

The Bethel Mag

The Church
that Meets at
Bethel



Spring
2023

The magazine from the church
In the community
For the community

NEWS FROM YOUR CHURCH

Hello People! Well, it's seems like forever since the last Mag - in fact, it was a complete year ago!! I wonder what's been happening with you during the past year? Maybe there have been some really great times for you - wonderful things, so memorable that you can keep brining them to your mind and they cause you to smile each time. Maybe there have been some really awful days though - ones filled with hurt or pain, maybe through loss and bereavement. For most of us, a year is a very long time, and we've probably had all sorts of days - the good, the bad, the ugly and everything else in between. That's life.

We sing a song some Sunday mornings with the chorus line as, "For this, I have Jesus, I have Jesus."

Here are the other words -



For the joys and for the sorrows
The best and worst of times,
For this moment, for tomorrow,
For all that lies behind;
Fears that crowd around me,
For the failure of my plans,
For the dreams of all I hope to be,
The truth of what I am:

***For this I have Jesus,
For this I have Jesus,
For this I have Jesus,
I have Jesus.***

For the tears that flow in secret,
In the broken times,
For the moments of elation,
Or the troubled mind;
For all the disappointments,
Or the sting of old regrets,
All my prayers and longings
That seem unanswered yet:

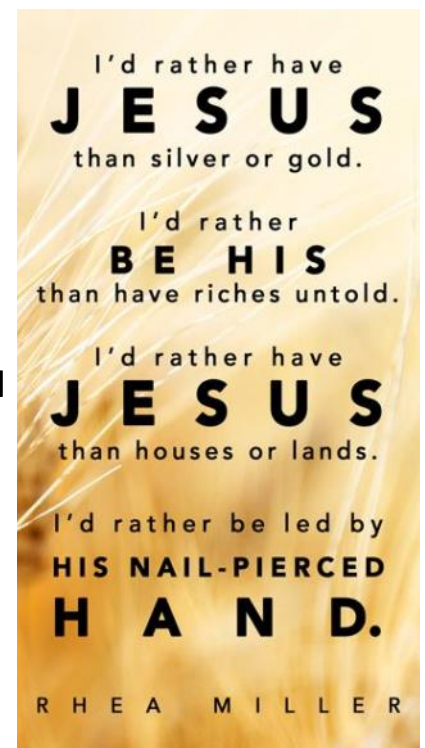


For the weakness of my body,
The burdens of each day,
For the nights of doubt and worry,
When sleep has fled away;
Needing reassurance,
And the will to start again,
A steely-eyed endurance,
The strength to fight and win:



Easter is upon us, and it's the most lovely time of year for Christians - new life, new from old, life from death, peace in the storms and hope for the world. This is all because we have Jesus for the joys and the sorrows and everything else. Sadly, Easter, like Christmas, has been hijacked by the world and turned into a spend-fest with all sorts of things being emphasized above Jesus. I have no objection to rabbits and/or bunnies - I actually really love all animals (sometimes, I like animals more than people!!) However, I wouldn't trade Jesus for a rabbit, bunny (I know they're really the same thing) or for an Easter egg, no matter how big and gorgeous it was. There is only one Jesus, and He's the ONLY one who can save and forgive, make a way for us into the Father's presence for now and eternity.

So, seriously, have a really wonderful Easter, but please - it's all about Jesus - His life, His death, His resurrection and ascension into Heaven. Celebrate Jesus, celebrate - He is risen!!





Bethel Chapel

Hill Street
Wollescote
Stourbridge
West Midlands
DY9 8TL



Friday afternoons from 2pm

**We will be OPEN and the heating
will be ON (when needed)**

**Come to Bethel and have a
tea/coffee & biscuit,
have a read, play a game,
use our Wi-Fi,
bring your knitting or
just sit and have a chat**

This new venture, Feel Good Friday, has been going for a few weeks now on Friday afternoons at Bethel. It is open to everyone, a time to have a chat, play a game, grab a cuppa and a biscuit and spend some time together on a Friday from 2pm for a couple of hours. Everyone is very welcome - come along and join in with the dominos matches!



SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT MY MUM

by Jonathan Wilding

Before Mother's Day Jill had put a WhatsApp message out asking if anyone wanted to contribute to the service. It got me thinking about my Mum so I asked if I could say a few words. This is the result of those thoughts.

My Mum was born over a hundred years ago in 1918. Her own Mum died when she was 14 so overnight she found herself taking on the role of mother for her siblings. She managed to



do this while still getting her 'O' and 'A' levels and when her youngest brother reached 14 she left to go to Bangor Normal to do a teaching degree.

Her first job was as an Infant school teacher in Birmingham (strangely just down the road from King Edward VI Five Ways where I was to start my teaching career some 40 years later). She was then evacuated, with the whole of her class, to a little town in the South Welsh valleys - some 2 miles away from her home. She met my Dad and when her class returned to the Midlands she stayed behind.

They were told they would never have children - Mum would find it almost impossible to conceive and if by some miracle she did it would be too dangerous to give birth.

Mum switched to being a Nursery teacher and for the next 36 years the 2 to 3 year olds of Llanbradach became her children. When I go home most people who are 40+ will tell me they were taught by Mum



and they all have several stories to tell. In 1958 at the age of 40 June was surprised to discover that she was in fact pregnant. A caesarean section avoided the complications of a natural delivery and I was joined 3 years later by my younger brother, Simon.

With Mum we always got what we needed - not necessarily what we wanted! I vividly remember Startright shoes and Vyella vests. No doubt really good for growing feet and a healthy chest, but I hated them both. I'd have given anything to be like everyone else.



Children from Llanbradach didn't go to the local Grammar school, my Mum decided I would be. She prepared both myself and my best mate Steve for the 11-plus exam and sure enough we got in. At the end of the first year Steve came 99/100 and I was 100/100. Neither of us understood how Grammar school worked. Throughout the 6 week holiday Mum taught us both for 4 hours a day, 7 days a week so we would catch up and neither of us were ever again out of the top 10.

Year 9 saw Saturday orchestra clashing with Saturday rugby. Mum's decision was 'Well, it won't harm to give rugby a miss for a year!' I would leave home at 9 armed with nothing but my flute, run around to the back of the house, climb over the wall and get my rugby kit from the coal house. I'd go to school, play rugby, come home and do the same process in reverse - surely



Mum would be none the wiser?

I had to get my best friend Steve (who played the clarinet, but didn't like rugby) to sign me in at orchestra and bring the flute music home with him. That way I could still perform in the end of year concert - something my Mum would insist on attending. Many years later Mum admitted she'd known all along. By keeping silent it forced me to rehearse and my Dad to wash my kit on a Monday morning!



It's 30 years since my Mum died, but whenever I have good news about any of my children, or grandchildren, I physically find myself picking up the telephone to tell her all about it. It was strange at first, but I've now learnt to spend a few moments in contemplation and fill her in on whatever has been happening.

My Dad was undoubtedly my role model - he was the person I aspired to be. I have no doubt that it was my Mum who forged me into the person I am today. She was a strong, determined lady who wanted the best for her children and for that I'll always be grateful.



Thanks Mum

CORNERSTONE

Cornerstone lunch club for the elderly - back in business and going from strength to strength!

With eager members (affectionately known as bids) and staff, a new Covid safe table layout and lots of lost time to catch up on, September 2021 saw us open our doors for the first time in 18 months.

Cornerstone changed a lot after Covid, we lost many of precious bids, some had just become too ill or frail to come back once we re-opened and sadly, some had passed away. But as old friends were lost, many new friends were waiting to join our happy family.

With Lynda still at the helm cooking mouth-watering and nutritious meals, an amazing team of volunteers, serving, clearing, and washing-up, minibus drivers safely bringing people in then taking them home and Jill providing a short service with prayers and hymns to feed the soul, Wednesdays at Bethel are once again filled with the sound of joy and laughter.

This wonderful club that was started so many years ago continues to grow and thrive, offering people a place to come together for good food and friendship, to share joys and sometimes sadness, to laugh and sing, but mainly to complain that Hayley never picks the right winning number on the Bonus Ball Raffle or



moan when she forgets the Turkish Delight for the chocolate box!!!

