

Sunday#22
august

Brooklands Church Update

Friends

Mum and I love to visit The Message. It is an amazing Christian charity based in Sharston. It helps rehabilitate young offenders by providing them with employment. It has a lovely cafe and a community grocery. On a recent visit we saw some t-shirts available to order. We chose to order some with one of our favourite words printed on. We love to research the full meaning of the Hebrew and Ancient Greek words in the Bible and *Shalom* is one of our favourites. It occurs over two hundred times in the Old Testament. *Shalom* is traditionally translated as peace but sometimes tranquility, safety or welfare. It actually has a much wider richer, meaning. To experience God's *shalom* is to experience mental and physical wellbeing and wholeness in all aspects of our lives.

In 1979 in Ketef Hinnom in Israel archaeologists made an amazing discovery. Situated between Bethlehem and Jerusalem is a series of caverns. It was here that archaeologists found two tiny silver scrolls. What they contain is the oldest known fragment of the Old Testament in the world. The scrolls are dated to the late seventh to early sixth century BC. The passage written on them is Numbers 6:24-26. These beautiful words are used to this day in synagogues and churches around the world as a benediction. The last line contains the word *shalom*. Normally translated as peace we might read it more correctly as:

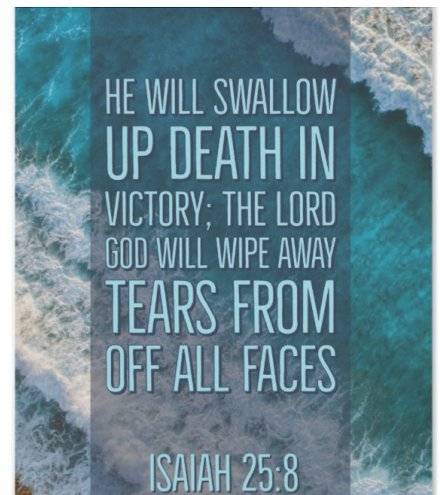
*"The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace, tranquility, restoration,
wholeness, completeness, wellbeing, abundance."*

Jesus said, 'my peace I give you' (John 14:27). He also declared 'I have come that you may have life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). The Ancient Greek word used by Jesus in this verse is *perisson*. It means fulness, abundance, overflowing, much more than could be expected! God has put on my heart this week not to put limitations on Him. I think of the many wonderful answers to prayer we have had as a congregation in recent weeks. When Jesus spoke of this overflowing, wonderful abundance it was in contrast to what the thief offers. Our fallen world encourages us to lower our expectations. We know the limitations of medicine and treatments, but God answers our prayers by confounding our expectations and bringing healing.

During lockdown I worried about our church. I also worried about people in our community that we had been evangelising to. It felt like these people were now unreachable and would never experience the fulness of life that Jesus offers. God has amazed me with the strength of our church. Despite some ongoing restrictions it has been so wonderful to see us back together, hear beautiful rousing hymns, music, singing, testimonies and fellowship. When we couldn't open our Dinnaz, or China Cup Café God continued to reveal himself to people we couldn't come into contact with.

The past few months God has been teaching me about the importance of prioritising my own physical and mental health. For many of us this can be difficult, it can feel selfish and indulgent. However, we can't serve God and others effectively if we are exhausted, frustrated, angry, or sick. My new t-shirt is a reminder that God wants us to live life abundantly. Let's pray for and expect *shalom*!

