

New Road Baptist Church

The Church in Bonn Square



*praying and working
for the peace of the city*

June 2013

PEACE to the CITY

is

The vision and prayer of New Road Baptist Church, Oxford

Located in the centre of the city, in Bonn Square,
this congregation is committed to

praying and working
for the peace and well-being of the city
through worship, witness and service .

This vision and mission is based on the Good News that "Christ is our Peace".

In Christ

a new relationship has been opened up between humanity and
God

breaking down the wall of contempt between people
and all things in heaven and on earth are being reconciled into
God - who is the source and end of all life.

Practically this means that in this place, where a congregation has
met for over 350 years:

The peace of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit,
is explored and experienced in worship
is celebrated and deepened through life together in
community and
is lived out in costly acts of compassion and hospitality

All are welcome.

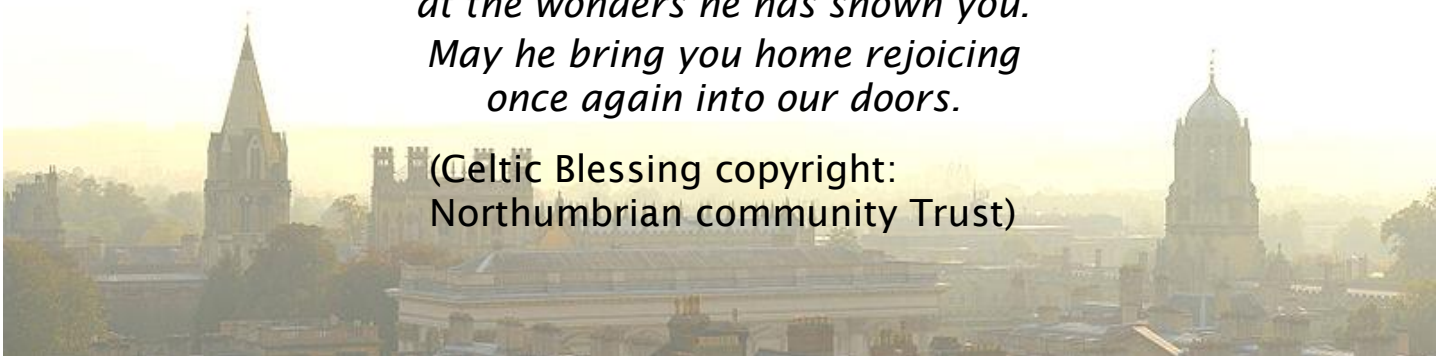
*May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
Wherever he may send you.*

*May he guide you through the wilderness
protect you through the storm.*

*May he bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders he has shown you.*

*May he bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.*

(Celtic Blessing copyright:
Northumbrian community Trust)



This issue

What's in a magazine?	3
Lent and Easter 2013	4
Spring Harvest	6
Back in the chapel	7
Easter Memories	8
The Donkey	9
Psalm from everyday life	10
The Baptist Assembly	11
Sunday's service	14
Christian Aid Malaria scheme	15

What's in a magazine?

The New Road magazine appears after such a long gap that I suspect many people will have assumed we have stopped producing one. This edition appears thanks to the efforts of Viv Edwards in particular who has successfully sought contributions from people and written much herself.

So in here you will read personal memories, reports of visits, poems—things by New Road people (largely) with the intention of passing on something of interest. Please feel that you can add something too. It might be a short report of something you did or attended, it might be a poem or reflection that has meant something to you, it might be a photo with a caption.

Please don't feel you have to be asked, I would like to be able to put together the next issue in late August ready for September.... where will you be this summer?

Nick Parsons

Lent and Easter Services 2013

The season of Lent began with a traditional service at St Michael's in the Northgate, one of the churches belonging to the "Faith in Action" partnership. As Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness in prayer preparing for his ministry proclaiming the Kingdom of God, so it has become the custom in much of the Christian church to prepare to celebrate the Lord's resurrection with a time of prayer, self-examination, repentance and study. The service at St Michael's included being marked in ash with the sign of the cross for those who wished. There was also communion.

