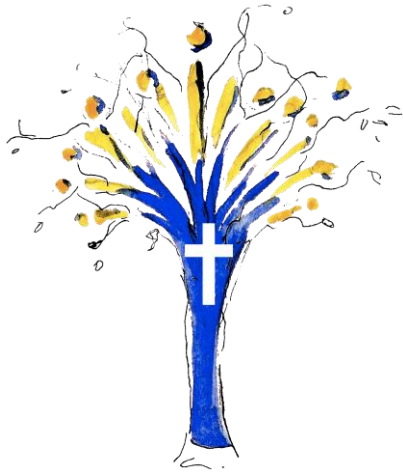


Off the Record



From **MAGOR
BAPTIST CHURCH**

*Growing and sharing
in God's love*



SUMMER 2024

"Thinking about what we think about"

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."
(Philippians 4.8)



I've been thinking about what we think about, and I've been doing it all week. So, here are some thoughts for you for a whole week.

Monday : *brothers and sisters, whatever is true ... think on these things.*

What goes on in our heads directly affects how we behave, and reveals what we value. Right thinking leads to right doing. Of all places where truth is told, and where what is true is faithfully upheld, the church of Jesus Christ should be the safest place for truth. So when we talk about someone, we are called as followers of Christ to choose our words carefully, to be curators of truth, and persons of trust.

Tuesday : *brothers and sisters, whatever is worthy of respect ... think on these things.*

In a culture that often glorifies the trivial, values the superficial, and takes pleasure in demeaning and diminishing others, respect is an important antidote. Christians are called to a life that honours each person, and refuses to play the game of not taking other people seriously. The word can translate as treating others with dignity - a recognition and respecting of the image of God in each and all human persons.

Wednesday : *Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is just...think on these things.*

This is a key word in Christian vocabulary. We are justified (made just) by faith; the just shall live by faith. The life that flows from being made right is characterised by right behaviour. Thus we welcome others as Christ welcomed us; we love because God first loved us; we forgive as forgiven sinners. In all our relationships and ethical choices, we live the life of the justified, walking in holiness, couriers of the love of God, doers of what is right, and just.

Thursday : Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is pure...think on these things.

It's 'a pure disgrace, says the person who regards something as outrageously wrong and completely unacceptable. It's a phrase that captures the exact opposite of what Paul means here. To think of whatever is pure is to look for, consider, and try to emulate in our thoughts and actions what is pure grace! To admire and encourage self-giving service; to acknowledge and give thanks for acts and words of kindness; to see the good and recognise the worth of those whose lives intersect with our own. Paul is writing to a church where some folk are at loggerheads. This whole verse is a call to a changed mind-set, to think of each other with the mind of Christ.

be curators of truth, and
persons of trust ...
couriers of the love of God,
doers of what is right.

Friday : Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is lovely ... think on these things.

Fill the mind with what is good, true and beautiful. Think about what is lovely, and loveable. Paul is pointing away from the ugliness of negativity, criticism, and never seeing anything good in someone else. This old chorus gets it spot on:

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me / all God's wondrous compassion and purity / O, thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine, / till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

Yep, that will do! With the heart and eyes of Christ, think about "all that is beautiful in creation and in human lives." Think of whatever calls forth love - and do it!

Saturday : Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is of good report ... think on these things.

The word means commendable, whatever is good and praiseworthy. Think about the kind of things that enhance and enrich your life and the lives of others. Such thinking is the opposite of the spirit of criticism. Again Paul is encouraging the kind of thinking that is amiable, friendship-building, having a reputation as someone who is conciliatory, and generous in spirit. Throughout this whole verse Paul is describing the recovery of a healthy ecology of the heart and mind, in which by God's grace, toxins are dealt with, and the channels of conversations and relationships are kept clear and clean.

Sunday : *If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

There you have it. Think! But think about what you are thinking. As someone wrote, "It's not what you think you are; it's what you think, you are!" Our inner life is mostly hidden from everyone else, except God. But if we seek to faithfully follow Christ, then how we think, what we think, and why we think it, is an important and inevitable discipline of our discipleship.

Mark Thomas

THANKS!

We would like to thank the fellowship for your thoughts and prayers, beautiful flowers and cards we received following the death of our lovely mum, Marlene.

So many of you said and wrote such kind words about mum which were very much appreciated. Thank you also to those who visited us - it was indeed a great comfort and we very much appreciate your kindness.

We are grateful to Mark for his support and wisdom during this difficult time and officiating at mums funeral which was a very special celebration of mum's life. The number of people who attended was such a tribute to mum. The singing and music were uplifting and also grateful thanks to Ann for playing the organ so beautifully.

