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| ALLERTONCONGREGATIONAL CHURCH |

February/March 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends

There’s a saying, ‘never meet your heroes’, or in its longer form, “It is unwise to seek personal acquaintance with people whom one has regarded with high esteem, as they often fail to fulfil one's expectations, resulting in disappointment.” Behind these proverbs is the idea that with most people what you see is not what you get.

There is often a difference between the public image of many celebrities, or public figures, and the private reality. David Walliams, the popular entertainer, Britain’s Got Talent judge and author of children’s books always seems lovely and friendly when you see him on TV. However, there are enough accounts online of people who have met him telling a very different story.

Sadly, this can even be true within the Church. Martin Luther King Jr., the beloved civil rights leader and Christian preacher who spoke so powerfully for the rights of black people was anything but a ‘good Christian’. His personal life was characterised by sexual sin, and his theology was so bad that many question whether he could, in any meaningful way, even be called a Christian. He denied the virgin birth, Jesus’ divinity, His resurrection, and rejected the Biblical Gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone. Yes, King was an important leader in the civil rights movement, and clearly good things were achieved through the efforts he put in, but he was a very flawed individual.

In one sense we could go on from here to reflect that we are all fallen human beings who do not stand up to God’s mark of perfection (Romans 3:23-24).

However, that is not the end of the story. In chapter 11 of the letter to the Hebrews we can read what many heroes from the Scriptures did “by faith”. None of these individuals were perfect, but by faith they were made perfect in Jesus Christ. When we meet these heroes of the faith in eternity we will not be disappointed. However, that’s not because they are wonderful individuals, but rather because they are made holy through Jesus. It’s also worth while us pausing to remember that this faith is not a human work, or something that we do.

The Scriptures rather tell us that faith is a gift that God’s Holy Spirit bestows upon us by grace. Paul puts it this way, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9). There is nothing that we can do to earn salvation.

Rather we receive God’s underserved gift of faith. The 18th Century theologian, Johnathan Edwards put it like this, “The only thing you contribute to your salvation is the sin that makes it necessary.” The author of the letter to the Hebrews concludes the discussion of these various saints of old with an encouragement for all of us. This is what he writes, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

By faith each of us can live up to the great potential of becoming more like Jesus each day. By faith we will ultimately be made perfect when we enter into the presence of God at the end of our lives. By faith, with God’s help, we can lay aside those things that hinder us from living for God every moment of every day. By faith our sins are forgiven because Jesus died for us and reconciled us to the Father in Heaven that we might be adopted into His family. None of us is perfect this side of glory, but by faith Jesus makes us perfect!

Yours

 Fred

Secretary’s Thoughts

Christmas and New Year have been and gone, celebrated and

enjoyed, and those who were able caught up with family and friends.

The Deacons met last week and have planned some events for the rest of the year, shown below.

Prayer meetings will also be held after Easter.

As we have the Coronation of King Charles III in May we have 3 Bank Holidays to look forward to, although it is just another day when you are retired.

Janet

Dates for your Diary

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| Friday 10th March | 1:00pm | Ladies Circle Annual Meeting. |
| Friday’s 10th-31st March | 10:00am | A series of Lent Bible Studies  |
| Saturday 22nd April | 7:00pm | Concert with John Froud and Cath |
| Saturday 13th May | 10am-12noon | Christian Aid Coffee Morning |
| Saturday 10th June | 10am-12noon | Leprosy Mission Coffee Morning |
| Saturday 15th July | 10am-12noon | Ladies Circle Coffee Morning |
| Saturday 23rd Sept | 4:00pm | Harvest Supper |
| Saturday 25th Nov | 10am-12noon | Christmas Coffee Shop |

Flower Rota – flowers provided by:

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| February 2023 | March 2023 |
| 5th  | Mrs & Mrs R Hardy | 5th  | Mr & Mrs I Hastings |
| 12th  | Mr & Mrs T Hippey | 26th  | Mrs Smith & Mrs St Claire |
| 26th  | In Memory Mary & Denis Cockcroft |  |  |

On Sundays not listed, silk flowers will be used.

Preaching list

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| February 2023 | March 2023 |
| 5th | Rev Fred Rich | 5th | Rev Fred Rich |
| 12th | Mr Trevor Kershaw | 12th | Mr Gordon Sitch |
| 19th | Rev Fred Rich | 19th | Rev Fred Rich |
| 26th  | Mr Trevor Hippey | 26th  | Rev Richard Lewis |

The Leprosy Mission used stamps

We’ve had an email from Leprosy Mission to advise us that due to decreases in the value of used stamps over the last couple of years they have made the decision to cease fundraising through stamps and collectables. A final package will be sent mid-March.

Finance Committee – A message from the Financial Secretary

The long awaited repair works are due to take place shortly, commencing on 13 February and there may be some minor disruption to those entering the building by the back door but this route will be clear on Sundays.

The works to be carried out include addressing the dry rot found by the back door and in the floor leading to the toilet. The main hall ceiling is also to be repaired.

Following a period of well over 10 years, we are sad to see Slimming World ceasing to use the Church for their weekly meetings each Tuesday. This change occurred in January.

Chris

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 26th March 2023 – please let me have any items for inclusion by 19th March 2023.

Thank you – Carole

Sundays - Services at 10.30 am.

## Website: allertoncongregationalchurch.org.uk

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