

# intouch



## **Ready, Steady, Grow!**

*Paul Rockley on our new Vision, page 3*

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In a very short space of time the four themes of the new Vision for South Parade seem to have caught the imagination of the church and inspired a new feeling of confidence among people across the Mission Communities. If you've missed them, they are Prayer, Encouragement, Adventure and Growth, memorably represented by four emojis that are emblazoned on the church website, on the poster at Headingley and on the front of this magazine. Find out more about the vision on page 33. On page 3 Paul Rockley looks at one of the themes, and as 2017 progresses we look forward to hearing more stories of God at work through us as we seek to follow Him more closely.

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**Matthew Newman** Editor

## **Informed, Involved, Inspired... Intouch!**

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# From the Ministry Team

*Ready, Steady, Grow!*

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**A**t our recent Vision Weekend we were introduced to the four areas we aim to be focusing on as a church in 2017: Prayer, Encouragement, Adventure and Growth.

Each of these has been assigned an emoji or pictograph, something visual to help us remember them. The one for “growth” is a little plant with two leaves on it. That particular image immediately makes me think of what plants need in order to grow. It’s a while since I studied Biology at school, but the ones that instantly come to mind are light, water and nutrients. Just

as these are essential for natural growth, so they can point us towards what is essential for our spiritual growth.

## **Light**

In 2 Corinthians 4.4 the Apostle Paul refers to “the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ”. That’s the light that helps us grow as Christians – the glory of Christ. That’s what we need to see more and more. And this doesn’t happen automatically, He must reveal His glory to us. We see this clearly when Jesus changed water into wine at that wedding in Cana. “He thus revealed His glory and His disciples put their faith in Him” (John 2.11).

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*As we seek to grow this year let’s pray “Lord, show me Your glory!”*

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In the Old Testament Moses cried out to the Lord “Show me Your glory!” As we seek to grow this



year let's make that our prayer also. It's a prayer God loves to answer.

*Are found for your growth in His excellent Word!*

## **Water**

In John 7.37 Jesus declares, "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." Just in case there is any doubt as to what Jesus means by this statement John then helpfully adds the comment, "By this He meant the Spirit whom those who believed in Him were later to receive."

For us to grow spiritually we need the regular irrigation of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Again, this doesn't just happen. We need to ask and keep on asking. "If you then, though you are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." (Luke 11.13)

## **Nutrients**

To paraphrase a famous old hymn:  
*What plentiful nutrients, you saints of the Lord*

How gracious and wise is our God in giving us the Bible, carefully ensuring that all He wants us to know about Him was faithfully recorded and transmitted to us, despite it being written so long ago. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3.16-17)

May the Lord help us find constant nourishment from His Word throughout the year so that we may all...

*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever! Amen. (2 Peter 3.18)*

## **Paul**

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!  
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!  
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love  
Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above!*

**Samuel Francis**

# Around the Church

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## Headingley

It's been a busy couple of months for Headingley Mission Community. A significant development was the appointment of Scott Halligan as the MC Leadership Team Leader (suggestions for acronyms please!) at the church meeting in November last year. This, combined with the launch of our 5 year goal and visits at either side of Christmas from Peter Morden (looking at the wider church vision for the next 12 months), has provided a new sense of focus for Headingley Morning. For those who haven't seen, or didn't get a laminated bookmark of the goal, it is – In 5 years from now, Headingley Morning Mission Community will be:

*A vibrant, growing church, engaged in faithful worship and mission locally and abroad, made up of all ages and nationalities, being supportive of and committed to each other.*

The next stage of making this a reality is to break it down into

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*The church vision has provided a new sense of focus for Headingley Morning*

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manageable and measurable action plans for shorter timescales. Any input from the wider Mission Community will be gratefully received.

On 11 December there was the Christmas play, with a cast made up of Junior Church attendees and helpers. It was well received, as usual, and served to remind everyone of the reason for the season. After the service we held another bring and share lunch, and also incorporated a Secret Santa feature. The lunch was well attended, with lively conversation and warm fellowship enjoyed by all.

A big “thank you” goes out to all those who contributed with preparations and helping out on the day.

The date of the next bring and share lunch is 12 February, in the sanctuary instead of the hall.

It has been a joy and a pleasure to share in the wider church activities during December and January, with the other Mission Communities, emphasising the dynamic nature of the whole of South Parade Church. Lots of singing has been engaged in, at Churches Together in Headingley, Carols by Candlelight and on Christmas morning.

The Vision Weekend saw gatherings over the course of 14-15 January, with a lunch and discussion time on Saturday, prayer from 6pm

to midnight on Saturday and an altogether vision Sunday service at Headingley, with Peter Morden preaching.

Continuing to look ahead, 9 February is a date to note. From 7.30-9.30pm we'll be hosting an evening to develop how we engage with our community through the South Parade website. Verity English will be guiding us through what makes and how to maintain good website content, contrasted with what content is likely to disengage our potential audience.

*Richard Sykes*

Headingley MC Leadership Team



**Christmas at Headingley**

## **Sent Weekend Away**

*[This article was submitted before the weekend actually took place. Please find someone who was in attendance to delete as appropriate!]*

At the beginning of February, over twenty people from Sent headed down the free-flowing / jam-packed M62 to the Westwood Christian Centre near Huddersfield.

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*The talks were an  
excellent complement  
to our recent series  
on spiritual gifts*

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Over the weekend, Phil Burns from Skipton Baptist Church shared on being the body of Christ, which was an excellent complement to our recent series on spiritual gifts. Phil's sessions were well pitched / beyond us and provided plenty of food for thought.

On Saturday afternoon, there were a few hours of free time. Several people went for walk, others took a leisurely stroll to a local farm shop and a small happy / unhappy few stayed on site.

Before our evening meal, we settled down to watch the 6 Nations match between England and France - Nathan Shipley was inconsolable /

overjoyed with the result!

We're grateful to Claire Ginn and Megan Hobbs for co-ordinating the catering. Unsurprisingly, the majority of people had seconds / thirds / fourths at most meal times.

