

And are You, Lord, about to give
Another year to me?
Then help me, Lord, that I may live
And spend it all for Thee.

My breath of life, my strength of days,
My food from day to day,
All come from You; then let me praise
And serve You all the way.

I know not what You have in store
For such a one as I;
But help me, Lord, to love You more
Than in the years gone by.

Lord, I resolve, whate'er the test,
To serve You without fear;
And by Your grace I'll give my best
Throughout this coming year.

Anon

SEEKING TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS IN THE COMMUNITY



A Farewell to Jim & Sylvia



From the Church Leadership

Dear Fellowship,

On behalf of the church leadership I wanted to share a few thoughts with you as we enter this short period between Jim and Andrew's ministries.

Firstly, of course, I am sure this weekend of 11-12 January has been a time of sadness at saying farewell to our Pastor of nearly 15 years, but also of great joy as we worship together. There are fewer experiences that draw us closer together, than the times we share in worship and praise of our Saviour and Redeemer!

But then, secondly, we start to prepare and look forward to Pastor

This is my command--
Be strong and courageous!
 Do not be afraid or discouraged.

*For the Lord your God
 is with you wherever you go.*

-Joshua 1:9



Andrew starting his ministry with us officially from the 2nd March. As we progress into February we will let you know all the details as they develop. At the moment of writing, we expect Pastor Andrew, Alice and the boys to be with us for the first time (but not leading) on Sunday 16th February.

Between these two landmarks we pray that we will experience God's presence, and encourage all who worship regularly with us to feel a part of this time. We have arranged a variety of speakers for each of the seven Sunday's to lead us in worship.

If, during this period, you have need of pastoral care and advice, we have arranged for the Rev. Carole Jenkins (our Church Moderator) to be available, and she has agreed for anyone to feel free to contact her direct. Her phone number is available on the church noticeboard or from any of the church leaders.

For all other practical matters either speak to Fiona in the office or call me on 07756 231133 any time.

God bless,

Martin Palmer, Church Secretary

THE CHURCH MAGAZINE can only be as useful as YOU make it, so please pass on anything you think will be of interest to the fellowship. FINAL COPY DATE for the April issue is Sunday 15 March 2020.

So... See me on Sunday's, phone me on 01732 491607 or Email me at martinpalmer1@sky.com

God bless, Martin P.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sunday Services

start at 10.30 am

Grape 7 for 3-10 year olds

During Sunday service

Contact: Stefan Reckless

01732 669692

Rascals

for pre-school children & babies. Meet

Wednesday's from 10.00-11.30am

Contact: Sheila Pearson

01732 454524

Frantic Fridays for 8-11 s

Meet Friday evenings at 5-7pm

Contact: Stefan Reckless

07772 792035

Vibe Youth Club for 11-16 s

Meet Friday evenings at 7-9pm

Contact: Stefan Reckless

07772 792035

CHURCH CONTACTS

Church Leaders:

Church Secretary - Martin Palmer

Finance - David Wheeler

Maintenance - James/Colin

Outreach - James Penn

Pastoral - Hazel Elliott

World Mission - Martin Palmer

Worship - Alan McNaughton

Youth Ministry - Stefan Reckless

Home Group Leaders:

Helen Ellis

Richard Francis

Jenny Marchant

Monica Wain

Data Protection Officer:

Martin Palmer

Prayer Chain:

Felicity Boyden / Hazel Elliott

Church Magazine:

Martin Palmer

CONTACTS:

PASTOR: contact Martin 07756 231133

ADMINISTRATOR: Fiona Murray 01732 360866

SECRETARY: Martin Palmer 01732 491607

YOUTH WORKER: Stefan Reckless 07772 792035 email: stefan_reckless2@hotmail.co.uk

The church office is open Tuesday & Thursday 9am - 3.30pm

Vine Baptist Church, Park Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 3UP. Tel. 01732 740634

vinebaptistchurch@talktalk.net **www.vinebaptistchurch.org.uk**

I believe over the past 15 years, Jim and Sylvia have been greatly used of God in many ways at VBC, undertaking the massive modernisation of the church buildings (an amazing step of faith), which has transformed the old Victorian church into a modern, flexible and user-friendly sanctuary, greatly enhancing the church's ministry within the community. Jim's gift of preaching has brought hope, encouragement and inspiration to many over the past decade and a half, along with his compassionate and caring pastoral support.

