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| ALLERTON  CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH |



August/September 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends

It pains me to say this, but I was wrong! About 8 years ago I wrote an article for a church newsletter about the infamous preacher/evangelist/healer Smith Wigglesworth who hailed from Bradford and lived most of his life here too. Wigglesworth is considered by many Pentecostals and charismatics to be a great man of God. Interestingly, though, historical research suggests that the reality is quite different from the fantastic stories that are told about the former Bradford plumber. I used to think that Wigglesworth was a Christian preacher from whom I could learn, be challenged and encouraged in my own walk with God. Sadly, I have come to realise that I was very wrong about this man.

For writing a misleading article about Wigglesworth that may have caused others to go astray I am truly sorry, and have repented. Thankfully we have a merciful, gracious and forgiving God who will restore us when we repent and ask for His forgiveness (see 1 John 1:8-10). The article I wrote referred to an alleged prophecy that Wigglesworth is said to have spoken shortly before his death in 1947. It talked about the coming together of Word (the Bible) and Spirit before a great revival, although there is a lot of doubt whether Wigglesworth actually said this. Whatever the details may be, we can be sure that this ‘prophecy’ did not come from God.

How can I state that with such certainty? By looking to the Word of God that He has handed down to us, the Bible. The letter to the Hebrews begins, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son…” (Hebrews 1:1-2, ESV) What this shows us is God’s plan of revealing Himself and His ways over time. He spoke to humanity through the prophets (the Old Testament), and then He revealed Himself more fully in and through His Son, to whom the New Testament bears witness. This gives us no expectation of further revelation or prophecy until Christ returns.

Having said all of that, the subjects of God’s Word, the Holy Spirit and revival are all ones that we do find in the Bible, which is a more sure word (2 Peter 1:19). The Scriptures show us that the main role of God’s Holy Spirit is to point people to Jesus in faith and to bring glory to Him. Jesus is revealed to us through the Scriptures so the Holy Spirit will also draw us to the Word of God, and not to Himself. Any separation of the Word from the work of the Holy Spirit is clearly wrong because both are from God, and both should lead us to faith in, and obedience to, Christ. But what about revival? What is it, and how is it relevant to us today?

Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones, the faithful preacher of God’s Word who pastored Westminster Chapel in London over many years stated that revival means “more than evangelism that brings in converts, and more than cheerfulness, enthusiasm and a balanced budget in the local church… (It is) the new quality of spiritual life that comes through knowing the greatness and nearness of our holy, gracious Creator… that usually starts with a deepened sense of the power and authority of God in preaching… the Biblical message.” I believe that this quotation is rather helpful because it points us back to the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit will help us understand.

Revival is, first and foremost, a revitalization of the faith of God’s people. It is a commitment to and passion for God’s Word. It is something that we should all desire – to grow in our knowledge of God, and our love for Him. The problem with Wigglesworth and many of the other so-called healing evangelists is that they focused on spectacular signs and wonders, or at least tall tales about them. They largely ignored the wondrous witness to Christ we find in His Word and the quiet ministry of the Holy Spirit in granting faith to individuals as they hear the Word preached and the Gospel proclaimed. Let’s focus on God and His Word, and ask that He would guide us and grant to us wisdom to live out our lives faithfully to His glory!

Fred

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 23rd September – Harvest Supper – 4.00pm

Saturday 25th November – Christmas Coffee Shop – 10am-12noon.

Secretary’s Thoughts

We would expect that in July the weather would be warmer. It’s a reminder that our world really is upside down.

I think we are all very fortunate in our church fellowship that we are all trying to look after and support each other in any way we can.

As we speak to folk from other churches it’s clear that it isn’t the same everywhere.

God is faithful and shares His love with us all, showing us how to love and support each other. With His support we will continue.

Janet

Treasurer’s Reflection

It was good to welcome Sherry Owulabi from Leprosy Misson last Sunday and hear of the plans for the new teaching centre being planned. She was grateful for the donations that were made and any other donations that people would like to make will be very gratefully received. If any of you would like to contribute, having heard Sherry’s appeal, please let me have your gifts and I will pass them on.

The old Leprosy Mission used stamps collection box has been repurposed for us as a Guide Dogs for the Blind used stamps collection box and is now on the table in the vestibule.

Many thanks

David

**The Christmas Coffee Shop**

The Christmas Gift stall is very short of gifts to sell and would appreciate wrapped gifts for men, woman and children.

Please remember that they are sold for £1 each, so please buy appropriate presents.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yvonne.

Flower Rota – flowers provided by:

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| August 23 | |  | September 23 | |
| 6th | The Hastings Family |  | 3rd |  |
| 13th | Mrs K Clough |  | 10th | Mrs B Lowther |
| 20th | Mr & Mrs R Breen |  | 17th | Mr & Mrs A Jones |
| 27th | Mr & Mrs C Roper |  | 24th | Mr & Mrs D Muschamp |

On Sundays not listed, silk flowers will be used.

Preaching list

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| August 23 | |  | September 23 | |
| 6th | Rev Allen Holmes |  | 3rd | Mr Trevor Kershaw |
| 13th | Rev Fred Rich |  | 10th | Rev Fred Rich |
| 20th | Mr Trevor Hippey |  | 17th | Mr Trevor Hippey |
| 27th | Rev Fred Rich |  | 24th | Rev Fred Rich |

Finance Committee – A message from the Financial Secretary

Roof repairs have been carried out and the asbestos works are scheduled for September.  
  
Work on the electrical works continues to be planned.

Coffee Rota

As we have returned to having coffee after services, it would be really helpful if those on the rota could come a little earlier to set things up. You will not need to bring milk.

The coffee rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

Bible Reading Rota

If you would like to offer to read the Bible for Sunday services, the Bible reading rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

Note from the Editor

The next newsletter is due on 24th September 2023 – please let me have any items for inclusion by 17th September 2023.

Thank you – Carole

Sundays - Services at 10.30 am.

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