

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 05 Nov - 10:30AM. *Stefan speaking*
Sunday 12 Nov - 10:30AM. *Remembrance Sunday*
Sunday 19 Nov - 10:30AM. *Malcolm speaking*
Sunday 26 Nov - 10:30AM. *Advent Sunday*
Sunday 03 Dec - 10:30AM. *Stefan speaking*
Saturday 09 Dec - AIM session: *Biblical counselling*
Sunday 10 Dec - 10:30AM. *Dr Andy Boakye speaking*
Sunday 17 December - 10:30AM. *Carol service*
Sunday 24 December - 10:30AM. *Service*
Sunday 31 December - 10:30AM. *Service*
Sunday 07 January - 10:30AM. *Stefan speaking*

Our visiting speaker

I am delighted to welcome our visiting speaker Archie Higgin. He is recently married, a theology student at the London School of Theology, and a local lad to boot! Please get to know him, his wife and family as they visit us today.

How can we 'love one another'?

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Jn 13:34

(See also, Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1:5)

One of our church aspirations is to be 'Relationship-Based'. How are we doing?

Jesus said his followers can be recognised by love for one another. When we love one another like Jesus, we are revealing Jesus to the world. What a beautiful thing. What a *needed* thing!

Paul emphasised that religious people without love are the sort of people who have 'depraved minds' (2 Timothy 3:1-9). Indeed, Paul said that if

he did not have love he *was* nothing, *gained* nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

We are also called to love people in the world, including our enemies. But we are unable to do so unless we learn to love one another within the fellowship. In fact it is hypocritical to tell the world about the love of Jesus if we are not living it in his church.

Love is hard

Why is love hard? Because it is costly. God's love for humankind led him to pay the highest price possible — the death of his Son. All manifestations of Christian love are inspired by that love and that cost. Our love for others is a reflection of God's love.

The infant church was devoted to 'fellowship' (koinonia - Acts 2:42). They had 'everything in common' (koinos - v44). Their costly love was expressed in selling possessions, giving to those who were in need, offering hospitality and spending significant quantities of time together (vv45-46). Which means they took time away from other activities which might have been easier, more 'fun' and less costly in time, money and energy.

Love is rewarded

Love and reward are not a formula, but experience teaches us that love always has an effect. In the case of the early church, 'the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.' (Acts 2:47) Paul's love for the Thessalonians led to a healthy, thriving, faith-filled church (1 Thess 1:3-10; 2:3-12).

One of the reasons I turn up to church services, men's meetings or coffee with a brother-in-Christ

is because I know I will be a better Christian tomorrow. Is that self-focussed? I know it is a true, experienced reality. If I spend time with another believer, and Jesus is in our midst (Matt 18:20), and we share the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Cor 13:14), then it is no surprise (though not automatic) that we feel a mutual benefit.

Love can always grow

We are not Jesus. Not at his level - yet. Nor will we be in this life. But we can grow. Even a super-loving church like the one in Thessalonica can develop further in love, "...in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more," (1 Thess 4:10)

What is the quality of our love in Watford? What would Paul say to us? Would he say, as he did to Philemon, "Your love has given me great joy and encouragement" (Philemon 1:7)? Let's hope so.

From time to time it is worth doing a self-evaluation regarding our love for one another. There are several reasons why this is a good time. Over last the last two years or so:

1. The Watford church of Christ & the West Watford Free church have worshipped together
2. God has brought new people to us from Hong Kong, Nigeria, Ghana, parts of London and Zimbabwe.
3. We are recovering from COVID's effects.
4. Our meeting patterns have changed (fewer men and women's meetings, for example).

And one other observation...the Watford church of Christ began with 16 adults (+children) in 2016. Now on Sundays we have 60 or more adults (not counting the children) in the building. Our relationships need a reevaluation. Seven years ago we could talk to everyone every Sunday. That is not the case any more.

Questions for Reflection

1. Are we deepening our relationships, or have we simply got used to one another?
2. Are we loving the 'new' people as much as our 'old' friends?
3. Are we stuck in patterns of home-based life not conducive to Christian fellowship?
4. Are fewer organised meetings being replaced by more individual times of relationship-building, or are we neglecting our friends?

We would do well to examine our hearts and practices. Is God's Spirit directing us to the kind of prayer Paul offered up for the Thessalonians,

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you." (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

Your brother, Malcolm

New Year 'Hygge'

I received the info below from my friend Sten Johannesson in one of our Nordic sister-churches.

"You and your church members are hereby invited to the New Year's Camp in Denmark. We are normally 80-100 people there for the party, of whom most are staying at the camp for 3 days. More information is here: <https://sites.google.com/view/kk-nyc/invitation>

This great camp that we have been enjoying for 30 years now. Maybe you know of someone who wants to try out an international camp with lot's of fun, family & "hygge". Love, Sten J.

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>