Please pray that we would be like the foolish / wise builders and put into practice the challenges from the weekend.

*Nathan Shipley*

SENT

## **Music Group News**

The Headingley Music Group have been on their usual Christmas tour, with a presentation of the good news of Christmas in word and song to a variety of groups.

At the start of December we joined Lighthouse - an alternative expression of church with the clients at St George's Crypt - in a memorable afternoon session. The simple message of the song Immanuel, by Michael Card really seemed to resonate with them in their daily struggles: "*Immanuel, our God is with us, and if God is with us, who can stand against us?*"

We continued our long association with South Ossett Baptist Church as we led a morning carol service, and heard news of new initiatives in



## **Headingley Music Group at Lighthouse Church at St George's Crypt**

their area to reach out to the community.

And we spent an enjoyable evening with the residents of a home in Harrogate after an invitation from the chaplain Judith Briggs. They appreciated the time we had spent practising and coming to see them, and we appreciated the mince pies afterwards. They generously gave to support the work of Rooted at South Parade.

Three very different sets of people, all hopefully enriched and inspired by the Christmas message of hope.

After an incredible thirty years of faithful service to the church Arja and John Copperwheat have decided to take a step back from weekly involvement in the group. We'll miss their immense dedication and commitment, and the whole congregation will miss the way they have enhanced the musical worship during hundreds of services over the years. We thank them for all that they have brought to the group over this time and wish them well for the future. We hope they will be able to come back and sing with us occasionally.



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*We still need enthusiastic musicians to join our merry band!*

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The group is now going through a time of change and we have welcomed new people to help us

lead the music at Headingley on a Sunday morning, including Anne singing, and Thomas joining us on the drums before he goes to Junior Church. With our regular pianist Steve now spending more time in Norfolk, we would still benefit from talented and enthusiastic musicians to join our merry band. If you think this might be you, come and have a chat to me or any of the group at the front after a morning service.

*Sarah Newman*

Headingley Music Group

## **Traidcraft News**

During 2017 Traidcraft will be focusing on the needs of farming families whose livelihoods have been devastated by climate change. They will be looking at the skills needed to grow more and earn more, allowing them to access healthcare, to send their children to school, to build functional homes, and simply have enough to feed their family.



There is great concern at the changes that Brexit will bring. For millions of people in the world's poorest countries who rely on trade with the UK, the changes could be make or break. Traidcraft

is campaigning with other aid organisations to ensure that our new trade approach works for everyone and that measures are put in place to protect products from the poorest countries from high import taxes.

*Action point:* Write to your MP about this. I have some sample postcards to help you do this – pick one up at the next stall at Headingley,

*Pam Roe*

Headingley Morning Mission Community

## **Pray for the Environment**

I would just like to ask for your prayers about the environment. I have been interested in climatology and climate change for much of my working life, and at this point in time we stand at an important crossroads in the environmental world. The American Republican Party has always been doubtful about any connection between global warming and human activities. They have not ratified previous international agreements about carbon dioxide production

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*At this point in time we stand at a crossroads for the environment*

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and it seems likely that the Trump administration will pull out of the recent Paris Climate Change Agreement. This is not certain and therefore well worth praying about. At the University of Leeds there is a major interest in climate change, with some close co-operation with NASA. A recent NASA Director of research in climate change completed his PhD at Leeds University. Research students at Leeds University are offered outstanding facilities to do their research and are making major contributions to the study of climate change.

*John Lockwood*

Cragg Mission Community

## **John and Ann Pelham**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Most of you will know that our older son Tom has been seriously ill with a rare form of cancer for over two years now and despite successive treatments his condition has continued to worsen. Tom is married to Anna and they have three children under 8 years old. All of this has led us to make the decision to move near to where they live in Ashford in Kent.

As you can imagine, this has not been an easy decision for us to take after more than 26 years in our

Leeds home. Over that time we have worshipped with Cragg, Adel and Four/Connect and we have seen many changes in the life of SP. With Peter Morden coming to join the Ministry Team in July, we have no doubt that there will be an exciting time ahead and regret that we won't be here to share the experience with you. We will of course stay in touch with our many friends here and will follow what happens with great interest!

Please continue to pray for Tom and his family. Despite his condition, Tom is working hard to build a new church community in an area similar in many respects to Bramley – “Grow Church Ashford” – and is excited at the prospect of a CAP Centre opening there very soon. Tom also heads up the “Hang Ten” youth work in Ashford.

We know that God has a plan for us, a plan to make us prosper in His work, and so we are content to put ourselves in His hands. We ask you to join us in our prayers that the Lord will show us where he wants us to serve Him and also that He will lead us through all the practicalities, particularly of finding a new home.

Blessings,

*John and Ann Pelham*

## Church Meeting

At the whole church meeting Katharine Widdowson presented the proposed budget for the year. The proposed expenditure for the year is £100,000 more than the church spent in 2016. A larger proportion of the budget has been set aside for necessary improvements to the boilers and heating systems at the Headingley buildings. The deacons will be getting quotes on the likely cost of these works very soon. We have also budgeted for 5 months of a Senior Minister.

The donations budget represents 12% of what the church spends, including nearly £18,000 each to the Baptist Union's Home Mission Fund

and BMS World Mission. But many donations are unchanged from previous years, meaning that their value is eroded in real terms. The church meeting approved the budget.

Church Secretary Charles Fletcher presented some items from the Elders' Meeting, and we discussed arrangements to cover Lawrence's role now he has left the Ministry Team. A member of the Ministry Team will attend Connect Mission Community Leadership meetings and there is still a need for children's workers at Connect (and at other Mission Communities). The church agreed to extend Geoff King's role as full-time pastor to the end of 2017.

MN

### ...informed...

Share news from *Around the Church* by sending reports, photos and updates from your Mission Community, home group, cell group, project or meeting to [magazine@spbc.org.uk](mailto:magazine@spbc.org.uk)



## www.spbc.org.uk

For service times, locations, Mission Communities, children's and student work, the weekly notice sheet, sermon downloads, this magazine and much more go to the church website!



