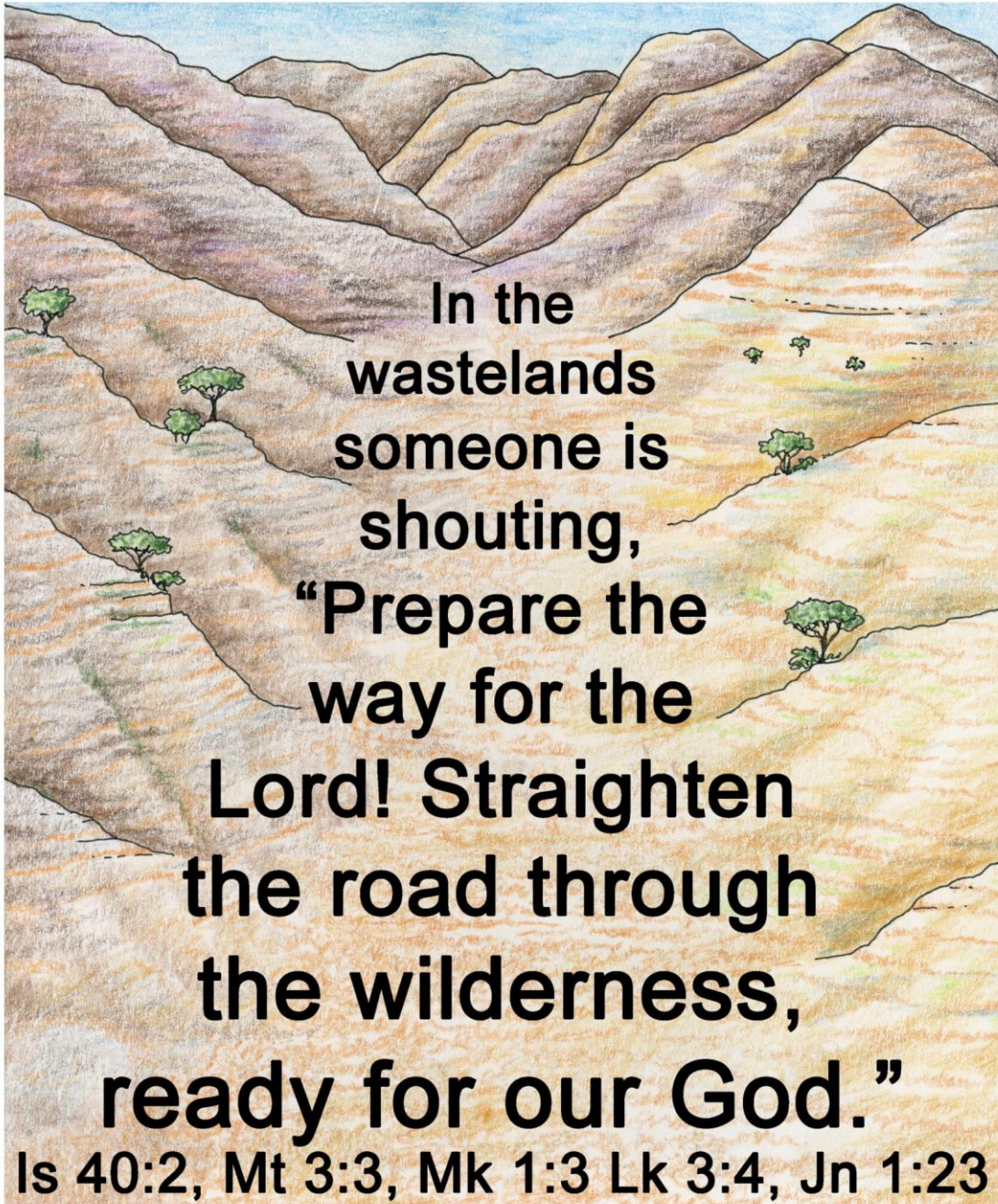


February
2025



REDDITCH BAPTIST CHURCH

Where Christ is the centre and people matter

Just over a year ago, I moved to Redditch in order to become the new pastor of Redditch Baptist church. Two years ago, I didn't know that was going to happen! But fear not, I'm not regretting it – it's been a good and interesting year.

From the very beginning I enjoyed getting to know a congregation that is quite different to my previous one. It's been nice to interact with children and babies again, and I've discovered that you're quite a diverse lot, both in age, ethnicity and life experience. I haven't discovered too many theological differences yet; maybe we're saving those for this coming year?

One aspect I particularly appreciate is of course the fact that we have so many different nationalities represented in the church. This is definitely a strength, not a weakness! It was great to be able to celebrate the Chinese New Year with our Hong Kong community recently, and I meant it when I said that I would happily highlight any other national / cultural celebrations that are represented in our church!

