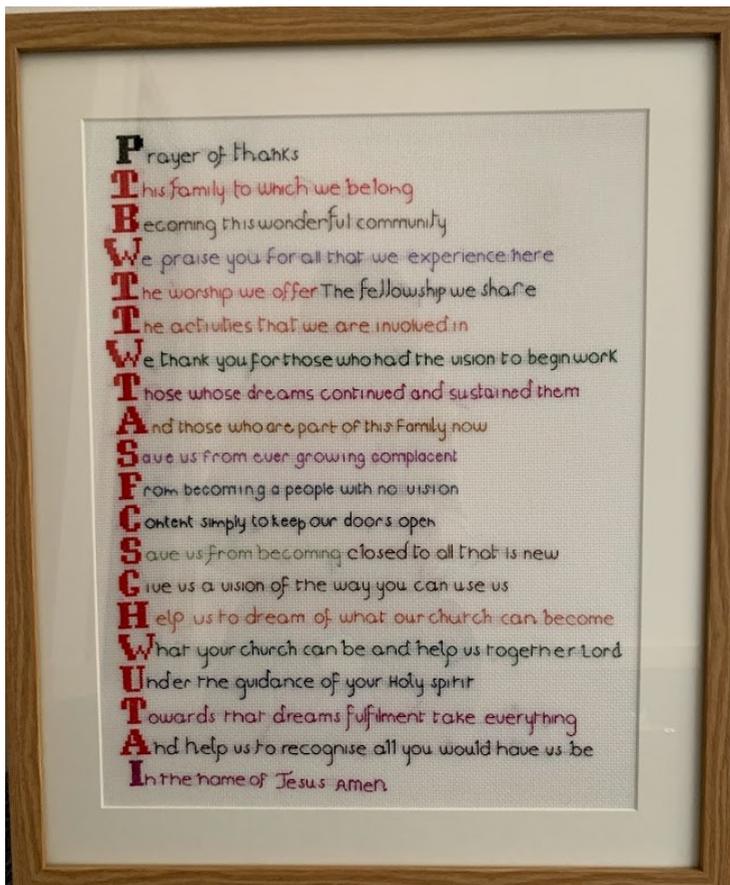


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CHURCH MAGAZINE—MARCH 2024



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for March from Sharon Joddrell

Today (that is, the day I began to write this), it's Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent, and forty days until Easter Sunday. The forty days reflect the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, where he fasted, prayed and faced temptation to strengthen himself for his coming ministry - the work of salvation.

Easter is what is known as a 'moveable feast', dependent on a calendar calculation involving the moon. It can fall anytime between March 22nd and April 25th. Some Christians attend a special service on Ash Wednesday and may have a cross drawn on their foreheads with the ash from the burning of the previous year's palms. Special service or not, for many Christians Ash Wednesday is a solemn day of reflection that begins Lent and the build up to the suffering of Jesus, his death and then glorious resurrection, and we can't appreciate the full meaning of that resurrection without going through the suffering. It's a time to repent, pray and maybe do good works in preparation for the renewal of commitment when Easter finally comes. Many begin a period of abstinence from something they enjoy.

Coincidentally, today is also Valentine's Day, or the Feast of St Valentine.

The two days, Ash Wednesday and Valentine's, only coincide about four or five times every century. The observation of St Valentine began as a feast day for a third century Christian martyr, executed for his faith. It had nothing to do with love and romance! Somehow that tradition grew, and in some branches of the church it is also celebrated with a special service as a celebration of love and friendship.

The darkness and lamenting spirit surrounding Ash Wednesday is so starkly in contrast with the commercialised and superficial big business of cards, hearts, flowers and fancy chocolates! Given the choice of one over the other, wouldn't most people pick the modern Valentine's Day vibes over sackcloth and ashes?

Human love can be fickle and fleeting, conditional and failing because of resentments and judgements. It can also be deep, long-lasting and strong, full of forgiveness and understanding. **But isn't Lent and Easter about the greatest act of love ever shown?** Jesus suffered the very worst of what humanity can do, yet faced it - and came out on the other side - with no resentment, hatred or judgement.