We've shared jokes, stories and poems written by our very own Win Parker and even a mystery – The case of the missing walking sticks which is still unsolved today!!!

You never know what a Wednesday at Cornerstone will hold, but you can guarantee it will always put a smile on your face!!!

Since re-opening, our bids have been treated to some special events including an afternoon tea for our beloved Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, a wonderful show from Maggie O'Hara, Christmas Parties with special visits from Santa and a couple of extra Afternoon Teas during the summer break when we usually don't get to see each other. We've celebrated special birthdays and always try to make a fuss of our bids on special days through the year including Valentines Day, Mother's Day and Easter to name but a few.





Every Wednesday that we can be together is a blessing and our wonderful volunteers (most of whom should be sitting and having a lunch instead of serving it) work tirelessly week after week to make every week as enjoyable as possible. Cornerstone wouldn't be what it is without these good and faithful servants.

May God bless every member of Cornerstone, bid or volunteer and long may this special club continue.

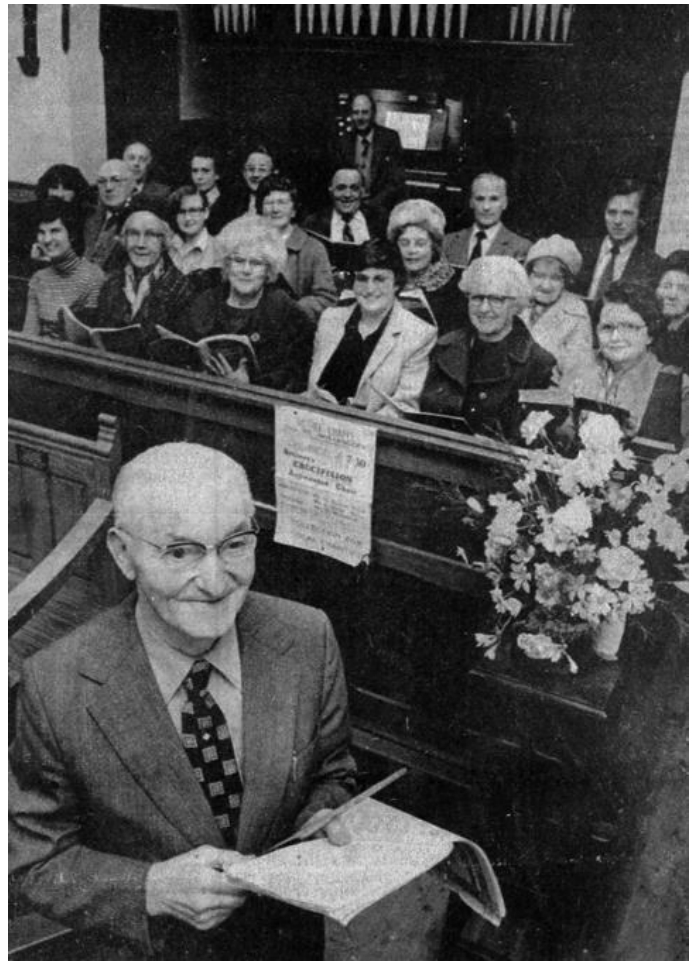
IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK SINGING

On Friday 7th April we'll be back singing Stainer's Crucifixion at Bethel Chapel - a Good Friday tradition going back for many years.

It was one of those events that you dreaded the Covid had put an end to: Would people have got out of the habit of turning up to rehearse for several weeks in the build up? Would people want to come out late at night?

Fortunately the answers to these questions were No and Yes (in that order), rehearsals have gone well from the very beginning and we are now looking forward to the performance that will take place in a few days time.

It's a great way to get Holy weekend started and a real opportunity to reflect on the real meaning of Easter.



Fred Dickens (conductor) and choir 1982



Soloists Herbert Bowen (Tenor) and Cecil Drew (Bass) and Choir 1992

Coping With Cancer

Cancer will affect 1 in 2 of us during our lifetime, and everyone will know someone who has been/is affected by cancer. Here at Bethel we have experienced more than our fair share of it.

So, we thought it might be useful to start a peer support group, for people who are going through, have had, think they have, or have loved ones who have or had cancer at any time.

