



Autumn Blessings

I wonder if like me, you need time to adjust to Summer's departure?
Does the thought of morning mists, golden landscapes and watery sunshine days cause you to sigh or raise a smile?

I admit, I struggle when the change in weather reminds me to find something more effective than flip flops to shield my toes from wet grass and worm casts.

But eventually, the cider-scented, windfall orchards, damp leaf mould and conkers evoke happy childhood memories. All over again I'm in awe of early morning spiders' webs heavy with diamonds, the quiet landscape shrouded in early mist and excited at the prospect of another rainbow infused sunset.



How hard it would be were we to watch a season depart without some anticipation of new blessings waiting for us.

I'm remembering that old song.

"New every morning it's new, the love of God to me is wonderfully new!"

Today, I was blessed by sunshine illuminating an unfinished autumnal display over our fireplace - the two seasons' letters threw a combined shadow on the wall behind.

What a visual representation of past memories and present hope!



For me some special memories are clear - mental pictures, perfumes and sounds - others are more akin to distant blessed shadows just like those projected on the wall but they all serve to lift my spirit when I most need them!

JM Barrie wrote this....

"God gave us memory so we might have roses in December"

....and these days I have come to believe that there is more than just whimsy attached to this thought.

How all-encompassing is the love of God!

How deeply and intricately He has made provision for our minds, our spirits, our well-being.

Romans 8:38 says this:

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, **neither the present nor the future**, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Responding positively to change can sometimes be a challenge but in every season of our lives God has promised he will lead us; always present, never changing, pouring His love, painting His beauty and faithfulness indelibly onto our hearts and minds and spirits.

May God bless us as we step forward together into this new season of harvest and thanksgiving.

Let's continue to encourage one another to live thankfully under His grace, trusting Him for the future and, in this unexpected season of mankind, exploring new ways to share His love with those around us.

Mary

Praise the Lord for the Harvest Thanksgiving Offering which has been forwarded on to the Falconer Trust.

The Free Will Offering amounted to £575 added to the additional gift of £200 from the churches Missionary Fund we were able to Bless the Falconer Trust with £775 for their tremendous work at their children's Home in Zaire.

Thank you all for your generous giving into the Lord's Work as we celebrate Harvest Time.



Gift Day – 2020

Our annual gift day this year is On 18 October. As in previous years, this is primarily for the Building Fund so that we can fulfil our target of repaying our interest free loans within the next 5 years. The balance of the interest free loans outstanding is £133,333 so that we would like to pay the sum of £26,667 to the lender to keep us on target to pay off the loan within the 5 years.

At present our Building Fund stands at £14924.40 as at 31st August. Our Treasurer estimates the balance on the Building Fund will be around £15700 on present giving at the 31st October leaving a shortfall of approximately £11000. So that is our target!

Let's take this as our challenge and trust the Lord to provide the funds as He always has done in the past in the history of Staplehurst Free Church.

There will be the opportunity to give monetary gifts at the service on Sunday morning 18 October or you can give direct into the church account

Account name: Staplehurst Free Church

Sort code: 60-60-08

Account number: 02928272

designating your gift for the Building Fund.

Remember the promise of Malachi 3 v 10

“(NIV) - Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the flood-gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

If you have been attending church services in the building recently you may have noticed that the image projected onto the main screen has many “speckles” interfering with the image. This because there is a fault with the projector. We are investigating repair or replacement options so will solve this problem in due course but thank you for your patience and understanding in the meantime.

Tech Team.

Welcomers Rota for October

4th — Jo and Peter
11th — Brenda and Graham
18th — Nic and David
27th — Clive and Kate



Live Broadcasting of Church Services

Over the last few months, online broadcasting has played a vital role in helping our Church members and friends remain connected and maintain our 'foundation' of being a supportive community of Christian people. Sunday morning services have now restarted in the building, but it is recognised that many people may still wish or be able not to attend for various reasons. We also want to continue to create opportunities to reach out to and engage with people in our wider community.

Therefore, from Sunday 13th September, our Sunday morning services will be broadcast live and will be publicly available online.

Here are a few things which you may find helpful as we explore this new way of being Church.

- Rather than sending links out each Sunday morning, you will be able to find the services just by searching for '**SFC Sunday Connection**' on YouTube on your device – this now includes Smart TVs with the YouTube app as well as phones, tablets and computers.
- The broadcasts will start from approximately 10.20 with the Service starting at 10.30 as usual. You can start watching anytime while it is going on and the broadcast can be watched anytime afterwards in full once it has finished.
- The broadcast will also appear live at 10.20 on the SFC Facebook page and be accessible by searching through our posts afterwards.
- **If you do not want to be filmed during a service, then please do not go on or near the stage.**
- If you are recording prayers or readings for use in the services and do not want your face to appear online, then just record an audio file.
- **Please avoid mentioning surnames in talks, during prayers and at other times.**
- **If there is a matter which could be considered sensitive then ideally let the Tech Team know in advance who can use a 'holding screen' to blank out video and audio at that point in the service.**

It will take time to adjust to these new ways of working and outreach, but we hope you will see it as a positive move. Do get in touch with the Leadership Team or Tech team if you have any questions.