With love and best wishes to you all

Sandra, Justin, Mandy and family

CHURCH NEWS



Following their baptisms on 7th April Angela and Anastasia Smith, and Suzie Roberts were received into membership at the May and June communion services and more details can be found later.

A total of 30 blankets put together by Knit & Natter were gratefully received by the Welsh Refugee Council recently. They have also asked for donations of men's socks – put them in the SoX BoX in church please.



At the MAY DAY FAYRE, which was very well supported by the community, the tearoom raised £606 for Raven House and Uganda while the bric-a-bac/plant stall raised £400 for Ukraine and £122 for Readysteadygo - a local autism charity.

Fellowship News from Val Jones

We have just celebrated our 208th Church Anniversary with guest speaker Rev Dr Steve Finamore, President of the Baptist Union. We thank God for him and pray a blessing upon him for the future. Over 60 people enjoyed a fine lunch – a big **thank you** to all those who



helped with the catering. We thank God too for all the past ministers and their wives, each with their own special gifts, and we thank Him for directing Mark and Ann to us to lead us into the future.

We thank God for the life of Enid Guard who passed away peacefully at Cherry Tree Nursing Home on 22nd June. Enid together with her late husband Gerald played an active role in Ebenezer for many, many years. They were both much loved members and Enid was a much loved and respected District Nurse. She was mother to Philip and the late Janice and mother-in-law to Alvine and Paul. We extend our sympathy to the whole family and ask for God's love to surround them as they come to terms with their loss. The service of celebration for her life will be held here at Ebenezer Baptist Church on Tuesday 23rd July at 11am followed by cremation at Langstone Vale Crematorium.

Many of our older folk in the chapel are unwell at the moment and we pray for healing and peace for each and every one.

We pray for all those either sitting exams or waiting for results. We think of all those who are graduating from colleges or universities and pray that they will be able to find employment of their choosing to put to use the skills they have learned.

Summer is coming so look out for children's celebrations being held here at Magor Baptist. Dates will be on the Notice Board outside the chapel and on Face Book.

Whatever you are doing this summer, going on holiday, days out or just relaxing in the garden with family and friends, may you have a happy time and return to church, work or normal working week refreshed.



Wedding Blessing

We would like to say a huge thank you to the church family at Magor for allowing us to celebrate the forthcoming marriage of **Thomas Salsbury and Grace Koncsics** at the chapel on Saturday 22 June. Mark led a lovely service of blessing, with Anne accompanying the singing on the piano and Frank providing technical support on the sound-desk and Zoom - which enabled Grace's family in Pennsylvania to share in the celebrations. Christine, Gill, Pat and Bernie helped serve a buffet lunch, with drinks and cake and then, thankfully, washed-up

afterwards! Everyone who came commented on how welcoming the church was, and being able to sit (and play) in the garden to eat and chat just added to the relaxing occasion. Grace and Thomas are now in America preparing for their wedding on 27th July and then settling down to married life in Philadelphia. Please remember us and them in your prayers as we look forward to sharing in this further celebration across the Atlantic.

With blessings and love, David and Heather Salsbury.

New Members

Angela and Anastasia Smith

We were both born in Swansea with Angela spending most of her life there and Anastasia spending the first 9 months. We moved to Undy in 2001 and have lived here ever since. Angela spent 14 years working as a Lunchtime Supervisor in Undy School whilst Anastasia received a degree in Psychology from Swansea University and is currently working in project management.



In her spare time, Angela loves reading, walking and enjoying live music. But her biggest passion is Strictly Come Dancing (maybe we should have our own 'Magor Baptist Come Dancing'?!). Anastasia loves reading books, playing video games and seeing friends. Any conversation about books is guaranteed to get her talking for hours, in 2020 she managed to read 160 books!

Since first coming to Magor Baptist Church just over a year ago, we have felt so welcomed and accepted into the church family which we are so grateful for. Church is one of the highlights of our week which enables us to catch up with friends and worship God. We also find great joy in attending our house group on Wednesdays which has helped us grow in our faith. Our baptism was a massive milestone in our journey and we are so thankful for the grace of God and the fellowship of our church family. Such a gift!

Suzie (Sue) Roberts

I grew up in Newbridge and have lived most of my adult life in this area, the last 36 years in Undy. Originally, my chosen career was the RAF, but God had other plans and guided me towards teaching. I trained in Portsmouth, and after a 3-month teaching practice on the Isle of Wight, I fell in love with the island, which I now consider my second home. I've adored my time teaching the younger pupils at Lliswerry, Caldicot, and as a headteacher in Barry, it has been a privilege to be a part of so many young lives.



I have been truly blessed with a loving family; my son, daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters fill my life with JOY.

