

Sharing the Vision

A newsletter for the members & friends of Bridgnorth Baptist Church

Listening to the right voice....

Rosalyn raised an important question in her talk on the area of forgiveness on Sunday 19th April - "who's voice are you listening to?" And it got me thinking!

We all know that our minds are fertile grounds and the competition for our attention is great. One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is, "What do I think about when I'm alone or at a loose end?" The temptations and doubts we face in our minds are almost endless:

- Pride and envy - how many of us have wished we could be like someone else?
- Issues of self-worth and value - ever uttered the 'I'm useless' or 'not good enough' statement?
- Negativity about others and forgiveness for wrongs done or done to us
- Fantasies about how our lives could be if things were different - the 'if only' syndrome
- Regrets about the past; shame and guilt for previous actions, failures or relationship problems

...too many of us allow our minds to get hijacked... and then wonder why our thought lives get in a mess

We've all been there and on occasions slip back in the old routines - I don't believe any of us is exempt.

So how can we try and minimise the problem?

Firstly we need to claim some relevant promises, e.g.:

- **"You (that is God) will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you"** - Isaiah 26: 3 (TNIV)
- **"For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment"** - 2Timothy 1: 7 (Holman Christian Standard Bible). In other versions of the Bible "sound judgment" is translated as "self control" but in this context, as the Amplified Bible puts it, could mean "a well-balanced mind", i.e. one that is disciplined and under control.

The Bible is not just an information tool - it's a life changing instruction manual filled with God's promises and ways of living life to the full. Get hold of some of God's promises for you. Claim them, act on them, live by them. You will be transformed as you do.

Secondly we need to focus our minds on God rather than on the problem. Here are another couple of verses you could start believing in:

- **"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths"** - Proverbs 3: 6 (NKJV) or as The Message says, **"Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track"**
- **"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things"** - Philippians 4: 8 (TNIV)

Too many of us allow our minds to get hijacked by the opposites of these qualities and then wonder why our thought lives get in a mess.

Thirdly we need folks around us who will be able to 'speak into our lives'.

- We need friends with whom we can build deep relationships based on trust
- We need mentors who can guide, encourage and challenge us
- We need more than just Sunday mornings in terms of fellowship with other Christians.

One of our small groups is an ideal place to start - see overleaf on page 2. I firmly believe that to be effective and productive in our faith we can't survive just coming along on a Sunday morning or evening (or even both) - we need times during the week to be refreshed as well .

Of course you could argue that it's possible to get that refreshment on your own and I'm certainly not advocating that you don't have your own personal times of Bible study, prayer and meditation. However being able to share the wisdom and experience God has given to you and to bounce your faith off others and raise questions with others on a regular basis will definitely stimulate spiritual growth and maturity.

But I do want to specifically mention the whole area of mentoring.

(See page 3 for a detailed look at what mentoring is about).

I've learnt (and continue to learn) so much from others. Initially my dad gave me opportunities to lead services. After our marriage Rosalyn and I were privileged to have a couple of mature Christians build into our lives and encourage us in our worship leading. When we moved to Exeter, the leader of the church we attended met with me on a fortnightly basis to build wisdom and spiritual training into my life as a homegroup leader. The principles he shared with me were invaluable and helped shape my ministry.

And then there are the many mentors I've never even met. The authors and speakers whom God has used to stimulate, challenge and inform me. Life's too short for us to learn all the lessons ourselves but we can learn from what others have experienced the hard way in the comfort of our own living rooms as we read books, listen to tapes/CDs or watch DVDs etc.

As well as asking the question that Rosalyn posed how about a couple more points to ponder?

- Who do I trust enough to counsel and advise me in my spiritual walk?
- Who could I encourage by getting alongside and sharing the lessons I've learned?
- What stops me from really opening up and allowing others to mentor and minister to me?

God has given us to each other for our mutual benefit. The Holy Spirit can and will use others with wisdom and experience as well as faith to build into our lives if we're prepared to let them.

