



Ackworth Community Church News Letter

www.ackworthcommunitychurch.co.uk

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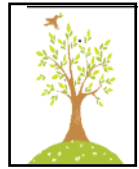
Ash's Letter

I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. - Revelation 3: 8

New Year always leads us to reflect on what has been in the previous year, but equally, there is always a sense of anticipation, as we seek to discern and discover what God has planned for the coming twelve months. So it was as we entered into 2024 and as always it has been good to gather together during our January evenings to pause, to wait on God and to listen to what He has to say to us.

The covenant service which always starts our year at Ackworth Community Church is not only an opportunity for us individually and corporately to renew our covenant with God and to each other but is also a time to think forward and to seek prophetic insight into the year ahead. This year I was a little surprised to be looking at the story of Samson, a story that I don't think I have ever spoke on before during all my years of ministry. If I'm honest, I find the story a bit brutal and unsettling, yet it was the story that came to mind as I thought about what to share at the beginning of the year. The particular part of Samson's story that I recalled was the last part of it, where Samson, shorn of his hair, with his eyes removed and his strength gone, is paraded before the mocking Philistine hoards in the temple of Dagon. Samson asks to be put between two pillars of the temple, where he can 'rest', before asking God to remember him and to strengthen him. You will know the story, that God hears his prayer, give him the strength and in one final act, he pushes the pillars and dies alongside hundreds of Philistines as the temple comes crashing down. Whilst I'm not advocating destroying temples or killing Philistines, the phrase that drew me to the story was 'one big push' or perhaps even 'one last push' and here's why.

Firstly, as you know, my time as pastor of Ackworth Community Church is drawing to an end. Who knows, by this time next year, it may be someone else writing this letter; so perhaps the thought of one last big push is a very personal finishing goal. To end with one last burst of effort in search of breakthrough.



Secondly, I became very aware at the end of last year, of the resistance we were facing as we sought to reach out again to young families in Ackworth. It felt like we were pushing against a rusted up door, with opposition forces arrayed on the other side trying to hold things closed. The picture that came to mind was of diligent prayer warriors putting their shoulders together against the door, to open up a door of opportunity once again. Perhaps we have started to see the door starting to move a bit over the Christmas outreach season, but let's not be satisfied with a bit of movement. Let's ensure we continue to pray and give it one big push together to see a wide open door in front of us.

Ash.

Prayer and Pastoral Support

Just a reminder that should a need arise; there are a couple of means of support available. Firstly, there is prayer support, so if you contact Ash or any of the elders with a prayer request then they can circulate it to people through e-mail and word of mouth.

Also, there is pastoral support, so again you could contact Ash, Neill, Alyn or Denise and they will arrange some appropriate help where possible.



Healing Ministry Team

If you would like to receive ministry and prayer for healing, please contact Alyn or Carole who will arrange for members of the ministry team to come and wait on the Lord and pray with you. The healing ministry team are: Alyn and Carole, Brenda, Denise, Jacquie, Dot & Ash.

Birthday Celebrations

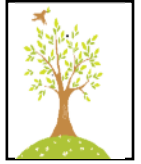
6th February - John I

6th February - Neill G

11th February - Julian

25th February - Grace

**A Very Happy Birthday From Everyone At
Ackworth Community Church**



I Believe in Jesus

I believe in Jesus
 I believe he is the son of God
 I believe he died and rose again
 I believe he paid for us all
 I believe he is here now
 Standing in our midst
 Here with the power to heal now
 And the grace to forgive.

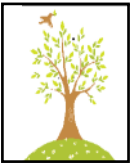
I believe in you Lord
 I believe you are the son of God...
 I believe you died and rose again...
 I believe you paid for us all...

And I Believe You're Here Now
 (I Believe That You're Here)
 Standing In Our Midst
 Here With The Power To Heal
 Now
 (With The Power To Heal)
 And The Grace To Forgive.

I believe in you Lord
 I believe you are the son of
 God...
 I believe you died and rose
 again...
 I believe you paid for us all...
 And I Believe You're Here
 Now

(I Believe That You're Here)
 Standing In Our Midst
 Here With The Power To
 Heal Now
 (With The Power To Heal)
 And The Grace To Forgive.

I believe you're here now
 Standing in our midst
 Here with the power to heal
 now
 And the grace to forgive



A Firm Footing

“Teach me to do your will so that I may please you, for you are my God: Let your good spirit lead me on level ground.” Psalm 143:10

What do you want to do when you grow up? It is a common question asked of kids and teenagers alike. At this point in their fresh lives they can dream up anything for their future without anything standing in their way. They can dream big dreams and believe for them to happen.

Some people ride through life, gliding on the dreams they envisioned while others struggle to know where they are supposed to be and what they are supposed to do. In the perfect Word of God, we read:

"O Lord, You have examined my heart and know everything about me.

