
MRBC

CHURCH MAGAZINE—APRIL 2025



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for April from Hazel O'Connor

The Cross

Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**" (Luke 23:34).

Today, crosses are worn by some believers and it is common to see crosses on steeples and inside churches as a symbol of Christianity. But in the 1st century the sight of a cross would draw gasps of horror. Crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals, who were nailed there until they died from asphyxiation (suffocation), which could take several days. It was so horrible that no Roman citizens could be condemned to such a death.



Yet the sinless Jesus was led to a cross to die. The women cried, the religious leaders scoffed, onlookers watched. The Roman soldiers gambled. Thieves hanging either side of Jesus faced the same death. The rulers said sneeringly "**He saved others, let him save himself.**" (23:35). One of the thieves who was being crucified with Him recognised that He should not be crucified and said to Him "**remember me when you come into your kingdom.**" (23:42). Despite His unbearable pain, Jesus told this repentant thief "**I assure you you, today you will be with me in paradise.**" (23:43). And it was then that He prayed to his Father asking forgiveness for all those who were there at the cross. The repentant thief benefited from prayer, admitting his sin and receiving God's forgiveness.

Whether or not we wear a cross round our neck or display one in our home to show that we're Christian doesn't matter. What matters is our relationship with Jesus. He is the only one who can save us. Reflect on God's love in sending Jesus to the cross for you.

Who have you found difficult to forgive? Why not give them a call today?

God bless you all.

Hazel

CHURCH DIARY for APRIL

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.

Also, **requests for prayer** can be written on the cards provided and put in the box in the Welcome Hall.

Shalom Fellowship—Sunday 6th April—2.30pm

Toddler Group—Monday 28th April—10am-11.45am

Renew Wellbeing Café—Every Thursday in April —1.30pm—4.00pm

Reflective Prayer Meeting—Thursdays—3rd & 17th April— 11am-12noon

Good Friday service led by Dave Mangan—18th April at 10.30am

PRAYER POINTS

1. Pray for all areas of darkness, where we desperately need the light of Jesus to bring peace, understanding, sensitivity and compassion.
2. Pray for our children and young people who are under siege by social media and a broken society.
3. Pray for our Christian communities all over the world who are struggling to stay under the banner of Christ.
4. Pray for “Peter and Paul” and “Saul and Barnabas” in their missionary work (*See page 7 for details*).

A time of Reflection and Prayer

Last September we started a fortnightly time of reflection and prayer on Thursdays, 11am to 12 noon. We have recently been listening to videos by Pete Greig based on the Lord's Prayer. Each session is stand-alone and anyone is welcome to join in on any of the dates listed in the Diary Page. Ask Ceinwen Harris for details.



The Examen

Finding God in your day and discerning his direction for your life.

1. Replay - think over your day like a film replaying in your head. What made you happy? What made you anxious? What made you angry?

2. Rejoice - thank God for all the good things that have happened in your day. Savour these moments in gratitude to God.

3. Repent - say sorry to God for moments that come into your mind as you review the day. Receive His forgiveness afresh.

4. Reboot - make a decision in your heart to live for Jesus tomorrow and ask for grace to see His presence more clearly.

Dave Mangan has produced some bookmarks which link with our discussions on prayer. We are encouraged to share answers to prayer within the group and following The Examen is a useful tool to help. If you would like a free copy of this bookmark, Dave will be pleased to supply.

Make a Joyful Noise

“Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord”

Psalm 100:2

THANK YOU to Jennifer Maxwell and her team for organising worship and a fellowship meal on 22nd March. A series of powerful songs and hymns highlighted God’s healing, his faithfulness and his comfort in difficult times. Each song was preceded by very moving testimonies which reminded us all how significant music can be in supporting and guiding us in our journey of faith. Perhaps the lasting impression from the evening was how important it is to have opportunities to listen to other people’s experiences of God at work in their lives and to share our own.