I rejoiced with those who said to me: "Let us go to the house of the LORD" Psalm 122:1

On behalf of the Leadership Team, I want to thank you for adapting to the new procedure, for worshipping back at the church building.

As a result of much planning, it's been calculated that a maximum of 35 people are able to be seated, with tables, in the main hall. An additional 15 people can sit in the Upper Room and the Welcomers will give direction, when the main hall has reached capacity.

They will have the registration form for their guidance, to ensure that everything goes well.

The chairs are set out, to ensure that everyone is socially distancing, at 2 metres apart from each other.

With the information that is received from the Eventbrite booking system, we have the list of names and the number of people who are attending. Please remember, that for your seat booking to be accepted, you must tap on 'register'. The chairs in the main hall are then placed in either ones or twos and if you come by yourself, please make sure that you do not sit at a chair that is linked to another one.

If you are unable to come to worship at the church building, thanks to the wonderful technology and marvellous capabilities of Roy, Beni and the rest of the team, you can connect to the service from your homes.

Please let us know if you encounter any difficulties.

Thanks and God bless you,
Bob x

God is good – from death to life.

Last week I was on holiday in Alnmouth, Northumberland. On Tuesday I was walking with a group on a cycleway outside the town, when a passing cyclist collapsed unresponsive right behind me. Thankfully my mind went into work mode, I asked our guide to phone an ambulance, assessed the causality and within a minute or two, was joined by two other passing cyclists – both of whom were nurses.

By now the gentleman had stopped breathing and had no pulse. We started CPR and took turns doing chest compressions. After about 10 minutes the ambulance crew arrived, with an AED (automatic external defibrillator), which showed an abnormal heart rhythm and delivered an electric shock. Immediately signs of life returned and we were able to stand back a little and watch the crew do their thing, assisting them where we could. Another paramedic vehicle appeared making three paramedics and three nurses.

In another 10 minutes the air ambulance arrived – the patient was restless but neither conscious or communicative, so we did not get to find out his name. We handed over to the Doctor and paramedic from the helicopter, thanked each other and the NHS responders, then passed round the hand gel. My group then went off on our 11 mile walk down the coast.

The reason I have decided to share this story is not for any sort of praise, indeed the experience has left me deeply humbled and grateful to have been able to play a part in that day. I am telling it to illustrate how I feel God was in control over that situation.

Regardless of what you see on TV dramas, surviving a full-blown cardiac arrest out of a hospital environment is a pretty rare event. None of the nurses present had any confidence that the episode would end well.

Looking back at what happened I can only see God's perfect timing. For the cyclist to collapse when and where he did, for the two other nurses to arrive on the scene when they were most needed, for the speedy arrival of the ambulances and paramedics with the defibrillator and his swift dispatch to hospital via the helicopter, was nothing short of miraculous. I have played it back in my head numerous times and find it difficult to see how it could have gone any better.

Sadly, I realise that for many people this is not the case and in their time of great need there may not be the miracle they are praying for. All I can say is that on this day, I felt God was very much in control.

Thanks to social media I have since had messages from the two nurses, from the gentleman's nephew and from the casualty himself. He is recovering slowly and was discharged from hospital last weekend. He said that he is feeling remarkably well but that his CPR bruises are there to remind him how fragile life is. So now I know his name!

Kate M.

KIDZ CHURCH

As we return to worship at our building we are looking into restarting Kidz Church in the next few weeks, for those who would like to attend. Further details need to be worked out and a risk assessment put in place but I would hope we shall be able to offer sessions from later on this month. If you have any queries or concerns, feel free to get in touch!

Kate M.

Staplehurst Free Church Interim Leadership Team

**Terence Hawgood
Bob and Mary Howse
Clive Jones
Kate Henry**

Treasurer: Roger Bashford

Staplehurst Free Church

Church Administrator - Maggie Martin

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Services in October

Sunday 4th	10.30am	All Age Connections - Messages <i>Theme: 'Message in a Bottle'</i> <i>Led by: Ian MacDonald</i>
Sunday 11th	10.30am	Worship, Word and Holy Communion <i>Speaker: Paul Martin</i>
Sunday 18th	10.30am	Gift Day Worship, Word and Holy Communion <i>Speaker: Clive Jones</i>
Sunday 25th	10.30am	Worship, Word and All-Age Holy Communion <i>Speaker: Roger Lumley</i>



**British Summertime ends on
Sunday 25th October.
Remember to put your clocks back!**

**Enabling everyone to know Jesus
and grow in a personal relationship with Him**

**STAPLEHURST
FREE CHURCH**