



Ackworth Community Church News Letter

www.ackworthcommunitychurch.co.uk

Issue 238
May 2025

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*Show me your ways, LORD, teach
me your paths. Psalms 25:4*

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Michael's Letter

Back from Bruges...



We're just back from a week in Bruges and it held a few unexpected surprises. I didn't expect to find a museum dedicated to chips (or frites). Not that I was allowed to visit it. Helen considered it a waste of money, which is fair enough. I wasn't allowed to go to the chocolate museum either – perhaps provident to save me from temptation!

I didn't expect to find all year round Christmas shops, filled with an array of Christmas decorations, which apparently do good business all year round. I learned of Germany's Christmas pickle tradition. A gherkin like bauble is hidden on the Christmas tree and the child who finds it apparently gets an extra present from St Nicholas.

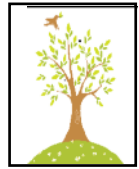
Rabbits were everywhere – well in many of the shops (edible and decorative) to mark the commercial face of Easter – the only one represented. They also like to eat rabbit stew in Bruges, much to mine and Helen's dismay!

The church of the Holy blood has what is claimed to be a piece of blood stained cloth taken by Joseph of Arimathea from Jesus body. Oh that it were true! Let's face it, it's very unlikely! The vial containing the relic, ornately sealed both ends in gold is reverently brought out at noon for the faithful to venerate.

I lined up to take a look at it, though venerating was a step too far. I did pause to quietly thank Jesus for shedding his blood for me. You will not be surprised to read that a collection box is placed beside the case the relic is kept in as you approach to view it.

Bruges is a beautifully preserved city of Historic architecture and impressive and imposing churches (mostly Catholic) with beautifully decorated interiors. Museums contain magnificent works of art of the Flemish masters, with many depictions of Jesus to pause and reflect upon.

I was surprised to see one of these shells less than 20 yards from our hotel. These are found on the pilgrimage route, known as the 'Camino de Santiago'. To think that in centuries past Bruges to Santiago de Compostela in northern



Spain was an established pilgrimage route. At a distance of over 1529 miles it tests the limits of endurance! The church that neighbours our hotel has information for pilgrims inside so to some extent it still happens today. The scallop shells serve as waymarks on the pilgrimage and I think in medieval times were given as proof of completion.



Now the furthest pilgrimage walk I have been was a mere 4 day trail. Now I can honestly say, to my disappointment I didn't experience a profound encounter with God on the journey. No epiphanies and I didn't feel any closer to God for it. I had a very enjoyable set of walks, which I'm sure did me good physically and mentally, but that was it. My romanticised image of a profound spiritual journey with the Lord didn't come to pass.

So where did I go wrong? Firstly you'll gather that going on a pilgrimage for me isn't about going to venerate some holy shrine or relic. It's about a dedicated journey with God away from the everyday distractions.

So why didn't it work out? I'm sure you can think of several possibilities. But one reason you probably won't have thought of and quite possibly won't agree with was that it was too comfortable. What I mean is that I was never in a situation outside of my comfort zone. I went home each evening because home was close enough to do that. I wasn't in a situation that made me more dependent on God and more focused on Him.

Let me give you a different example. I could fast for a day and find it beneficial. But I found that if I fast for 3 days I notice something different. My focus on God increases substantially for significantly more of the time. By the way, I am merely sharing my own experiences. This is just me! I'm not saying 'go and do thou likewise'.

But in light of my experiences and my still romanticised view of pilgrimage, I have for several years wanted to take on the Camino de Santiago. It is a route declared one of the 3 great world pilgrimages by Pope Alexander VI in the 15th Century along with Jerusalem and the 'Via Francigena' route to Rome. It began in the 9th century when the supposed remains of the apostle James were discovered.



There are several different routes, but the most popular is the French one which is about 500 miles. The original route known as the primitive route is quite a bit shorter I think.

So why haven't I embarked on this yet? Maybe I'm just too comfortable! The main reason is my inability to get my head around using a map and compass effectively. Yes, the route is marked out but I can guarantee it will not be marked out enough to make up for my lack.

It means that when I do finally get started on it, I will not be able to do it alone which would be my preference. I will need to enlist a group of Christians to travel with including some who can navigate effectively. We shall see!

Well I've gone a bit off-piste in terms of the subject matter, but this is a very longwinded way of saying we had a nice holiday!

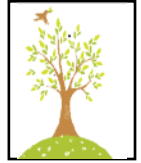
Every blessing
Michael



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, Michael, Helen, 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: Michael, Helen, Alyn, Carole, Brenda, Denise, Jacquie, Dot & Ash.

Birthday Celebrations

15th May - May

16th May - Andrew

A Very Happy Birthday From Everyone At
Ackworth Community Church



Verse of the Month..