# Coming Soon

## Interview with Peter Morden

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**In the Autumn, the church invited Peter Morden to be the new Senior Minister/Team Leader at South Parade. His current commitments at Spurgeon's College mean he will be moving to Leeds and joining us later in the year. But he was around for Vision Weekend in January, when *Intouch* caught up with him.**

*Intouch:* You're not due to start at South Parade till the summer. Why are you here today?

PM: I'm keen to come up on a regular basis to meet some people and do some ministry, so that when I do arrive hopefully I have the ability to hit the ground running and have some awareness of the church and sense where God might be leading us in future.

*What are your early impressions of South Parade?*

**F**antastic! Really, really good. I like the structure, I like the challenge of making sense of the complexity and helping it to work well. I'm really excited by many of the things that I've seen. There are some challenges as there always are as you think about the fresh chapter in the life of something, but I'm very excited: that's my overall thought.

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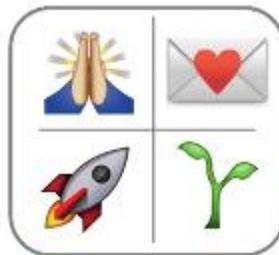
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*If there is a clear vision that people understand it makes a huge difference in the life of the church*

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*We're here for Vision Day. Why is the vision important?*



Biblically, without vision the people perish. I think if there is a clear vision that people understand and appreciate it makes a huge difference in the



**Peter and Anne Morden**

life of the church. What we're thinking about with prayer, adventure, encouragement and growth - these are themes that people can reflect on and work out in their own lives and think about in terms of the life of their congregations and the whole church.

*What's your involvement going to be for the next six months?*

We're aiming to come up in February as a family to look around Leeds, and I won't do too much in terms of church stuff then. But I'm hoping to come in March as well and spend some time with Connect. And I'm keen to come at Easter too - that's about as far as we've planned.

The Governors at Spurgeon's College have very kindly given me two days a month where I can work for South Parade and that's helping me to take this time to visit.

*How can we pray for you?*

**P**ray that I would finish well at Spurgeon's College, that's something that's really on my heart. It's a time of transition for the College, and a number of new appointments will need to be made. Pray that Spurgeon's has a good few months and that I really play my part to the full in that. I'm also currently chairing the leaders' meetings at our church in Streatham and would appreciate prayer for this too.

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# BMS World News

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## Malee: the Little Miracle

**A young girl born with severe medical conditions had her life completely transformed through the help of BMS World Mission's Hope Home in Thailand.**

**M**alee\* had a difficult start in the world. The list of medical conditions that she was born with was long: multiple organ damage, slow brain development, heart and liver problems and slow growth.

These medical challenges were especially tough for Malee's 15-year-old mum, who couldn't afford to get her daughter the medications she needed. The ongoing struggle led Malee's mum to make the difficult decision to turn her little girl over to the state in Thailand, hoping to give her a better life.

The social welfare department in Thailand wanted to get Malee into Hope Home – a care home for children with severe disabilities, founded by a BMS mission worker.

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Fortunately, there was an opening for Malee.

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*Children at Hope Home are being shown God's love and given the care that they need*

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When 18-month-old Malee arrived, carers quickly got her treatment and the medications that she so desperately needed. The great thing about Malee's condition was that it turned out to be very treatable – once she got on the right medication all of her organ damage reversed. She got better!

Today, Malee is three years old and thriving. She has some slow devel-



opment and hearing problems but, beyond that, all of her medical problems have gone away. And on top of that, she is now in the process of being adopted – something that doesn't always happen for children who come to Hope Home.

Thanks to BMS work at Hope Home, children with disabilities are being shown God's love and given the care that they need.

\*Name changed

## Responding to Hurricane Matthew

**BMS World Mission authorised a grant for £22,150 to help provide cholera treatment in the hard-hit south of Haiti.**

**W**idespread flooding and poor sanitation are predicted to cause cases of cholera to surge in the wake of Hurricane Matthew, which hit Haiti in October 2016.

BMS was in touch with partners on the ground to find out the most helpful way to respond to the hurricane, and the provision of cholera treatment was identified as one of the urgent needs. We agreed to provide a grant of £22,150 to help

towards treatment for 1,200 cholera patients. This treatment will be provided through a hospital on the south west tip of Haiti, serving people hit by the heart of Hurricane Matthew.

We have a history of helping to prevent cholera and caring for cholera patients in Haiti. Following the 2010 earthquakes, we worked with a partner in Cap-Haitien to help reduce the cholera-related mortality rate from around 13 per cent to under 0.5 per cent. We believe and pray that we can help do the same for people in the south of the country following this latest disaster.

“Haiti is one of the most marginalised and fragile countries in the world,” says Steve Sanderson, Deputy Director for Mission. “As we stand with the people of Haiti following Hurricane Matthew, we want to ensure that we demonstrate the love of Christ through helping those directly affected.”



# My Favourite Psalm

## *Psalm 139: A Time and a Place*

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**Continuing our series of Favourite Psalms that began with sermons at Sent last summer, Nathan Shipley, selects a Psalm for a particular time.**

**B**eing asked to choose my favourite Psalm, was like being asked to choose my favourite film. Impossible!

There is a time and a place for every film.

If I want to be on the edge of my seat, I watch *Rear Window*. If I want to escape on an adventure, I watch *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. If I want to

dance with somebody, I watch *Dirty Dancing*.

There is a time and a place for every Psalm.

If I want to be comforted, I read Psalm 23. If I want to wallow, I read Psalm 88. If I want to remember God's faithfulness, I read Psalm 124.

As I wasn't able to identify *My Favourite Psalm*, I rephrased the title and shared on *A Favourite Psalm*.

Psalm 139 is a favourite Psalm because it has had a time and a place throughout my life.