Since finishing my career, my time has been full of exciting activities, including my voluntary work at Sedbury Space, Yum Yums Undy, and previously working in St. Briavels. My hobbies include going to the theatre, wherever and whenever I can. I enjoy a wide range of music, most recently jazz. Music fills my life; I'm never happier than when I'm singing and dancing around the kitchen with my granddaughters. I also love travelling around the world, mostly as a solo traveller.

I've always believed in God and felt Jesus with me throughout my life; however, I hadn't realised the importance of fellowship. One sunny day, God led me back to Ebenezer. I came to Mark's inauguration and started attending weekly. One morning I came into the Chapel, filled with light, flowers, and smiling faces, and I knew this was where I belonged. I'm thrilled to be a member at Ebenezer after being baptised in April.

Report from Peter & Rose Kasozi

ROCK PROJECTS UGANDA



TOUCHING HEARTS, CHANGING LIVES

JAN-MAR NEWSLETTER

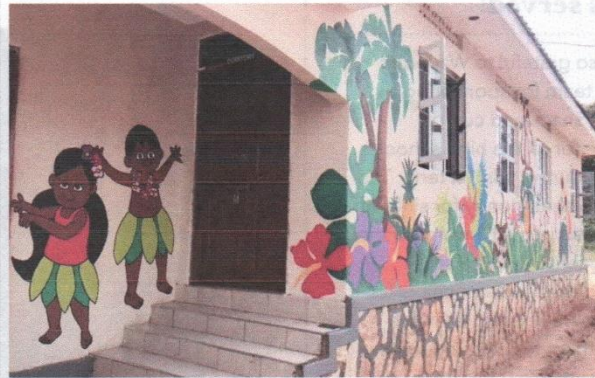
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P7 Candidates

It was such a joy to receive the results of our P7 candidates who had sat their national PLE exams last Nov. The results came back at the end of January and we are delighted to let you know both Kitetikka Pri School & Sunbeams Pri passed with only 1st & 2nd grade results - the best we've ever had! A huge congratulations to all our students.

A new look!

We had the real privilege of hosting Alan Christie, a friend from Scotland who is a very talented artist! He came to spend two weeks with us in Uganda and completely changed the look of Sunbeams dormitory. From boring and dull to all things bright and beautiful! With a theme of 'Our Father's World' the children are learning all about the different seasons and animals of the world. Thank you so much Alan, and to your church Albert Gospel Hall Christian Fellowship for all their support! Please see the photo to the right.



Where do we start!?

Sometimes it hard to put into words all that is going on in Uganda, as our ministry is so diverse and new situations arise on a daily basis! We are so grateful to God for allowing us to be a small part of making a big difference to many. Life here at times can be overwhelming as the need is so great, however we take comfort in this quote **'Do for one what you wish you could do for everyone.'** **Andy Stanley.** Whether it be helping a child, a sick patient or elderly grandmother we try as best as we can not to turn anyone away - however the reality is that resources and money limit us. So again, we would like to say how much we appreciate each and everyone of you who gives monthly or on a one off basis, your sacrificial giving makes this ministry more effective, and for that we are so grateful.





Meet Erin!

It's such a delight to have people come and volunteer with us. We are excited to have Erin Povey, 19, from Kent, England. Erin has come to volunteer for 2 months, and has already been a huge blessing! Working some days in Busiika and some in Kitetikka - the kids already love Auntie Erin!

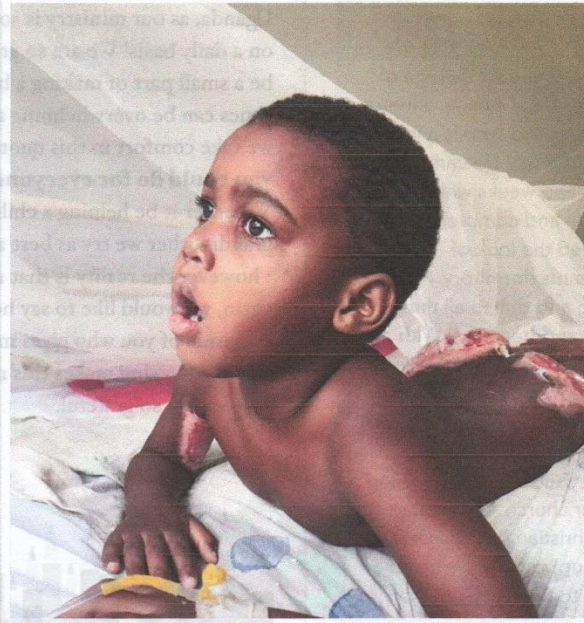
Shinah's story

CHILD SPONSORSHIP STORY

Shinah's life turned upside down last year when her lovely mother passed away unexpectedly. She was in P7 studying hard for her final national exams when she returned home one day and found her mum had passed away. Shinah has 3 younger siblings, and is the only one her mother had managed to support through school. Now with both her parents dead she only has her elderly grandmother there was absolutely no hope for Shinah's education to go further. However, we are so grateful to have a kind supporter who visited Uganda around the time of Shiah's mother's death and decide to sponsor Shinah to bring hope to her in this very trying situation and enable her to go to highschool. If you've been thinking about sponsorship, why not sponsor one of Shinah's siblings?