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 1 Peter 3:15

Wise words from Peter. Just prior to this in verses 13-14 he says... 'Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."

Peter is specifically talking of persecution. But he maintains that the usual and expected outcome for those who do good is reward not punishment. Good will result from doing good. Nevertheless, those who do right before the Lord may still suffer for doing what is right.

Doing good in spite of the opposition, criticism even persecution can help in leading the other to turn from their ways and do what is right.

The next verse illustrates how, when believers keep doing right, it may win through in the end,

He continues...

keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1 Peter 3:16

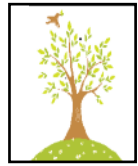
Sharing our faith and making disciples can be daunting. But most people are not hostile and many are willing to listen and even be prayed for.

During May and into June, our teaching series will be looking at disciple making, its challenges the ways we can all develop and take part in sharing the gospel and helping others on their journey of getting to know Jesus and growing in faith in him.

1 Peter 3:15 reminds us that when we are feeling afraid or daunted to fix our eyes on Jesus and let our fear be replaced by reverence and love for Him. Trusting that as we look to Him, He will guide us by His Spirit every step of the way. In this way, may we be prepared to give an answer to all who ask us to give a reason for the hope we have and importantly to do so with gentleness and respect.

I trust this Scripture bless and inspire us in the days ahead.

Every blessing
Michael



Power Prayer!

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit
comes on you...Acts 1:8a*

The risen Jesus promised His disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit and be His Spirit empowered witnesses to the ends of the earth. Of course, it came to pass when on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2 tells us that Peter addressed the crowd (a truly Spirit empowered message) and that day about 3000 were added to their number.

What a legacy we have as believers in the Lord Jesus! And through the ages to this very day the Holy Spirit continues to move in power, empowering God's people bringing God's blessing, renewal, awakening. Revival is happening around the world. In the UK the Bible Society talks of a 'quiet revival' as a substantial rise has occurred in young people particularly young men coming to church. Church attendance has risen by 50% in the last 6 years. The trend of decline is reversing praise God!

It's been on my heart for some time, as it has others to gather to pray for revival. To seek the Lord for revival in our community, in our nation, in all, nations. We want to come together to pray more Lord! More of your Spirit, move among us, stir us within, reach out to touch the lost, changing hearts and lives!

Will you join us? Will you be part of a mustard seed prayer movement to be carried in the Spirit's flow knowing that with God nothing is impossible?

How it works is we will have a Tuesday meeting one week and then a Thursday meeting the next both at 10.30am at Alyn and Carole's. We'll bring what the Spirit lays on our hearts and pray as He leads. But at the heart we'll be praying for revival.

The first meeting will take place on Tuesday 22nd April 10.40am and then Thursday 1st May then alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays thereafter. I will be looking for others to host it so that the burden doesn't fall entirely on Alyn and Carole, but I'd encourage you to attend Tuesdays or Thursdays whichever you can best manage. Please join us and let's show that we mean business!!

Thank you
Michael



Malawi Prayer Update

The prayer points for Malawi are:

Julian Lott is travelling to Malawi to arrive on 24th April, for a 5 week visit, please pray:

Safety as he travels around Malawi throughout the 5-week trip

Ease in picking up relationships with old friends and with the trustees and church members in our churches around the country

For God's presence with him when he's alone as well as when he is teaching and preaching

For Caroline and family left in the UK

That he will be a blessing and not a burden to the Malawians

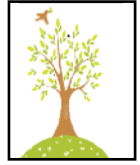
That God will achieve everything He wants from the trip

Please also pray for Peter Taylor one of the Salt Malawi trustees who will be joining Julian on 1st May for the last 2 weeks of the trip.

The photo shows the Easter Sunday gathering for four of the churches from the East Dedza district. It was attended by a local MP and his wife, who say they would like to join the church.

Every blessing
Alyn.





God's Grand Plan

When we accept the gift of salvation, God begins the process of healing all that is broken within us.

1 Peter 1:13-16

First Peter 1:16 says, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” What an overwhelming command! But that is exactly what the Lord is committed to do in our life—make us holy. His grand plan can be summed up in one word: sanctification. This is the three-stage process by which He sets us apart for His purposes.

Stage one occurs at salvation. When God declares us righteous, we are positionally holy. The second stage is a progression of growth as we become more and more holy in practice. This process will continue as long as we are alive on this earth. Desiring that we be conformed to the image of His Son, the Father is continually working to shape our character, conduct, and conversation (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

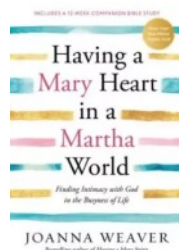
The third stage of sanctification is our ultimate perfection when we will possess absolute holiness. Upon our physical death, we are freed from sin, and in the resurrection, our bodies will be made perfect. We will stand faultless and spotless before Christ.

