

MARCH 2020



He has made everything
beautiful in its time.
He has also set Eternity in the
human heart.
-Ecclesiastes 3:11

Pastor's Study – Paul's Gospel opportunity in Athens.

¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, 'May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?' ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.' (Acts 17:19-20)

Of all the confrontations Paul is faced with on his missionary journeys, his being brought before the Areopagus in Athens is one of the most fascinating. The leading centre of learning and philosophy of its day, Athens was afforded special 'free' status by the Romans, in recognition of its great reputation. Paul never intended to preach in Athens, he was only there to meet up with the rest of his team, but God had other plans and soon Paul is in the synagogue before he is summoned.

It seems the great men of the Areopagus want to meet Paul out of academic / theological interest, but this meeting is certainly adversarial; Paul is summoned to account for his disparaging remarks about the number and nature of gods he has seen in Athens. (V16-17). Once again the Holy Spirit gives Paul the words he needs as he launches into his famous Areopagus speech.

The message for these great philosophers and theologians who have created their various gods for this and gods for that, is a simple one: there is only one true God.

God who made the world and all life within it does not need us to make statues for Him. Humankind has been created to seek the Lord and find that: 'in Him we live and move and have our being'. (V28). Rather than calling us to make images in stone or gold or silver, God calls on people to repent of sin and come to Christ for forgiveness, and to find everlasting life.

The 'sneering' of some in the Areopagus is the same response we get from time to time from those who have their own philosophical ideas on matters of religion. Like Paul, we should keep it simple and be ready to 'tell it like it is!'. Even in the Areopagus, when Paul had finished, some of them believed.

Pastor Robbie

Pastor's Diary: Heading for Easter 2020!



They say 'a picture paints a thousand words'. And this picture of little Joshua, home at last, says it all.

There is still some way to go as he learns to take his food by mouth rather than by a tube into his tummy, but he is well on the way. Thank you to all for your prayers and support these last 4 months.

In church it is so good to see the repairs from the dry rot almost completed. We will still have some disruption from building work as the repairs to the Western Gable begin once the weather allows. The Schoolroom refurbishment (including that awful toilet block) is back on the agenda for this year. Not certain yet, but we are excited at the prospect that this will be something quite special.

We have had a very positive meeting with our new Regional Minister, Hayley Young, and have some plans and ideas to build and develop our youth work and programme over the coming months. Please pray for this.

Pastor Robbie

A poem for Iris.

It is Spring, and she sits by the window,

And the crocuses are arguing
as to who got here first.

And she sews.



It is summer, and she sits
by the window; open this
time.

And the tennis is on
television, as green as the
plants outside, and the
conversations are stilted
because she would rather
watch the match. Which
is fine.

.And she sews.

It is Autumn.

She sits by the window, and the leaves fall
quickly.

So does the night.

The bronzed garden is closed down for the
year and a jigsaw of a harbour scene
appears on a lap-tray.

And still she sews.



And then Winter.

She sits by the window.
The birds panic and argue over
what little food there is.
And the wooden rabbit by the gas
fire stares into the glow.



And she sews.

And throughout the year, the seasons, the decades there is this thread,
running through everything.

Sometimes it is an embroidery thread, cross-stitching its way through a
lady in a seasonal gown or a snowy landscape; or a sampler which has
been planned and planned and planned.

Sometimes it is the thread of a sewing machine, holding together a doll-
sized replica of my bridesmaid's dress.

Or maybe the thread of a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle outfit, full and
complete, for my cousin.

Or sometimes the thread of hand-stitching, turning up trousers and letting
out skirts. Little comes into the house that is not gifted to her needle.

Or knitting yarn, threading and knotting its way through a cardigan, a top
or anything else you care to ask for.

And so this thread. We can follow this thread through each of our lives,
our wardrobes, our houses; and we can see ourselves as bound by it,
bound to it, bound to her, to one another.

This thread, linking us. This thread. Because she sewed.

This poem was written by Iris's grand daughter, Katie. What a fitting and
loving tribute which encapsulates the very essence of Iris' gentle faith and
her many talents. We can all bring to mind people like her, women and
men, faithful and strong who work quietly at their skills they amaze and
delight us. Thank you, Katie and family for your love for Iris.

A thought for Lent (With a nod or two to Christmas!)