Nothing too heavy, just a time to be able to chat to people who know what you're going through, or just sit and listen or read some information leaflets, whatever is most helpful for you. We can develop these times to suit, so if you have suggestions or ideas what you would like included, come along with your ideas.



Spread the word around to friends and relatives who may find it useful come along - some of us have found the most disconcerting time in our cancer journeys - after diagnosis - has been the time immediately following first-line treatment finishing, when all the support and contact from the medical professionals seems to come to an abrupt end. Peer support can then be invaluable.

As most of us find it difficult to stay up late following treatment, how about an early evening meeting starting at 5.30pm for a couple of hours on the last Tuesday of the month, come when you can, leave when you must - if you can only make it at 7pm for half an hour, that's fine. We'll try for monthly to start off with, and we can adjust the times and days to suit those who can or want to come along. First meeting will be on Tuesday 25th April at 5.30pm. If you can, please let us know if you can come along, or if you would like to come along but this date or time isn't possible for you.



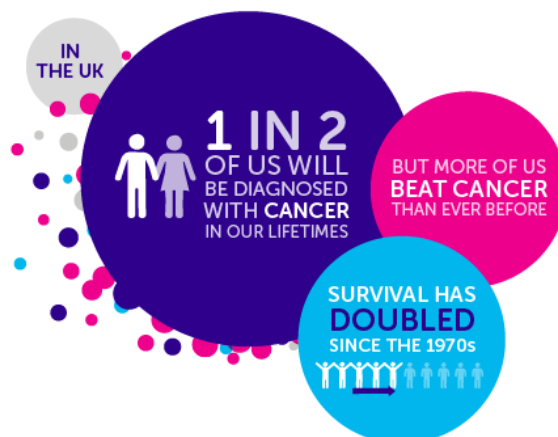
Cancer Awareness



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

Cancer Research UK has a home here at Bethel - it began 45 years ago with Jim Dickens, who was part of the initial Cancer Research UK Dudley and District Committee. As the numbers fell away one by one, Jim asked me to join, but then it ended up with just me and Jim! As days turned to years, Jim needed a bit more help with the banking, so I asked my sister Joyce to step in, which thankfully she did. So now, since Jim's promotion to glory, it's just me and Joyce who do the Cancer Research in memory of our dad, Les, who died 31 years ago of this horrid disease.

Look what came through the post just this week - Jim's legacy, I just wish he was here to see it .



Our Founding Mothers

By Val Woodhouse

The pictures on these pages are of just some of the wonderful women who have contributed to the life and work of this chapel since it was founded in 1888.



ALEXANDRA ROSE DAY collectors from Bethel Chapel, Lye, ready to venture out to the street with their trays of roses. The date was 1920. In the picture are (standing) F. Bennett, E. A. Phillips, E. Hill, W. Dickens, E. Perrins, A. Cooper, N. Chivers (seated), A. Brettie, A. Bowen, S. Newey.

A few years after I joined Bethel, I came across what we now call the archives and there it was, the history of Bethel Chapel. I was entranced, I read everything that was available and realised

this was the story of humble, hardworking, mostly self-educated local women and men who had done the seemingly impossible in founding and then building not one but two church buildings in ten years, armed solely with their faith in God.

In this archive is a typewritten partial history of Bethel which has on the opening page a list of names entitled the *'Men who Mattered'* yet the document mentions many women who too were instrumental in building Bethel, so I want to redress the balance by mentioning some of the *'Women who Mattered'* our Founding Mothers.

Some of founding mothers mentioned in the document are Mrs Charles Dickens of Cross Walks Road and Mrs Ernest Cox of Balds Lane in whose homes the first Bethel services were held. It was also Mrs Cox who made sure there were



Judith Dickens

enough wooden boxes for children to sit on every Sunday.

By 1890 it became obvious to the growing number of Bethelites that they needed to acquire a large space in which they could all worship together. A local lady called Mrs Phillips came to their aid. She indicated that she was well disposed to Bethel and was willing to sell two houses she owned in order that they could



Iris Kendrick

be converted into a chapel.