Every Tuesday throughout Lent there were Lent groups held at New Road. These were well attended by all the "Faith in Action" churches. There were five or six groups each week, ranging from discussions and talks about salvation, suffering, famous hymn writers and ways of praying to a choir preparing a performance of Stainer's Crucifixion.

New Road Junior Church held a feast – but with a difference. As far as possible the food (which was delicious) was made using things close to their use-by date, which otherwise might have been wasted.

On Palm Sunday there was snow – which prevented the visit from the donkey! Maundy Thursday the service was at St Columba's United Reformed Church. The liturgy included the foot-washing and the Lord's Supper, in an imaginative way, and then candles were extinguished until the church was in darkness and the congregation left in silence.

On Good Friday the Churches gathered at Wesley Memorial Church for a very still, quiet service in which the Crucifixion narrative was read, with pauses for silent reflection and prayer. It seemed strange to step out of the church into the busyness of the city centre, with all the normal sights and sounds, but it must have been like that on the first Good Friday.

Easter Day was cold, but eight brave souls climbed the tower at St Michael's to proclaim the resurrection of the Lord as dawn broke. This year there was a magnificent sunrise. Then breakfast. Then a wondrous, joyous service for Easter Day celebrating the new start which Christ offers to all of us through his resurrection. Alan proclaimed his faith and was baptised. Alan and Norman were received into membership of the church. Eggs and cake were shared by all.





Comments about the Lent course

It was lovely to see the church and the whole premises full on a Tuesday evening.

A very wide range of interesting group – it was difficult to know which to choose.

The church was warm and welcoming. Thank you for the refreshments.

This has been most successful.

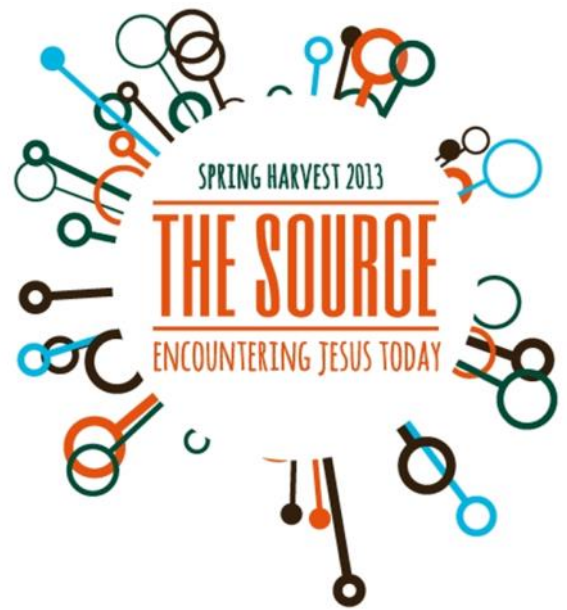
It is good to meet people from other congregations and get to know them.

I enjoyed the singing.

A big thank you to Kat for all the time, energy and vision that she put into organising the groups, and to the people of New Road.



This Easter my mum and I headed off to Butlin's Minehead resort to spend 6 days exploring this year's theme at Spring Harvest - **The Source**. Morning bible studies led by Gerard Kelly looked at 1 John. Afternoon seminars helped 'equip the Church for action' through a diverse collection of topics. Evening worship, led by Chris McClarney was followed by a sermon delivered by various speakers following a running theme of "Jesus is... therefore we should be..." with each night focussing on a different adjective - these were Loving, Hopeful, Courageous, Passionate, Merciful and Visionary. After hours featured offerings from the Saltmine



Theatre Company, live music, readings by authors such as Adrian Plass, and every night comedian Tim Vine delivered a fantastic show.

Here is a brief look at the four stages of the theme that we explored through the week in the practical sessions that followed the daily Bible study.

Jesus is **The Source**. Today we explored what Jesus said about Himself, His works and what it means for our world that Jesus is the saviour. Among other things we explored the actual words and work of Jesus and compared them with our contemporary understanding of the good news.

The second stage looked at how we can **be** active followers of the Jesus we see in the gospels in our everyday lives. What does His life tell us about who we are and how does His life challenge us to live where we are - at home, work, in our wider communities and even globally.