Imagine how Mary felt when the angel Gabriel brought the message that she was to be the mother of God's son. Tradition says Mary was a teenager. So imagine the exciting thoughts that must have raced through her mind. The possibilities. It would mean a posh house, or even a palace fit for a king, wouldn't it? With servants and fine furnishings. After all, hadn't the angel said her son "would be great ... and he would reign... and his kingdom would never end ...? What food for the imagination of a teenager.

Ah, but what would Joseph think? She was betrothed to him, yet she would be pregnant with a child not his. Hmm... problem. Sure enough, Joseph was not a happy man. He decided to divorce this apparently unfaithful woman, but discreetly. He was still fond of her, in spite of what had happened.

How might Mary feel at this setback? Surely God could have done something to avoid this happening, couldn't He? Hadn't He taken this into account before sending Gabriel with that message? Mary need not have worried. God had taken it into account. He soon sent an angel to reassure Joseph, and instruct him regarding the name to be given to the baby boy Mary was carrying.

Perhaps this had been a lesson for Mary to learn. When God calls us to a task, or ministry, or service, or whatever, things do not always work out as we fondly imagine, do they? Difficulties and set-backs arise; disappointing us, puzzling us, causing us to question God. Yet, if we did but know it, they call us to have faith in God and in His plan for our lives.

The angel said that Mary's relative, Elizabeth was pregnant. Mary visited her. She was hardly through the door when Elizabeth excitedly cried out how blessed and privileged Mary was to be carrying such a special child. This all tied in with Mary's dreams. She rejoiced at the "great things God was doing for her".

So all was well. Mary could continue to dream of her circumstances changing, until she and Joseph had all that was needed to befit the arrival of her child, the son of God. The king whose kingdom would never end.

Then there was the unexpected journey to Bethlehem, demanded by the census. It must have been something of a shock to Mary when she had to give birth in a most unking-like place, and lay this special baby in a manger, of all places. What do you think she must have thought? Had something like this ever entered her mind! When Gabriel had brought the message, did Mary ever consider a manger for her baby! Not likely. This did not fit in with her hopes and dreams and expectations. The son of God, this ruler, this king with an endless kingdom, this special baby being born in an outhouse and being laid in an animals' feeding trough for a bed? What had gone wrong? Where was God in all this? How could he let this happen?

While thoughts like this must have gone through Mary's mind, some rough-looking men arrived, Shepherds! Not the most welcome of men in polite society. Many had a reputation of being petty thieves. But they had an astonishing message. They said angels had visited them, and told them a special baby had been born, a Saviour, Christ the Lord. They would find him lying in a manger.

Now what thoughts are filling Mary's mind? God *knew* what had happened, and hadn't stopped it? How could he have let it happen? Surely his Son deserved better than a manger for a bed?

The shepherds left, and things began to improve as Mary, Joseph and the baby moved into a house. Then there was the essential trip to the temple at Jerusalem. An old priest named Simeon met them. He too rejoiced at the arrival of this child, and spoke of this child who would bring glory to Israel. The old priest looked at Mary, and solemnly told her, "A sword will pierce your own soul." Had Mary any idea what this would mean? Of course not. She had been chosen to give birth to the Son of God, the king whose kingdom would never end

Back to the house at Bethlehem. After a while who should arrive than another group of men. Not common shepherds, but wealthy and educated men from afar. Men who were looking for the baby born to be the king of Israel. Here he was. They fell on their knees and paid homage to the baby. Then they presented costly gifts; gifts worthy of a king.

What were Mary's thoughts as these VIPs left? Didn't their visit confirm all her thoughts and dreams! At last things were falling into place. Their future was on the up, wasn't it! Sadly for Mary, news quickly came that Herod was sending squads of soldiers with instructions to kill all baby boys in the area. Jesus' life was at stake. So there was the hurried flight to Egypt. Now what is Mary thinking! Had she foreseen this? I don't think so, do you?

Life went on, but perhaps not as Mary expected. For many years her son was a carpenter. No sign of being crowned king. Then of all things he became an itinerant preacher, gathering around him a motley bunch of men. The authorities did not like it, and began plotting to do away with him. What is Mary thinking? No sign of her son becoming king, is there?

Then there was the horror of the crucifixion. As Mary stood near the cross, did Simeon's words come back to her, "A sword shall pierce your soul"? Where was God in all this? Even her Son had cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Resurrection Day changed it all, praise the Lord! This Lent we again consider the temptations and sufferings of our Lord. The agonies of the cross. And I think we can take a moment to reflect on our own lives too. Things have not always turned out as we had hoped and imagined, have they? When we began following Jesus, and serving him, we had our thoughts and dreams, didn't we? We also had those moments when "a sword pierced our souls", unexpectedly, and unwanted. And it was, and is, painful. Like Mary, we might have wondered what God was doing, allowing such things to happen to us.

