dioceses, those of Central Zimbabwe, Masvingo and Matabeleland, are the first ones to roll out the supplementary feeding

programme in schools, and Easter week saw the first food distributed through the Church schools

The Rt Revd Michael Doe, General Secretary of USPG; Anglicans in World Mission said:

"We've been astounded by the response of the general public, and we thank all those that have supported the Archbishops' appeal so far."

The Archbishops' appeal (which is being administered on their behalf by USPG: Anglicans in World Mission) will be accepting donations for the rest of 2009.

Social Events

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

On the 11th July the "Cameo Group" held a "Strawberry cream tea" in aid of "St Richard Hospice". A great deal of hard work went in to the planning and execution, we are grateful for those who worked so hard on the day, making the event such a success. We were encouraged by the attendance, a gentleman drummer who joined Mike and Alan with the music, our thanks to Mike and Alan for their playing, which went down very well. The afternoon raised the sum of £100. We look forward to the next "Fund Raising" and hope that more ladies will be encouraged to join us.

BUT GOD!**God can work for your good – even when everything seems to be against you**

In the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis there is a passage near the end that illustrates how God works in our lives and circumstances in the most remarkable ways.

When Jacob died, his sons feared that their brother Joseph would exact vengeance for the evil they had done to him. When they knelt before Joseph, now a great lord in Egypt, they feared the worst. Joseph's reply was generous and magnanimous. 'You meant evil against me, *but God meant it for good*' (Gen. 50:20).

Both halves of this sentence tell a great story. The first half, 'You meant evil against me' is a reminder of family favouritism and jealousies that had tragic consequences. Jacob's preferential love for his son Joseph made the boy proud and arrogant and his brothers' jealousy turned to revenge. They sold him to passing desert traders and told their father that a wild beast had killed him.

Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt but his wise counsel and good conduct made him a valued servant to Potiphar, an Egyptian general. His refusal to compromise with Potiphar's wife landed him in gaol and even when his predictions for others proved true, he was kept in prison.

Brought before the Pharaoh, Joseph's interpretation of dreams brought him release and rapid promotion. When the famine he had predicted struck Egypt, he was made virtually Prime Minister in the land

and his scheme of storing crops saved the land. His eleven brothers came to Egypt to buy corn and although Joseph recognised them, they did not recognise him.

Later, when he discovered that his father was still alive, he told his shocked brothers who he was. They trembled with fear but Joseph was not planning revenge. As he looked back over the hard years of being a slave and in prison, he saw the hand of God in all of it. 'You meant evil against me,' he told his brothers, 'but God meant it for good.'

'But God!' How precious, how wonderful, how providential, how reassuring those two words are! Against all the odds, God was working on Joseph's behalf. In spite of his brothers' cruel hatred, in spite of Potiphar's wife's dangerous solicitations, in spite of being forgotten by those he befriended in prison, Joseph triumphed because through it all God was on his side!

But God! is a glowing testimony to God's great plans and purposes for his people. Its New Testament equivalent is when Paul says that 'in everything God works for good for those who love him' (Romans 8:28). The Sovereign Lord of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, of life and death, holds his people secure in every circumstance. One day when we will look back on our lives and on all the things that baffle us now, and often cause us hurt and pain and anguish and doubt, we will say with Joseph, and Paul, and all who have travelled the road of faith – *'but God meant it for good.'*

Dr Herbert McGonigle

Is that holiday job against the law?

August is a time when many children are looking to earn some money from a temporary job. Nothing wrong with that, but they can be exploited – last year more than 600 children in the UK were found to be employed illegally and nearly 60 were seriously injured or killed. A campaign was recently launched to change this situation.

Last year, visits at the peak of the holiday season by officers involved in child-welfare found 805 school-aged children working in a number of occupations. 574 did not have the required work permit, 43 were found to be working outside of the permitted times – and 21 were working in prohibited occupations.

One was seriously hurt whilst working in a kitchen. He was employed illegally and without a permit, so was not covered by the employer's insurance and did not receive any compensation for his injuries.

Another boy had nerves and tendons in his hand severed when

he slipped and fell while delivering milk.

Paul Kirkman, of the National Network for Child Employment and Entertainment, stresses that the checks were not designed as a persecution or prosecution exercise, but to provide education welfare and juvenile employment officers with an opportunity to visit employers in shopping centres, markets and other places to offer advice "about the legal situation in regard to work permits, hours of work and occupations that in which children can and can't be employed."