Lucy



Speakers This Month

22/08 Lucy Frost
29/08 Carl McCann
05/09 Mick Kane

Brooklands Church of the Nazarene

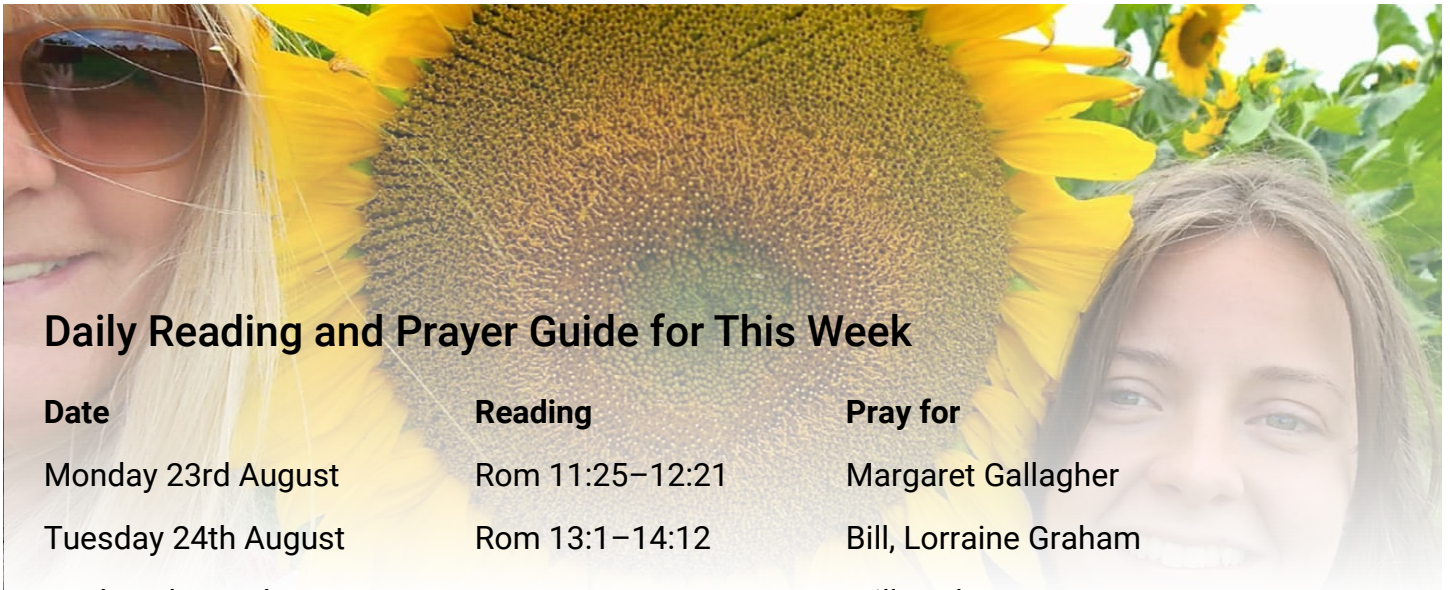
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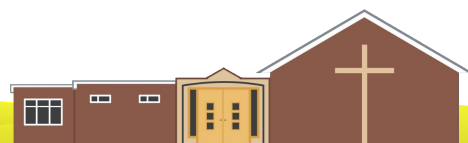


Daily Reading and Prayer Guide for This Week

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 23rd August	Rom 11:25–12:21	Margaret Gallagher
Tuesday 24th August	Rom 13:1–14:12	Bill, Lorraine Graham
Wednesday 25th August	Rom 14:13–15:7	Will Graham
Thursday 26th August	Rom 15:8–33	Brenda Hambleton and family
Friday 27th August	Rom 16	Diane Hallam
Saturday 28th August	Catch up	Nathaniel Herbert and family
Sunday 29th August	1 Corinthians 1	Peter and Babs Hewitt

Prayer requests

- ⇒ Pray for Mick, Debbie and Mikey, as they enjoy their summer holidays.
- ⇒ We give thanks with Isobel Cave who had a positive meeting with her consultant this week. We continue to pray for healing.
- ⇒ Pray for Annette Jones, as she receives hospital treatment. Annette hopes to join us in church soon.
- ⇒ Pray for Brenda Cawley (former regular at our Diner) and family as her granddaughter's partner, Owen is very ill with cancer.
- ⇒ Pray for John Beattie as he continues with his chemotherapy.
- ⇒ Continue to pray for Alan Roberts, son-in-law of Val Batty, who has cancer.
- ⇒ We continue to pray for others in our congregation who need healing. Including, Jon F, Colin Dunbar, Claire.
- ⇒ Pray for the safety of our church as we continue our journey out of Covid restrictions.
- ⇒ Pray for the continuing work of the church in the local community.
- ⇒ Pray for those we have recently come into contact with, and who are showing an interest in church.





Sunday 22 August 2021

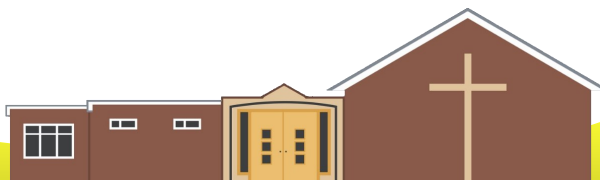
Rock Solid

Lucy Frost

I have returned from a lovely relaxing holiday in Lincolnshire. We got to explore miles and miles of beautiful countryside. Lincolnshire is famous for its produce with an abundance of potatoes, cauliflowers, broccoli, and wheat growing. Seeing these lush fields of vegetables really made me appreciate God's creation and provision. I went with some of my friends including two children. My eight-year-old friend, Sara has been learning about rocks, stones, and crystals at school. She already has an impressive crystal collection and we enjoyed buying more on our holiday. What she really enjoyed though was collecting rocks, pebbles, and stones from the beach, as well as car parks and along lanes and pavements. This was an enjoyable activity, not least because everything we picked up was free. I did however have to explain that we couldn't take gravel from people's driveways! It reminded me of my childhood and the delight of finding such treasures. My mum taught me how to wash what I found and to varnish it with nail varnish. I told Sara that we could do this, and she was most keen, so a few happy evenings were spent doing this. Studying our rocks again made us marvel at God's creation. So many beautiful colours, textures and patterns emerged. I explained to Sara that by washing and varnishing we could enhance the beauty of our treasures and preserve them. We talked about the word enhance and how it means to improve, strengthen, intensify, and improve.