***I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made***

I don't remember much from my time spent in Sunday School, however I do distinctly remember discussing Psalm 139.14 during a session at Aspley Evangelical Church.

After reading that verse we were asked, "What does it mean that you



are fearfully and wonderfully made?”

As an opinionated teenager who thought he knew all the answers, I was somewhat surprised that I did not have an answer - and I still don't!

I find it truly mind blowing that the God who created the universe is the same God who made me. I wasn't a rush job either! The intricacies of the human body testify to God's attention to detail.

I am not carelessly and awfully made - I am fearfully and wonderfully made! I am not unique in that either. Each and every single human being that has ever existed was fearfully and wonderfully made by God!

***All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.***

I can recall many happy memories from NCYH Camps and it was at a Summer Camp in the mid-noughties that Psalm 139 made another impression.

Beth Rookwood (nee Tash) spent the week sharing the good news of the kingdom over techno beats. During one of the sessions, while

unpacking this Psalm, Beth created a high street aide memoir: MK1.

### **Made. Known. Ist.**

(This hook was even more effective for those of us from Nottingham as there was a MK1 store in the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre!)

Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, whoever we are with, we were made and known first by God.



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*Before everything, God knew us. There are no surprises, twists or uncertainties. God has quite literally written the book on you and me!*

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Again, I still can't really comprehend what that simple statement means. Before anything and everything, God knew us. There are no surprises, twists or uncertainties. God has quite literally written the book on you and me!

***Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.***

**See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

At various points in my life I have endeavoured to memorise Bible verses. As a child the main incentive was prizes. As an older teenager the main purpose was protection. As a twenty-something the main drive was pride.

**T**he final two verses of Psalm 139 are David's heartfelt plea for God to continue to humble him. In the book of Acts, David is described as a man after God's own heart and yet he still knew that there was work for God to do on his attitude, character and daily living.

When I set these verses to memory, I was well aware that I was not the finished article and I am happy to type that I am still a work in progress.

***You knit me together in my mother's womb.***

There are many perks to working for the church - days off in the week, unquantifiable amounts of quiche and being able to bend hospital visiting hours!

One of the greatest privileges is the opportunities it creates to share in

people's lives.

On one occasion a tearful woman sought refuge in my office. Even though I didn't know her that well, I felt comfortable enough to let her take a moment. I grabbed a box of tissues and began to listen to her story.

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*I asked God to knit  
the child together in  
their mother's womb*

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She was in the early stages of pregnancy, however she was fearful as she had suffered several miscarriages. As the conversation went on I tried to say as little as possible and when the time seemed right I offered to pray.

I didn't really know where to begin so I just kept it simple and as I was praying Psalm 139.13 came to mind. I asked God to knit the child together in their mother's womb and God did.

There is a time and a place for Psalm 139.

What is your favourite Psalm?

***Nathan Shipley***

Associate Pastor, Youth and Young Adults

# Prayer Diary



*February & March 2017*

## FEBRUARY

Sun	5	Sent Mission Community on their weekend away
Mon	6	Caring for Life
Tue	7	Our friend in North Africa
Wed	8	Peter and Ann Morden
Thu	9	Preachers and worship leaders in all Mission Communities
Fri	10	Your Mission Community Leadership Team
Sat	11	Kate Burkett
Sun	12	Outburst at Headingley
Mon	13	Rooted
Tue	14	Your homegroup, small group or cell group leader
Wed	15	Your own place within South Parade at this Lent season
Thu	16	The church office
Fri	17	Under 5s work
Sat	18	The Joanna Project
Sun	19	Cragg Mission Community

*Pull out and use!*

Mon	20	Geoff King
Tue	21	Local government councillors and leaders
Wed	22	Pam Roe and the work of Traidcraft
Thu	23	Ann and David MacFarlane
Fri	24	The Deacons
Sat	25	Nathan Shipley
Sun	26	Junior Church leaders and helpers
Mon	27	The Arabic Christian Fellowship
Tue	28	The Elders
<b>MARCH</b>		
Wed	1	Colin & Jill Jones and their work with the church in Normandy
Thu	2	Teddy Praise and Play
Fri	3	The Ministry Team
Sat	4	JustAct Middle East ( <i>see page 28</i> )
Sun	5	Headingley Morning Mission Community
Mon	6	Sam and Katie
Tue	7	Hannah Preston and Kate Churchill
Wed	8	John and Ann Pelham and family ( <i>see page 10</i> )
Thu	9	Young People meeting in Cell Groups
Fri	10	ABC Coffee Shop
Sat	11	Heather McLeen
Sun	12	Church @ Little London
Mon	13	Andrew Bedingham and the work of the CAP centre
Tue	14	Missionaries with BMS World Mission
Wed	15	TLG mentors working with children in schools

Thu	16	St George's Crypt
Fri	17	Work with children and young people across the church
Sat	18	Paul Rockley
Sun	19	Connect Mission Community
Mon	20	Those in hospital or waiting for treatment
Tue	21	Levi Booth in Japan
Wed	22	The Barnabas Bunch
Thu	23	Sent Mission Community
Fri	24	Drop-in @ Cragg
Sat	25	Brian and Elsie Nicholls
Sun	26	The Headingley Music Group (see page 7)
Mon	27	Someone you know who doesn't know Jesus
Tue	28	Katharine Widdowson and the church finance team
Wed	29	Chris Gnanakan
Thu	30	Charles Fletcher, church secretary
Fri	31	Students at the Leeds School of Theology (see page 26)
Sat	1	Pray for another local church

## **Lenten Prayer of St Ephrem**

*O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.*

*But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.*

*Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.*

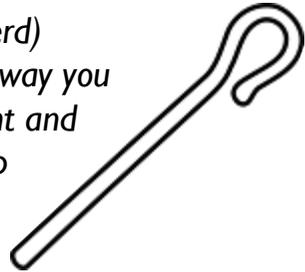
## **Prayers on the Names of God**

### **Yahweh-Shammah** (*The Lord Is There*)

*Thank you God that you are always there for all - either in need or not. Thank you that your presence means that we can call upon and rely on you constantly. Please help anyone who is lonely and please show them that you are always near them.*

