



Life of HOPE

Faith in Action

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1

Hope gets used a lot but I think the modern day use of hope loses the power of what hope is.

Today hope gets used as a wish for something that we would like or want. Things like I hope it doesn't rain or I hope I get a new Xbox for Christmas. Whilst all grammatically correct, this isn't what our hope means. Hope isn't a wish. Hope is something tangible we can hold on to. Our hope is Christ. He is real. He is alive and He already has the victory. I was reading a book about hope and the author explained hope really well. He said the world sees hope as an unknown. Its like watching Match of the Day and not knowing the score and hoping your team has won.

Whereas, we, as followers of Christ have a tangible and certain hope. We already know the victory has been won in Christ. Its like knowing your team has won 100 -0 and then watching Match of the Day. We already know the score. The victory is in Jesus. This is a hope that is certain!

"But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you."

Psalm 39:7

Welcome to the 2021 Spring Edition.

Life of Hope is our main theme as well as
looking forward to the Spring.

The centre pages have, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday,
Daily Holy Week Prayers suggested by Pastor Steve.

Riverside Mission News & Prayer

On page 11 is an excerpt of Jacky Garbett's March edition.



Over the past two decades I have chatted with many people about

Riverside Bewdley Elim Church's History

I never made notes and realised our church has an amazing story to tell. I mentioned it to Pastor Steve and our Elders and they have encouraged me to start such a series of articles.

A church is not a building but people. Articles in previous issues record recent events. In the past 14 months Just Love @ Clementines opened; during the River Severn floods the environment agency used our building; during the Covid19 lockdowns half of our Dog Lane building changed to an online TV studio and we became a collection centre for the Wyre Forest Food Bank.

Our church history is also about how it all began, the pastors and elders who have led us, the buildings we have used over the years, the time line of events, photos etc. There are many encouraging testimonies down through the years that could be included.

I would like to hear of your memories of Riverside, it's people and activities from its inception including testimonies and miracles. If you have anything to share contact details are on the back page.

Les the Ed

A guy went into a pub with a lump of tarmac in his hand. He placed it on the counter and said to the barman. "A pint of beer please and one for the road."



Angela Clark's thoughts about Life of HOPE

Matthew 6 :34.

Jesus said, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

John 6:35

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Do not worry about tomorrow."

Exodus 16:4 Bread from heaven - a portion for each day. Grace is like this.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions."

Isaiah 49:23 Those who hope in me will not be disappointed

"Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

Blessings. *Angela*

Seen in a hotel in Zermatt, Switzerland

Heaven

Is where the police are British, the cooks are French, the mechanics are German, the lovers are Italian and all are organised by the Swiss.

Hell

Is where the cooks are British, the mechanics are French, the lovers are Swiss, the police are German and all are organised by the Italians.

How to Plant Your Garden

First you come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses.



For the garden of your daily living



Plant 3 rows of peas.

1. Peas of mind.
2. Peas of heart.
3. Peas of soul.

Plant four rows of squash.

1. Squash gossip.
2. Squash indifference.
3. Squash grumbling.
4. Squash selfishness



Plant 4 rows of lettuce

1. Lettuce be faithful.
2. Lettuce be kind.
3. Lettuce be patient.
4. Lettuce really love one another.

No garden is without turnips.

1. Turnip for meetings.
2. Turnip for service.
3. Turnip to help one another.



To finish our garden we must have some thyme.

1. Thyme for family.
2. Thyme for friends.
3. Thyme for each other.



Mary Prior's thoughts about Life of HOPE

The Vine and the Branches

John 15:1-8 (NIV)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes a so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

God is my source and Jesus is my hope. Let us live our lives like Jesus. We know that actions speak louder than words and we can only do that if we stay connected to the source just as the branches on the vine. Jesus is my hope and he never changes. Love faith and hope so what is hope? My hope is in my spirit not in my emotions or my mind but in my spirit and it is triggered by hearing and reading the word of God. In our life group we have recently studied the book of Ruth. Naomi says to Ruth go back to your own people and country. I am too old I have had enough of life - she was giving up.

But God put Ruth into her life and gave Naomi a new family and grandchildren.

He gave her HOPE.

In the book of Job we read that Job would not give up. He knew that God was good. Despite everything Job suffered he knew God was so good and he never lost his hope in God.

In Psalm 39 v 7 *It says My hope is in You.*

In Psalm 42 v 5 *Put your hope in God.*

God is a faithful God who you can trust. Without God there is no hope and we are hopeless without God.