Kibanga Heath Center

During the week of Valentines, we decided to do a church outreach to the local government hospital. We asked church members to donate soap & sugar which we took to the sick patients. It was quite an experience as we soon realised that there was absolutely no medicine, not even paracetamol or disposable gloves - and yet the patients were many. When people go to a government facility here the medical care is supposed to be free but this is far from true. With no medicine and no care from doctors and nurses the only hope for help is to pass over money. There is no justice in this as most people don't have any so they are left alone and often die when they could have been saved. During our visit we met **Monira**, a 5 year old girl who's body had been badly burnt in a charcoal stove accident. We found Monira in extremely excruciating pain - and the worst part she wasn't receiving any care at all, not even a paracetamol to control the pain! Our hearts were truly broken for her, and her single mother with a young baby told us that she had prayed every night for God to send someone to come and help Monica. It was such a privilege to bring Monira to Kibanga Medical Center where she is now receiving the treatment, care and attention that she needs. We would love to give a huge thank you to everyone who has donated towards her care.



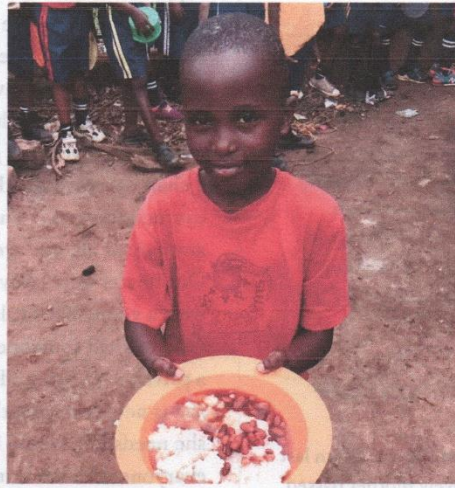


A great harvest!

Well 2024 has seen the greatest harvest of food at the farm! We've had over 800 kilos of posho (maize crushed & ground), an abundance of sweet potato as well as other products. A huge thank you once again to the kind sponsor who donated a brand new tractor. With prices of food ever on the rise we are delighted to have this harvest to help us feed the children at school!

Tea is served!

We are so grateful to Waypoint Mission team for sponsoring a morning snack and cup of porridge for all the high school students during this 1st term. The team also sent money for sinks to be installed into all 3 wards in the medical center. They also provided the funds for chairs for The Ark. We are so grateful to each of them for blessing us all in so many ways.



Gospel Crusade in Kitetikka

We started the year in the best way possible by having a 21 days Daniel fast and at the end of it had an open air gospel crusade for 5 days! It was wonderful and we were delighted to have Apostle Experito join us.

Thank you!

While we have so much to tell you we don't want to make this newsletter too lengthy, but instead promise to be update you a little more often.

For those of you who are sponsoring children in either Kitetikka or Busiika if you have not received an update in a while please let us know by email info@rockprojectsuganda.org or by text/call +447812975977

Lifegroups in Busiika

Church in Busiika continues to flourish, with new comers each and every week. Life groups mid-week have really been such a blessing for so many. We read the Bible, pray and support each other in smaller groups.

We'd like to remind you to follow Rock Projects Uganda on Facebook & instagram where we do regular updates.

Thank you so very much for all you do, words can't express how grateful we are.

With all our love,
RPU

Isooko Women's Cooperative Rwanda

By Mary Watkins

When I decided to travel to Africa to volunteer, I never dreamed that I would be drawn into the country - but Rwanda steals your heart! I have worked as a volunteer in Rwanda training teachers in 2014 and 2018 and have just returned from my 16th trip. I have made hundreds of Rwandan friends and have been very lucky that so many people in the UK have supported me and helped me to help many Rwandans to live better and more sustainable lives.

The money donated by Magor Baptist Church will do just that! I have set up a school, a women's cooperative and I run a charity (Friends of Rwandan Rugby) that employs Rugby Development officers to teach organised sport in schools and communities.



Isooko Women's Cooperative

There are currently 33 members of the cooperative. As well as making clothes for the local community they make items such as aprons, bags and fabric animals (giraffes and elephants) for me. I give talks to community groups and sell these items.

The money raised is used to further support the cooperative.