Whose voice are you listening to? The answer will make a world of difference to your life!

Loads of blessings

Stephen



Date	Morning Service - at 10:00	Evening Service - at 18:00 (except Refresh)
3 rd May	Stephen Derges - "Your Kingdom Come - part 7"	EVENING COMMUNION led by Phil Batten
10 th May	Rosalyn Derges & Inspired - "For ever and ever"	18:30 for 19:00 Refresh led by 2030
17 th May	MORNING COMMUNION SERVICE - with an opportunity for testimony	PRAYER FOR HEALING, RELEASE & RENEWAL
24 th May	Stephen Derges - "Distorted Images"	No Evening Service
31 st May	Ian & Elaine Campbell will be with us on Pentecost Sunday	No Evening Service

What's on and coming up

Small (Midweek) Groups at BBC

As mentioned overleaf we have a number of small groups that meet during the week. These are great places for fellowship and for working out our **Core Values - real, relevant, relational**.

They are also the primary stage of **Pastoral Care** in the church - people looking out for one another, encouraging faith, meeting needs, practising hospitality, developing gifts etc.

So why not pray about where you would fit? Speak to Rosalyn or one of the small group leaders if you want more information.

Day	Small Group	Leaders
Tuesday	Homegroup (afternoons) Homegroup (evening) 2030	Tony & Veronica Roddy Mike & Julie Breese Rich & Ruth Whitney
Wednesday	Homegroup Men's Group Crusaders Cells/Mettle	Mike & Shirley Sadler Alan Muscat Graham & Rosemary Patey
Thursday	Homegroup Inspired (for ladies) Connection (for ladies)	Simon & Fritha Scowcroft Rosalyn Derges Wendy Swallow

In addition we have the following monthly and other activities:

- **Mission Support Prayer** - normally 2nd Monday each month: contact **Chris Bache** or **Margaret Weir**
- **Midweek Monthly Prayer** - 2nd Wednesday each month at 10:30am in **Jack & Lowri Hamon's** home
- **Men's Supper Club** - 1st Thursday each month: talk to **Paul Riding**
- **Worship Group** - alternate Tuesday evenings: **Mike Ford**

Each one of these small groups offers personal support and prayer as well as the chance to build relationships. Give them a try!

From the Managing Trustees

The Managing Trustees will be holding their quarterly meeting on Monday 11th May. We would value your prayers as we seek guidance and wisdom on the many decisions that we have to make relating to the running of the church.

With increasing legislation and statutory requirements there are a number of issues we have to consider as well as thinking about the life of the church and our spiritual direction. We need guidance so please pray for us.

Rotas for May

A big thank you to everyone who helps with the physical practicalities of setting up church for Sundays.

Refreshments during March will be provided by **Mike & Shirley Sadler**.

Flower Arranging Team: displays this month will be provided by **Ivy Meredith** (3rd & 10th), **Julie Shaw** (17th & 24th) and **Margaret Weir** (31st).

Date	Welcome Team	Chairs & Layout
3 rd	Alan & Ali Muscat	Paul Riding
10 th	The Ashby family	Mark Anderson
17 th	Tony Roddy & Helen Sedgley	Linda Hemming
24 th	Jack Hamon & Ruth Gwilliam	Tony Roddy
31 st	Paul & Carol Riding	Dave Hodgson

Mission Update

At the end of the month - on Pentecost Sunday - **Ian & Elaine Campbell** of **AIM International** will be with us to update us on their work in Africa. We've supported them for a number of years and the last time they came they gave us much to praise God and to pray to Him for. Ian makes regular trips to Africa and was recently in Madagascar (whilst there was a military coup), South Africa and Kenya and he's now in Rwanda. Do come along and hear about the work.

In June we'll also be welcoming back **Thompson & Glenda Nwosu from Nigeria** - more details next month.

Mission Support Prayer

There's no **Mission Support Prayer meeting** this month but we'll be sharing some items at the Midweek Monthly Prayer meeting instead (see below).