Nora Dickens

Nervously, a deputation went to negotiate the purchase only to be amazed by the God filled generosity of Mrs Phillips when she proposed a purchase price of £74 to be paid once the church proved to be a success. If the venture failed, she would take back the properties and release the trustees from any obligation to pay. In 1896 she was paid in full, interestingly Mrs Phillips signature on the conveyance deed had to be validated by a

legal '*commissioner for taking acknowledgments by married women*'. I would argue that although she does not appear in any documents as a member of Bethel she could indeed be classed as an honorary founding mother.

The two buildings required much work to convert them mostly done by members of Bethel including the women, who



Amy Nicholls

juggled this manual work alongside caring for their families and doing 'outwork'. It is recorded that the women including Jane Perrins, mother of Amos and Martha Westwood spent many hours stripping and cleaning old mortar from cheap second-hand bricks so that they could be reused.

The document entitled '*History of Bethel*' also notes that many of those remarkable Bethel women were 'no stranger to the shovel either.' In fact, Jane Perrins was commemorated on a marble memorial in chapel until it was damaged in the late nineties.

As an aside you might like to know that 130 years ago on 20th March, the Bethel Ladies enjoyed a Mother's Day service of song entitled '*For Mother's Sake*' in the Pump Street chapel.



Martha Westwood

I earlier mentioned Martha Westwood joined Bethel as a young woman in 1888 and she served the church until her death in early 1929. Martha was described as being there from the start of the society and noted as one of Bethel's most active workers for its wellbeing and development. She served as unpaid caretaker at the Pump Street chapel for years alongside Jane Perrins until in 1896 there was enough money to pay each of them one shilling and

sixpence a week in old money (7.5p in decimal) Martha then continued to serve in this current chapel until ill health prevented her.

It was said that to know her was to love her. A noble soul with a cheerful personality, her Christian faith gave her an integrity and steadfastness that made her a person of great influence



Hazel Dimmock

who inspired those around her to tread the same path she had faithfully followed.

Other founding mothers include Mary Anne Wooldridge who raised a £100 mortgage on her own property, for the sole purpose of lending the sum raised towards building the chapel we sit in today and Martha Barnbrook a

Christian woman of whom it was said '*she kept her light ever shining.*' Stories of the other wonderful '*women who mattered*' will have to wait until another time but I do hope you have enjoyed hearing about some of them today.

When I first came to Bethel, I was very aware of the high proportion of women in leading roles in the Chapel, something I had never previously experienced in a religious setting, Prior to this positions of influence were always held by men, and I remember thinking it was a refreshing change.



Margery Hill



Sandra Bloomer

After spending much of my adult life in this chapel surrounded by Christian women of strength, I now realise these magnificent women I have been privileged to know through years are the spiritual descendants of those faith filled founding mothers and continue to light the path those earlier women showed us. And, one day, your story too, will be told as an inspiration to others.

Stewards

By Emily Dunn

For my childhood, mothers day was always something to be particularly celebrated and revered. I was raised by a select few incredible, strong, nurturing, influential women - namely my mom, grandma, Jacqueline, and I have always included Jacq and Jane in that number too!



My adult life obviously saw the emergence of Lois and Zara. And while the same reverence for all my women remained, the sentiment of the day drastically shifted for me.

I am obviously, as Lois and Zara will freely explain, not their mom. I have however been given the absolute privilege of being able to raise them along side their actual mom. I get to keep them safe, make them happy, discipline them, facilitate the

mundane daily grind of school and tea etc, go to town on their birthdays and play as much of a role in their Christmases and other important memory making activities as I can be afforded. I am undeniably, as they regularly do remind me "loved 1 million times infinity".

But, not their mom.

I am not at all proud to stand here and say that I have on occasions, felt a bit bitter about that reality. 99% blessed! But still 1% bitter. Because I couldn't love them any more if my life depended on it.

But one day I was watching this one episode of The Chosen - ace programme. And there was one scene in particular in season 3 that resonated with me hard. It was a flashback scene to when Jesus was a kid and he was spending time with Joseph doing some carpentry and they have a real heart to heart. Joseph says to Jesus, "Now I know I'm not your dad, but being the steward of your life is the greatest gift I could

ever have been given". And that smacked me right in the feels and kinda absolved me of that last 1% bitterness. Because that's what I am! A steward of the most precious lives I could have ever been gifted.