Perhaps that is your experience just now. Let me encourage you. God has not let you down, nor allowed things to go wrong. Share your pain, your anxiety, your feelings, with the Lord this Lent. Then remember: Easter is coming! Lent is not the end. What God had promised you will come to pass. Go on trusting, and believing.

Rev. Mike Weldon

FAMILY NEWS

Happy Birthday to BMS Birthday Scheme Members - March

4th John Ware

Ethan Davies

7th Margaret Morton

With one voice we must surely give thanks for we have escaped the eye of the past storms which have caused havoc and heart break for so many countrywide this past month. Granted, the wind and rain affected us and evening services were wisely cancelled as gusts of strong winds blew - at precisely 6pm; but we have all pulled through unscathed. Our prayers continue for all who have suffered and lost everything.

What joy – we are seeing an outpouring of God’s loving care and provision across all aspects of our church life.

As February rolls out our pastor will have finished the first phase of his treatment. To see him able to preach and minister in so many ways has given us great heart. Blessings abound as prayers bind us ever closer together.

The Building committee is worthy of second place and first in praise. They have steered us through the intricacies of restoration, bidding farewell to the dry rot, getting the caretaker’s cottage worthy of Seung Ho and Uni’s hard and dedicated work. There is more to be done on our church buildings; the volume of work will be on an unprecedented level but we have a buoyancy of expectation as we realise God’s guidance. He is honouring our commitment and love. "For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere," Psalm 84 v10.

I am well aware of the truth behind the phrase ‘the church is the heart of the people of God – not the building’. Rest assured our church family are by no means neglected. With so much illness around someone always phones, others call, they cook, they offer lifts and they pray. God is in the midst of us, Good Samaritans one and all.

Prayer has given Anita the strength to fight in her hour of need (in hospital) and Edward is kept strong in faith. Hear our church prayers for you both, Edward.

Mr Huw Morgan paid an unexpected and alarming visit to our hospital but all is well. Prompt attention and much good care has been evident and appreciated. The organ is waiting for you as are we. Bendith mawr, Huw.

We send Brenda Cadogan and all the family our deepest sympathy on the passing of Olwen Martin, Brenda's sister. Olwen became a member when she moved back to Bridgend. Her family looked after her with great devotion. Olwen's faith was 'built on solid ground' – boosted by her quiet yet firm convictions of its truths. The family would have us know how grateful they are to our pastor for officiating with such empathy and understanding.

Mr Brinley George took a fall but has recovered well. God bless you both. Mr Cyril Jenkins has also had a nasty fall. We reach out to you and Cynthia. Cofion cariataf.

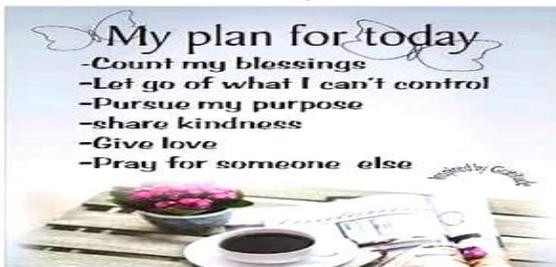
I, too, have fallen and managed to break the larger bone in my right wrist. Ouch!. (ED: Not practising parachute jumping as rumour has it! My thanks to you Rhonwen for your perseverance with your left hand as I did think I would have had to brush up on my shorthand to get the magazine done!) To my 'good Samaritans' I send my apologies and heart felt gratitude. Where would I be without you. I thank God for each one of you. Phil Chamberlain continues to push the boundaries – no comment! You are being monitored!!

We think of Mrs Barbara Harris as she is limited in what she can do at present. Get well soon, Barbara, your garden will soon be calling.

We pray for Helen, our pastor's wife as she has the first of her cataract operations this coming month.

To all who are at home caring for loved ones, all who are in constant, debilitating pain, to all who bear frustration and responsibilities with patience and faith we send you our love and support. How we all look forward to Spring and most especially Easter.