Say was the next stage - what does it sound like to be a 'good news' person? When friends and colleagues ask us what we believe about Jesus many find it difficult. Today we shared way of communicating our personal faith with others as well as looking at what the church says to the non-believers in our communities.

The final stage brought together most of the week's thoughts and focussed on what we **do** as followers of Jesus. How can we put light, life and love into our actions in our personal, local and global lives? One charity that featured during the week, XL-Mentoring, struck a chord with me with the work they do, using church members to mentor those pupils on the fringes of their societies, close to being expelled from school. A thought occurred to me on this day - might this be another way for our church community to help bring peace to our city?

Gary White



Back in the chapel

A lot has been happening in the chapel in recent months. A radically repaired roof, a replastered ceiling and walls, new lights and, of course, fresh paint.

We have much to be thankful for; many people have worked long and hard to get our place of worship safe again and to enhance its beauty.

It comes at a price, of course, and the appeal for money to pay for it continues.

Nick Parsons



Easter memory

I have always had a very sweet tooth. When I was a child we lived next door to my grandmother who kept a few hens. I loved collecting the eggs. Especially on Easter Sunday. Because Gran's hens were very clever. They knew it was Easter, and so they laid special chocolate eggs. As chocolate was rationed for a long time after the war it was a much anticipated treat. (When sweets came off the ration people bought so many that they had to go back on again for a while.) What amazed me most about these eggs is that they were covered with silver paper, some said Cadbury's and some said Rowntree's and some said Fry's. Gran saved the silver paper for them, of course. But fancy the hens all gathering round to fix it on with their beaks.

Viv Edwards

Easter in Athens 1997'

On, Good Friday, 6 April 1997, I left Oxford for Athens for a fortnight's holiday in Greece. On the first evening as we were finishing our evening meal at our hotel in the centre of the city we heard muffled drum beats and when we went to the window to see what was happening, saw the drummers leading a funeral procession, consisting of a bier with the figure of Christ lying upon it and a large silent crowd walking behind.

We expected a celebration at midnight on Easter Eve and went to the main square about 11.30pm. By that time it was almost full, so we bought candles and edged our way into the crowd. In the centre was a small marquee and from time to time officers of the Greek Services arrived and were ushered to it. Then at midnight the bells rang, canon were fired, the doors of the cathedral were flung open and the worshipers rushed out with their lit candles to pass on the light of the resurrection to those standing nearest and so on throughout the crowd with the words "Christos Anesti" "Christ is Risen" to be greeted with the response "Alithos Anesti" "He is risen indeed" At the same time an impressive firework display was going on.

We walked back to our hotel trying to keep the the flames of our candles alight and passed churches every one of which was brilliantly lit with the doors wide open, the silver and gold of the ikonostasis, the screen bearing the ikons, clearly visible. , The whole evening was a marvellous celebration in sound light and colour,

Next day we saw individuals walking along in the streets taking gifts to their friends.

Truly for Greek Christians ,Easter is the supreme Festival.

Elizabeth Gill

The Donkey

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

G.K.Chesterton

This is one of the poems in an anthology – a poem a day for Lent and Easter – selected by Janet Morley and called “The Heart’s Time” published by SPCK. One of the Lent groups used this book and enjoyed it very much.



A Psalm from everyday life

O give thanks to the Lord for he is good
His goodness endures for ever.

I crept from the house in a rage
I left in a fury of temper
I walked with angry step
Determined to listen to no-one.

I came to the five-bar gate
I gasped in amazement and wonder
The evening had donned her dress
Of gold, of red and vermillion

The glory of a wondrous sunset
Called for all my attention
I relaxed and gazed in awe
At the beauty of all my surroundings

The grass so green and so pleasant
The trees so tall and so stately,
The sheep so quiet in the meadow
The sun ablaze with glory.

I thank you, O Lord, for your sunset
Endowing the earth with its splendour
O praise the God of creation
His goodness endures for ever

All the way home I was dancing
Skipping with girlish contentment
Gone was all the tension
Relaxed and refreshed I felt better

And what was the anger concerning?
Of this I have no remembrance
But the sunset stays for ever
Gold and pink and vermillion.

