

Gorse Hill

BAPTIST CHURCH

CRICKLADE ROAD
SWINDON
WILTSHIRE
SN2 1AA
Tel: 01793-534193
www.ghbc.org.uk
Charity Registration No: 1127294

Transforming God's people

Dear friends

A couple of days ago, a friend posted a picture on facebook. At first glance, it's an unremarkable view of open countryside with farm buildings in the middle distance.

On closer inspection though, it's a much more familiar image. There are a few new buildings but the most striking thing of all is the wood which towers over the farm, protecting it from the cold winds from the north and the east.

It's my wood - well, sort of. I spent a couple of weeks in the cold Spring of 1977 getting the ground ready, marking out the rows and later, setting the trees. Well I dug the holes, but someone far more qualified and skilled than me set the foot high saplings - English broadleaves all - into the freshly tilled soil.

Forty years on, a change of ownership later and the wood survives. It stands tall in a typically open East Anglian landscape, visible for some miles and is, no doubt, a welcome shelter for wildlife as well as a valuable windbreak for farm and crops alike

Transformation and change is not uncommon in the natural world. Indeed, it's what farmers and gardeners alike recognise as the changing seasons, each having their own distinctive character.

Moving on and growing up is part and parcel of life. It involves change, sometimes dramatic transformation rather than step by step transitions. The end result will always bear some resemblance to the starting point but new fruit will be plain to see if we take God seriously.

(continues in next column)

IN THIS ISSUE ...

| | |
|---|---|
| TRANSFORMING GOD'S PEOPLE | 1 |
| THIS YEAR | 1 |
| PRAYING WITH PURPOSE..... | 1 |
| OUR MOTTO TEXT | 2 |
| TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND .. | 2 |
| CHURCH: A GATHERED COMMUNITY | 2 |
| WHERE IS GOD WORKING? | 2 |
| IMAGINE THIS CHURCH | 2 |

Lord God, through this Year,

We entrust our lives to you afresh.

Be our beginning. Be our end.

Be our purpose, our energy, our action. Amen

Praying with purpose

... for our nation at a time of change and uncertainty

... for our new Diaconate as we work through the implications of God's call on our lives

... for our community: for all who live, work or go to school in Gorse Hill. Pray for opportunities to connect with them



(continued from previous column)

It's this last point which continues to challenge me and my fellow servant leaders. At our next Members' Meeting we'll be sharing where we feel God is leading us as a fellowship.

It's simple really: transformation comes from waiting on God and walking with God - hearing and following. Our call to "Bring In," Build Up" and "Send Out, reflects both the Great Command (Loving) and the Great Commission (Discipleship).

It's relying on spiritual basics as the firm foundation from which we can build a stronger witness.

God invites us to join Him in this task. Will you commit to building His Kingdom here and to seeing a transformed community through changed lives?

Every blessing in Christ

Steve

OUR MOTTO TEXT FOR 2017 ROMANS 12: 2

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould but let God re-mould your minds from within



Church: a gathered community

Despite the shrinking world and global news, surveys tell us that people believe loneliness to be their greatest problem. We long for a sense of community: we may have more acquaintances but fewer real friends.

Our diaries and calendars might be filled, we have a greater choice in how we spend our leisure time but does anyone really know us? Do we really know anyone else?

The Bible describes a revolutionary way of life designed for any society, in any age. It offers the blueprint for a spiritual kingdom where the King's subjects are loved, nurtured and protected.

In this kingdom, everyone has distinct gifts, yet real differences bring people together. Anyone can be included, yet each person is irreplaceable. When citizens in the kingdom are wounded, the whole community hurts; when new life or growth breaks out, the whole community celebrates.

Pause for thought: Joel 2; Acts 14 Where is God working?

Building the bridge

- time: in it for the long haul (vv. 3)
- truth: a firm foundation (vv. 3, 6)
- tenacity: committed to the cause (vv. 6)

Living in the power of God

- their hearts were in the right place (Joel 2: 13)
- they were filled with God's Spirit (Joel 2: 28- 29; Acts 14: 3)
- they were wholly dependent on the Grace of God (Joel 2:32)

Changed by the presence of God

- transformation: there's fruit (vv. 1)
- confirmation: God's Grace (vv. 3)
- recognition: meeting others where they are (vv. 8 - 18)

Reaching our world for God

- it's all about God, not us (vv. 15, 18). Do we expect Him to get involved?
- misunderstanding and rejection (vv. 11- 12) truth in a plural society
- not giving up: keeping on, keeping on

IMAGINE ...

... this church as being a place where ...

... children, young people and adults are helped to come to faith in Christ

... everyone is welcomed, loved, taught and guided

... everyone is confident in sharing their faith, and clear about God's call on their lives

... everyone serves one another and their community

... gifts are grown & leaders developed; all this through the ministry of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit



Gorse Hill Baptist Church
Cricklade Road, Swindon, SN2 1AA
Phone - 01793 - 534193
E-mail - pastor@ghbc.org.uk

Sunday Services
10.45 am Morning Celebration
6.30 pm Evening Worship

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