If we could just get a glimpse of what the third stage will be like, we would never moan and groan about the difficult sanctification process we endure now. Our eyes would be fixed on the goal, and our greatest motivation would be to glorify God by submitting to His transformation.



Book
Review
by:

www.eden.
co.uk

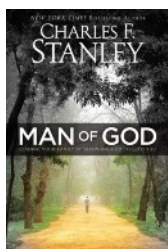


Having A Mary Heart In A Martha World £14.14

The life of a woman today isn't really all that different from that of Mary and Martha in the New Testament. Like Mary, you long to sit at the Lord's feet...but the daily demands of a busy world just won't leave you alone. Like Martha, you love Jesus and really want to serve him...yet you struggle with weariness, resentment, and feelings of inadequacy.

Then comes Jesus, right into the midst of your busy Mary/Martha life-and he extends the same invitation he issued long ago to the two sisters of Bethany. Tenderly he invites you to choose "the better part"-a joyful life of "living-room" intimacy with him that flows naturally into "kitchen service" for him.

How can you make that choice? With her fresh approach to the familiar Bible story and its creative, practical strategies, Joanna shows how all of us-Marys and Marthas alike-can draw closer to our Lord, deepening our devotion, strengthening our service, and doing both with less stress and greater joy.



Man of God £14.55

As Dr. Charles Stanley writes, a man of God is a maturing man, a striving man, a knowledgeable man. And the first step in real manhood is spiritual rebirth.

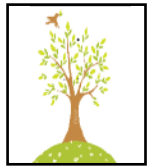
In Man of God, Dr. Stanley asks and answers questions such as these: What can we learn about manhood from Jesus's example? How does a true leader allow God to lead him?

Why is a godly man "both velvet and steel"?

What does it look like to be a provider?

What does it mean to lead with sensitivity?

Man of God will challenge and equip you to become a better leader, teacher, father, and husband.



Coming Events for May

Sunday 11th May

New Teaching Series: The Higher Path
Focussing on discipleship and disciple making.

Sunday 18th May

Church Meal to follow after the service.

Monday 19th May

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

Wednesday 28th May

Toddler Groups breaks up.
Returns on the 4th June.

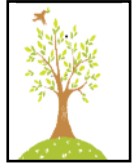


The Information Exchange

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.



Coming Events for June

Sunday 22nd June

New Teaching Series: Encountering Jesus

Monday 23rd June

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

Sunday 29th June

Vision Sunday.



Small Group Meetings

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

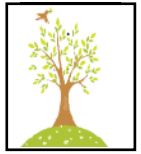
Thursday Lunch Group led by Denise

Meet on Thursday 1st May, Thursday 8th May, Thursday 15th May, Thursday 22nd May & Thursday 29th May. at Lilian's Midday. Series on Gospel of John.

Thursday Evening Group led by Alyn (Zoom 8pm)

Meet on Thursday 1st May, Thursday 8th May, Thursday 15th May, Thursday 22nd May & Thursday 29th May. Series on Romans.

Sunday Evening Prayer Meeting at 6pm, at The Community Centre.



Worship, Preaching, Projection and Children's Rota.

Date	Time	Theme	Worship	Preaching	Projection	Sunday School	Creche
4-May	10.30am	Simply Jesus / Communion	Michael	Michael	Lisa	No Sunday School	No Creche
11-May	10.30am	Being a Disciple - and a disciple! Jn 8:31-32; Jn 13:34-35; Matt 7:24; Acts 1:8; Jas 1:22-25;	Sue	Neill	Joel	Di (Jesus on the Cross)	Holly
18-May	0.30am	Your story, God's Story - sharing our faith Jn 1:45; Acts 1:8; Rm 10:14-15*	Michael	Michael	Lisa	Ash (He is alive)	Jacque
25-May	0.30am	What the harvest looks like Jn 4:31-38	Sue	Michael	Joel	Carole (Walk to Emmaus)	Val

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 Jacquie	2	3 Dimytro, Natalia & Denys	4 Anne- Marie & Alison
5 Ann	6 Alyn & Carole	7 Matt, Cheryl, Oscar & Georgina	8 Julian & Caroline	9 Amanda	10 Stan & Moiria	11 Kevin & Jeanie
12 Dot	13 Julian & Valerie	14 Maryna	15 Michael & Helen	16 May	17 Ash, Di. & Ceryws	18 Lisa
19 Lilian & Family	20 John & Pat	21 Brian & Linda	22 Denise	23 Adrian & Anne	24 Brenda	25 Tony, Jilly & Family's
26 Joel & Holly	27 Andrew, Kimberley, Hannah & Joanna	28 Neill, Sue, Grace & Hope	29 Neil & Eileen	30 Jacquie	31 Elders	