Helen writes "Please be aware that all our sermons are on line and you may like to highlight this to friends and family so they can listen to them too. Our magazine is also available on line and is in colour! Finally we are selling cards on Sundays in the school room. There are no costs so all the money taken goes to the church. We have a good selection made for Easter at a very reasonable price so come & buy early whilst you enjoy your tea & biscuits! We also have a good selection of birthday, thanks, get well etc. cards".



Month of Sundays...

	1 st March	8 th March
DUTY DEACONS	Mrs. Margaret Francis	
	Rev. Robbie Hall	Rev. Robbie Hall
	A Nod to Wales	Mr. David Drew
	Enid & Gareth James	Margaret & John Francis (52 nd Wedding Anniversary)
 AM PM	Enid James & Pat Fairfax	Lynne Chamberlain & Elaine Jenkins
	Pam Jones & Rosalyn Hogg	Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman
	COMMUNION PM Prep: Alison Evans	

Readers: March 1st Mrs. Helen Hall
8th Mrs. Eva Evans
15th Mrs. Alison Evans
22nd Mrs. Rosalyn Hogg

Deacons' Communion Rota

March 1st John Ware/Margaret Francis
22nd Maureen Turner/Rhonwen Miles
Philip Hogg/Mary Johnson

15 th March	22 nd March	29 th March
Mrs. Margaret Francis		
Mr. Neville Thomas	Rev. Robbie Hall	Rev Clive Jones
Rev. Stephen Pare		
Delyth & John Ware	Mrs. Nyfain Pugh	Mr. Geoff Hopkins
Yvonne Matthews & Rhyl Coleman	Rosalyn Hogg & Val Jenkins	Mary Johnson & Rosemary Rowe
Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh	Pam Jones & Rosalyn Hogg	Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman
	COMMUNION AM Prep: Rosalyn Hogg & Val Jenkins	

Tuesday@Hope

- 3rd Mr. David Drew
- 10th Mr. Paul Thomas
- 17th Mrs. Linda Jenkins
- 24th Mr. Derek Slark
- 31st Mr. Keith Johnson

WHAT'S OCCURRING!

SUNDAY'SCOOL NEWS

Congratulations to Morgan Ward who was 18 on Sunday, 23rd February. We wish you every success in all that you do. God will bless you as you stand on the threshold of your career. Congratulations also go to Eloise on her performance in Guys & Dolls. We are now looking forward to preparing for Mother's Day and Easter.

Pam Jones

CHRISTIAN AID

Once the long month of January is over we start to think about Easter. Ash Wednesday is February 26th, marking the start of Lent. As a church we plan once again to support Christian Aid's 'Count Your Blessings' scheme. This year they focus on how climate change is impacting the poorest communities in the world and what we, as Christians, can do to help.

There is a daily reflection and we are encouraged to give thanks or to pray for a particular need. On some days we are invited to give a small amount. We save up the contributions over the weeks of Lent and bring the total at Easter to send to Christian Aid.

The leaflets are in the porch. It's a great way to support Christian aid, but more importantly to really count our everyday blessings and with grateful hearts thank God daily for all He has done for us

Delyth Ware

THE FRIENDS OF HOPE COTTAGE - TEA PARTY

Thank you to all who supported the Tea Party on Saturday 15th February. The weather was rather wet but we were delighted with the turn out.

Thank you to the catering team, to those who entertained us with a variety of acts, to those who helped on the stall and a special thank you to the young people who gave out quiz papers and helped on the stall and entertained us with their musical skills.

We raised the fantastic sum of £1,235.00 which with a previous donation received, means the total raised comes to £1,735.00, which means we can easily go ahead with the renovations required. A big thank you to all.

Neil Jenkins

MISSION HOME AND AWAY – HILDA’S WALK

Just an advance notice that Hilda’s Walk will be taking place again on Easter Saturday, 11th April starting at 10.30 a.m. from the Rest Bay Car Park. More details in next month’s magazine.

Neil Jenkins

CHRISTIAN AID QUIZ

Don’t tell me that we don’t listen and learn as Robbie teaches and preaches the gospel. Hope had 2 tables representing us and we came 2nd and 3rd! Well done everybody, We hear that it was an enjoyable evening. Thanks to all who attended.

To the further glory of God, the organ has had a complete overhaul. Both Paul and Huw are delighted, as are we all, for we can appreciate what a wonderful organ we have in sound and beauty.



What's occurring ... we might well ask!!

Storms have battered our country. We knew they were on their way but precisely where they were heading for remained a mystery. Sadly no amount of last minute preparation was enough to hold the waters back. My heart goes out to all who are absolutely devastated . Right now our hearts are heavy.