And I don't believe that is true for just me. This place alone is filled with stewards of life. Whether you grew them or you didn't. This place has raised generations of warriors for God. We have the very best examples of stewards of grandchildren, stewards of god children, stewards of everybody's children! All in this building.

Between my mom, grandma, Jacqueline, Jill, Jacq, Jane, San... they have helped lay these pretty flippin' solid foundations that my faith has been built on and continues to be built on. The ripples of which I pray from the deepest part of my spirit will go on for generations. Be it in my bloodline or not. I believe whole heartedly that God doesn't gift, withhold or take away for no purpose. He equips us and places us where and with whom we need to be to do his work while we are here. He knows what he's doing. Nobody has titles in heaven anyway. Only love.

Happy stewards day!



Mother's Day Prayer

By Cheta Atasie

In the name of Jesus Christ we lift up all the mothers today.

We thank them for the sacrifices they've made so that we can live a life of joy, comfort and peacefulness.

Lord grant them more wisdom and favour and may they have a lovely place in your heart of grace. In the name of Jesus

Amen





It Truly is Heaven Sent!

Bethel Treasures - Heaven Scent is now a firmly established feature of Quarry Bank High Street. Customers comment on the peaceful atmosphere and the lovely perfume of fresh flowers, which combine to make it unlike any other shop.

Many customers call it their 'Little shop of Hope' and feel that if they come in weighed down by the anxieties of this world they can bank on going back out laughing - and hopefully with a bargain as well.

It has established itself as a firm part of the local community with many of the local shop workers popping in and being prepared to lend a hand if there are deliveries of heavy items.



It works on lots of different levels - providing a cup of tea, a listening ear and filling a need when people want something specific. It's wonderful for the self-esteem of the volunteers with one young man developing the confidence to speak to others far more than he has done over the last couple of

years. The staff are looking forward to the development of the shop next door as this will give customers far more room and create a dedicated place for coffee, biscuits and chat.

The shop is overwhelmed by the generosity of those people who donate goods to be resold. Everything they get is then steamed or cleaned and staff say that in every bag of donations they get there are always one or two real gems. Customers also enjoy the fact

that if they are looking for something in particular Bethel Treasures will put the word out and that item invariably turns up.

Word of mouth has meant that customers now come from further afield. One regular comes monthly from Cardigan in West Wales. She brings a

list of things that her neighbours are looking for and says that she never goes away disappointed.

All in all it's a little shop, with a big role - a place where you can make a real difference to people's lives.





Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent welcomes you to its shop in Quarry Bank.

Our vintage themed shop boasts a mixture of lovely pre-owned and new items, the collection includes clothes, accessories, children's and household items as well as an extensive range of bric-a-brac at affordable prices.

A shoppers car park is located to the rear of the shop which makes visiting the shop convenient for customers whether they travel by car, bus or on foot.

For more information on opening times, events or help with donating call 01384 986032 or visit www.bethelchapel.net

All proceeds from the shop will go towards the community work of the Bethel Chapel Charity.

Walking Stick

A poem written by Win Parker, after an amusing incident with walking sticks getting lost and mixed up at Cornerstone!



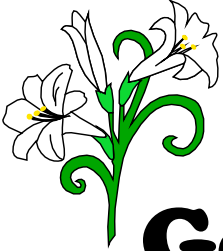
*A walking stick from the Bethel
Decided to go out alone
He wandered quite a long, long way
And could not find his way home
He did not realise how far he'd walked
No signposts were in sight
He started then to panic
Not knowing what to do
The day was getting shorter
He had not got a clue
Then all at once
He looked above
And saw a shining light
The Bethel shone right down on him
And saved him from the night*





Easter at Bethel

Hill Street, Wollescote



You are welcome to join with us for:

Good Friday, 7th April

12.00 - 1.00pm

Thoughts Around the Cross

1.00 - 3.00pm

The Passion of the Christ - Film

(not suitable for under 18's)

7.30pm

The Crucifixion by J. Stainer

The Choral Society that meets at Bethel

Easter Sunday, 9th April

10.30am

Easter Morning Celebration Service

6.00pm

Evening Celebration

