



SBC News

June / July 2023

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BE ENCOURAGED

Yes, that is June on the horizon, and yes you could be forgiven for thinking we are just getting over Easter (I'm picturing Philip reminding us that its only 30 weeks to Christmas!)

However, I want to share some encouragement and reflect on the challenges we face because there is so much to celebrate among us. The continuing development of group activities, growth in our congregation and membership over the last few years all remind me of God's faithfulness. As I reflect on the past and look at the present, I cannot help but see the wonderfully creative way that He works. He's the one at the helm of the ship guiding the way. This enables us to see how far we have come and to acknowledge the challenges, which are so often the place of growth and learning.

Encouragement and thanksgiving play vital roles in the journey of those who truly follow Jesus Christ. They provide strength, hope, and motivation, even in the face of challenges. Scripture is abounding with passages that emphasise the power of encouragement and the importance of expressing gratitude. Moreover, challenges and learning experiences are seen as opportunities for growth and spiritual development. Let us

delve deeper into these concepts and explore their significance.

Encouragement is like a balm to the soul. It lifts spirits, instils confidence, and motivates individuals to persevere. The apostle Paul understood the value of encouragement and frequently urged fellow believers to uplift one another. In his letter to the Thessalonians, he wrote, "*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing*" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Encouragement not only helps individuals overcome trials but also strengthens the bond within the Christian community. We give thanks to Hazel, Jan, George & Pauline and Livi for their continued support with the Ark playgroup. We also give thanks for the Ladies fellowship, weekly Lunch club, Mini Messy Church, prayer walk group, Men's breakfast, Prospects and many others. These are a vital part of outreach for SBC and the wider community. We give thanks to Carol for all that she does behind the scenes (too many to mention here). I give thanks to my team who strive to lead us forward as we discern together. I also give thanks to the faithful, committed members of SBC as we discern God's will and missional opportunities so that we

can share the Good News of Jesus Christ in our community.

With that said, we cannot escape the fact that challenges are an inevitable part of life. As Christians, we are not exempt from trials, but we have the assurance of God's presence and guidance through them. Challenges refine our character, deepen our faith, and enable us to rely on God's strength. This has certainly helped some of us through difficult situations. Learning from these experiences is crucial for personal and spiritual development. Scripture teaches that wisdom comes through seeking God and meditating on His Word. King Solomon, renowned for his wisdom, advised, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction*" (Proverbs 1:7). Challenges present an opportunity to seek wisdom and discern God's will. By leaning on God's wisdom, we can navigate difficulties with grace and understanding.

Moreover, learning from challenges also requires humility. The apostle Peter admonished believers to humble themselves under God's mighty hand, knowing that He cares for them (1 Peter 5:6). Recognising our limitations and surrendering to God's guidance allows us to learn valuable lessons and grow in faith. Hopefully we have learnt

more of this through our recent series on 'Unity & Conflict'. It also serves to remind us of our 3 core values - knowing God – growing in Christ – overflowing in life through the Holy Spirit.

So, I want to encourage you all to reflect upon the year so far. Where are you in your daily walk with Jesus? What have you given thanks for recently and what or who has encouraged you? Encouragement and thanksgiving are integral to our journey. They provide strength, hope, and motivation, enabling us to face challenges with unwavering faith. Remember that Scripture emphasises the power of encouragement and the importance of expressing gratitude. Challenges, though difficult, present opportunities for growth and learning. By seeking wisdom and humbling ourselves before God, we can navigate challenges and emerge stronger in our faith. Let us encourage one another, give thanks to God, and embrace challenges as stepping stones to spiritual maturity.

Grace and Peace



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Skeet is our Church Team Leader

*"The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never.
I nothing lack if I am his, and he is mine forever."*

Hymn by H W Baker, based on Psalm 23



The middle of the year is a good time to stop, reflect and pray. The other Sunday we wrote some of the things we could thank God for and some of our requests. It is hard sometimes to

remember everything that happens and to see God at work in our lives. Some people find writing a journal can help them reflect.

Please take a moment to write down as many good things God has blessed you with already this year; events, people, experiences, learning opportunities, gifts. Write down the ways God has used others to bless you and times when God has used you to bless others. How has the joy, love and peace of God and other fruit of the Spirit been displayed in your life these few months? When the list is finished bring it to our heavenly Father. Thank him for each of the blessings one by one.

As you begin to look ahead to the rest of the year, reflect and pray:

- What might be on God's heart for you?
- How can you spend more time getting to know God?
- Is there an area of your character God may want to grow?
- By the end of this year, what words do you want to be able to say about how you lived the rest of the year?

Isn't it wonderful that God Almighty wants to bless us in so many ways and that we do indeed have so much to thank Him for. Let us remember to give thanks.