We have had so much thrown at us recently; one political wave after another. Are we to be battered further by the storms of Brexit. Are we to face the undisputed catastrophe of climate change all because we have been so irresponsibly unprepared?. We can but thank the 'front liners' and all who are working so hard to keep us and the planet safe. The fact is we are reeling because we are woefully out of control.

Neil Portman is often quoted as saying that, "Science does not provide the answers most of us require"

To the question "How did it all begin", science answers "probably by accident." (Bertrand Russell)

To the question "How will it all end" science answers, "probably by accident". To many people, this accidental life is not worth living.

In his book 'Epic' John Eldredge reminds us that " life does not come to us like a mathematical problem - it comes as a story - it unfolds, scene by scene...we have to take the journey as it comes" with all sorts of characters playing their parts in all sorts of settings.

We all have our own story to tell; we all love to hear the stories of others. We curl up with a good book or watch a film. "Stories are our equipment for living" says screenwriting teacher Robert McKee. Other people's life stories help us to write our own.- divulging who we are, why we are here and what we are to do. So why are we getting so much of it so wrong.

The world itself has its own story - larger, more complex than any human mind or any computer can fathom - .and we have lost it. You must have said many a time, "we've lost the plot". No! We haven't lost a plot, we've lost a story – The Story. The Larger Story. The story about God and His creation, His relationship with His children.- with you and me. It is a story we cannot escape from, for the author has "planted Eternity in the human heart".

Nature was not generated by a computer but by a person. It is personal in nature. Only personality begets personality. There is this wondrous sense of interdependence, - of unity, of wholeness all around us.

One of the deepest of all human longings is the need to belong, to be invited in. When that longing is suppressed, when we are snubbed, abandoned even by our own reasoning, or the 'reasoning' of others – it is then that loneliness seeps in – seemingly uninvited!

We have known the truth behind the lyrics” It takes two”. Two to quarrel, two to share, two to have a conversation, two to love. Dare we say that God gets lonely for need of our conversation and love. I think we can. Sunday by Sunday, Robbie, our pastor, diligently opens up the scriptures and reminds us that Jesus came to tell us that God seeks out the poor in spirit, the lonely and those who have lost their way. We need constant signposts, constant reminders. ”Here I am, in the midst” always, forever in the midst – in your heart and mine.

Floods bring helping hands and newly formed communities.

Friendships will be forged this night because someone went the extra mile.

Because a need was met, food was passed around – the hungry were fed. Someone knocked on a door with shovels and brushes sweeping the floors, asking for nothing in return.



Who would have thought that such kindness, such sacrifice of time and effort would be given by so many to those who were in greater need than themselves; known or unbeknown they are releasing the power of God that dwells within each of us.



I forgot, Lord, that you are Love,

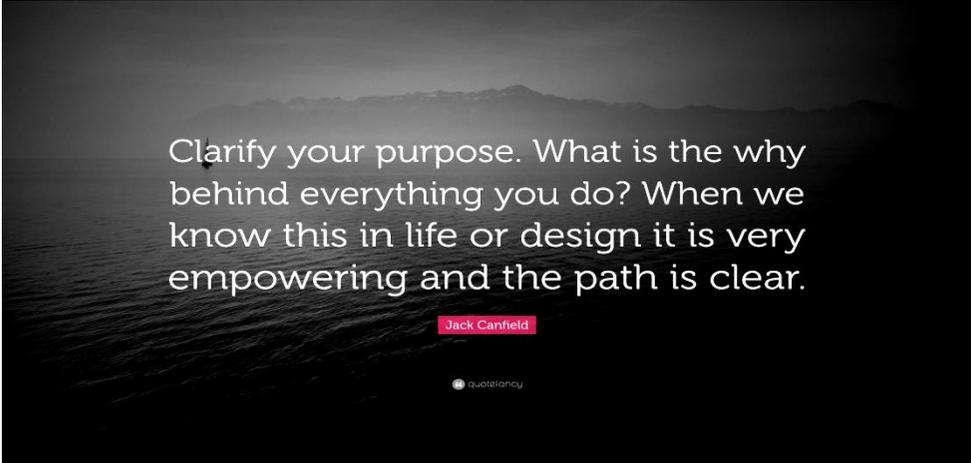
And that love has come down among us.

I forgot, Lord, to let myself be loved..