### **Yahweh-Rohi** (*The Lord Our Shepherd*)

*Lord guide me in my life. Show me the way you want me to live. Use me as your servant and make me who you want me to be. Help me make the right decisions and help me to guide others towards you.*



### **Yahweh-Rapha** (*The Lord Who Heals*)

*Dear Healer, we are thankful that if we are ever hurt by the world or feeling hurt from someone we can always turn to you for help. We are thankful knowing you sent your son to heal us so that we can come back to you after all we've done. And we are grateful that you will always be there to accept us and mend our relationship with you.*

### **EI-Roi** (*God of Seeing*)

*When we attempt to visualise you, even at our peak of imagination, your majesty triumphs over our interpretation! We try and fail to perceive your greatness and superiority over us. You can see straight through us, past the surfaces and know us, not as we appear but as we are.*

**Young People from the church at Youth Cell**

# Ford's Focus

## John's Gospel Part 11: Where is Jesus?

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**Steve Ford's Bible study continues in John Chapter 8.**

**A**ccording to Jesus Christ, to be a disciple we have to continue in Jesus' word and by continuing in his word he says "you shall know the truth and this truth will make you free" (John 8.31-32).

Immediately the Pharisees tried to justify their freedom saying that they were of the seed of Abraham and therefore did not need to be set free because they believed they were free already. Jesus cuts straight to the point and says anyone who commits sin is the servant of sin, he knows the heart of a man or women, no-one else knows that



except the man or woman themselves: what insight.

When we truly know what we are because we have been exposed by the word of Jesus we can really do business with God on His ground. The ground that is the very depths of our being, the place of the heart, the spiritual place. What I am talking about does not take place in the realm of the natural or the realm of the intellect. If we truly want to know God and His freedom then we have to find the spiritual place in our lives and then endeavour to find God there.

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*We need to ask Him to reveal himself to us again in a fresh and living way*

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In order for that process to begin we have to let go all of our preconceptions and doctrines (both about God and our existence and our origins), that is everything we have accumulated through our lives, in order for us to get back to the real

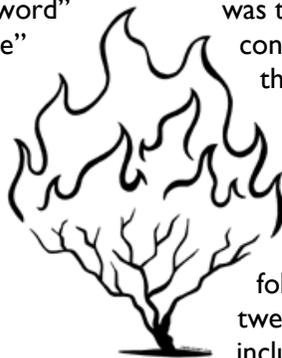
issue, the issue of God himself, and when there we need to ask Him to reveal himself to us again in a fresh and living way.

**W**e do this by abiding in “The Word” and “The Word” will set us free. Paul points out in Romans 6.12-13 where he says “let not sin reign in your body”, “neither yield your members (you as a whole person) as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive....” So what we learn here is that by continuing in “the word”, “the word” will set us free. To “continue” requires an action on our part. Christ died for Sin once for all but for us to live in that freedom requires us to make daily choices to yield to God in order for us to live in the truth that has set us free.

In John 8.28 Jesus says “when you have lifted up the son of man then you shall know that I am”. Here in this verse Jesus is talking about his death. He came into this fallen world, as a man, with the full knowledge and understanding of His purpose. What he says here to the Jews, the people who knew all about the one true God but who did not know God is “then you shall know that I am”.

At this point let us refresh our memories and go back to Exodus 3.1-14 to the man that God chose to lead His people out of bondage and the slavery of Egypt. When Moses was attracted by God by means of a burning bush, he was a man who had fallen from exceptional grace and privilege from Pharaoh’s inner circle to the place of a wandering shepherd in the desert where he was shepherding sheep for his father-in-law.

The burning bush in itself was not exceptional, what was exceptional was that the bush was not consumed by the fire. It was this that caught Moses’ attention and he turned to observe, and it was in the “turning to observe” that God spoke to him. What follows is a dialogue between the two of them that includes the phrase “I AM



THAT I AM” part of the phrase that God requires Moses to say to the children of Israel in response to his question “who shall I say has sent me?” God says you say “I AM has sent me” (Exodus 3.14). God then follows on in verse 15 and says “The Lord God of your fathers.....has sent me” and “this is my name forever”. So we see in the passage in John 8 that Jesus is saying you shall know that I AM. It is Jesus

saying I and the Father are one.

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*I AM has come down in response to the cry of longing that has gone up for truth and freedom*

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**I**t is when we begin to acknowledge and accept that Christ has been crucified and has risen that we then begin to understand that He is the I AM. It is then that Jesus says to those who believe “if you continue in my word then you are my disciples indeed: and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” So we see salvation is first about belief in a crucified and risen Christ then about continuing in Jesus’ word. It is about abiding on a daily basis, minute by minute, hour by hour, always giving God the glory and praise in everything we do and say, so that others might come to see the crucified and risen Christ. It is not about working out the theology, it is about accepting that Jesus is I AM and that I AM has come down in response to the cry of longing that has gone up for truth and freedom.

When God revealed that His name of I AM to Moses was to be His name forever in the meeting at the burning bush, God also revealed that He had seen the afflictions of His people which are in Egypt, He had heard their cry, He knew their sorrows and that I AM come down to deliver them, to bring them out in order to bring them in to something far greater. This “I AM come down” is denoted in the original Hebrew as being permanent in the past with certainty and permanency in the future. This “I AM come down” is important for all of us, it is God with us, Immanuel.

Do we know and appreciate this Jesus today? Are we one of those who believed into Jesus, into the one who said before Abraham was I AM, or are we like those Pharisees just trying to argue away the truth and in so doing blind ourselves and those around us?

Let us purpose in our lives to find this I AM and continue in his word in order that the truth will set us free.