You know when I sit down or stand up.

You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.

You see me when I travel and when I rest at home.

You know everything I do.

You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.

You go before me and follow me.

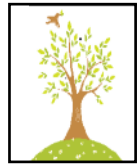
You place your hand of blessing on my head.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!"

Psalm 139:1-6

God loved us before the foundation of the world (**Ephesians 1:4**) and has a plan for our lives. Sometimes this is clear and sometimes it is foggy, leaving us confused.

I am of the latter group. I am nearing middle age and still trying to figure out what I want to do when I grow up. Sure, I have been led in many different areas



of ministry, leadership, and writing but the world tends to put a high importance on career and income, two things that have fallen short in my life.

I often find myself begging God for direction for the next place He wants me or for the next big thing I need to do. I long to finally land in God's will for my life.

This can be flawed thinking. Perhaps, we never arrive in one place. Perhaps, God has many things for us in His perfect timing.

In times like this, I have to allow myself to come to a place of surrender. I ought to lay down my own ideas, dreams, and visions and allow my heart and mind to be filled with God's visions, and perhaps, for that day it is just to simply sit in His presence. Nothing notable or praiseworthy, just sitting with Him.

So what are some practical ways that we can live in the promise of God's firm footing, solid foundation, and level ground?

1. Seek Him first in all that we do. Set aside our own desires and allow His voice to speak louder than the world. Spending time with Him in the morning, saturating our minds with the truth of God.

2. Eliminate distraction. If your social media feed is filled to the brim with advertisements of new careers, new courses, and new miraculous ways to bring in a large income and this is causing confusion, then decrease your time in that space, unfollow people, and change your settings. Protect your eyes and your heart from things that will cause you to stumble. Give God space to speak.

3. Stop comparing. This one is especially hard with social media and the constant flow of unneeded information. Stay in your own lane. Don't covet what others have. Focus on what you are thankful for in your own life and praise God for His perfect plan for you.



The Lord is very clear in His word that He loves us, He cares about the little things and He longs to have a front-row seat in our lives, giving us the direction, stability, and peace that we all long for in this dark world.

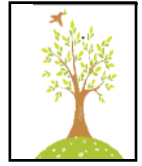
We can be comforted by knowing that when we lean into time with Jesus and surrender our lives to God's will we will, in fact, be on firm, level ground. Even to our limited human view, it doesn't make sense or it is not what we had envisioned.

We can trust the mighty God of the universe that we are right where we need to be. This is a good place to be.

Yes, God has plans for us, things to do and people to see but if we prioritize these quiet moments with the Lord those things will come into light in their perfect, divine timing.

This act teaches us patience and trust. It is not easy and it is tempting to take the wheel and start making things happen... Unfortunately, I have learned this the hard way. Often, when I take things into my own hands it causes more chaos and confusion.

Time with God will never be wasted. Rest in that today.



The Lord of Electric Bills

Prematurely out of the nest, I quickly discovered how little a part-time fast-food employee's paycheck covered. Seated on my couch and with an electric bill in hand, I pondered, then worried, then cried about the \$52 deficit. According to the notice, I had exactly 10 days from the posted date before the electricity would be disconnected. Ten days! I didn't have even a percentage to offer the power company. I was alone and broke in Nashville, the biggest city I'd ever called home.

Night fell, and the room got darker. My eyes overflowed with hot tears as I felt the shame and embarrassment of failure. I tormented myself with thoughts of sitting in the dark with nowhere to go. Finally, I took a deep breath and began to pray. I prayed for a miracle out of the clear blue sky, an undeserved deliverance for a lukewarm Christian in desperate straits. And I continued to pray, every day, numerous times, until I felt myself growing closer to God. What was initially a last-ditch effort became a sincere discussion with the heavenly Father I'd elbowed away in my teens.

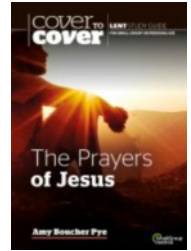
One week later, I received an envelope from a physician I hadn't seen since childhood. How bizarre, was my initial thought, which gave way almost immediately to, Oh, great—another bill. Then came the shocking realization that it ever actually arrived. There was no yellow forwarding sticker on the envelope because I hadn't bothered to change my address. In the pre-internet era, this envelope should have landed in some Dead Letter Office or been returned to sender.

Instead, it ended up with me and contained just one thing: a check for \$52 with the word "refund" written on the memo line. To this day, I don't know what was being refunded or why.

Now, when I find myself panicking first and praying second, the Holy Spirit graciously reminds me of the trustworthiness of the Lord of my upbringing, the Lord of unpaid electric bills, and the Lord of manna from heaven. That prayer in my 20s had been more of a desperate wish to a long-lost relative than an earnest conversation with a Saviour. After years of a growing relationship with Jesus, punctuated by earnest prayers of entreaty and gratefulness, I thank the Lord God for His patience with me, and for the undeserved blessings to His forever-grateful child.