Midweek Monthly Prayer

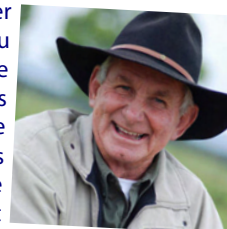
At Jack & Lowri Hamon's home - 35 Ludlow Road, Bridgnorth - on **Wednesday 13th May at 10:30am**. If you are free do come along - we need to pray for our community, county, country and international issues.

Fathers & Sons

It appears tickets for the **Angus Buchan** weekend especially designed for men and their sons are going very fast. The organisers are already thinking that the 2,000 marquee they've ordered is not going to be big enough.

Whilst there is no charge for the event (with some meals being provided and free camping facilities) you do have to book in so **Chris Bache & Mike Shaw** are the people you need to talk too - as soon as possible. They need an indication that you are considering coming to ensure we have bookings in place.

Angus Buchan is a South African farmer with a powerful ministry. Those of you who came to the Film Night to watch the documentary about Shalom Ministries and his pioneering work in sharing the Gospel would have witnessed his passion for God. The event takes place at Top Barns Farm, at Holt Heath, just north of Worcester, and the weekend commences



at 6:30pm on **Friday 12th June** continuing with 2 sessions (10am and 6:30pm) on **Saturday 14th June**. There is also a Family Gathering on the Sunday.

Let Chris or Mike know if you want to register.

Celebrating 40 years of The Beatles' White Album for charity.

Alan Muscat, supported by the Men's Group, is putting on a celebration of 40 years of The Beatles' White Album. This is an album that gave us songs such as "Back In The USSR", "Blackbird", "Dear Prudence", "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da", "Rocky Racoon", "While My Guitar Gently Weeps", "Martha My Dear" and "Revolution 1".

There will be over 10 groups of musicians (around 40 musicians) playing all the songs from that album. Many of the musicians are from our church and proceeds will be going to support "The Bridge".

The event will take place on **Saturday 16th May, 7:30pm** at **The Theatre on the Steps**. Further information is available from the theatre website www.theatreonthesteps.co.uk (click on the 'more acts' button). Tickets (£10 - £8 for concessions) are available from the box office at the Tourist Info Centre in the Library 01746 763257.

If you love The Beatles, you will love this event. If you like The Beatles, you will like this event. If you hate the Beatles, I know a good therapist.

Alan Muscat

Book Review by Abigail Bowley

"Aftershock" – Adrian Holloway

"Aftershock" is the 2nd book in the series by Adrian Holloway, the first being "The Shock of Your Life". Having not read the first book I was a little worried that I would be completely lost, but as it turns out, the book can stand on its own. That fear over, I continued to read.

The main character, Dan, is introduced by explaining briefly what happened to him in the previous book. This helped greatly and while not knowing what the character was like before "dying" you can tell he has changed dramatically. I say "dying" because in the previous book, the three main characters all died and went through the final judgement. Dan was brought back to life and this is where "Aftershock" begins. The book takes you through the next year of Dan's life, how he witnessed to his friends having actually met Jesus and knowing the truth, the resulting discussions they had concerning Christianity, and their reactions to it all.

The book deals with the issues faced by Christians today, in a clever and fun way. Answering some of those awkward questions people always like to try and catch you out with, like "Why does God allow suffering?" So if you were ever in one of those situations where you just did not have an answer, this book gives you one! Not a very in depth one, but it goes through situations where Dan's friends are asking those exact questions and he is able to answer them. I wouldn't suggest just using Dan's responses for everything but they'll do for a casual conversation, and will make the questioner think a bit about what they were expecting to hear from you. Are they just trying to catch you out or are they genuinely curious about it? If they are just trying to catch you out then you have the perfect comeback, and if they're curious then you have a starting point for a discussion about Jesus, which is an ideal time to witness to them without scaring them off!