**Steve Ford**

Headingley Morning Mission Community

*If the Son sets you free, you are free through and through.*

**John 8.36 (The Message)**

# Thoroughly Equipped

## Leeds School of Theology

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**In January, eight intrepid South Paraders embarked on the Leeds School of Theology. Over the next twelve months, we will catch up with the students to find out how the course is going and how we can support them.**

Name: Nat Johnson

Age: 33

Occupation: Lawyer

Mission Community: Cragg and Sent

*Why have you embarked on the LSOT?*

**N**ot long after I became a Christian I knew that I wanted to go to Bible college “some day”. LSOT enables me to study some theology, which will hopefully both equip me for life and provide some foundations for my preaching, whilst enabling me to continue to work full-time. I had been thinking about doing a distance learning course, but knew that would be tough motivationally as I wouldn’t have any face-to-face contact. I have heard that some university theology courses can be hard faith-wise, so it’s important to

me that the people teaching the course are Christians with the aim of helping us in our walk with God rather than hindering it.

*What are you enjoying about the adventure so far?*

I was really encouraged by the fact that there were about 110 there on that first Saturday, with about 70 people in my intake. How fantastic that there are so many people who are keen to know more of God. Some had travelled a fair distance to get there.

It is interesting to be challenged to think about questions such as “What are the fundamentals of the Christian faith?”, or to put the question another way, “What beliefs are essential for someone to be a Christian?” Different people will draw the line in different places.

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*I hope the course will help me know the Bible better, understand it better, and live out its teaching better.*

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*How do you hope to grow through the experience?*

I hope to know the Bible better, understand it better, and live out its teaching better.

*What would you say to encourage people to start in 2018?*

Do you want to know God better? Do you want to be equipped with the tools to really suck the marrow out of the Bible? Do you want a better understanding of how we (the church) got to where we are today? Do you want to meet with Christians from all sorts of different backgrounds from across Yorkshire and the north?

If you answered “Yes!” to any of these questions, consider applying next year. The course is aimed to encourage Christians in their walk with God, to lead to greater love for others, and is mindful of the need for practical application. We

meet for a (very) full day once a month, and then there is another 6-8 hours’ work expected on top of that to get the most out of the course. It is unaccredited, and works on the basis that “You get out what you put in”.

*How can we pray for you as you continue with the LSOT adventure?*

I am conscious that I may not walk this way again. My prayer for this course is that I’d really be able to make the most of every opportunity for learning. I hope that it will give me tools to improve my preaching. I’d like to know God more, as that is eternal life (John 17:3), and I think one of the really big challenges is to apply what I learn practically. The Bible is a challenging book!

*Nathan Shipley and  
Nat Johnson*

**...inspired...**

*Find out more about the Leeds School of Theology at [leeds-school-of-theology.org](http://leeds-school-of-theology.org). Or catch up with Nat or Nathan in church.*



*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)**

# Revive and Thrive

## Introducing JustAct Middle East and Merath

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**At the Carols by Candlelight service in December Gareth Iball spoke about JustAct Middle East, a charity of which he is a trustee. He introduced JustAct and spoke specifically about Merath which is an organisation working with Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon.**

**J**ustAct are currently running an appeal to raise funds to support Merath and their increasingly important work. The retiring offering at the carol service was donated to JustAct's appeal, and the total amount given to date is £448.75! We would like to thank everyone that has donated for their incredible generosity, and also South Parade for allowing us to make this appeal at the carol service. We are hoping to send the money on to Merath in late February so there is still time to give!

JustAct Middle East is a UK charity that was set up in 2011

by the five current Trustees, three of which are or were regular worshippers at SPBC. Our mission is to nurture hope among marginalised people, by partnering with locally-run organisations whose work provides for their needs, and brings about social inclusion. We dream of a more inclusive Middle East in which a person's ethnicity, disability, religion or nationality do not pose a barrier to the fulfilment of their potential.

Our ethos is built around the words in Micah 6.8: *“And this is what*



the Lord requires of you, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.”. These values of justice, compassion and humility are at the centre of our partnerships with organisations in the Middle East. At present we have formal partnerships with two organisations: The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children ([www.basma-centre.org](http://www.basma-centre.org)) - which helps disabled children to reach their full potential through a range of therapies and services; and The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme ([www.gcmhp.com](http://www.gcmhp.com)) - which empowers the most vulnerable members of Gazan society through community-based mental health services and training.



nary – some of you may remember their Executive Director, Nabil Costa, who visited us at SPBC some years ago. The Community and Development arm of LSESD is known as MERATH (Middle East Revive and Thrive). The word merath means inheritance in Arabic, and their purpose is to empower communities to reach their full potential as sons and daughters of God.



In addition to this we also have growing links with the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) [www.lsesd.org](http://www.lsesd.org) This is a large organisation which includes the Arab Baptist Theological Semi-

This is achieved through a number of areas of work including: education, basic assistance, food assistance, trauma support and action against gender-based violence. For example, Merath have enabled over 1,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon to attend education programs, even ensuring that they are taught the Syrian curriculum. They provide monthly food vouchers/boxes to over 1,900 houses in Lebanon, more than 5,550 in Syria and 105 in Iraq. Merath also provides training

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*The word merath means inheritance in Arabic. Their purpose is to empower communities to reach their full potential as sons and daughters of God.*

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to promote gender equality in the Syrian and Iraqi refugee communities.

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*The ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region seems to be unending*

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The work of Merath is desperately needed given the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region: Lebanon, a small country of only 4.5 million people, has received 1.6 million Syrian refugees, 70% of whom are living below the poverty line; 11 million Syrians have either been killed or have left their country, and 13.5 million are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance; whilst in Iraq there are 3.3 million internally displaced people and 11 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

**M**erath is working tirelessly to meet their needs and they invite you to join hands with them as they respond to the needs of vulnerable families affected by the Syria crisis. This seems to be an unending crisis and we are therefore asking you to consider making a donation to support their work.

