

# Calvary Newsletter

## Spring 2014



### Times and Timing

Dear friends,

Greetings to you on behalf of Calvary Church whether you are near or far away! The winter in Brighton has been one of the wettest ever: we have had storms and rain and wind. It is good to know that all things are in God's hands, and by his grace we look forward to the sun he sends (as well as the rain). We can also look forward over the longer term, and recently we have been thinking and praying in a responsible way about the years to come. God has blessed us as a church in recent months, and we have seen several new faces and in particular the growth of the "Young Adults Group". So much so that we have had the addition of several church members, and finding places for all the children and adults on a Sunday morning is something that we are starting to think about. We are grateful to God. But how should we think about the future, and the challenges that it holds? I have been reading through Deuteronomy chapter 1. Moses recounts to the people how they should have faced the challenges of entering the land of promise. We can learn from their example by not following their mistakes. **They failed to count on God's faithful love:** 1:27 "you grumbled ... and said The LORD hates us; so he brought us [here]". It is so important to remember that, whatever our failures, the place we are at, and the steps that brought us here have their origin in a God who is compassionate and loving towards his children. All things work for our good. **They forgot the LORD's goodness to them in the past:** 1:30,31 "the LORD ... will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt ... the LORD carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place". We too should remember God's mercies to us in the past. I wonder how many crises and stresses we have been seen through, and then—even though they seemed so insurmountable at the time—we have forgotten about afterwards. **They failed to trust that the LORD would guide them.** 1:32 "in spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God who went ahead of you on your journey ... to search out places for you to camp, and to show you the way you should go." Perhaps it is easier to say when we are not in a crisis, but it's true at all times, God goes ahead of us, we are never left alone; he only takes us the way that he has already scouted out. He still says: "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Let's think ahead with that strong confidence. **They failed to trust the LORD – full stop.** 1:32 "in spite of this you did not trust in the LORD your God

..." This is the bottom line. God does insist that we do him the honour of trusting him. He does not ask us to know the future, nor to be supermen and superwomen, nor to be sinless, nor to be beyond temptation and weakness. But he does insist that we trust him. What is that, if it is not simply allowing God to be God—the all wise, the Almighty, the King of Kings! Whether we look forward to drier weather, or to the gradual shifting of one generation to another, let us do so trusting that God is able, and able to ... I leave it to the reader to fill in the blanks as appropriate to each situation.

Yours by the grace of Jesus Christ, the Saviour who died for us,

*Philip Wells*

### Buying the building: a good start

Matters are now moving on apace as we face the substantial challenge of raising £162,500 to buy the freehold of the Calvary Church building. After giving and pledges in the latter part of 2013, the target is now less than £90,000. It has been humbling and uplifting to sense the thoughtful and sacrificial giving that has already made. We have a church membership of 25 with only a quarter of these in full time employment. But we also have a mighty God who knows how to provide what we need and just as we have received his encouragement to progress with this purchase we have also seen his matching provision. The challenge continues. We have another Gift Day marked for 27th April at which we hope that a further £40,000 will be given or pledged. This time we hope that friends of the church, especially those with past involvement, will join with us in the 'grace of giving'. For some of us it may seem that there is little or nothing more that we can give but God may surprise us in this area. Meanwhile the Railway Mission has instructed their Solicitor to prepare the sale documentation. We have likewise instructed Mark Harvey to act for us. Mark is a Christian solicitor who has provided much help and encouragement to us over the last few years in the matter of the building. Clearly we're not there yet but in this journey of faith a good start has been made. Do keep an eye on the church website ([www.calvary-brighton.org.uk](http://www.calvary-brighton.org.uk)) for latest developments. 'Let us not become weary in doing good.' Galatians 6:9

*Chris Fry*

# Launch of the Toddler Sunday Club

When I first started attending Calvary Church in 2008, there were two families with four children altogether: two children attending the Sunday Club. I know that the church has prayed for families and children to be added to our church family and God has graciously answered those prayers both bringing in four new families and with the birth of four babies into our existing families! It was clear from the start of the year that the crèche was too small to keep our little ones entertained and although we could branch out into the back hall, it was obvious that provision was needed for the toddlers to have their own spiritual input at their level. Some of the toddlers enjoyed joining the older Sunday Club children but it would have been impossible for the teachers to meet the needs of all children with such a wide age range: 2-12 at one point! So, the Toddler Sunday Club was launched in September. The aim of the TSC is to introduce the children to Bible stories and biblical truths, in a fun and interactive way, that will be built upon as they grow older. They have the opportunity to sing songs at the beginning of the session as they join with the older children and pray together at the end of their group time. We want the children to have a positive experience of coming to church as well as build friendships with their peers as they learn and play alongside each other.