All this talk of rocks and stones made me think about some of the imagery in the Bible. In Psalm 118:2 God is described as our rock in whom we can take refuge, our stronghold. A stronghold is a place of safety from attack. In the Book of Isaiah God speaks through the prophet that the Messiah will be "a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line" (Isaiah 28:16-17).

There is another prominent rock in the Bible and throughout history. This rock was actually a person. For a long time, he was more of a wobbly jelly than a rock. He was a fisherman along with his brother Andrew and they became some of Jesus' first disciples. Now fishermen in the time of Jesus had quite a bad reputation. They were often scruffy and unkempt, swore a lot, were hot headed and quick tempered. This person certainly comes across as a flawed and frustrating character. His name was Simon. Despite his problems Jesus saw great potential in him and gave him a new name: Peter.



I spoke on Peter and this passage at our last evening sermon just before lockdown. It seems appropriate to revisit it, this time with new eyes. When Peter speaks of coming out of a time of suffering, I think of our period of lockdown, social distancing, and isolation. Peter was writing to Christians who were facing persecution, but the passage can also be applied to our wider Christian life.

Petros is the Greek word for "a piece of rock, a stone." Jesus had found in Peter a rough diamond that required a lot of refining and polishing. He would grow into his new name of Peter that means rock. Peter's trials, failures and successes were all used by Jesus to build his character and make him worthy of his new name.

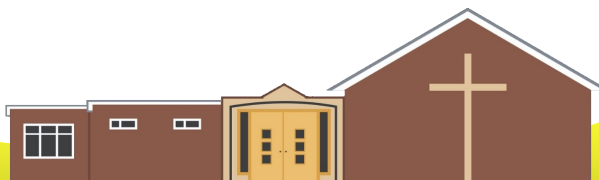
He was brash and eager and soon became the spokesperson for the disciples. He had a lot to say for himself but often engaged his mouth before his brain and he made a lot of mistakes as well as showing tremendous faith and courage. He was the first out of the boat to walk on the water towards Jesus but then his faith wobbled and he nearly drowned. He recognised Jesus as Messiah and Jesus called him Peter- the rock on which the church would be built (Mtt.16:18). But before that could happen there would be a few more wobbles. He fell asleep keeping watch in the garden of Gethsemane, in a flash of temper he cut off a soldier's ear and he denied Jesus three times. When Jesus was seized and taken to the high priest to be tried, all the disciples fled, except Peter. Having denied Jesus three times, Peter witnessed the risen Lord and declared his love and commitment three times.

After Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension Peter grew fully into his new name. He grew in maturity and faith; he learnt restraint and grew into a mighty leader of the fledgling Christian church. Filled with boldness he preached at Pentecost and 3000 people believed. He healed many and raised Tabitha from the dead. Despite persecution and imprisonment, he continued to preach and spread the Gospel. It's believed he provided much of the information for Mark's Gospel and later wrote two letters himself. This first letter that we are reading from is believed to have been written around 30 years after Jesus' death. Peter had grown in stature and experience and the church had grown also. But life for the first Christian communities was not easy, the threats of exile, imprisonment, persecution, and death were very real. Peter who'd grown into the solid rock, the foundation of the church wrote these letters to strengthen his brethren as Jesus had asked him to do.

If you're reading this passage in the NIV version I think the full nuance of what Peter is saying- it uses the words restore, strong, firm, and steadfast. These words all seem quite similar, and I don't think they are a very accurate translation of the original Greek words. I think the NRSV and other versions put it better when they say restore, support, strengthen and establish.

Peter chose these 4 words to build on each other to show how God works in us as Christians and how we can live out our faith.

The first word is restore. The Greek word is *katartizō* meaning to restore, order and arrange



properly. In Mark 1:19 John and James have broken fishing nets, no use for catching fish so they kataritzo them: mend them. In the Roman world it was also used to speak of a trainer adjusting parts of the body, or a surgeon setting a broken bone or putting a dislocated limb back into place.

