

Longfleet Baptist Church

Newsletter No 199
21 October

Link Up!

‘Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.’ Isaiah 55:6

For the rest of October:

On 25th October, Ken will complete our series on Hot Topics by looking at ‘Suffering’. There will be an opportunity for prayer at that service.

Looking forward to November:

On Sunday 1st November Ken will taking a Sunday off and Janet Matterface will be leading the service with an All Saints Day theme.

On Sunday 8th November it is Remembrance Sunday. Our service will start at 10.45am and we ask everyone to be seated by that time.

On Sunday 15th November we will be looking at the theme of The Temple

Then on Sunday 22nd November Ken will be taking another Sunday off and Stephen Chaloner will be leading our service.

Finally on Sunday 29th November we will be joining Parkstone Baptist Church at their service which starts at 10.30am.

Encouraging Signs of our times

I'm probably one of the few people who still spends quite a bit of time on Facebook! For me, it's a great way to keep in touch with friends scattered around the country and overseas, and I still enjoy the occasional cat or dog video. Alongside that, I watch a lot of YouTube content on subjects that interest me, including singing, nutrition (the Carnivore diet mainly), and of course, Christian teaching and encouragement.

Lately, I've been particularly encouraged by what seems to be happening across the UK as more people explore the Christian faith. One of the most visible examples has been the growing number of large baptism events that have drawn both believers and seekers together.

You may have heard about the beach baptisms organised by Merlin Croft, better known online as *Bible Lad UK*. Merlin isn't a pastor, just a committed follower of Jesus who shared a simple video of a baptism online. The response was extraordinary and blessed by God. People began asking questions about faith, salvation and baptism, and many expressed a desire to publicly declare their faith in Christ. What started as a simple invitation led to around 170 people being baptised in the sea at Bigbury-on-Sea in Devon. Praise God!

There have also been large baptism gatherings at Boscombe Beach in Bournemouth, organised by churches working together through the Bournemouth Church Collective. Hundreds gathered to celebrate as people publicly professed their faith in Jesus Christ. Whatever people's reasons for first attending, I am encouraged that local churches have been surrounding these new believers with prayer, fellowship and discipleship. Let us join in, praying that those who have recently been baptised will continue to grow in their faith and walk closely with the Lord.

Another encouraging trend is the growing interest in the Bible itself. According to figures reported by Bible Society using Nielsen BookScan data, Bible sales in the UK have risen. The number sold jumped from 192,000 in 2019 to 396,000 in 2025. Bible Society has described this as part of a "Quiet Revival", particularly among younger adults in Generation Z (that’s ages 18-24 currently), though the growth in interest is showing across all age groups.

Then in the evening on the 29th the Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Baptist Cluster will be holding a Cluster Advent service at Christchurch Baptist Church at 7pm. Anyone wanting to attend but needing a lift should see one of the leadership and we will see what can be arranged.

Other Notices:

On Sunday 15th November we will be holding a Church Members' Meeting after the morning service. Members, please bring your lunch as usual and we will provide drinks. Agendas and other paperwork will be sent in advance of the meeting.

On Saturday 21st November we will be holding our annual concert for Poole Lifecentre and Foodbank with Bournemouth Male Voice Choir between 4 – 5pm. Tickets are free but we ask that those attending either bring items from the Foodbank Christmas Parcels list or donate towards the running cost of the Foodbank. Tickets can now be ordered either from our church website or from our Facebook page. If you have a problem doing this then see Kim or Janet to order tickets.

Some argue that people may simply be interested in the Bible as a historical or cultural text and yes, this may be true for some. But we know that every Bible opened is an opportunity for someone to encounter God's truth and to receive His gracious invitation to know Him. Scripture tells us, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Let us pray with expectation for all those who are searching, reading and asking questions, that they may come to know Christ for themselves.

I know that there is darkness in the online space, but God, through His church and by His Spirit, is there too, and social media can be a powerful tool for sharing the gospel. There is some excellent Christian content available on YouTube and Facebook. There are apologetics channels and evangelism, and thoughtful responses to common questions about Christianity, designed with seekers in mind. There is the crowd funded series "The Chosen", also driving people to the bible to read the accounts of Jesus for themselves. It encourages my heart to see us contending for Christ in these spaces.

As many of you know, I help look after our church's social media presence… and I fit this in where I can (so it is a bit as and when). It is a wonderful opportunity to reach people we may never meet in person. I would really value your prayers, asking that God would guide what we share, direct my thoughts as I create content and help us communicate His love faithfully and effectively.

I would also love to involve more people from our church family. Would you be willing to record a short video sharing why you follow Jesus and what difference He has made in your life? Perhaps you could read a favourite Bible verse or offer a brief prayer for our community. If you have ideas or suggestions, then let's have a chat sometime.

The reason I suggest video is simple: people engage far more with faces and voices than with written posts alone. More importantly, authentic stories speak powerfully. If we want people to know that God is real, that He loves them and that His Spirit is still at work today, then they need to see that reality reflected in our lives.

A shameless plug!!! For those that are able, please do "like", "follow", "subscribe" to the Longfleet Baptist Church content on YouTube (our Diving Deeper podcasts), our Facebook posts and videos and visit our church website occasionally! This will help the algorithm to "see" that people are interested in Christian content and it then is more likely to share the content with seekers near us.

I know some of what I've written about here will be "a foreign language" to some of you... that's absolutely okay! We are a diverse body for His glory and we are called to different types of service for our Lord Jesus. If you never go online or have anything to do with social media I do completely understand. I wanted to share that God is very much in the physical community AND the online community. He is Lord of all. And His Kingdom surely comes. Amen

Kim Chaloner