I thank you, O Lord, for creation
So simple in all its splendour
The mystery it points to is great
The mystery endures for ever.

O give thanks to the Lord for He is good
His goodness endures for ever.

The Baptist Assembly 2013

This year's assembly was thrilling and historic. Below is some of the Baptist Times coverage and two personal reflections from two New Road members who were there.

For all the Baptist Times articles go to www.baptisttimes.co.uk

New General Secretary

The Revd Lynn Green was unanimously elected as the next General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) during the Baptist Assembly earlier this month.

There were no votes against and only a handful of abstentions when Assembly delegates appointed Lynn to the role during a packed BUGB AGM on Saturday morning.

She will take up the post in September 2013 and will become the first female General Secretary of our Union. She was the unanimous choice of the General Secretary Nominating Group, Assembly heard, and had been unanimously endorsed by Baptist Union Council which met for a special meeting at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool on Friday afternoon.

Lynn is well known to many within the Union and is currently a regional minister with the Southern Counties Baptist Association team.

Current General Secretary the Revd Jonathan Edwards, who will leave his post in July, spoke warmly about his successor. 'I feel a deep peace and great excitement for the Union as Lynn becomes our General Secretary. I urge the Baptist family to pray for Lynn and to give her all the love and support that I have been privileged to experience for the past seven years.'

Discussion on same-sex partnerships

There is a real sense that Baptists want to wrestle with the issue of how to respond to faithful, same sex relationships. The Monday morning plenary session at the Baptist Assembly, began with a Bible study, heard from a minister whose son is gay and then made space for small group discussions on the subject.

The session was chaired by the Revd Ernie Whalley, the new president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. At the end he asked: 'Do we think it is important for us to explore this in our churches over the next few months?' The response from the floor



was a resounding “yes”.

Assembly heard from the Revd Dr Paul Goodliff, Ministries team leader, and the Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society team leader, who set the social context. In a moving section, Assembly heard from the Revd Richard Lewis, a regional minister but speaking now as a husband and father. Mr Lewis shared how one of his four children, at the age of 27, told him he was gay.

Delegates were then invited to break off into small groups and discuss the question: ‘How are we to respond to missional and pastoral ways to faithful same sex relationships with our churches?’ A number of ‘listeners’ were on hand to record observations from the discussions, which were then fed back from the main stage when the discussion period had ended. The responses, shared by the listeners, included: ‘We should be accepting first, then allow the Holy Spirit to convict’ ‘Jesus said very little about homosexuality’ ‘There is not an unanimity in our church’ ‘There are limits to acceptance’ ‘We want one thing with our hearts, but are struggling theologically’

Responding, Dr Goodliff said it seems clear that this is something ‘we want to wrestle with, and not bury’. He then attempted to dispel the ‘urban myth’ that should a minister talk about homosexuality, they are at risk of losing their accreditation. ‘You can talk about this. Council has wanted this debate to happen - so let’s talk about it without risk.’



'Miracles still happen'

or

'The Power of Prayer'

...a personal reflection from Assembly

The Baptist Assembly this year was a great event; Ernie Walley, our new President, spoke well on the opening evening and it was great to join with 1500-2000 Baptist brothers and sisters to worship together. There were some great seminars too, and a healthy discussion about our approach to sexuality issues on the final morning. For those who have never been, I can highly recommend it. But there was one part I was not looking forward to one little bit: as many of you are aware, I have been involved with the 'Futures' work over the past couple of years looking to rethink how we walk together as 'Our Union' - not just in terms of achieving financial sustainability but also in acknowledging that some of our ways of working together were either ready for a rethink, or not happening at all. After lots of listening, through online surveys to churches, from Associations and justice groups, then lots of consultation, we eventually started to make decisions about the changes and these were put to Council last June, reshaped in the light of that and put again in November, and the final stages in March this year. Now all that had to happen was Assembly to accept the consequent changes to our Constitution. However, making changes on behalf of 2500 churches, 13 Associations, 7 Colleges and many more individuals inevitably means some will not see things in the same way, or will be unhappy with the changes. I get some of those views in my postbag each week! And at the Assembly, I would have to stand up in front of all those people and put the recommendations for the changes. Scary. Especially for someone like me who sees themselves as quite good with a group of 12 but 1500 plus...VERY scary!! As the time drew near, I prepared my script then started to write potential difficult questions and how I might answer them...Others wrote to me with their concerns about what might happen and stressing the importance of these Constitutional changes going through. I thought of more situations and shared these with the President so that he would know what I was prepared for...and more importantly, what I was not prepared for. Then as the nerves increased the week before, I wrote some more and estimated I had probably spent in excess of 100 hours thinking about how this might go and anticipating the difficult questions or comments.

