



BARKING BAPTIST CHURCH

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ANNUAL REPORT

During a recent church members' meeting our pastor, **Manoj Rathatha**, reported on the work of **Barking Baptist Church** during the past year.

Manoj recalls that, in early 2018, there was discussion on the future direction of the church. It was agreed that the church should aspire to be "a *prayerful, mission-focused, wholehearted, Gospel-centred community*" where members would love and serve the Lord together. Progress towards these goals has been achieved in various areas.

Valerie Eliot has worked with the music group to help them develop a deeper understanding of authentic worship.

A new website has been developed which has enabled the church to be more outward facing. Leaflets about the church have been designed and printed and are now available. New weekly groups for prayer and Bible study have been established and a welfare group has been started with responsibility for home visits and prayer for members of the congregation in need.

Internal and external preachers have been invited to speak at the church and these have included speakers from our own membership and outside speakers working in national ministry roles. Members are being encouraged to develop their gifts and teaching has been given to help the church understand that the Christian faith is about serving God and serving the world we live in.

Priorities for the future include the recruitment of more teachers for the **Sunday Club** and the development of closer links with the parents of members of the **Boys' Brigade** and **Girls' Brigade**. The Church is seeking to be more outward looking in the following months with the hope of engaging in evangelism and social action to help meet the physical and spiritual needs of people in our community. It is our hope that the refurbishment of the toilets and kitchen will enable us to step forward in this. A longer version of this summary can be found in the minutes of the church members' meeting held on Sunday 27 January 2019.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

One of my earliest literary efforts has recently re-surfaced on the Internet. *If Only ...*, a tongue in cheek re-telling of the story of the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), intended to highlight the contrast between early Christianity and the contemporary church, appeared in the October 1972 issue of **Buzz**, a popular Christian magazine of the day. The story also appeared in our own church magazine and a Christian magazine published in New Zealand and was later reprinted in two books. You can now read this forgotten blast from the past on the **Buzz** on-line archive at www.buzzmagazine.online

NARRATIVE BIBLE

Sunday 10 March 2019 was our **Sunday School Anniversary** and we celebrated one hundred and sixty-seven years of work with children and young people. The service included items by several members of the **Sunday School** and **Bible Class** as well as a talk by our guest speaker **Keith White** based on the story of Jesus and the blind man as told in John 9.

Keith, who heads up the **Mill Grove** family centre in Woodford, brought along several copies of the second edition of **The Bible (Narrative)** which he has produced with several colleagues. This combines an Anglicised text of the **New International Readers' Version** with striking full colour illustrations and helpful marginal notes. This version of the Bible makes full use of contemporary principles of layout and design and uses short words and sentences which can be easily understood by everyone including people who know English as a second language. The end result is described as a Bible for everyone and it is suitable for distribution to people with little or no prior knowledge of the Scriptures.

This edition of the Bible is available in flexiback and paperback editions and is available at the introductory prices of £12.99 and £10.99 respectively with discounts available for multiple copies. A free full colour electronic version is also available with every purchase. You can order copies from <https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/> or by 'phoning 0330 22 33 423.

TIME OF BEREAVEMENT

We were sorry to hear that our friend **Joan Martin** died on Saturday 9 February 2019 after suffering from ill health for many years. Joan was the wife of our former Moderator, the Rev. **John Martin**, who carried out this role for a number of years during the 1990s and was a frequent preacher in our church during that time.

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Most of our present members will not have known John and Joan but we can all pray for John and other members of his family in this time of bereavement. A memorial service for Joan has been planned to take place on Sunday afternoon 17 March 2019 at the **Trinity Free Church**, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Donations in Joan's memory are invited for **The Gideons**, George Street, Lutterworth, LE17 4EE, a charity set up to provide Bibles for schools, hospitals, hotels and various organisations.

PUBLISHERS AND ROBOTS

Prayer is requested for the annual conference of **Christians in Library and Information Services** to be held in Oxford on Saturday 6 April 2019. The theme is **Publishers and Robots** and speakers include our own **Manoj Raithatha**, speaking on **Christian Publishing for the Twenty-First Century**.

In the second main session of the day delegates will be looking at the theme of artificial intelligence and robotics with a guest speaker from **Oxford Brookes University**. You can find more information from the web site <https://www.christianlis.org.uk/event/2019-clis-annual-conference-agm-save-date/>

LIBRARY SPOT

It is easy to be a Christian when things are going well but not so easy when our circumstances are more difficult. Author **Liz Carter** has suffered from health problems, including a serious lung condition, for many years and is well qualified to write **Catching Contentment: how to be holy satisfied** (Inter-Varsity Press, RRP £9.99, ISBN 978-1783597406) as an account of her experiences and lessons learned. You can find my extended review of this book on the web site of the **Evangelical Alliance** at www.eauk.org/news-and-views/book-review-catching-contentment-how-to-be-holy-satisfied

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A similar story is told by **Lysa Terkeurst** in her book **It's Not Supposed To Be This Way** (Thomas Nelson, RRP £10.99, ISBN 978-1400210978) Lysa is the President of a leading Christian ministry in the United States but has had to contend with marital breakdown and serious illness in recent years. Her book does not try to answer the question of why God allows pain and suffering but outlines some of the spiritual lessons learned during these difficult times. My review of this book should also appear on the EA web site shortly. Both books are available for loan from our church library along with many other titles.

NARNIA AND MIDDLE EARTH

Readers of this newsletter will probably have heard the news reports that the media services provider, **Netflix**, has acquired the screen rights to all seven of C. S. Lewis' **Chronicles of Narnia** and is planning a new series of films and episodes based on the popular fantasy series. Lewis' stepson, Douglas Gresham, will be one of three executive producers working on this project.

Some years have passed since Narnia last appeared on the screen and my own hope is that **Netflix** will reboot the series by starting with the Narnian creation story **The Magician's Nephew** rather than attempting another re-make of **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**. Other readers may disagree and it will be interesting to see what **Netflix** make of the Christian themes in Lewis' books.

There have also been reports that **Amazon** is planning a new series of films based on **The Lord of the Rings**, by J. R. R. Tolkien, Lewis' friend and fellow Christian. There has been speculation that this new series will explore the earlier lives of characters in the **LOTR** rather than simply re-hashing the existing films directed by Peter Jackson.

In the meantime, we can look forward to a forthcoming cinema release **Tolkien**, scheduled for May 2019, which will chart the early life of the author of the **LOTR** including his military service during the First World War.

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