Rhonwen.

A New Purpose

Jacob Davis was a tailor with a problem. It was the height of the Gold Rush in the 1800s American West and the gold miners' work trousers kept wearing out. His solution? Davis went to a local dry goods company owned by Levi Strauss, purchased tent cloth, and made work trousers from that heavy, sturdy material – and blue jeans were born. Today, denim jeans in a variety of forms (including Levi's) are among the most popular clothing items in the world and all because tent material was given a new purpose.



Clarify your purpose. What is the why behind everything you do? When we know this in life or design it is very empowering and the path is clear.

Jack Canfield

quoteancy

Simon and his friends were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Then Jesus arrived and called them to follow Him. He gave them a new purpose. No longer would they fish for fish. As Jesus told them, “Come, follow me ...and I will send you out to fish for people” (Mark 1 v17)

With this new purpose set for their lives, these men were taught and trained by Jesus so that, after His ascension, they could be used by God to capture the hearts of people with the message of the cross and resurrection of Christ. Today, we follow in their steps as we share the good news of Christ's love and salvation.

May our lives both declare and exhibit this love that can change the lives, purposes and eternal destinies of others

Taken from The Bible in a Year

We Have to Smile

It was the first Sunday in February. 02/02/2020

Irene and Clive were excited. "It won't happen again in our lifetime. Today's date!. It's a Palindrome ..."

A quick check with Gareth and there it was! ...02022020
Palindromes.

The same forwards and backwards. 02022020

We were given another three. Thank you, Gareth.

MADAM I M ADAM.

A MAN, A PLAN, A CANAL PANAMA.

ABLE WAS I ERE I SAW ELBA.

=====

Before he retired Ted worked at a nuclear power station, monitoring the pressure of the boilers and the temperature of the zirconium alloy control rods in the reactor. Now he doesn't know how to set the correct aspect ratio on his television screen!

He leaves that to his 9 year old grand daughter!

Before she truly retires Maureen Turner will strive to complete her bucket list.

1. To learn how to ski. Anyone selling theirs together with splints?
2. To appear on the Antiques Road Show! Oops! That doesn't read well !!!!

Are they in the right order?

Maureen

Did you know that children come 'programmed' to smile; to live in the moment; to follow willingly; to try something new; to be helpful; to follow their dreams

With God's guidance it is up to us to show them how.

Food for Thought

If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,
He learns to be guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice

If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,
He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
He learns to find love in the world.

He is also programmed to be inquisitive but that's another story for another day.



OUR WEEK AT A GLANCE

For more information on any of our activities, please get in touch with the contact shown.

TUESDAY:

Tuesday Prayer Group	9.30am	Mrs R Rowe	(01656) 654881
Tuesday@Hope	11.00am	Mrs M Johnson	(01656) 656346

WEDNESDAY:

"Busy Fingers" Group	2- 4.pm	Mrs. H. Hall	(01656) 224015
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THURSDAY:

Baby & Toddler Group	9.30am	Dr D. Ware	(01656) 662948
Prayer Meeting	7.30pm		

SUNDAY:

Sunday'sCool	10.00am
Morning Service	10.30am
Evening Service	6.00pm

WHO TO CONTACT AT HOPE

CHURCH CONTACT:	hopebaptist@hotmail.co.uk	07866 746851
CHURCH PASTOR:	Rev. Robbie Hall	07866 746851
SECRETARY:	Rhonwen Miles	(01656) 654169
TREASURER:	Paul Evans	(01656) 661986
CARETAKER:	Seung Ho & Yun Hee Kang	(01656) 646911
USE OF PREMISES & SAFEGUARDING	Sally George	(01656) 668791
NEWSDESK:	mag4hope@yahoo.com	Rhonwen Miles/ Pam Jones

HOPE

BAPTIST CHURCH

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

(Church Meeting 010503)

We will EVANGELISE our community & beyond.

We will encourage people to become more Christ-like through
DISCIPLESHIP.

We are committed to meeting the needs of those inside & outside
our walls through MINISTRY.

We will value FELLOWSHIP, recognising that it is a divine gift to the
church.

We will come before the Lord in obedience to WORSHIP Him.

Hope Baptist Church operates a safeguarding children and
adults at risk policy

www.hopebridgend.co.uk

www.facebook.com/HOPE-BAPTIST-CHURCH-BRIDGEND

[1699576150319699](tel:1699576150319699)

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