My song is love unknown, my Saviour's love to me; love to the loveless shown that they might lovingly be. (From the hymn by Samuel Crossman).

CHURCH DIARY for MARCH

Sunday Service each week at 10.30am with groups for the children and young people.

There is a **Prayer Meeting** at 10.15am in the Boulevard Room every week before the Sunday Service All welcome.

For those who would like to receive prayer, there will be two people after the Sunday Service at the front of the church offering prayer.

Shalom Fellowship—Sunday 3rd March 2.30 pm.

Youth Service—Sunday 10th March—followed by Mother’s Day afternoon tea

Toddler Group—10.00am to 11.45am on Mondays 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

Renew Wellbeing Café— 1.30pm to 4.00pm on Thursdays 7th, 14th, 21st

Deacons Meeting—20th March at 7.00pm

Easter Sunday—31st March—Baptismal service

PRAYER POINTS

- 1) Pray for strength to continue our fellowship through these times of change and seeking a new Minister.
- 2) Pray for the right person to see the Minister Profile and come forward.
- 3) Pray for families of those who are grieving.
- 4) Pray for all of those living in places of conflict and war.
- 5) Pray for Young People that they will feel God’s presence and His peace, hope and joy.

Cross Stitch on front cover

The cross stitch picture on the front cover was stitched and donated by church member Sylvia Laing-Machray. It is from a prayer which Sylvia heard in church read by Anne Davies, and again used by Clive Trusson in a subsequent service. Sylvia was so moved by the words of the prayer that she embarked on this craft project. Sylvia is a regular attendee of the Renew Café which meets in the Welcome Hall, so it felt appropriate to mount the picture in that welcome space for all to read.

Mother's Day Tea Invitation

On **Sunday 10th March** the Youth Group will be leading our morning service. As it will be Mother's Day, they have planned a special "Afternoon Tea" which will be served in the Church Hall after the service to any ladies (mothers or not) who would like to join them.



As they wish to make this an annual event, they would be grateful for donations of any teapots, cups and saucers, cake stands or white tablecloths you may have stored in cupboards which you no longer use. Bring into the church office.

The Youth Group also would like to celebrate the diversity of our church fellowship by inviting any who have traditional outfits to dress in these or in particular colours of their tradition on the day!

Renew Café Easter Event



On **Thursday 21st March** our friend, Mary Hawkes, has offered to come back to Renew Café to provide a craft activity. An open invitation to all to come along to make your own **Easter cards**. All materials will be provided, and no real expertise in card-making is needed! Come and enjoy a cuppa, a chat and this craft activity.

A selection of cards hand-made by Mary will also be available to buy.

1.30pm—4.00pm—Thursday 21st March—A warm welcome awaits

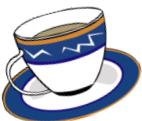
Spencer Court Spring Fair

The tenants and scheme manager at Spencer Court, next door to the church, **invite all** to their forthcoming **Spring Fair** on

Saturday 23rd March 10am—12 noon

Admission 50p will include tea/coffee

Bric a Brac * Cake stall * Breakfast cobs * Raffle



Our Stained Glass Windows (part 2)

Three of our stained glass windows, the second, third and fifth on the left hand side of the church all bear the name Hopewell. Noah and Margaret Hopewell were owners of the Hopewell Furnishing Company and along with their four children, Robert, Donald, Winifred and Jessie they joined the church around 1906. Robert George Hopewell was killed in the First World War and his parents presented the church with window 5 (more about this next time). When Noah died he was remembered by the family with window 3. Margaret is remembered in window 2—*see photo below*—and note the knitting needles, saucepan, brush and teapot!

Window 4 is in memory of Samuel Derbyshire, a member of the church at the time the building was constructed.



The Day after Christmas Day (part 2)

Last month's church magazine led off with an encouraging item from Hazel O'Connor under the title "The day after Christmas Day".

This led me to some other thoughts on the day after Christmas Day. In God's Church generally, the 26th of December is celebrated in memory of Saint Stephen—remember the carol "Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen".

The opening few verses of Acts chapter 6 tell of certain administrative issues arising as the number of disciples was increasing. It seems that the widows among the new disciples of Greek heritage were being somewhat neglected in the distribution of daily food. It was discerned and decided by the Apostles that seven men should be chosen by the whole group to take on these welfare issues, thus leaving the preaching and evangelising to the original disciples. Stephen was among the seven chosen for this task.