Then the moment came to stand up and appear calm! I said my bit and sat down. Our President asked if there were any questions and pointed out the microphones...silence...more silence....I could hear my heart beating in that massive auditorium....there was not one question or comment. The resolutions were all passed and those of us involved looked on with astonishment. I wanted a round of the Alleluia chorus. Was that a miracle? Or, if every hour of worry, concern and preparation was a desperate prayer, maybe it will renew my confidence in the power of prayer!!

Jenny Royal

A great weekend at Baptist Assembly.

It started with the election of the first female General Secretary of BUGB and finished with one of the most intelligent, spirit filled, respectful, grace filled, sessions on same sex relationships that I have had the privilege to be part of.

With the result that churches are wanting to and being encouraged to have open discussions about same sex relationships, as the first steps in a discerning the way forward.

A wonderful time to be part of the Baptist family

Emma Walsh

Appreciated Sunday's service ...?

Did you know that recordings of the past five services can be found on our website? So if you were away, or you were there but would like to share the experience with your friends, you can now easily do so.

Go to www.newroad.org.uk where you can either stream the recording straight to your computer or download the recording to play on other digital devices.

Services

For help with listening to the website media, please see the [Help section](#) of this website. To download a file right click on the speaker icon and choose 'Save Link As...'

Title	Author	Date Recorded	File Size
Morning Worship	Kat Bracewell and others	19th May 2013	19,876 Kb
Description			
Holy Spirit we welcome you. Includes Getting to Know Gregory Hadley			
Title	Author	Date Recorded	File Size
Morning Worship	Kat Bracewell and others	12th May 2013	17,091 Kb
Description			
'Take the shackles off my feet so I can dance'. Includes Getting to Know Rob Ellis			



Christian Aid Churches malaria scheme

Malaria is one killer we can stop

It kills a child in Africa every minute and it is responsible for a third of all child deaths in Sierra Leone. What's even more shocking is that this cruel disease is entirely preventable, and yet only one in three children in Sierra Leone sleeps under a bed net.

We want to put a stop to these needless deaths, and we know how to do it. But we need your help.

We're looking for at least 100 UK churches to help us to run a life-saving malaria control project in Sierra Leone.

By pledging to raise £500 by 1 July 2013, each church will fund the work of one **malaria control volunteer**, like Fatmata, for one year.

Fatmata, 24, from Kenema District in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone, has seen two of her children die from malaria - including her eight-month-old daughter.

She says, 'I know now that my children would have lived if I had taken them to the hospital earlier.'

That's why Fatmata is determined to give accurate health information to other mothers in her community, so that they don't make the same mistake and suffer as she has.

Your church's **£500 donation** would provide the training and equipment needed for a malaria control volunteer to save lives by giving communities essential health education, such as:

- how to spot the symptoms of malaria in themselves and others - particularly in young children
- how to get a malaria test
- how to seek urgent medical treatment
- how to prevent malaria by using treated bed nets correctly and stopping mosquitos from breeding in stagnant water around the house

New Road agreed to send £500 at the May church meeting.



New Road Baptist Church
Bonn Square
Oxford
OX1 1LQ

www.newroad.org.uk

01865 798235

Sunday service: 10.30 am
Crèche and Junior Church
Tea and Coffee afterwards

Weekday Church: 11.00am—2.00pm
Drop in for a cuppa, a chat or quiet reflection

Minister: Kat Bracewell
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01865 437909

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Please let me have copy for the next edition by Sunday August 18th.