Mr Kirkman, who works for Cornwall's Children's Services Authority, says that employers must ensure that they have carried out all legal obligations and are aware of necessary safety precautions before they employ a child.

Around the country, child employment officers have been visiting secondary schools to hold lunch-time drop-in sessions for pupils.

Number fun

Here is one of those totally useless bits of information that is interesting nonetheless: at five minutes and six seconds after 4am on the 7th of August this year, the time and date will be 04:05:06 07/08/09. This will not happen again for 100 years. Same for next year's 05:06:07 08/09/10. So – now you know!

Do and say

My boss was always keen to motivate us, his staff, to come up with bright ideas. One day, in the men's room, he placed a sign directly above the sink. It had a single word on it: "THINK!"

It obviously inspired somebody, because the next day, right below it, and immediately above the soap dispenser, someone had carefully lettered another sign. It read simply: "THOAP!"

'Use compass of Christ' urges new bishop

The Church of England's newest diocesan bishop, the Rt Revd Steven Croft, has issued a call for churches to refocus on Jesus as the compass to navigate the changing terrain of the world in a new book just published.

Taking his cue from Jesus' teaching about assessing the 'fruits' of endeavours (Matthew 7.20), Steven argues that "the source and the secret of lasting fruitfulness for any Christian community is not technique or good planning or the latest ideas. It does not rest primarily in great leadership or wealth or natural human ability. The source and secret of lasting fruitfulness is whether or not we are connected to and abiding in the vine: it depends on our connection to Jesus."

How it changes

A clergyman who had recently been made a bishop was the centre of attention at the 40th reunion of his old school. "How marvellous," said a former classmate. "Becoming so important hasn't changed you one bit!"

"Actually, it has," admitted the new bishop. "I'm now 'eccentric' where I used to be impolite. And I'm 'delightfully amusing' where I used to be a pain in the neck. And I'm 'a theologian' where they used to just tell me that my sermons didn't make sense."

Having encouraged Christians to focus on the person and teaching of Jesus as their compass to navigate change, Steven Croft moves on to look at the Beatitudes, Jesus' teaching at the Sermon on the Mount. He considers the need not only to build the Church but also to change the world, and offers thoughts on finding the strength for change through Bible study, worship, fellowship and prayer. Each chapter ends with suggestions for reflection and discussion individually or in groups. "Jesus' People will challenge the reader to rethink both the role of Jesus in the Church and that of the Church in today's society and culture," comments Steven.

Jesus' People: What the Church should do next, £7.99 is available from Christian bookshops.

Earth-bound

At a village costume party for children, a police officer was stationed at the door, with instructions not to admit any adults. Then an excited woman came running up to the door and demanded admission. "My child is in there as a butterfly, but she has forgotten her wings!"

"Can't help it," replied the officer, "orders are orders. She'll have to stay a caterpillar."

Prayer Calendar for August 2009

1	Roz Mackay	
2	Create in me a pure heart, O God	<i>Psalm 51:10</i>
3	David & Diane McBride	
4	Margaret McCully	
5	Colin & Gloria McLellan	
6	Viv McWhirter	
7	Alan & Claudine Mee	
8	Peter & Eileen Merry	
9	May you experience the love of Christ	<i>Ephesians 3:19</i>
10	David & Jean Middleton	
11	Florrie Newell	
12	Adrian & Chris Nicholls & family	
13	Joan Orr	
14	Wayne & Carol Palfrey	
15	Roz Palfrey	
16	... Now is the ... day to be helped	<i>2 Corinthians 6:2</i>
17	Kath Parker	
18	Ray & Barbara Pearson	
19	Jayne Pickering	
20	Ken & Jill Porter	
21	Mike & Wendy Porteus	
22	Ken & Barbara Price	
23	You have only one Teacher, the Christ	<i>Matthew 23:1</i>
24	Nick & Yvonne Price & family	
25	Barbara (Joan) Pritchard	
26	Trevor & Elizabeth Pryce-Jones	
27	Mary Pugh	
28	John & Lee Rawson	
29	Pam & Paul Rayner	
30	We have this hope as an anchor for the soul	<i>Hebrews 6:19</i>
31	Peter & Rosemary Read & family	

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the September edition to be in by **noon on Sunday August 23rd**. 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