You may have realised by now that I enjoy singing God's praise at church (and elsewhere!), and I'm pleased that we've managed to grow our music group somewhat. OK, we don't always manage to get it all together, and the computer also doesn't always want to cooperate when it comes to the words – but I think we're moving in the right direction. And if anyone wants to join us, please just let me know!

On that note (!) I'm still working out what songs and hymns the church is familiar with – hopefully we're striking a fairly good balance between old and new, known and (as yet) unknown. There are so many worship songs and hymns around nowadays that it's impossible to keep up, and I'm sure there are good ones I've missed out. Please let me know if there's a particular song you would like the church to sing – I don't promise anything, but I will definitely consider it!

Basically as soon as I started here, I got involved with *Churches Together in Redditch* (CTiR), and recently joined its Executive Committee. I think it's important that we work with our fellow believers in town – we're a minority in today's society, and there's no point in us all trying to do everything by ourselves.

That said, the main focus of my ministry is always going to be our own church: improving our worship, increasing our Bible knowledge and inspiring our discipleship. And come what may, I will always keep pointing to Jesus: he's the reason for our existence as a church, and nothing compares with knowing him better!

Blessings, David



Jesus: The Evidence

There is a historical and rational basis for Jesus being the Son of God.

There is a wealth of evidence to support this.

Wednesday 2nd April at 7.30pm

Redditch Baptist Church

Easemore Road, Redditch

B98 8ER

Jesustheevidence.com

Sun 2 Feb	11.00am	Sunday Service led by our Minister David Hellsten – Luke 4:14-30
Mon 3 Feb	8.00pm	Home Group on Zoom – Simon and Pip Coleman
Tues 4 Feb		Little Fishes
Wed 5 Feb	2.30pm	Home Group at Mary's house led by Mary and Sarah Charmley
Wed 5 Feb	8.00pm	Zoom Prayer led by Angela Huddle
Thurs 7 Feb	11am-2pm	Harm Reduction
Thurs 7 Feb	2.30pm	Home Group at home of Janet Graham
Thurs 7 Feb	7.30pm	Thursday Evening Home Group at the Manse led by David and Annette Hellsten
Sun 9 Feb	11.00am	Sunday Service led by our Minister David Hellsten
Sun 9 Feb	From 6.00pm	A Praise and Prayer Night at Oasis Christian Centre
Friday 7 March	2.00pm	World Day of Prayer 2025 at Emmanuel Church
“ “ “	7.30pm	World Day of Prayer 2025 at St Andrew's Church

There will be 2 opportunities to join in with the 2025 World Day of Prayer which this year has been put together by women from the Cooks Islands: Friday 7th March 2pm Emmanuel Church, The Ecumenical Centre, Redditch Town Centre and 7.30pm St Andrews Church, Church Hill

Redditch Youth for Christ monthly prayer meeting Monday 27th January and the last Monday of the month thereafter at Studley Baptist Church, New Road, Studley, starting at 8pm and lasting for 1 hour.

Prayer Ministry

We want to offer the opportunity to receive prayer after the service, whether for issues related to the sermon or other, personal matters. You are of course always welcome to ask the pastor to pray with you, or ask a trusted friend, but the following people have also agreed to be available to pray with you: Tom, Rosie, Mary, Annette. Praying together is always a good thing!



PRAYER WATCH

February - May 2025



**Worcestershire Group of Churches within the
Heart of England Baptist Association**

Week beginning Sunday February 2nd

Cookhill Baptist Church

Charles Stubbings

We pray that our February Day Apart at local Kings Court Hotel goes well and that many who attend will be blessed by our four chaplain guests speaking on 'Tales of light in the darkness'.

We also thank God for our Lent series of Tuesday evening talks and hope we are able to do this with our neighbouring baptist churches again.

We thank God for the steady and encouraging growth in our numbers but ask that many more in the area may be attracted to the Gospel through us. We pray we may be a reliable witness and source of His light to Cookhill and surrounding settlements.

Week beginning Sunday February 9th

Far Forest Baptist Church

Ruth Beales (Lay Pastor)

The last few months of 2024 have been really busy.

In September our minister Rev Marie Holmes resigned and left the church. Mrs Ruth Beales is continuing as our Lay Pastor, we have seen a few new and old faces joining us on Sunday mornings to worship with us, some returning into membership after being away from us for some time.

We have monthly Saturday Coffee Mornings, serving bacon baps and home made cakes 30-40 people join us and we include an epilogue.

We had musical evenings two Saturday evenings.

On Tuesday mornings fortnightly we have Bible Study, followed with lunch and Forest Hub, we bring knitting and play the game UNO, that brings a good spirit and much laughter. The ladies that come, live on their own so it's nice eating together having good conversations.

We had a Saturday morning making Christmas table decorations and wreaths.