Both Jim and Sylvia's musical gifting has enhanced the worship tremendously. Sylvia's involvement and encouragement with support for the development of the young people in the church, running Youth Alpha, and having an open door policy at the manse, has been a true blessing to many. There never really is retirement in the Kingdom of God. God will continue to use the gifting's that He has given us to bless and help others, and I know that Jim and Sylvia will be a great blessing in their new home for many years to come.



I am always intrigued in the Bible to read that retirement age is not the end, just the beginning of a new exciting chapter of life and blessing. Old Testament characters such as Moses was greatly used of God when he was 80, as was Aaron at 83, Abraham at 75, Elizabeth at 80 and the list goes on, so watch this space!

Always remember that our hope and future is secure in Christ.

**Every blessing
Clive**

SUNDAY 12th January

We are looking forward to welcoming our dear friends Clive and Ruth Doubleday for the weekend. Clive & Jim will share leading the Sunday service and Clive will bring God's word.



**our Christmas collection
Raised £490
towards Spurgeon's
Childrens Homes &
Bulgarian Winter Fund**



BMS Birthday Scheme sends birthday greetings to:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 14 January | Gus Copeland |
| 18 February | Margaret Palmer Douglas |
| 27 February | Margaret Rattray |
| 2 March | Martin Palmer |
| 4 March | Miller Lang |
| 7 March | Shirley Lang |
| 11 March | Richard Marchant |

DIARY DATES

We have an exciting few months ahead, so don't forget...

JANUARY

Saturday 11th

Farewell Party from 6pm

Sunday 12th

Farewell Service with Clive Doubleday

Sunday 26th

Special Church Meeting following service to elect new Leaders

FEBRUARY

Sunday 9th

Church Prayer Meeting after service

Week of 10th

Pastor Andrew and family move into Manse

MARCH

Sunday 8th

Pastor Andrew's first Sunday

Saturday 14th

Welcome Service & Induction of Pastor Andrew from 1pm

Wednesday 25th

Church Meeting & AGM 8pm

Church AGM
Wednesday 25 March 8pm

Both members and regular attenders are welcome.

The theme for my message this Sunday is from Jeremiah 29:11

Our Hope and Future are in Christ



It is a real joy and privilege to be invited to share at Jim and Sylvia's final service here at the Vine. Somebody once said, constant change is here to stay. Human beings are creatures of habit and often resist change, but change can be a very positive thing for us all. We certainly live in changing times and we do not know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future! Our hope and future is secure in Christ:

and promise that our God is in control of the situation, because He always sees the bigger picture.

Psalm 145:8 reminds us that the Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. Our loving heavenly Father only wants the best for us and His desire is to bless His children, not harm them. The Old Testament Hebrew word for prosper is "tsalach", which is not merely about material wealth but has the idea of moving forward or making progress, accomplishing things humbly with God's help, and to succeed in what God calls us to do.

Continued on page 10

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Here Jeremiah is writing a letter to the people of God who are in exile in Babylon, facing a very difficult and depressing situation but these words from the Lord after 70 years of exile bring blessing, reassurance

and just a few memories...



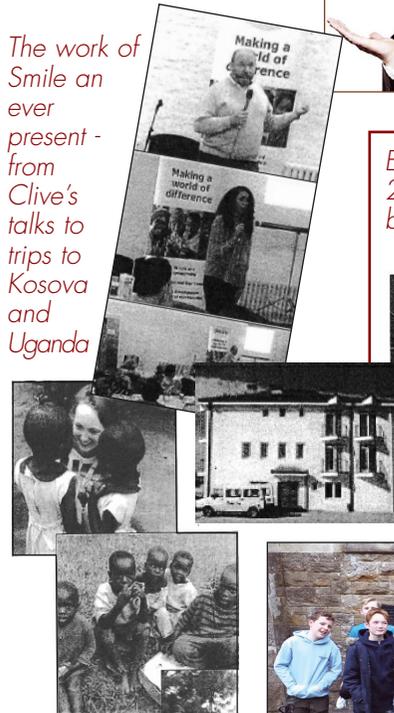
Saying farewell to Martin Maggie Williams as Martin enters Baptist Ministry training.



Outreach extravaganzas! ABBA 2013 Paul Kerensa 2017



The work of Smile an ever present - from Clive's talks to trips to Kosova and Uganda



Easter 2012 baptisms



Nicky & Barry



October '15 sees Jim's 10th Anniversary at VBC and more cake!