Book Review by:	www.eden. co.uk
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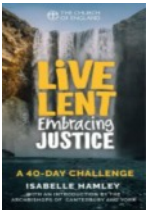


Cover to Cover Lent Study Guide: £7.94
The Prayers of Jesus

Encounter Jesus through the prayers that shaped Christianity. This year's Cover-to-Cover Lent guide takes you into a place of deeper faith and nourishment.

This Lent, refresh your relationship with God by exploring the way Jesus Himself prayed to His Father. Focusing on six of the prayers of Jesus leading up to the central events of our faith, encounter the Saviour in a new way and reach new depths of intimacy with God in prayer.

Through six sessions, experience more of God's presence as you pray and reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross.

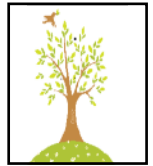


Live Lent Embracing Justice £1.98

Each year at the start of Lent, Christians are challenged to turn away from sin and towards new life. Together we acknowledge that our own lives, our communities and our world stand in need of God's redeeming and transforming power.

Live Lent: Embracing Justice is the Church of England's theme for Lent 2022. It invites us to examine our own lives truthfully, to see the world more deeply and to pray – for the church and the world far and near – that 'justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' (Amos 4.24).

For each day of Lent, this booklet for adults offers a daily Bible reading, a short reflection and a prayer, as well as a practical challenge. Each week follows a different thread through the many stories of justice in the Bible to explore how God works with humanity to bring justice, wholeness and salvation to all.



Coming Events for February

Tuesday 13th & Wednesday 14th February. Half Term, so no toddler group.

Monday 19th February All articles for the News Letter must be received by Lisa.



The Information Exchange

This is a place where you can request prayer for yourself or others, share your need /request for help, exchange surplus goods, or if you have some spare time, help someone with gardening, housework, shopping etc. You can use this section also if you want to say anything to the Church. Just ask Lisa to place your request.

Remember to Recycle

Please remember to recycle your empty Ink Cartridges. (HP, Cannon, Lexmark, Dell) and Stamps. Lisa is collecting them, each item donated will raise money for a Charity.

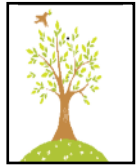
I am not collecting CD's or DVD's anymore.

If you would like to take these items to a Charity shop they would gratefully receive them.

New Church Contact List

Lisa is preparing a new Church Contact List, if you are already on the list could you please check your details are correct.

If you have not been on the Church Contact List before and would like to be, please print clearly your name, address, telephone number, mobile number and email address.



Coming Events for March

Monday 18th March

All articles for the News Letter must be received by Lisa.

Friday 29th March

Outreach on Co-op Car Park:
11.45am. Walk of witness from All Saints Church 12.00 Midday.
On Co-op Car Park.

Friday 29th March

5.00pm Good Friday Communion at the Parish Rooms. We'll meet to celebrate Jesus victory on the cross!



Small Group Meetings

Do get involved in a mid-week group and let us know which one you're hoping to be part of.

Alpha Groups 7pm

New Post Alpha led by John Wattis

Meet on Tuesday 6th February & Tuesday 27th February.

Old Post Alpha led by Ash

Meet on Tuesday 20th February.

Thursday Lunch Group led by Denise

Meet on Thursday 1st February, Thursday 8th February, Thursday 15th February, Thursday 22nd February & Thursday 29th February at Dot's house - Middy.

Thursday Evening Group led by Alyn (Zoom 8pm)

Meet on Thursday 1st February, Thursday 8th February, Thursday 15th February, Thursday 22nd February & Thursday 29th February.

Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting at 6pm, venue to be announced.

Prayer Diary

Please pray for each other.

If you would like to be on the prayer list please let Lisa know.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1 Alyn & Carole	2 Jacquie	3 Julian & Valerie	4 May Ann
5 Tony, Jilly & Family's	6 Adrian, Anne & Family	7 Brenda Amanda	8 John & Pat	9 Andrew, Kimber- ley, Hannah & Joanna	10 Neill, Sue, Grace & Hope	11 Kevin & Jeanie
12 Matt, Cheryl, Oscar & Georgina	13 Stan & Moiria	14 Anne- Marie & Alison	15 Joel & Holly	16 Ash, Di. & Ceryws	17 Neil & Eileen	18 Brian & Linda
19 Maryna Dot	20 Brian & Shelia	21 John & Lilian	22 Denise Lisa	23 Doug & Lidia	24 Jeff & Kath	25 Julian & Caroline
26 Joan A James	27 Andy, Sue & Rachel	28 Dimytro, Natalia & Denys	29 Elders			