Please join us (full details on the next page):

- In the church for our monthly prayer meeting
- On Zoom for a time of Prayer and Meditation
- For prayer walks in the community

Suzanne Charles



"I will give you every place where you set your foot."

Joshua 1 v 3

We have just started a weekly prayer walk, which takes place every Wednesday morning at 10am. The aim is to claim back our local area for God, to see people come to know Him and for lives to be transformed.

Each week we walk through a different part of our local community, and as we walk we pray. We pray for those that live at each house that we walk past, and for each person that we pass during the walk. We are inviting God's presence into the area and asking him to move, to bless and to meet the many needs in our area.

If you would like to join us, please speak to Jan Dean for more details.



The **Prayer Meeting** takes place in church on the first Saturday of each month at 9:30am.

- 3rd June
- 1st July



A time of **Prayer & Meditation** takes place fortnightly on a Monday via Zoom only at 9:30am.

- 12th and 26th June
- 3rd and 17th July

Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus



We are being encouraged in our Fellowship to reach out to others and share our faith as Jesus gave the great commission in the gospel of Matthew 28:19:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

It is not easy, I don't find it easy - we are not all called to be evangelists but we can tell those around us what Jesus has done for us:

<i>"Speak just a word Ever to Him be true Speak just a word Tell what He's doing for you"</i>	<i>"Speak just a word for Jesus Tell how He helps you live Tell of the strength and comfort Which He will freely give"</i>
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(Speak Just a Word for Jesus, Katherine O'Barker)

This is a song I learned in Northern Ireland many years ago and it has stayed with me especially *"Tell what He's doing for you."*

I have missed opportunities to do this but with the help of the Holy Spirit I move on and seek to be more obedient in future.

Another song which helps me is 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus', especially the third verse:

<i>"Stand up, stand up for Jesus Stand in His strength alone; the arm of flesh will fail you You dare not trust your own"</i>	<i>"Put on the gospel armour each piece put on with prayer; where duty calls, or danger be never wanting there"</i>
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(Stand Up Stand Up For Jesus, George Duffield)

So let us - *"Speak just a word for Jesus, Tell what He's doing for you."*

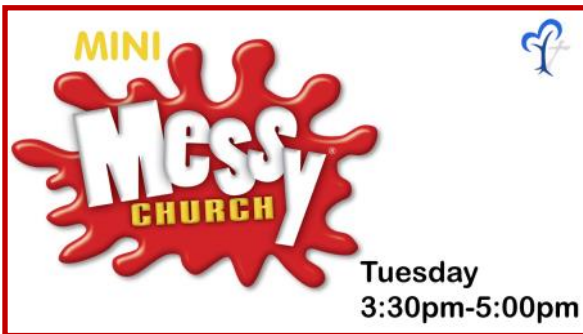
Marbeth Purdy



Our **Sunday services** take place each week at 10:30am in our church building. We also continue to livestream the services via our YouTube Channel. The first and third Sunday of each month includes communion.

Junior Church is for school-age children and meets every Sunday. The children and young people stay in the main building at the start of the service for the time of sung worship, and then go out to our School Room building for their age-specific groups, where they engage with songs, bible teaching, crafts and other fun. The School Room is attached to the right-hand side of the main church.

June	July
4 th Olivia Egan (Communion)	2 nd David Skeet (Communion)
11 th David Skeet	9 th Rob Joyce
18 th Rob Joyce (Communion)	16 th Rob Joyce (Communion)
25 th Family Service - Junior Church	23 rd David Skeet
	30 th David Skeet



Mini Messy Church takes place in church on the first Tuesday of each month at 3:30pm.

- 6th June: Messy Pentecost
- 4th July: The Lost Sheep

If you wish to speak to the leadership team, or if you have any items of news or prayer requests that you would like the church to know about, then please contact:

07536 992946



The **Lunch Club** takes place in the church schoolroom every week on a Thursday, with lunch being served at 12:00. Come and join us for food and a chance to chat. We just ask for a small donation of £2 per person.

Men's Breakfast



Saturday @ 8:30am
 £4

All men welcome – any background, any faith, any age, any postcode.

The **Men's Breakfast** takes place in the church school room on the second Saturday of each month at 8:30am

- 10th June
- 8th July



The **Ladies Meeting** takes place in church fortnightly on a Monday at 1:30pm.

- 5th and 19th June
- 3rd July

(The ladies meeting will be taking a break over summer and will recommence in September.)



Sunday @ 3:00pm

Prospects meets once a month on a Sunday in the church school room at 3pm.

- 18th June
- 16th July

We offer an open invitation to anyone who would like to join us at any of our events. Email swallowneestbaptist@gmail.com for further information.