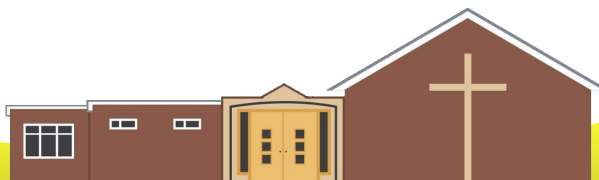
We may be broken and sinful, God restores us, Jesus has cancelled out our sins by his death on the cross. And the restoration continues. Jesus uses this word in Luke 6:40 to describe how as disciples we become fully trained and perfected.

After restoration comes support. Stērizō means to support, make firm, stabilize, a buttress to support a building, something to lean on. This word would have special meaning to Peter because it's the word Jesus used to describe how the devil would test Peter, but Jesus had prayed that his faith would hold firm and Peter would be able to strengthen others. In times of struggle our faith holds us in place, keeps us upright when we feel weak and lost.

The next word Peter uses is strengthen: sthenōō. This means literally to fill with bodily strength. But this requires suffering and effort. Like athletes training for the Olympics: there is effort, and pain. Building muscle is a painful but worthwhile process. Peter was telling his readers that Satan was on the attack and there would be periods of persecution and suffering but these trials would only make them stronger. In our times of suffering God strengthens us, making us spiritually strong.

Finally, Peter writes that God will establish: themeliōō us. This was a term used in building meaning to settle or establish on a firm foundation. Peter had become a firm foundation on which Jesus chose to build the church, but Peter knew that Jesus is the foundation on which everything is built. Both Paul and Peter wrote that Jesus was the cornerstone that Isaiah had prophesied. In ancient construction work a cornerstone was of huge importance to the foundations of a building. It was the most important stone in any building because it was used to orientate the angles and straightness of the entire structure. It was the strongest and biggest stone. Unshakeable, through which everything comes into alignment- Jesus is the ultimate cornerstone.

Peter is one of the great characters of the Bible and a hugely important figure in history. He started as a highly flawed character, but God loved him. Jesus saw his potential and refined and polished him. Often, we lack confidence in ourselves. Sometimes we can even hate ourselves because we feel weighed down by our weaknesses, health problems, addictions, or character flaws. Perhaps you had spoken over you from an early age that you were worthless and would never amount to anything. These are the lies of the enemy. Peter became a mighty warrior for God. From shaky beginnings he became rock solid and as Jesus prophesied a mighty leader of the early church. In this letter we see he has grown in wisdom to such a degree that he can help and advise others struggling through life. As we continue through a period of restrictions, uncertainty and fear I pray for our renewal and refining. May we be restored, supported, strengthened, and established on the firm foundation of our mighty saviour Jesus.





Covid safety in church

It has been really good to see so many people attending church these last few weeks. We have enjoyed meeting and talking to friends again after so long, and we have also had the opportunity to meet some people for the first time. All those attending church services have enjoyed being able to sing again in church, and we have been blessed with some inspirational teaching from Pastor Mick.

We mustn't forget though, that Covid is still around, and we must all do whatever we can to continue to restrict the spread of Coronavirus, and keep one another as safe as possible.

With this in mind, will all those attending church services please try to observe the following precautionary measures.

1. If you, or any member of your family has any symptoms of Covid-19, please stay away from church, and watch the service on our YouTube channel.
2. Please wash or sanitise your hands using the hand-sanitising gels provided.
3. Please wear face coverings during singing. Rather than protecting the wearer, face coverings serve to protect others from any infection the wearer may unwittingly transmit.
4. Try not to make contact with communal items such as hand rails, door handles. Sanitise your hands after such contact.
5. Try to refrain from physical contact with people from other families.
6. Maintain a safe distance of at least one metre when talking to people, and try to find a safe place away from other groups. All areas inside and outside the church can be used when talking to other church visitors.
7. Please take care to touch only the food you will be consuming when taking refreshments from a common plate. Individually wrapped refreshments are available on request from the drinks servers.
8. Do not congregate in entrance areas, near doors or in corridors.



Ladies' Weekend **CREATED TO CREATE**

11th - 13th February 2022

Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton

We are created in the image of the great Creator God. Come and explore the creativity we have within us all.

- Creativity in worship
- Creativity in music
- Creativity through art
- Creativity in Bible study
- Creativity in prayer

Whether you have years of experience or none, all are welcome.

This is our annual ladies' weekend. The cost is £150 (includes accommodation, food, resources etc.) Ages 13 to 16 - £110 (must be accompanied by a responsible adult).

Workshop leaders so far confirmed are Sarah Gilmour, who will lead a singing workshop for all abilities, and our own Joanne Bolton, who will teach participants something from her creative repertoire.

If enough are interested, we might be able to help out with transport.

Email info@BrooklandsChurch.uk if you would like more information.