By verse 8 of chapter 6 we are being told that Stephen, no doubt in addition to his welfare duties, was "a man full of God's grace and power and did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people". This led to conflict with some of those outside the church, followed by false accusations and the inevitable arrest of Stephen and his appearance before the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews.

The first 53 verses of chapter 7 give Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin, a summary of the essence of the Old Testament and hence of God's dealings with the people of Israel. Stephen ended it with a stinging denunciation of those religious authorities, and of their betrayal and murder of Jesus, the

Righteous One. Not surprisingly, when this is followed by Stephen's vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God, the members of that "high court" drag him outside the city and stone him to death.

Thus Stephen, elected one of the first deacons of the Church, became one of its first martyrs.

John Sheppard



This statue of Saint Stephen stands in a Catholic church in Italy dedicated to the martyr

Summary of the February Prayer Letter of Pippa and Toby Vokuhl

www.bmsworldmission.org/ptvokuhl



This month Pippa has written the newsletter from the Vokuhl family. It is very much abridged. Please ask if you would like to read the full version.



On a recent walk, Ella and I ran into a tiny abandoned puppy crying and shivering violently in the cold Kathmandu winter. She would not have survived the night, so Socks came to join us for a few days. We grew very fond of her, but caring for her took a lot of effort. Having Socks with us got me thinking a lot about how much I am prepared to put myself out for the vulnerable. How much does my life reflect the message of Luke 14?

Life for the differently abled is hard in Western countries, but in Nepal disability of any type means a life of marginalisation, poverty and suffering. Our partner organisation INF places a lot of emphasis on serving those with disabilities in Nepal. INF and Wheels for the World ran a really successful wheelchair camp last autumn in which I was involved, demonstrating Christ's love and compassion in practical ways, and wonderful to witness.



I also helped with a disability family retreat. The program was packed with fun activities designed to support and celebrate those struggling families, to let them know that they are not alone and that they are passionately loved.

Please pray for people with disabilities in Nepal.

Please pray for individuals and national/international ministries who seek to make a difference in this field, as well as Government initiatives.

Pippa went on to say that, after six years, it is likely that their work will come to an end this summer, as the BMS reviews its organisational strategies around the world. However, they feel strongly that they should explore further opportunities to serve in Nepal. They are already investigating some leads. She writes: We would very much appreciate prayer that the Lord would clearly direct us wherever He would have us to serve .

Much love from all of us,

Pippa, Toby, Jakey, Ella, and Millie

About our Church

If you are new to the church or just visiting, you may find this page helpful.

You can expect a warm welcome and a friendly group of people of all backgrounds and ages gathering to learn more about God.

We meet every Sunday at 10:30am for our Sunday Service. During school term time groups for children and young people from 3 - 18 are held downstairs, with a crèche available for under threes. Stewards in the Welcome Hall will be happy to show you where to take your children.

The Shalom Fellowship meets on the first Sunday every month at 2.30pm for worship and teaching in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

Toddler Group meets Mondays during term time from 10.00am to 11.45am. Parents, grandparents and carers are warmly invited to bring along the children in their care to enjoy play and activities.

Renew Wellbeing Café meets Thursdays from 1.30pm to 4.00pm. Join us for activities, chat and refreshments.

For specific dates of the above activities please see the Diary section of the magazine. If you would like to get in touch with someone at the church office please use the contact details below.

Room Hire Different rooms are available for hire. Please contact the church office for details.

Phone: 0115 9604304 during office hours—Mon-Fri 9.00am-2.30pm

Email: admin@mrbc.org.uk

Church Address:

Mansfield Road Baptist Church,
Corner of Sherwood Rise/Gregory Boulevard
Nottingham NG7 6JN

A big “thank you” to all contributors this month. Please continue to furnish us with YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR story, any articles of interest to others. Please give to Susan Bye or Sharon Joddrell at church or post or send by email to susan@msbye.co.uk, to arrive by 15th March for the April edition.

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Website: www.mrbc.org.uk