



# Link Up!

## 'The Lord is with you Mighty Warrior' Judges 6:12

### Looking forward to June

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June we will be having our monthly Prayer Service including communion. Graeme Smith will be leading that service.

Then on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June, Rev Melanie Pike one of the ministers at United Church Ferndown will be leading our service and continuing our series in Luke's gospel.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, the congregation from The Vine Church in Poole will be joining us for a combined service where one of their leadership team will be preaching.

Finally on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June, Stephen Ashby will be back with us again continuing our Luke series.

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June, after the morning service, we will be holding our schedule Church Members' Meeting. Please bring your own lunch and we will provide drinks. Apologies for absence can be given before the meeting to Janet.



Anyone who knows me will know that I love the Bible stories about real people and their encounters with God. That's because they are flawed, human beings just like all of us and it gives me encouragement that God still used them despite their faults.

I've been looking recently at Gideon, whose story is told in the book of Judges. When God's messenger first encountered Gideon in chapter 6, he is hiding away in the winepress threshing grain for fear of the Midianites who were terrorising Israel. The angel calls him 'Mighty Warrior' and I wonder if he had his tongue in his cheek as he said it. God's message is that Gideon is to lead Israel into battle against the Midianites.

## Other news

Janet & John will be away from 3<sup>rd</sup> June until 11<sup>th</sup> June on holiday. In their absence, please contact one of the other Deacons outside of working hours about anything urgent.

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July, Carri Hall is putting on a meal to raise funds and interest in the work of Orfund who have the Molima home in Malawi. This event is taking place at The Gateway Church in Alder Road and starts at 5.45pm. If you would like to go to this, there is a list on the notice board in the entrance for you to put your name and food preference on.

For many years our friends at Parkstone Baptist did a community fun night they called Neighbourhood Night when they invited people in the community to come to the church car park and hall for hot dogs, bouncy castle and other inflatable games. They haven't been able to do one for a few years and, as part of our conversations we have been having together about things we might be able to do with the other Baptist Churches, they wondered whether the three churches might be able to revive the Neighbourhood Night idea and invite people from both our communities and groups like the Smile families to join us. The evening we are talking about is Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September. Does this sound like something you would be able to get involved in? Let Janet or Stephen know as soon as possible.

Move forward to the end of the chapter and we see the well-known part of the story where, having summoned the tribes to come and join him, Gideon is still struggling to believe that God is going to use him to defeat the enemy. He asks God for a sign by putting a sheep's fleece out overnight, where the fleece will be wet with dew while the surrounding ground dry. God doesn't tell Gideon off for asking for this and, even when Gideon asks for the reverse to happen the following night, God understands Gideon's anxiety and doubts and proves his word to him.

Then in chapter 7, when the Israelites army had assembled, God tells Gideon that his army of 32,000 was too big! If you do the sums in chapter 8, you'll find that the Midianites and their allies numbered 135,000!! But God tells Gideon that it is important that the Israelites realise that it is God who has won the battle for them. So firstly, he tells Gideon to send home anyone who is scared, then he tells him to test them by seeing how alert they are when given the chance to take a drink. Those that drank while keeping their wits about them are the ones who pass the test. The others are all sent home. He did this so that he was left with the people who courageously trusted in God but were also alert and ready to fight in His power. Eventually Gideon is left with 300 men and God helps them win the battle and drive Midian back where they came from.

What can we learn from Gideon's story? Well firstly, that God can use even the most timid and nervous person if they put their trust in Him. Secondly, that God understands our doubts and anxieties and he's willing to affirm his word to us if we ask Him to. Lastly, we learn that with God's help and power, even the smallest group of people can do amazing things for Him.

On this, our Day of Prayer, let's pray that, as a church and as individuals, we will be willing to trust God and obey His will even though we feel outnumbered and overwhelmed.

*Janet Matterface*