

The LINK

digital edition

July 2021



The Parish Church of
St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

‘SMASH’ WITH A DIFFERENCE – AGAIN!

Dear Friends,

Today I find myself singing, ‘Faithful One’...

Faithful one, so unchanging
Ageless one, you’re my rock of peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again

You are my rock in times of trouble
You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm
Your love is, the anchor
My hope is in You alone

This rather short song is rich in truth and reminds us that through all our circumstances God is ‘unchanging’ and our ‘rock’. This song describes God’s love as ‘the anchor’ which holds us through the storms that life can bring. During the summer months, last year, we spent time considering Romans 8 in our services – which are all still available to view online!!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUSpCS4VeVWkujfG3HyKVVVA/videos>

Paul reminds us that, “...absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God’s love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.”
Romans 8 v 39 – The Message. When Jesus died and rose again, he completely destroyed the sinful barrier that separates us from God – he ‘embraced us’ and we know that if we put our trust in Jesus then we are safe for all eternity. What wonderful Good News to celebrate and share with the world!

Our **S**aint **M**ichael's **A**lternative **S**ummer **H**oliday **C**lub is in the diary between the 26th and the 30th July 2021. This year SMASH will have to look a little different again but (drum roll, please...) we will be able to meet in person!

Our plan works within the current restrictions and includes family bubbles seated together. So, this year, parents and carers will join the fun! Each day there will be daily Bible stories, action songs, drama sketches, Bible studies, crafts and games!

This year the title is 'Backpackers' and we will be journeying through the events of the week when Jesus died and rose again. So, the plan is as follows...

Monday – Jesus enters Jerusalem – Matthew 21: 1 - 11

Tuesday – At Simon's House – Matthew 26: 6 - 13

Wednesday – The Last Supper – Matthew 26: 17 - 20

Thursday – Jesus is betrayed – Matthew 26: 36 - 56

Friday – Jesus dies on the cross, and comes alive again - Matthew 27: 45 – 28: 10

Then on Sunday 1st August our CFW service will have a focus on SMASH and we will celebrate the week and God's great love for us!

We would really value your prayers as we continue to plan another 'SMASH with a difference' and as people sign up. Please pray that this will be a life changing event for so many. If anybody would like further information about getting involved – I would love to hear from you.

My e-mail address is...rgrovesmith@stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Wishing you every blessing,

Rachel Grove Smith

REAL FREEDOM

“So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

A motorcyclist said: Many people cannot understand why I am so happy to be on the move on my motorcycle. When it is sunny, I ride into the free nature, enjoy the air stream and feel free of any care like a youngster. I leave duties and every day worries behind. I feel free like a bird in the air.

At some point I asked myself: Am I really as free as I feel? Or is it only a brief feeling? Indeed, I had to admit that I put my problems to one side instead of solving them. How thankful was I that I got to know a real freedom? It is not just a temporary feeling but a lasting reality. Through my personal faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I have learnt how He made me really free. He saved me from my fear of death and not caring.

But the most important is: He saved me from my debt! It took a long time until I realized that I did not have to carry my many sins on my back during my whole life. Then one day another Christian told me how I could become free. So, I confessed everything to God which weighed me down, my thieving, my hatred and my lies – in short everything which separated me from God. After this confession I felt that many very heavy chains had fallen down from my heart.

Translated by Peter Schaad

COME BACK LETTER WRITING – ALL IS FORGIVEN.

Why write a letter when you can text? Texting is quick and brief. Why go back to writing pads, envelopes and stamps? It is quicker to sit at the lap-top or get out your phone than take a walk to the post box. Letters are history. Smart phones are today! Great grandchildren will smile about putting pen to paper. ‘Did you ever do that?’
‘You mean to say you wrote to people!’

Mental health issues have come to the fore due to the pandemic. Being restricted and having to stay at home has affected very much how we feel. Being cut off from family and friends (yes, and church!) has made us feel isolated.

GETTING IT OFF ONE’S CHEST

There was a man who once wrote a kind of letter that has come down to us. He was unhappy. He was off his food and felt isolated. He was, as we say, ‘washed out’.

So, years before smart phones, he put pen to paper, and wrote down how he felt. And it is a good thing he did – for what he wrote down has helped folk in many generations.

HERE IT IS -PSALM 102!

If you do read this Psalm, you will find he doesn’t tell us what his particular trouble is. What he does tell us is that he feels intensely unhappy; he is losing weight; he has no appetite for his food. His days are dull and grey. Check out verses 2 to 9. No one seems to be his friend. In fact, he has more enemies than friends.

Maybe there is something here for us if we are seeking to deal with the sadnesses that come to us. Once upon a time people would write about their sorrows to a trusted friend. Actually, this man does just that. What he has written is first for God’s eyes. He addresses God. He is bold enough to blame God for his trouble! Check out verses 10 & 23.

Shocking? The point is if God is big enough to send these things, he is big enough to enable us to cope them away and one day take them away.

VALUE ADDED

A modern counsellor may tell us to face up to what inner troubles we have and articulate them – just like our ancient friend. And our friend here adds something else.

He speaks about God being in charge. He acknowledges that God is the creator. The world may change at God's instigation, but nothing can divert him from his goodness and rule of the world. In such a God men and women can find security. He wants us to enjoy his fatherly care.

The New Testament looks at these last words of the Psalm and says they speak of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mental health issues may not disappear. These issues might and sometimes do live with folk for a long time – even for a lifetime. But the living and reigning Lord Jesus Christ is a proven help. He may not take our sadnesses away instantly, however he is stronger, even when 'darkness is my closet friend'.

PEN TO PAPER?

Shall I write down my troubles? That could go a long way to help me face them and manage them. Can I find a discreet friend who will read with sympathy what I have scribbled? If you can, that's a big and worthwhile step to take. Shall I call on Jesus Christ to help me cope with them? Why not? Many have and do that daily and find his strength powerful and his friendship real.

Stephen Bailey

JULY DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Online services are launched on Sundays as follows:

9.45am – Children’s & Families service – now on Zoom

10.00am – Adult services & monthly Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

Links for Zoom services are on Nigel Adams’ weekly email – these need to be accessed “live” (at the time).

The 10am YouTube services are available at these times, or to watch or listen to after those times, on catch-up.

1 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Monthly Zoom Coffee morning” with Nigel & Jo Adams

4 Sunday

10:00am Worship on the Web – Church Family Worship

10:00am Church Family Worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6.30pm Holy Communion on Zoom

6 Tuesday

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

7 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

11 Sunday

9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live in Church House and on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

10:00am Morning worship outside Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

13 Tuesday

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8 - 9pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

14 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

18 Sunday

9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6:30pm All Age Tonight – Live on Zoom

20 Tuesday AUGUST LINK SUBMISSION DUE

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

21 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

24 Saturday

9:00am Church House/Church Work party (to be confirmed, more details to follow)

25 Sunday

9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

26 Monday

SMASH Club

27 Tuesday

SMASH Club

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

28 Wednesday

SMASH Club

29 Thursday

SMASH Club

30 Friday

SMASH Club