Since establishing the cooperative in 2021 we have been able to purchase 30 sewing machines, 4 knitting machines, an embroidery machine, a machine to place buttons and poppers, two industrial quality sewing machines, two overlockers, two electric machines and a variety of smaller items such as furniture – tables, storage cupboards, stools and chairs and cooking equipment so the women can cook lunch at the workshop. We have also been able to rent a large workshop as a base for the women in the village of Tara where the women live.

The group was originally composed of 7 tailors who had the skills but no machines. Since then, the majority of the members are vulnerable women who had no tailoring skills and no chance of a decent job. Most earned a

small amount through growing a few crops that they would sell in the local market.

I visit the group once or twice a year and it has been so good to see their confidence grow. For most of last year they had taken responsibility for the payment of the rent on the workshop and had won some contracts working with local technical colleges on a funded project to train teenage mothers to learn to sew. Due to the quality of the machinery we have purchased for the group, they are attracting more and more business. All school uniforms are hand made in Rwanda and this is proving a good source of income especially as we have been able to fund materials so they can produce a stock of readymade uniforms. (Buying 'off the shelf' is not usually done in Rwanda as tailors cannot afford to buy materials in advance – consequently there is a huge demand just a few days before the start of the academic year that tailors struggle to meet).



Donations have allowed me to arrange training for the women as well as machinery. We have used local experienced tailors to train the women to make basic clothing, as well as the items they make for me to sell. Recently we employed the services of Denis the Giraffe man. Denis has become famous in Kigali for making high quality fabric giraffes for the tourist industry. We arranged for him to spend four days at the cooperative (an 8 hour bus journey from Kigali) training 15 women to make giraffes and elephants.



I have told the women about the generous donation from Magor Baptist Church. They have asked me to pass on their thanks. I asked them to let me know how they would like to spend the money. They

have said they would like to buy a machine that will sew leather and for training to use the machine. This will allow them to make shoes and bags.

Mary spoke so passionately to Ladies Friendship recently that the church agreed to help the ladies of Isooko.



A reflection by Baptist President Steve Finamore in which he introduces his themes for the coming year.

My goal in this short article is to encourage us all to be more prayerful. I am particularly concerned that we should express thankfulness and that we should ask God to act in our lives. Doubtless, most of us will have lots of different things that fall into these different areas. There's lots I could write about but the ones I'm going to mention are about God's Baptist people – our family of churches, associations and colleges.

Thankfulness - be intentional about experiencing gratitude

Firstly, I want to say something about thankfulness. Nearly every time I watch the television or visit the cinema, I'm confronted with adverts. Most of these encourage me to want things that I don't need and can't afford. Occasionally, they hit a nerve somewhere deep inside me and I find myself longing for something that is out of my reach. If I'm not careful this can provoke me to be envious of those who do possess the car or watch that has become the object of my desire. A constant diet of advertising can leave me feeling dissatisfied and restless. The best way I know to address this is to be intentional about experiencing gratitude. It's so important to recognise that all the good things we experience come from God and that we should express our thanks for them. By and large, grateful people are not bitter or disappointed.

- *Do **you** ever feel unhelpfully influenced by advertising? Are there strategies you can think of that help you to handle this?*

This line of thought got me thinking afresh about the things I am grateful for. Among other things, I'm reminded of my first encounter with a Baptist church. It was over 40 years ago but I can still remember the feeling that I had arrived home. Here was a community where I could belong, and to which I could make a contribution. When they asked if I could serve as a deacon and church secretary, I was deeply appreciative. I thank God for that church – and for the association and union it belonged to – because it has, for all these years, provided me with a sense of family and with opportunities to serve.

- *Do **you** remember your own first experience of one of our churches? Are there things about it that make you grateful?*

Thank you for how you responded in the pandemic

I imagine there are lots of people who feel like me about a particular church or our networks of churches. This became evident during the pandemic. Our communities have always relied on people meeting together. When this was taken away, it was a real challenge to our sense of purpose.

Yet everywhere you looked there were people who stepped up and found creative ways to maintain our sense of belonging to one another. It was often hard work and was frequently thankless. In many cases churches have emerged well from the experience of lockdown but many have struggled. Where that's the case, there are people who feel somewhat discouraged.

For what it's worth, I would like to say how grateful I am to God for all the people who cared for our churches during that period. Not just the pastors but the church secretaries, treasurers, elders, deacons and all those without a formal title.

- *To what extent do you feel that **your** church is still impacted by the lockdowns during the pandemic? How did you maintain a sense of being church together? Are there people you are grateful to for their work in that period?*

These are just some of the reasons I am thankful to God, and I find that expressing my gratitude makes me appreciate what I have and makes me less concerned about what I don't have. It helps me to focus my prayers so they become less about what I want – if I'm not careful, that can become a long list – and become about what God might be doing or longing to do.

