



28TH JULY 2019

Jane Mitchell writes...

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore.” Psalm 133

I have always loved these words and the rich picture they create of how good unity is.

Jesus also prayed for all believers as recorded in John 17 v 20-21 that *“all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

The unity of believers should be so powerful that it leads others to believe that God sent Jesus.

So why is it that churches so often struggle with disunity?

Firstly, if God’s plan is for the world to know Jesus through the church – the Enemy presumably does not like unity among Christians! There is certainly an element of spiritual warfare here. Our response is to be aware of this and to pray.

Secondly, we all still sin and hurt one another. David Watson’s book ‘Discipleship’ was written in 1981 but has much to say that is relevant to church life today. He refers to an illustration by the philosopher Schopenhauer who said that people are like porcupines who huddle together for warmth but, as soon as they come close, jab and hurt one another, so they separate again. In a similar way as we make ourselves vulnerable in close relationships in the church we can be encouraged and built up, but we can also hurt one another. The temptation is then to pull back to a safe distance to protect ourselves from being hurt again.

Our Christian response is forgiveness – even though there may be many logical reasons not to forgive. We need to forgive the person who has hurt us and in turn we are released from the bitterness of unforgiveness ourselves. This is never easy. The hurt is real. We may not be able to do this ourselves but with God’s help we can. As 1 John 4 v.11-12 says *“Dear friends since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*

Blessings, Jane

Notices

CAFÉ SUMMER OPENING TIMES

31ST JULY– 2ND AUGUST CAFÉ CLOSED (HOLIDAY CLUB)

7th—9th AUGUST **CAFÉ OPEN**

14TH—16TH AUGUST **CAFÉ OPEN**

21ST—23RD AUGUST CAFÉ CLOSED (HOLIDAY AT HOME)

28TH—30TH AUGUST CAFÉ CLOSED (HOLIDAY)

NORMAL OPENING HOURS FROM WEDS 4TH SEPTEMBER

HOLIDAY AT HOME AT EMMANUEL CHURCH

If you are retired or unable to go away on holiday then come and join us for a holiday at home. Come and enjoy crafts, games, historical Bicester, film, tea dance, and much more. August 20th—22nd. 10am—3.30pm. To book , please call **01869 600299** or email:

home4ew@gmail.com Booking forms also available at one of the churches in Bicester. For more details call **01869 243479** **Volunteers needed! Please use the contacts above or call Emmanuel Church office: 01869 320021**

ISRAEL—MAY 2020

Join Helen and Clive as they lead a 9 day tour of Israel in the footsteps of Jesus.

Places are limited to 35 and you can reserve your place from now on. For more info talk to Clive and Helen ,visit: www.israel2020.co.uk .

HOME GROUP LEADERS MEETING

Home Group Leaders are invited to meet at church on Monday 5th August or Wednesday 21st August, both at 7.30pm. This is to share encouragements and concerns and to pray together.

THE GREATEST SHOW HOLIDAY CLUB

Monday 29th July to Friday 2nd August for ages 5-11. This is now fully booked! Please pray for all involved in this important outreach.

ENCOUNTER— stopped for the summer, restarts in September.

LADIES BREAKFAST - 7th September

A date for your diaries. Pick up a flyer for details or speak to Helen Collier.

ROTAS: If you need to check rotas please log on to Church Builder. If you need help with this or any other information about events, groups or who's who then please contact the church office. Details overleaf.

ECB DIARY

SUN 28th JULY	10.30am	Informal Communion New summer series—Parables The Two Sons Leader: April Beckerleg Preacher: Roger Winson
	7.00pm	Evening Service (Refreshments at 6.30pm) Prophetic series 3 Leader: Chris Hunt Preacher: Autumn Hunt

CAFÉ CLOSED THIS WEEK—HOLIDAY CLUB

FRI 2nd AUGUST	7.00pm	Prayers
	7.30pm	Contemplative Compline

SUN 4th AUGUST	10.30am	All Age Worship Parables week 2, The friend at midnight Leader: Autumn Hunt Preacher: Chris Hunt
	7.00pm	Evening Service (Refreshments at 6.30pm) Prophetic series 4 Leader: Annie Croxford Preacher: Phil Croxford

Website: www.emmanuelbicester.org.uk Church Office: 01869 320021

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All notices to Admin Team by 7pm Wednesday