So far we have taken a different sense each week which we have explored through a Bible story, games and a craft; looking at the many different things we can do with each sense, helping the children to appreciate what a wonderful job God has done in making us. We also have taken the opportunity to say thank you to him through prayers and songs. It was wonderful to hear Samuel one day, whilst jumping on the bed, declaring all of the body parts that God had made. We then looked at the Christmas story, exploring what it would have been like to be a shepherd, leading to the children dressing up as shepherds in the family service (although it was only one who managed to brave it on the big stage!). We finished our Christmas series with a party and a cake to say 'Happy Birthday to Jesus'. This term we are in the process of looking at the wonderful world that God has made, taking a different day of creation each Sunday and building up a display in the back hall. Children grow up so quickly as we have realised that our 'original' toddlers are now a pre-school age and the babies have now become the toddlers who now have a separate story and talk time in the crèche. We are looking for some new names for these three groups and are very much open to suggestions. It is both a privilege and a blessing to be able to share the truths about God in this way as we partner with parents in laying the foundations that will be built upon in the future. Please

join with us as we pray for these precious little ones; that their hearts will be open to God's truth; that we will be able to meet their needs in the best way; that they will build good friendships with each other and we will be ready to welcome new children as and when God adds to our number. Thank you to all the leaders and assistants and enthusiastic parents who have helped with TSC. It is lovely to be able to know that our children are able to have their own part in the service when they can meet together and learn about God.

*Rachel Rayfield*

## FIEC national leaders conference 2013

The conference took place on the 4-7th November 2013 at Seacroft Holiday Village near Great Yarmouth. I think some of this area fell into the sea during the storms of the following month! The venue is normally a summer holiday camp complete with Starlight Ballroom (where the main meetings were held) and Coral Restaurant where we queued up for our very nice meals. Chris and Katy Fry and Philip and Maria Wells attended on behalf of our church. We were told that this was the biggest ever Leaders' Conference with over 460 delegates.

By way of introduction National Director John Stevens came out shooting from the hip with a barrage of statistics to show that FIEC should by no means be thought of as a collection of dwindling churches, but rather that FIEC offered a support and co-operation network fit for mission to the UK in the 21st Century. He showed how the number of churches involved was favourably comparable with the New Frontiers network. He cited how various significant churches across the UK were turning from decaying denominations toward the gospel fellowship of the FIEC. He told us that many of the most exciting current initiatives such as the annual Evangelical Ministry Assembly were going forward with input from FIEC people. He observed that the cause of the gospel had been in decline in the UK for more than a century and it would take decades of God-enabled visionary slog to win the nation again for Christ.

The main meetings were full. The music was provided by a band with keyboard, guitars, drums and bass. They made an inspiring sound. Each day there were main addresses and a choice of smaller seminars. The main addresses were devotional and inspirational from Psalms 32,33,34. John Stevens gave a series of addresses on "The Power of God" as it is available for the work of the mission of the church. We each attended different seminars. Chris and I took it in turns to hear the Director of Australian FIEC tell us about the stunning

growth of the network he was leading. They had been planting churches at a prodigious rate, and were growing into the 1000s. At times this crossed the boundary of encouragement (Yes! We could do that!) and entered the territory of “well it’s OK for them, but it really isn’t like that here”. More realistically he encouraged us to think where we would like to be in (say) five years time and what we could be praying, planning and doing now in faith for the future. I attended a seminar on the principles of worship, and also learned about a new evangelistic scheme for inviting people to read John’s gospel. We are now planning to put that into practice in 2014. All in all it was a most inspiring and encouraging conference.

*Philip Wells*

## What’s in a name?

Naming your child is not an easy thing, as there are so many names to choose from! However, as Christians we have some great names in the Bible which have substance. On Bethany’s Thanksgiving Day we had the opportunity to explain why we called our children Samuel Hugh and Bethany.

### Samuel Hugh

We got the name Samuel at a Wednesday meeting when Phil took a study in the book of Samuel 1: 1 where Samuel is named. After the meeting, we both said that we felt it was right to call our child Samuel if it was a boy! Like Hannah cried out to the Lord and she was answered (Sam = to ask of, El = God) the Lord heard our requests and was gracious in giving us a child. My dear grandfather was called Hugh, whom I have lovely memories of. He was, and is, a fine Christian role model for me, who I always looked up to. My grandfather was a godly, kind, humble, fun-loving, generous family man who was loved by many. He was a talented architect and was very artistic; he helped redevelop a lot of present day Southampton after it was bombed in World War II. He painted a lot and especially loved sculpting, and his work still remains here on earth. I especially like going to my parents’ place (as they bought his home when he passed on) and seeing his sculpture of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet. Grandad was a man who served his Saviour to the end and he died in the Lord. He was an overcomer. I endeavour to follow his example, and I hope and pray Samuel will too by putting his trust in Christ.