We need more leaders

When I try to reflect on what God might be doing, one of the things I think about is the students I worked with while I was on the staff of one of our colleges. We had ministers in training of all ages, but in the last few years we accepted a number in their 20s. There was a time younger students might have been turned away until they had more experience of the world, but it was clear that God was at work in their sense of calling.

I remembered my own experience of being asked to take on responsibility in the church and at work when I was in my early 20s. It was a challenge but extremely important in helping me to develop.

For these and other reasons, we accepted many of the younger applicants. Lots of them turned out to be excellent ministers and their enthusiasm and energy had a tremendous impact on the churches they served. I am not unaware of the current difficulties in the life of our union, but I do believe

they present us with opportunities to reset our thinking in ways that give room for God to move. One thing we will need is more ministers who are equipped for that future, and I think we should be encouraging people of all ages to consider whether God might be calling them to be pastors, chaplains, pioneers, evangelists or other kinds of servants among us.

- *In the end, only God can bring renewal to our churches. But there may be things we can do to help clear the path. Do **you** have any suggestions? What should we be praying for?*

... especially younger ones

More than this, I think we should have a particular emphasis on encouraging the emergence of younger leaders. I would like to see us all looking around our congregations and other gatherings and asking ourselves if there are young people we could encourage and mentor and in whom we could sow the possibility of serving God in ministry. I know this won't be right for all of them, but I can't help but feel excited about the difference that groups of young ministers might make in our churches. They could be the agents of the kinds of renewal for which many of us are longing.

- *Are there people **you** could be encouraging to think about ministry and other forms of service among us?*

My prayer is that we all try to encourage this to happen. I would love to see a kind of recruitment drive for a fresh generation of leaders. It would be great to see a national campaign featured in our publications and then to see this taken up within all our associations and colleges.

However, the most important thing will be to get all our ministers and congregations involved. I'm aware that not all our churches include young people and that many of us will have other priorities, but I would love to see us all making a concerted effort to pray for God to raise up a new generation of leaders for our churches, and to see all of us looking for opportunities to encourage young people to think about whether God may be calling them to service.

- *Next time you gather, be intentional and prayerful as you look around the congregation. Are there any young people **you** could be talking to about God's call on their lives?*

I suppose I am suggesting that our prayers should look backwards and forwards; back, with gratitude, to what God has done in the past, and forward with expectation of what he will do next.

First printed in Baptists Together summer 2024 magazine.



**WELCOME TO MAGOR & UNDY
COMMUNITY
FRIDGE**

MAGOR & UNDY COMMUNITY FRIDGE CELEBRATES ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY!

The beginning of June saw our first anniversary since opening on Friday June 8th 2023. It took almost a year in the planning, but we are proud that we have opened every Friday since then. We've had lots of visitors, including classes from Undy Primary School as part of their work on the environment. We talked to them all about how we are trying to do our bit to save food from landfill and encouraged them to tell their parents and carers all about us. We gave a talk to Magor Brownies recently and they had some great ideas to promote the Fridge and promised to help. We have Carly Bond from Citizens Advice Monmouthshire visit us regularly and she is available to give advice and guidance on a range of issues such as energy and debt advice to visitors.

We have recently been accepted by an organisation called Fareshare, this gives us access to some Asda Pillgwenlly and Duffryn products, it is only very small amounts at the moment but we have high hopes that it will improve and this will keep our food collections at a sustainable level. We welcome between 35-50 people a week to our Community Fridge, we have 16 volunteers who are on a rota, and we meet loads of lovely people. We have a few volunteer drivers but would love to have a few more on our books, if you're interested in helping out please pop in and see us or email magor.undy.cf@gmail.com

We are looking forward to the growing season again this year because last year many residents brought us surplus fruit, veg and plants from their gardens to share. We love receiving fresh eggs and vegetables from church and community members too, thank you! We would also like to thank the businesses that donate their surplus food to us, including Co-op Magor, Suzy at The Gate, Chepstow Garden Centre restaurant plus Fabulous Fish and the Farm Shop there as well, Subway Magor and the petrol station at Magor Services. All these businesses have been crucial to keeping us going. When you visit them, please mention us and thank them for their continued support.

Also big thanks to the community of Magor Baptist Church for hosting the Fridge and being so welcoming. One of our volunteers Annette has made us fabulous aprons and we now have name badges so that our visitors know who they are speaking to.

We encourage everyone to bring their own bags and find that most people do this now, so we continue to reduce our impact on the environment. Any food left over is given to local chickens or composted. We weigh all food that comes in and to date **we have saved 4,867kgs (almost 5 tons) of food from landfill.**

We have a Facebook page [Magor & Undy Community Fridge](#)

We are open every Friday 10.30 - 12 and all are welcome.