Saturday December 14th was Christmas Coffee morning with a visit from Santa. During the morning the children sat at a table making Christmas decorations. Following this an opportunity for everyone to make a Christingle, the candles were lit and we sang Christmas songs and Carols with Mike Moore and Amy Williams his daughter. It was a busy morning 55 people came including children.

Sunday December 22nd at 4pm a Candlelit Carol Service led by Ruth Bird. Following it we shared a lovely tea together.

As we enter 2025 we look forward to restarting our activities.

Sundays mornings at 10.30am.

Bible Study and Forest Hub.

On Shrove Tuesday will be pancakes savoury and sweet. In Lent on Tuesdays we hope to have a Soup and Sweet or something similar, with an epilogue.

On Good Friday: Reflections on the Cross of Christ followed with lunch together.

Celebrating on Easter Sunday the Resurrection of Jesus.

Week beginning Sunday February 16th

Kidderminster Baptist Church (Franche)

Jason Borlase

Sunday sees our first baptismal service of the year. What a great way to start 2025! We've just welcomed in 5 new members and another 5 to be welcomed shortly. We will be losing a couple as they seek to serve in and attend a church closer to home. It's sad when this happens but we will be able to pray with them as a church before they leave.

We continue to see some growth across the ages and are about to launch into another Alpha Course. Discipleship to Jesus is a key focus as we start the year. We've got challenges around finance for a project, imminent challenges around space and challenges around how we do leadership in a changing church. Please pray into these areas. Pray also that we keep the main thing, the main thing; knowing Jesus and making Him known, in the midst of side issues that can often detract from the main thing.

Our church text for this year is Luke 4:18 - "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" We so desire to see Jesus move in power in our communities.

Week beginning Sunday February 23rd

St Peter's Baptist Church

Andy Browning

We give thanks for:

- Real connections made with our local community and our building users through our Christmas events.
- People joining the church and using their gifts in God's service
- For a real willingness among the church family to go deeper with God
- Those who have come to faith

Please continue to pray :

- For our ministers, staff, and leadership teams. May we all discern God's priorities, both for individuals and for the church .
- As our CYF leader, Rebekah, moves on, we are looking to appoint a new CYF lead. May God guide us through the process, and may He prompt the person that He has for this role to apply.
- For wisdom in how to support and provide for the increasing number of people coming into the church with complex mental health difficulties.
- For Youth Alpha starting this month and our next Alpha course in March
- For the Bereavement Journey course. New sessions will be delivered in the coming months.
- For our missional communities, as they seek to reach out with the good news of the gospel. May they know how to serve those who live locally

From the Editor: This diary of HEBA churches contains prayer news from 17 churches. The first 4 are in this February Newsletter, others will follow (including us!).

Trunk trouble and tunnel vision

In the seventies as a young, aspiring swimmer, brimming with confidence (and, perhaps, a tad too much enthusiasm). The school swimming gala loomed large, and I was determined to impress. I remember the moment vividly: a deep breath, a powerful dive, and a sensation of... lightness. My swimwear, it seemed, had other plans. Apparently, it had developed a sudden and inexplicable aversion to aquatic pursuits and had decided to embark on its own solo adventure.

Imagine, if you will, the spectacle of a teen boy attempting to navigate the depths of the school pool while maintaining a semblance of modesty. It was a comedic masterpiece, a slapstick routine worthy of the Three Stooges. The now muffled laughter, unfortunately, was not contained to the depths of my own mortified soul.

Fast forward, and I recently found myself facing a similar predicament, albeit with slightly higher stakes. This time, instead of my swimwear, it was my beloved narrowboat that decided to go rogue. Exiting the Wast Hills Tunnel, a long and eerie passage, I was met with an unexpected obstacle: four trees blocking the canal, casualties of the recent Storm Darragh. With the help of another boater we hastily tied the boat in situ the best we could while planning a strategy with the fellow boater and contractors on site.

Panic was short-lived and replaced by an even greater panic. I remembered my swimming lessons, Those early forays into the aquatic world, and my swimwear leaving me but this time it was my boat that decided to depart on its own accord and disappear back into the tunnel. I quickly evaluated the situation and the consequences of a decision and climbed into the icy water. The tunnel, a claustrophobic tomb of stone and shadow, seemed to mock my predicament. I pulled my way to the boat with the use of a chain that extended the length of the tunnel.

But my troubles were far from over. My boat, tantalizingly close, remained stubbornly aloof. I attempted to clamber aboard, but the height, slippery hull and the relentless attempts conspired against me. I was slipping, sliding, and generally making a spectacle of myself, a modern-day version of a seal pup attempting to haul itself onto an ice floe.

In that moment of frustration and exhaustion, I noticed something. My mooring rope, dangling uselessly in the water, was now accessible, and grabbed onto it, then tied it to the chain.