Syrian guitarist, Ayman Jarjour's annual concerts for Sevenoaks Welcomes refugees



A highlight of 2018 with Noel and Tricia Richards

Stefan and David (July 2019) with the youth at one of Stefan's dodgy bar-b-ques!



working with me, to take the Church forward in worship. I worked out some time ago, that we had taught nearly 100 new songs to the Church during my time here (I can hear some of you groaning at that, right now). But I hope and pray that most of you have been helped in your worship through the new AND the old songs. Thank you, Fiona.

And, finally, thank you to Sylvia for all she has done, not only in the past 15 years in the Church, but throughout my 30 years of Ministry. She has been there through thick and thin - she has seen the good, the bad, and the ugly! and yet has been there, to support me. But not only that, the Church has much to be grateful for because of the Ministries Sylvia has been involved in - whether her musical gifts; working with our Young people (Grape 7, Youth Alpha, the Community choir etc etc). And for cooking so many

lovely meals for all those we were able to have round to the Manse. And on top of all this has been Head Teacher of two schools here in Kent - a massive job in itself. Thank you, Sylvia for all you have done.

And now, we and the Church move on. You to a new Minister, Pastor Andrew, and his wife Alice, and their family. I pray that you will give him and his family your full support, as you seek to find God's will for the way forward for this Church.

And for myself and Sylvia - well it's down to Hampshire, to be closer to some of our family, and to make a fresh start - and to discover what God has in store for us over the coming months, and years (in His will).

May God bless you all,
Love,

Jim



A Final Farewell

Well ... this is it ... in the words of Frank Sinatra, 'And now the end is near, and so I face the final curtain'



..... EXCEPT

I hope I can say that instead of doing it 'My Way' ... we did it 'God's Way', as best we could! After 14 years and 4 months as Minister, it is time to say 'Goodbye.' It is a very strange feeling for me because it was 15 years ago that I came to be interviewed by the Leadership - January 2005 - it is a long time ago, but in many ways it seems that the time has flown by.

I believe that many things have changed in the Church over that time - hopefully mainly for the

good! The most important thing for me is that I hope and pray my Ministry has in some ways touched people's lives for the good - that through my Ministry here at VBC that God has transformed lives.

The transformation to the physical building has been enormous during this time - and I believe has helped this building become a tool which has enabled us as Church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the Community, bringing people closer to a loving and caring God.



Part of my brief when I came, was to lead a major building project (almost £1 million), to enable the Church to be at the heart of the Community. And, today, you can come down to

the Church on almost any day of the week, and find it buzzing with all sorts of activities going on - from Counselling groups to baby Ballet etc etc.

During the latter years, we employed a part-time Youth Minister, Stefan, to start to reach children and young people in the Community, and to help to retain and grow our teenagers in the Church. And I am delighted to have worked with Stefan over these past years, and to see over 40 young people regularly attending our Friday night clubs.

Of course, all the regular things a Minister has to do, still go on - from preaching, leading

worship, visiting those in need, taking funerals and weddings etc. And it has been my delight and privilege to have been able to be involved in the crucial times of the lives of families in this Church - both the good times ... but, especially, the sad times. Thank you.

As my Ministry comes to a close here at VBC, it also brings to a close almost 30 years of full-time ministry, where I have had the great pleasure of serving in 3 churches, Kings Road Evangelical church in Berkhamsted, Sudbury Baptist Church in Suffolk, and here at VBC. It has been an exciting, and at times 'interesting' journey, but through it all I

The church interior before modernization...



believe that somehow God has been able to use a short, pretty insignificant man, with a stutter! to bring God's Word week after week - and I have been amazed at what God has done in people's lives. PTL!

During my time at VBC there are too many people to name and thank each and everyone personally, for your help and support during my time here. I would, though, like to thank the five Church Secretaries who have helped me during this time. I have also greatly appreciated the work of the many Ministry Leaders who have served alongside me during my time here. Thank you. I wouldn't have been able to do what I have done without the wonderful work of the Pastoral Care Team, who have ministered to the elderly and vulnerable people.

Thank you to those of you in this Church who have encouraged and supported me (and Sylvia) during my ministry here - through the highs and the lows - it has been greatly appreciated. A special

thanks to Monica, not only for her work with the Mission Team, but also, her constant notes of encouragement to me. Many thanks Monica.

There has been one person in the Church, though, who has worked with me, and joined the staff at the same time as I did - and that's Fiona. She has worked tirelessly in the office (along with her team of Ann and Davida), to support me in my work here - day in and day out. Without that help and support, I would have fallen off the cliff a looong time ago. Thank you so much. Fiona also spent most of my years here as my Worship Team leader - she has done a brilliant job, I believe, in