From all the volunteers at Magor & Undy Community Fridge

**Redwick History
Group
presents**



**The man behind
Redwick's landmarks
Hubert Jones, his life and legacy**

Saturday, 3 August 2024
1 - 5 pm
3 pm Unveiling of memorial bench



**Exhibition at
Redwick Village Hall
NP26 3DU**

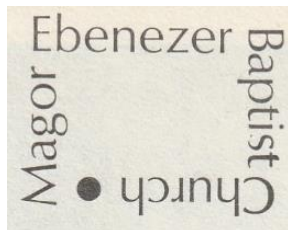
Free admission

If you missed last year's exhibition, '*The man behind Redwick's landmarks*', there will be another opportunity to see it on Saturday 3 August. Hopefully the weather will be better this year so that people can also enjoy visiting the different sites in the village (guide map available). At 3pm, we will also be unveiling a bench to commemorate Hubert Jones' contribution to village life.

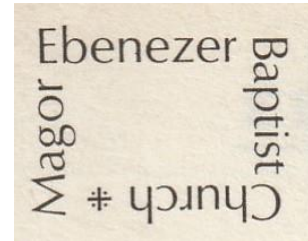
Snippets from the magazines, 50 years ago by Chris Leighton

June 1974

The weather was no better 50 years ago: *'A frosty nip in the early mornings and in the evenings a chilly wind, with occasional little bouts of rain.'*



The church had a number of 3" x 2" 'windscreen stickers' which showed the 'Ebenezer Baptist Church Magor', symbol:



Made by Bernard Hill (who had become a church member in May 1974), they were described as *an effective way of advertising your church and nailing your colours to the mast for the world to see*. Berni tells me that the filled-in circle soon developed into a cross:

Perhaps Berni would like to make some more with the current church symbol and suitably arranged wording!



Young Wives' Group

The speaker at their April meeting was Miss Thorne, from the Gwent Naturalist Trust. Formed in 1963 as the Monmouthshire Naturalists Trust, it was later renamed the Gwent Trust for Nature Conservation, and then the Gwent Wildlife Trust. Members were invited to join the society for a walk through the reserve in May. Have you visited the Trust's latest reserve which was opened last month – Bridewell Common, off Whitewall?

At their May meeting, Miss Reece from the South Wales Electricity Board, spoke about *'the use and abuse of deep freezing food'*. Many members *'learnt quite a lot of new tips and the rest of us realized just what we were missing'*. Freezers, for domestic use, had been introduced by the American Company, General Electric, in 1927.

Bible class outreach

The Young People's Bible Class had obtained much of the equipment needed to record services. They *'still need time to install some permanent wiring in the sanctuary but as a temporary measure and in a somewhat 'Heath Robinson' manner it works!* Recordings were enjoyed by housebound friends and others, further afield. They planned to extend the service in three ways:

- a) a member of the Bible class will visit homes and play the recording (free)
- b) cassettes posted to friends at a distance who would then return or send on to another friend (25p to cover postage and overheads)
- c) cassettes posted to friends to keep (£1 to cover cost of cassette and postage)

I wonder whether anyone still has any of the recordings?

July

A season of anniversaries: Bethany at Llanvaches - 165th; Ebenezer at Magor - 158th; Magor Sunday School's 129th; Salem at Redwick - 141st; and the 50th of the Monmouth district of 16 churches. At the annual assembly of the Monmouthshire English Baptist Association, the name was changed to the Gwent English Baptist Association. Furthermore, Salem Chapel, Redwick, transferred from the Welsh Association.

At the Redwick anniversary, there was a recitation of a poem, entitled, *Whose Delinquency?*

*We read in the papers, we hear on the air
of killing and stealing and crime everywhere.
We sigh and we say as we notice the trend,
"This young generation - where will it all end?"*

*But can we be sure that it's their fault alone?
That may be a part of it isn't also our own?*

*Kids don't make the movies, they don't write the books
that paint a gay picture of gangsters and crooks.
They don't make the liquor, they don't run the bars,
they don't make the laws and they don't buy fast cars.
They don't make the drugs that addle the brain;
it's all done by older folks, greedy for gain.*

*In so many cases we find this be true,
the label 'Delinquent' fits older folks, too.*

I checked online, but failed, to ascertain who wrote the poem. It features on many US church websites in the early 21st century, where there is also an additional verse before the one starting 'Kids':

*Too much money to spend, too much idle time;
too many movies of passion and crime;
too many books not fit to be read;
too much of evil in what they hear said;
too many children encouraged to roam
by too many parents who won't stay at home.*

The American version has a different ending:
Thus in so many cases it must be confessed
the label "Delinquent" fits older folks best.

Certainly something to ponder!