Dave Mangan

The Purpose of the Biblical Proverbs

Over the last few months, a selection of verses from the biblical Proverbs has been put forward in this church magazine. The themes so far have been: Diplomacy in Practice; Home Life; and Politics and Government. There may be more to follow.

You may be asking what the purpose is of these biblical proverbs, after all, they are not the words spoken by Jesus in the time of his earthly ministry, and they are not the guidance of Paul and his helpers in spreading the teachings of Jesus to the wider world.

The opening verses of Proverbs say it all, and one set out below, verses 2 to 7 of the Prologue.

For attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the saying and riddles of the wise.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

No-one could put it more plainly than that.

John Sheppard

Thank you to **Michael Blissett** for giving us another cutting he saved from *The Times* newspaper, August 10th 2019, from their weekly article "Faith Register". This one is by Jewish rabbi and author Dr Jonathan Romain, entitled

Becoming better versions of ourselves is reincarnation

Dr Romain begins by suggesting that today more people seem to be aware of the concept of reincarnation than was once the case. He acknowledges that it is key to several other faiths, and suggests that many of us live in multi-cultural, multi-faith societies and may, therefore, be familiar with it. He writes:

The concept of reincarnation is as alien to Judaism as it is to Christianity, and it is nowhere to be found in the Bible. However, this has not stopped some rabbis suggesting that reincarnation is a punishment for misdemeanours that must be rectified until spiritual perfection is achieved.

But it leads us to ask if this is the way of a loving God, and also would mean that we lack free will. Mainstream Judaism concentrates instead on how we behave in *this* world, offering routes to immortality through what we do in the here and now. Our influence also lives on if those who knew us act in a certain way because of us, or see the world through a lens that we helped to shape.

Good deeds also survive after us through the charities we supported, the people we mentored, the ventures we helped and the individuals to whom we offered a kind word when they were in need.

He mentions an occasion when he asked some elderly people what they might do differently if they had the chance, reporting:

Some said they would take more risks and come out of their comfort zone, others would make different choices, or perhaps live each day as if it were their last and live it more joyously.

The rabbi concludes: This is where religion can make a difference. It challenges people while they are still alive to adopt alternatives, rise above ruts and become a better version of themselves. Whether it be changing our jobs, relationships or personal conduct, it is far better to assume that there is only one life and that we have to make the best of it. Who needs reincarnation when we can renew ourselves in this life?

Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of..... (2 Samuel 1:20)



This concerns our two new linked-missionary teams. In both cases they are a married couple, and in both cases they are working in or into very difficult and dangerous countries. In one case the work involves broadcast and social media targeting of North Africa, and in the other, actually living in a Central Asian country working for a specialised hospital.

The dreadful extent of persecution of Christians in North Africa and that other place cannot be exaggerated, and there is a very real risk to these good people were they to be identified and exposed to Christ's enemies. Accordingly, there will be no material displayed in church or in the magazine that could be misused in any way. The full BMS guidance on confidentiality covers both sides of an A4 paper!

However, to keep it simple as well as secure, our BMS friends best support is in our prayers, and for this purpose I suggest that prayers are made for "Peter and Paul" and "Saul and Barnabas". God knows his own, and will act as needed.

If a few people would like a copy of the confidential updates that will be sent to me from time to time by BMS, these could be supplied by prior request, and under promises of confidentiality.

Joan Sheppard

The BMS World Mission Birthday Scheme.....

.....is an excellent way to play a small part in the life-changing work of BMS World Mission. Simply celebrate your birthday and then choose to make a donation. If you are interested in joining the scheme, please see Jenny Hall who will be pleased to give you full details.

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.

Reflective Prayer Group meets fortnightly on Thursdays from 11am to 12 noon. All welcome.

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

Car Parking is allowed on a Sunday in the Page Kirk / Jarodale House car park along Gregory Boulevard. On weekdays the Sports Car Park opposite should be used. Disabled parking only on the church forecourt.

A big “thank you” to all contributors this edition. 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 April for the May edition.

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