Should you wish to donate there are a number of ways that you can do so:

- Go to [www.justact.me/donate](http://www.justact.me/donate) - here you'll find a link to donate directly through Virgin Money Giving, and a link to a donation form which contains our bank account information, thus allowing you to make a direct payment. Should you choose this method, please can you consider sending a completed donation form to us, especially if you are a UK taxpayer, as we will be able to reclaim gift aid which adds 25% to your donation!
- Send a cheque payable to JustAct Middle East to 30 Vesper Road, Leeds LS5 3NX.

We are grateful for every single donation, no matter how small or large.

If you would like to support the ongoing work of JustAct please consider:

- Praying for us, especially for the Trustees, that we will continue



to act with justice, compassion and humility in all of our work.

- Becoming a regular giver. Our ability to support our existing partners relies on our regular donors, and the more money that we receive, the more life-changing work our partners are able to do.
- Fundraising for us, either through a personal challenge – eg running a marathon, or by

hosting a specific fundraising event – we can provide suggestions if needed!

Once again we'd like to thank everyone that has donated thus far. We are more than happy to talk about JustAct and Merath anytime, so if you see us around, just ask!

*Gareth and Alex Iball*

Trustees of JustAct Middle East

**...informed...**

Find out more at [www.justact.me](http://www.justact.me)

**JUSTACT**  
MIDDLE EAST

## **Praying**

*It doesn't have to be the blue iris, it could be weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones; just pay attention, then patch a few words together and don't try to make them elaborate, this isn't a contest but the doorway into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak.*



**Mary Oliver**

Quoted by Paul Whitman  
in the all-age talk at Headingley 22/1/17

# Truth RIP?

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**D**riving back from a family funeral I listened on Radio 4 to a discussion about possible bias in BBC reporting. The various speakers clearly believed that equal weight had to be given to different and conflicting opinions. The idea that one might be correct and others false was not even considered.

I have lived through “economical with the truth”, “burying bad news”, “spin” and now we have “alternative facts”. I was brought up to believe in always telling the truth. If you don’t tell lies it makes other sins less easy, except perhaps pride.

In large public bodies corporate “face saving” is all too often seen to

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*Truth seems to be  
an outdated and  
discarded concept.  
But the Bible is clear.*

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be paramount, whatever the truth and whatever the cost, as some fellow church members have experienced. Truth seems to be an outdated and discarded concept. When did I last hear a sermon on the ninth commandment (or any of them for that matter)? But the Bible is clear; “*Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your*



*lips from telling lies.” (Psalm 34.12-13).*

As a young man I became a scientist because of a dedication to truth - “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”, a quotation which really needs to be taken in full: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32).

Sometimes truth can be difficult, as with “Can humans get mad cow disease?” When this question was

most urgent the best answer anyone could give was “We don’t know, it is possible but on balance we think it is relatively unlikely to happen”. Press and politicians wanted “yes” or “no”, but the nearest anyone could get to the truth could not be expressed that way.

**H**owever there are simple true statements, such as “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3.16); and “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.’” (John 14.6).

Let us stick to truth, and try to distinguish between it and lies masquerading as alternative opinions in all areas of life.

*Charles*

## **Our Vision for 2017**



### **Prayer**

*How is God calling us as a church to pray in the next year?*  
When we pray we want to be specific, full of faith and attentive to God’s voice.



### **Encouragement**

*In what ways can we as a church encourage one another in the year ahead?*  
The word encouragement literally means to give someone courage. We want to be a church that gives courage both in word and deed.



### **Adventure**

*What adventure do we believe God is calling us to?*  
When we go on an adventure we are often called to take risks. We want to step out in faith and dependence on God in a risky but not reckless way.



### **Growth**

*How might God be calling us to grow?*  
Growth is not purely about numerical size and reach. We believe a healthy church is a church that is growing in breadth, depth and unity.

# Gnanakan News

## The (Un)known God

**Our Mission Partner Chris Gnanakan, working with pastors in Asia through OTAN, and based in Boston, USA, recently sent his greetings to the church along with these thoughts on the gospel in today's modern world.**

**T**oday, we see that contemporary society is more interested in living the “good life” than knowing or doing the right thing!

The focus is on individualism and a selfish pursuit of personal satisfaction. Postmodernity has eroded us of absolutes, while secular humanism has left us with a moral relativism that is sceptical of



exclusive truth. As pluralists, we are supposed to tolerate all things; therefore, anyone who believes in absolutes is arrogant. Savvy issues on social networks pull us into the latest trends, but de-link us from accessing the truth about life's ultimate purpose.

Is ignorance really bliss? How can intellectual knowledge make us so narcissistic? At Athens, Paul reasons with such philosophers and boldly presents biblical truth that can set us free (Acts 17.16-34)! Here, we will also examine a useful example of how the gospel prevails in any pluralistic society.



The infamous Greco-Roman city, Athens, was notoriously hedonistic. Pleasure was so important that they would argue over ways to please themselves while avoiding consequential pain. They pushed all moral limits to feel good, typically using two opposing schools of thought. The Epicureans were naturalists, whose slogan was, “Don't worry, be happy!” Their lives centered around earthly

happiness without concern about death or the afterlife.

In contrast, the Stoics were pantheistic, believing the whole cosmos is god - a divine spark within that unites humanity with everything else. They stressed the exercise of reason and self-discipline. Unlike the disengaged god of Epicurean Deism, Stoic pantheists believed in endless cycles of rebirth.

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*Paul's message places  
God as the sovereign  
Creator, only Saviour and  
the coming Judge*

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**T**herefore, at Athens, we see a sample of the New Agers and the New Atheists of today. This instructive approach begins with Paul noticing and commending them for their religiosity. Nonetheless, he was deeply disturbed at the idolatry that refused to acknowledge the unseen Creator. Finding this entry point, he tells them about Jesus and what God has done for humanity by raising him from the dead. He begins with "God's goodness," not "human badness". Then, via Jesus' resurrection, he established who Jesus Christ was and God's offer of salvation and eternal life. Although his audience scorned him as a

scavenger teaching new and strange things, Paul cleverly quotes their own philosophers to effectively communicate the gospel in their context, then demands a verdict!