August

The Coffee Bar arranged a church cricket match at Undy Playing Fields: men *versus* youth; and later in the month **249 adults and children** went on the Sunday School outing to Bourton on the Water. (*pictures anyone?*)

The Young People's Bible class organized a '**Come Together**' - a musical experience in love, for soloists, singers, rhythm group and congregation. Part of it was recorded on their recently purchased electronic equipment. *'One visitor was thrilled to think the 'Come Together' which has been experienced in many of the large towns and cities throughout the country, should have come to Magor. Others, not necessarily the older ones, found it too 'way out' and would prefer the 'old-fashioned service'.*

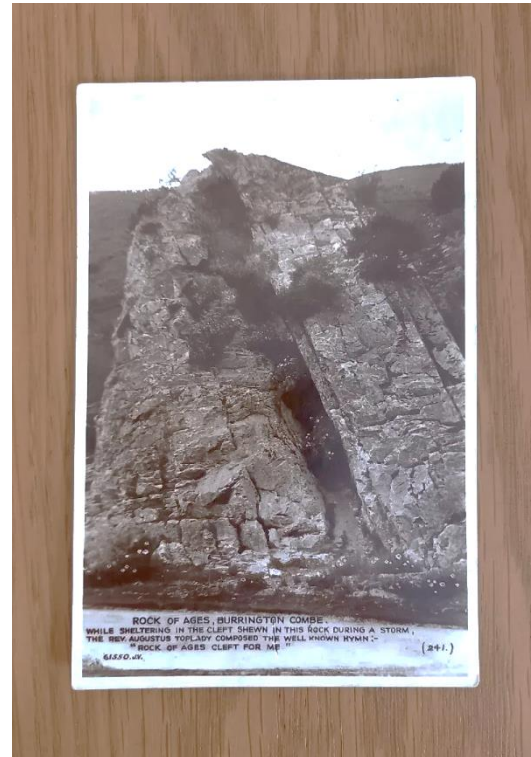
There was an SOS from the Sunshiners: *'Please eat more sardines! The sardines are good for you and the tins are good for us! They are used by our floral artists to enclose those attractive flower arrangements on the ledge in front of the pulpit ... and can be taken complete into homes and hospitals. Small rectangular meat tins are also used for the same purpose and would be welcomed.'*

Augustus Toplady 1740-1778

What a wonderful and fearful picture comes to mind when a story is told about clinging to a narrow gap in the rugged hillside to shelter from a storm. This could have been in the mid 1700's and there was no high-tech waterproof clothing in those days: a drenching storm could have been a life threatening event. If the event did happen just as hymn folklore tells, it seems to be a bit farfetched.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me

True, Augustus Toplady lived for a while near to Burrington Combe, and there could have been a time when he had needed to shelter from a storm. Between 1762 and 1764 Augustus Toplady was the curate at the village of Blagdon, this was his first church as an ordained minister in the Church of England. He was born in Farnham, Surrey but he and his mother moved to Ireland after the death of his father.



In August 1755, the 15-year-old Toplady attended a service in a barn where the sermon was preached by James Morris, a lay preacher from the Methodist Church. This sermon and one written in 1758 by Dr. Manton on chapter 17 of St. John Gospel, he would always remember and said they were important in helping him to respond to his effectual calling from God.

He studied at Trinity College, Dublin graduating in 1760 and was ordained in 1762 by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. He was to serve a number of churches in the South West of England. In 1768 he became the vicar of Broad Hembury in Devon. It was at Broad Hembury that Toplady wrote most of his hymns. In 1775 he became ill and his doctor said '*that the moist air of Devonshire was thought to be injurious for his lungs*'. He advised him to move to London.



In London Toplady became closely connected to Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, the founder of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion churches, and often preached in the Chapel in Orange Street just off Leicester Fields, now Leicester Square, to congregations of 1200-1500 people. "*He preached with the solemnity of a voice from the tomb and the joy of one on the verge of heaven.*"

His Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Worship, which contained 419 hymns of which some 133 were his own, was published in 1776. He also published Poems on Sacred Subjects and the Gospel Magazine. For a short time, he was the Editor of the Gospel Magazine and Rock of Ages was first published in the magazine while Toplady was the editor.

Augustus Toplady died on 11 August 1778, but his hymn **Rock of Ages** lives on and at one time was considered the country's most favourite hymn. These days it is not sung so often, but its underlying message is as pertinent for today as it was in the late 1700's. It is a hymn about sin and salvation, about the sinner and need, of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice. He, the Rock of Ages, is the sinner's sole refuge.

*"Nothing in my hand I bring
Simply to thy cross I cling".*

People cannot save themselves. It is by clinging to Christ, it is by coming to him, and fleeing to him that we are saved. The grace of God does the rest.

1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy wounded side which
flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
save from wrath and make me
pure.

2 Not the labours of my hands
can fulfil thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.

3 Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.

4 While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyes shall close in
death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

Christine Miles

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