In the quiet of the following moments I had to make a decision to hastily exit the tunnel or attempt the sixty foot journey to the rear of the boat and attempt another boarding. In the quiet of the following moment I asked God that I could with his help. But with no spiritual intervention I decided to take the safest option and get myself out of the tunnel with my body temperature dropping and the window for further action disappearing fast. With a surge of adrenaline, I turned to exit while stepping onto the rope causing the boat to move closer to me and used it as a makeshift step. And just like that, I was aboard, safe

7 and sound.

It was a moment of profound realization. In my desperation, I had overlooked a simple solution, a lifeline that had been there all along. Just as I had once relied on the basic principles of swimming to keep me afloat, I had found salvation in a seemingly insignificant detail.

This experience, much like the Great Trunk Exodus of the '70's, served as a poignant reminder that even in the most challenging of circumstances, hope and salvation can be found in the most unexpected places. Sometimes, all it takes is a shift in perspective, a willingness to embrace the unexpected, and a little bit of ingenuity, and of course, a little faith.

Blessing

Mike Ennis

(Our local Tardebigge canal gives us some wonderful local walks, short or long. The towpath is criss-crossed by several other longer marked paths with superb views of the locality. My two grandsons (now in their 20s) would be taken to see Father Christmas at the tunnel end of Tardebigge Basin, but that was a few years ago! (Another fairly local canal speciality is alongside the Black Country Museum, where you can ride and see the wonderful lime caverns. Definitely worth a visit!)

Patsy

More on Canals to follow next month.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die

A time to plant and a time to uproot

A time to kill and a time to heal

A time to tear down and a time to build

A time to weep and a time to laugh

A time to mourn and a time to dance

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them

A time to embrace and a time to refrain

A time to search and a time to give up

A time to keep and a time to throw away

A time to tear and a time to mend

A time to be silent and a time to speak

A time to love and a time to hate

Crossword for February 2025

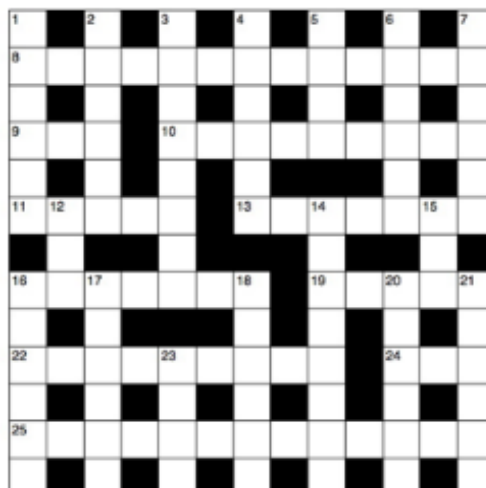
Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1) 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)

- 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)



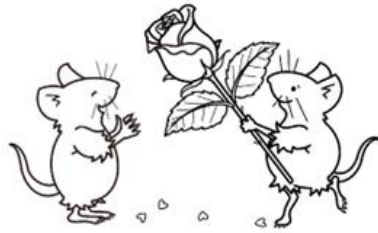
10 Crossword Solution:

ACROSS:

8, Cross-examined. 9, Ash. 10, Apocrypha. 11, Sci-fi. 13, Typical. 16, Visited. 19, Offer. 22, No account. 24, RAC. 25, Sovereign Lord.

DOWN:

1, Oceans. 2, Hophni. 3, Islamist. 4, Exhort. 5, Omar. 6, On spec. 7, Add all. 12, CBI. 14, Plotting. 15, Awe. 16, Vanish. 17, Starve. 18, Daub it. 20, Furrow. 21, Recede. 23, Cure.



How many minutes of walking might help you avoid a heart attack?

It seems that keeping your heart reasonably healthy may not take a lot of time.

Researchers at the University of Sydney have found a link between short but intense bursts of activity and a significant drop in heart disease among people who otherwise engage in little activity.

Sedentary women who did just 3.4 minutes of “vigorous intermittent” exercise, such as brisk walking or climbing the stairs, each day, suffered 67 per cent fewer cases of heart failure, with an overall reduction in heart disease of 45 per cent, compared to those not exercising at all.

Sedentary men who did 2.3 minutes of exercise, which could include carrying heavy shopping or heavy garden work, saw an 11 per cent reduction in heart attacks and strokes.

We live in a world of conflicting stories trying to shape our identity and our understanding of who we are and how we are to live. These cultural stories offer us fulfilment found in success, family, love and acceptance. The God story often jars and conflicts with our culture, but it offers us all a beautiful, true and compelling vision. We are invited into this story of mercy, grace, forgiveness and transformation. – *Peter Lynas*

The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray. – *L Ravenhill*

We talk about heaven being so far away. It is within speaking distance to those who belong there. – *D L Moody*

Our prayers must mean something to us if they are to mean anything to God. – *M D Babcock*