### Bethany

While expecting Samuel, we did not know whether we were having a boy or a girl so even though we both felt very strongly that Samuel was the right choice for a boy, I felt we should have a girl’s name on standby too. But, as months passed by no name stood out. My mum gave me a book: ‘1000 Christian Names and Their Meanings’. I read through the book and the only name

that stood out was Bethany. At that time, I thought it was a lovely name and, being a teacher, the four Bethanys that I had taught were all lovely too. So I only had positive associations with the name. Then in February Samuel was born, which explained why we had a strong conviction of the boy’s name. When we found out we were having a girl at my second scan with Bethany, it just seemed natural to use the name we had chosen previously. I wanted to know that it was God’s choice and not simply me picking out a name, so I prayed for confirmation. Philip was carrying out a series of sermons leading up to Easter and he read from the passage in Mark 14: Jesus Anointed at Bethany. I had never made any previous association with the name other than it being a Biblical town but, by the end of the passage, had the confirmation I needed. It was at Bethany that a lady poured expensive perfume on Jesus’ head. He describes it as a ‘beautiful thing’ and goes on to say that wherever the gospel is preached, what she had done will also be remembered. Bethany was a place where a lady showed such extravagant worship to her Saviour, where the opinions of others did not matter compared to her desire to show such love and respect for her Lord. We are not given the lady’s name in this passage but the place is significant. Our prayer is that Bethany will too grow up and make a public declaration of her faith. Chris’ message on Bethany’s Thanksgiving Day was very true. What is the most important thing for Bethany in this life? Going to Cambridge University and getting a first? Getting a so called “good job”? Finding a husband? No! The best thing that she could ever hear is “Well done good and faithful servant. Come and enjoy your inheritance”. Simply trusting in Jesus is the wisest thing to do in this life as all other things fade away. Let’s pray that our children would turn to the name which is above all names!

*Rachel Rayfield with Mark Rayfield*



**L to R: Bethany, Mark, Rachel  
and Samuel Rayfield**

# On the Record

## Looking forward

September 2013 featured a week of prayer looking forward to the challenges facing the church. A major issue that has preoccupied us both in prayer and members' meetings is that of buying the freehold of the building from the Railway Mission. See the article by Chris Fry in this issue. But preaching and teaching the word of God, together with building a loving, outgoing community within the Kingdom of God, continues to be our primary mission. We are grateful to God for a slow but steady growth in numbers. The Sunday morning congregation is now around 50, with improved attendance also on Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

## Ministry of the word

In the early Autumn, Philip Wells lead us in some studies in John 8. Then in November he returned to the series on Romans. A brief revision of chapters 1 to 8 was followed by some intensive study of the later chapters focussing on God's electing purposes. In the evenings we have looked at apologetics, family issues and also adressed some of Jesus' 'difficult sayings'. Some Wednesday evening studies covered the subject of conversion. Philip has also preached at other churches including Chailey and Southern Cross.

Chris Fry has led us on a variety of topics, including looking at church buildings from a scriptural viewpoint: an interesting study. He has also been to Goldstone Church. Meanwhile on several evening services in the Autumn, I finished my long running series on 1 Corinthians, and then in the spring I have given six talks entitled 'Wisdom Commended', opening up the book of Proverbs. A welcome return in the morning services this Spring has been a series of sermons by visting speakers from Christ Church Haywards Heath. The topic this time was 'Meals with Jesus' based in Luke's gospel.

## Student Friendly

In October 2013 we held some introductory evening meetings for Chrstian students, preceded by an afternoon tea. A few contacts were made, but on the whole these were not well attended. We also held three BeThinking talks. On 18th October, Katherine Crompton talked about the attitude of pioneer missionary Hudson Taylor to Chinese culture and clothing. This was based on her Masters thesis and was very well researched with some fascinating pictures. Then on 1st Novemeber, Tim Wells addressed issues of conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world. This topic was picked up again on 14th March

by David Blower, an Agapé worker based in Birmingham, who talked about his book 'Kingdom vs Empire'. The following morning he hosted a lively discussion. However these meetings again, were largely attended only by Calvary people. Obviously today's students do not know what they are missing! By contrast, Calvary International Café for international students on Saturday evenings has continued to be well attended, with topics varying from Pizza to English Folk Dancing!

## Men's Breakfast and Ladies who lunch (and read)

Men's breakfasts on the last Saturday of each month coninue. Some of these are meetings for fellowship and prayer, while others have an outside speaker and are intended as a vehicle for inviting visitors. A highlight was the March meeting featuring local optician 'Specky Wren'. Meanwhile Ben Alltimes has continued to hold meeting aimed at younger men, with Friday evening meetings and 'Platoon' camping weekends. Not to be outdone, the women have met for a fellowship lunch and also organised a book group. The Young Adults' Group also continues to thrive.

## Training

We have continued to make use of the Sussex Gospel Partnership training events. At various times, Philip and Maria Wells, Chris Fry, Katharine Crompton and I have attended Sussex Evangelical Ministry Seminars. Katharine and I have also been taking year two of the Sussex Ministry Training Course. From 10th-13th February, Philip attended the Residential Preaching Training Course, near Rye. David Jackman led the participants through the book of Galatians.

## Looking outwards

Missionary visitors included the Albanian Evangelical Mission (twice) and the Principal of Baldeus Theological Seminary, Trincomalee.

Our own outreach has included Christmas Carol services and Ben Alltimes and others giving out books and leaflets in London Road on most Tuesdays. This was extended to a whole week 7th-11th April as part of Passion for Life, with an inter-church men's meeting on the Friday evening.

## Dalesdown

The second Dalesdown church weekend away took place from 4th-6th April. David Sprouse of Cuckfield Baptist Church lead the study sessions in 1 Peter. Look out for a full report in the next issue.

*Steve Ellacott*