Paul's message on the Mars Hill's marketplace of ideas placed God back where he rightly belongs as the sovereign Creator, only Saviour and the coming Judge. Paul informed the pagans, who had never engaged with the Jewish Bible or heard of the Messiah, that ignorance, or suppression of *the Truth* about Jesus (God's only Way to Life) is not bliss.

Even now, we are called to take the Gospel to all nations who have not yet heard, or have deliberately suppressed the truth. From ancient times to now, we see hedonism, the problem of placing pleasure above all things. Sadly, we are more devoted to our false gods of materialism and secular humanism that remake God into our own image. This universal Gospel calls us to respond by repenting from sin and turning to God by placing our faith in what Christ has accomplished for us. Let us prepare now for Jesus' Second Coming by living out the reason for our living hope!

*Chris Gnanakan*

Executive Director, OTAN  
[www.outreachtoasianationals.org](http://www.outreachtoasianationals.org)

# Church Noticeboard

## Churches Together In Headingley



### Events during Lent and Easter

- A **Lent study course** will be held at St Michael's church – details to follow later.
- **Lent Lunches** every Friday from 10 March - 7 April at Headingley Methodist Church hall (opposite Arndale Centre), 12.30-1.30pm. The theme will be "Feasting and Fasting" and will include talks from several leaders of other faiths.
- **Good Friday Walk of Witness.** Likely route: meeting in front of Headingley Methodist, walking round to the Rose Garden (the Arc) with banners and crosses, for drama and worship. Coffee and Hot Cross Buns at Headingley Methodists. For more details see noticesheets nearer the time, and the next edition of *Intouch*.

## ABC Coffee Shop



The ABC Coffee Shop at Holt Park is run by volunteers from South Parade and other helpers and friends. They always need more help, so if you're able to spare a few hours a week for a morning or an afternoon shift, contact the church office on 0113 275 4989, or pop into the café!

## Intouch

Email [magazine@spbc.org.uk](mailto:magazine@spbc.org.uk) to put your notice on the

April edition of the Church Noticeboard.

The deadline is 17 March. More church notices are on the weekly noticesheet available at your Mission Community or on the church website.



**baptist assembly**

*Saturday 13 May 2017*

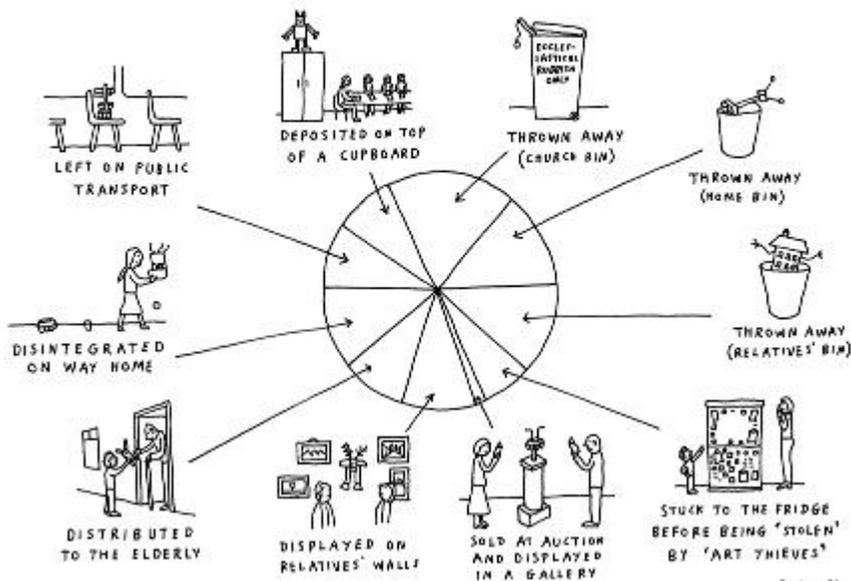
*10:30 – 20:30*

*Harrogate International Centre, Harrogate*

***[baptistassembly.org.uk](http://baptistassembly.org.uk)***

# CHILDREN'S CRAFT ITEMS

WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM



This CartoonChurch.com cartoon by Dave Walker is used with permission.

How much of the world God loves...

CHRISTIANITY EXPLODED

#4

■ Loved  
■ Not Loved

John 3:16

christianityexploded.tumblr.com



South Parade meets as four distinctive Mission Communities across Leeds: in **Headingley** and **Cragg** on a Sunday Morning, and as **Sent** at Headingley on Sunday evenings. **Connect** meets in the community in Bramley. We're involved with Church@Little London, run a CAP Debt Centre and run the ABC Coffee Shop in Holt Park and have a partnership with the Arabic Christian Fellowship. To find out more, visit the website or contact the church office.

Together, we have a shared vision to **build community in Christ**. We hope that all who meet us will be helped to **belong** to Christ and his people, will discover what it means to **believe** in him, and will **become** all that he invites them to be in character, lifestyle, witness and service.

Minister

Paul Rockley

Associate Pastor for  
Youth and Young Adults  
Children's Worker  
Associate Pastor  
Church Administrators  
Under 5s Co-ordinator

Nathan Shipley  
Heather McLeen  
Geoff King  
Hannah Preston & Kate Churchill  
Kate Burkett

Elders

Andrew Bedingham, Steve Burras,  
Freeman Dumenu,  
Charles Fletcher (Church Secretary),  
Ruth Hughes, John Pelham,  
Sue Ricketts

**South Parade Baptist Church**  
**Kirkstall Lane, Headingley**  
**LEEDS LS6 3LF**

**0113 275 4989**  
**[www.spbc.org.uk](http://www.spbc.org.uk)**  
**[info@spbc.org.uk](mailto:info@spbc.org.uk)**



“

*Where there is no vision,  
the people perish.*

”

**Psalm 29.18 (KJV)**

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**intouch**

**SOUTH PARADE**  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Building Community in Christ