

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Monday 7th July: Mentoring training

Sunday 13 July: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 20 July: 10:30 AM. Dr Rolan Monje is our visiting speaker from the Manila ICOC.

Sunday 27 July: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 03 August: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 10 August: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 17 August: 10:30 AM. Osagie speaking

Sunday 24 August: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 31 August: 10:30 AM. Church service

Monday 1st September: Mentoring training

3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat



The Loneliness Cure - Part 2

Continuing the two-part series based on my notes from "Why do we feel lonely at church?" by Jeremy Linneman, we look at strategies for strengthening belonging in our congregation and minimising the chances of anyone feeling lonely.

"Since we are hurt in relationships, we can only find healing in relationships." p. 29

Last week, we saw how the problem isn't just emotional or social, but spiritual. We were made to belong—to God, and to each other. So how do we begin to rebuild that sense of belonging? It doesn't happen by accident, but takes intentionality. Effort. Consistency.

Linneman states: "We need a belonging deeper than what the world can offer." (p. 14) That kind of belonging doesn't come from shared interests, shared politics, or even shared theology alone. It

comes from being fully known and fully loved—first by God, then by His people.

Jesus models this for us. He didn't just preach truth—He lived it in *relationship*. He broke bread with outcasts. He washed His friends' feet. He made space for the broken. And when He sent His disciples out, He didn't send them alone (Luke 10.1). His heart in this area is summed up in this instruction:

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

So how do we follow His lead?

1. Make Relationships Central

Let's be honest: it's easy to let programs, performance, and events like the Sunday services take centre stage. But relationships must be central. That means creating space for conversation, connection, and vulnerability.

2. Lead With Example, Not Expectation

In many churches, everyone's waiting for someone else to make the first move. But belonging doesn't happen when we wait. It happens when we reach. Our call is to reflect the example of Jesus—not waiting for the hurting to reach out, but going to them. No one in church should ever have to wonder, "Does anyone see me?" As Paul reminds us:

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves."—Romans 12:10

3. Help Heal What's Been Broken

Many of us carry relational wounds from the past—church hurt, rejection, gossip, judgment. If we're honest, some of those wounds were caused by the very people meant to offer healing.

But the good news is that what's been broken in relationship can be healed through relationship. Forgiveness, repentance, and reconciliation aren't idealistic—they're biblical.

4. Every Member Has a Role

You don't need a title to create community. You just need open eyes and a willing heart. Here are four simple but powerful ways Linneman encourages every believer to cultivate belonging:

a. Practice hospitality — Open your home or share a meal. It doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be available.

b. Pray together — Prayer knits hearts together. Whether it's organised or informal, invite God into the middle of your relationships.

c. Ask open questions — Go deeper than "How are you?" Ask, "What's been hard this week?" or "Where have you seen God at work?"

d. Stay present — Stick around. Belonging takes time. You can't microwave deep community. Grow roots, and help others do the same.

"From the perspective of Scripture, when we belong to God (not ourselves), we can then—and only then—fully belong to others." p. 19

When we root our identity in Christ, something amazing happens: We stop competing, comparing, or performing. We start connecting. We start belonging. We become more than just churchgoers—we become family.

And that's exactly what the world needs right now. Not a church with perfect programs or flawless theology, but a church that loves—deeply, visibly, consistently.

"Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." — 1 John 3:18

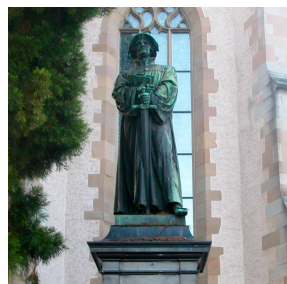
This isn't easy. It won't happen overnight. But it's worth it. Because what we build together in love and truth reflects the very heart of our Saviour.

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In the end, we're not just trying to fix loneliness. We're following the God who sets the lonely in families (Psalm 68:6). And through Him, we don't just attend church. We belong.

Your brother, Malcolm

Answers to last week's quiz



This is Zwingli. He was a Swiss reformer and contemporary of Martin Luther. His view of the Lord's Supper was 'memorialist', meaning he disagreed with

Catholic teaching on transubstantiation and Luther's consubstantiation. He was killed on October 11, 1531, at the Battle of Kappel, during a conflict between Protestant and Catholic cantons in Switzerland. Zwingli served not only as a reformer and preacher but also as a military chaplain for Zurich's Protestant forces. However, he was armed and present on the battlefield, and when the Protestant side was overwhelmed, he was struck down and killed.

After his death, his body was quartered and burned, and his ashes were scattered—an act of desecration meant to dishonour his memory and discourage further reform efforts.

Watford Contribution Details

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Watford Media