So I would recommend this book to people of all ages, but mainly to young people who are in school and faced with these types of questions from their peers. It will give you a bit of confidence to stand up for what you believe, knowing that you have an answer of sorts to the trickier questions of life.

Mentoring

The Message is only version of the Bible I can find that uses the word 'mentor' (on 3 occasions) and although it's a paraphrase rather than a literal translation I believe mentoring is definitely a Biblical principle. If you're interested the 3 references are:

- Proverbs 3: 7 in the context of someone regretting how they had wasted their life and not learned from other people's experiences

- Isaiah 54: 12 where God promises to be a mentor teacher to children
- James 5: 10 where we're encouraged to learn from the example and wisdom of the prophets of old who persevered through adversity and never gave up.

We are encouraged time and time again in the Bible to learn, be teachable, gain wisdom and to seek the truth. Jesus himself said in Matthew 11:29 (TNIV) **"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."** Somebody else said, "The moment you stop learning you're dead!"

We're also encouraged to become disciples - the definition of which includes: student, pupil, scholar, learner, devotee and adherent of the person you are following.

Naturally we need to be led by the Holy Spirit but let's face it not many (if any) of us became Christians through a Damascus Road experience - there was invariably some human intervention. It may have been a powerful message that was preached; a testimony of God's saving grace; a physical need that was met through practical assistance or maybe a prayer for healing or even someone demonstrating God's love and care. In my case it was a Sunday School teacher and my parents that enabled me to come to Jesus.

There are many different definitions of mentoring and there is a wide debate about the similarities and differences with coaching. Mentoring is primarily about developing capability and potential whereas coaching involves enhancing performance and skills. Wendy Swallow gave me this definition in terms of Christian mentoring and coaching: *"Mentoring is imparting to you what God has given me; coaching is drawing from you what God has given you."*

Another definition I found is: *"Christian Mentoring is a one-on-one relational experience in which one person empowers another person by investing their God-given wisdom and resources."*

The key for me though is that mentoring is a long-term process; it's not a quick fix, sticking plaster approach to helping someone get over a problem. It's about standing alongside, of learning from someone who has experienced life in the trenches and been a faithful servant of God, whose wisdom will help us grow and develop faster than if we ignore the lessons they've learned.

What's the point? We all need help to become more effective Christians. Jesus chose 12 ordinary guys and poured 3 years of his life into them. Barnabas mentored Paul who in turn mentored Timothy and Titus. In the Old Testament we see Joshua being mentored by Moses; Elijah and Elisha; Naomi and Ruth; even Jonathan and David co-mentoring each other. If they needed it so do we!

We're developing plans to offer one-on-one

spiritual mentoring so if you're interested, please talk to me, Rosalyn or Wendy.

News in Brief

Alpha - the introductory evening went very well but it's not too late to join the new **Alpha Course** that **Don & Ro Gibbons** are starting. If you are interested please have a chat with them as soon as possible.

Prayer Diary

The April edition of the **Prayer Diary** is now available on the notice table in foyer or online at the church website.

There's a new look and feel to this month's edition.

Men's Supper Club

This month the speaker will be **Eric Stirrup**, Pastor of New Life Community Church, Clebury Mortimer. Eric will be sharing how his faith as he combines leading a church and running his business is **"real, relevant and relational"**.



Men of all ages are invited - **Thursday 7th May** at church from 7:00pm. Let **Paul Riding** know if you're coming for catering purposes.

Maranatha Weekend - "Feed my sheep"

A non-residential weekend (limited accommodation is available in homes) at Clun Village Hall, Craven Arms. The weekend runs from the evening of Friday 8th to tea-time on Sunday 10th May (meals included) and offers an opportunity to be refreshed, restored and renewed. A nominal cost of £20 per person + any accommodation costs. More details from **Ivy Meredith** or see the noticeboard.

Refresh

2030 will be hosting another **'Refresh'** evening of worship, sharing and encouragement on **Sunday 10th May** from 7:00pm at church. Come along and allow God's Spirit to minister to you His refreshment.

Prayer for Healing & Renewal

Our evening service on **Sunday 17th May** will focus specifically on prayer for physical healing, release and personal spiritual renewal.

We want to offer the opportunity for anyone who wants prayer for an area of their lives to receive God's blessing. We will also be able to minister to one another and share together as we pray.

Come and receive.

This Month's Diary

You'll find more information about the items highlighted in **BOLD** inside 'Sharing the Vision'

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Verse of the Month					1	2
<p>The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost <i>"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."</i> - Acts 2: 1-4 (TNIV)</p>					10:00 Toddlers Group (church)	07:30 Crusaders' Prayer Breakfast (48 Conduit Lane) 19:00 Valley Worship (Burford Village Hall)
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
09:30 Prayer Meeting 10:00 Morning Service 18:00 Evening Communion	BANK HOLIDAY	09:30 Open House Prayer 10:00 Open House 14:30 Afternoon Homegroup 19:30 Homegroup 19:30 '2030' 20:00 Worship Group	10:00 Toddlers Group (church) 20:00 Men's Group 20:00 Homegroup	09:30 Childminders Drop-In at church 19:00 Men's Supper Club (church) with Eric Stirrup 19:30 Connection (Social tba) 20:00 Homegroup	10:00 Toddlers Group (church) 18:30 Crusaders' Sportsnight (OWS) Maranatha Weekend (Clun) commences Men's Group Away Weekend	Maranatha Weekend (Clun) continues Men's Group Away Weekend
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
09:30 Prayer Meeting 10:00 Morning Service 18:30 for 19:00 Refresh Maranatha Weekend (Clun) concludes Men's Group Away Weekend	13:45 Handicraft Group (church) 19:30 Managing Trustees Meeting	09:30 Open House Prayer 10:00 Open House 19:30 Homegroup 19:30 '2030'	10:00 Toddlers Group (church) 10:30 Midweek Monthly Prayer (35 Ludlow Road) 19:30 Crusaders' Mettle (church) 20:00 Men's Group 20:00 Homegroup	10:30 Inspired Ladies (church) 19:30 Connection (church) 20:00 Homegroup	10:00 Toddlers Group (church)	19:30 Celebrating 40 years of The Beatles' White Album for charity (Theatre on the Steps)
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
09:30 Prayer Meeting 10:00 Morning Communion Service 18:00 Evening Service - Prayer for Healing, Release & Renewal	13:45 Handicraft Group (church)	09:30 Open House Prayer 10:00 Open House 14:30 Afternoon Homegroup 19:30 Homegroup 19:30 '2030' 20:00 Worship Group	10:00 Toddlers Group (church) 20:00 Men's Group 20:00 Homegroup	09:30 Childminders Drop-In at church 20:00 Homegroup	10:00 Toddlers Group (church) 18:30 Crusaders' Sportsnight (OWS)	
HALF TERM WEEK						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
09:30 Prayer Meeting 10:00 Morning Service No Evening Service	BANK HOLIDAY	09:30 Open House Prayer 10:00 Open House 19:30 Homegroup 19:30 '2030'	20:00 Men's Group 20:00 Homegroup	10:30 Inspired Ladies (A café somewhere in Bridgnorth!) 19:30 Connection (BBQ at Rosemary Anderson's) 20:00 Homegroup		15:00 The Wedding of Maarten Fontein & Elodie Vernier in France
31	Wise Words - on how we think					
PENTECOST SUNDAY 09:30 Prayer Meeting 10:00 Morning Service No Evening Service	<p><i>"As long as you don't forgive, who and whatever it is will occupy rent-free space in your mind"</i> - Isabelle Holland, author</p> <p><i>"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies"</i> - Nelson Mandela, statesman</p> <p><i>"Two types of thoughts continually vie for our attention. One proclaims God's strengths; the other lists your failures. Why listen to the mockers when you can, with the same ear, listen to the voice of God?"</i> - Max Lucado, author</p>					
						