Turn to God – Put faith in God he saves, he heals, he delivers. He is my hope.

The hope I have isn't spelt hope it's spelt J.E.S.U.S. - Jesus

From Acorn to Oak Tree



In the Spring the acorn is aided by just the right combination of humidity and temperature. It doesn't grow easily, especially when squirrels collect their nuts from around the oak tree.

Acorns have unlimited patience for they have to have the right amount of rainfall to penetrate the soil whilst hidden growth is taking place. Green leaves will not appear just yet. The saving virtue of most acorns is an ability to set a deep anchor (root) into the soil before winter. Green leaves of the new oak tree will not appear until Spring.

The reaction of trees to change around them are controlled by a chemical substances known as hormones.

The acorn sends up a shoot, as thin as a pencil lead and topped by a tiny bud. It takes six days to emerge through the matted carpet of the previous years leaves. Three more days and it stands as high as a woodland mouse as four limp leaves unfold from the bud. It is the beginning of the new oak tree.

By mid June the seedling will stand 12 cms tall and it stops growing for a year. As long as the four leaves can catch a bit of sunlight, it relies on deepening it's anchor into the soil.

By late summer the anchor will be about 35 cms down into the soil, thick as a pencil and tough as a piece of leather. A strong man would be well tested if he tried to uproot the seedling with his bare hands.

The hazards are many in this oak tree's life, as in our lives, but because it was securely anchored it survived. Deer could eat the saplings, storms could rage about it, insects could get at it but through all this it can grow from the inside and it draw on natural resources.

Our Resource is God.

A mechanic was removing a cylinder-head from the motor of a Harley Davidson motorcycle when he spotted a well-known cardiologist in the shop.

The cardiologist was waiting for the service manager to come take a look at his bike when the mechanic shouted across the garage "Hey Doc, want to take a look at this?"

The cardiologist, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working on the motorcycle.

The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take the valves out, repair any damage, then put them back in and when I finish it works just like new.

So how come I only earn about £20,000 a year and you get the really big bucks when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The cardiologist paused, smiled and leaned over, then whispered to the mechanic:

" Try doing it with the engine running."



Reflections on “Christmas on the Road” ...or was it “Christmas Up Your Street” ...or “Street Nativity”?

Many bright ideas turn out to be exactly that – and nothing else. They get your attention for a moment, like a spark flying from a fire, then disappear instantly. Every now and again, one of those sparks lands on a dry blade of grass and before long you’ve got another fire to think about.

That was what happened with this project! It started with *“Well if they can’t come to us, we’ll have to take it to them!”* and it ended up with a team of about twenty people delivering a community theatre performance to about 300 people.

So what did it achieve? Well, the audience enjoyed it: the comments (we heard!) were very positive. There seemed to be a genuine appreciation that someone had thought of a way to help families to see a nativity play.

The performers enjoyed it: those who held on to the gazebo when the wind blew, the brass band who lost the feeling in their fingertips, the marshals and singers who did such a great job of welcoming and including the onlookers, the hosts who invited us to their streets.

There was plenty of fun, but that wasn’t all. This project created a gift which Riversiders gave to the community: the Riversiders who booked it for their street gave their neighbours a moment to pause and consider how and why Christmas started; to look up from the stress and concern of Christmas in lockdown; to remember that Christmas is more than just a financial burden and a culinary challenge.

My hope and prayer is that this “bright idea” may have brought some light into those 300 lives, and that at least some of those sparks will turn into something longer-lasting.

Tim Scarborough

Schoolboy Elephant Jokes

- It was reported that a man was holding up the traffic in the middle of Fore Street in Bewdley waving and using a spray can in his hand. A policeman stopped him and asked, “What are you doing?” To which the man replied; “Getting rid of all the elephants.” The policeman replied, “But there are no elephants in Fore Street” The man answered: “Yes, Isn’t my spray efficient?”
- The police had to stop traffic on Bewdley by pass when they found an elephant doing a ton!
- As I was going out my dad asked me if I knew the difference between a post box and an elephant. I said “No”. He replied, “Then I won’t ask you to post this letter for me”.

Holy Week Prayers

Between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday is a great time to re-centre ourselves on Jesus and what he did for us all on the cross.

I often find being particular about my Bible reading and prayers in this week to be particularly helpful. Here is something that might help you.

Each day has a Bible reading for you, a simple prayer you can pray and then in italics is a suggestion for a deeper time in prayer with God. Make some time this Holy Week to dig into your relationship with God and dig deeper in prayer. He won't ever let us down.

Palm Sunday 28th March

Read Matthew 21:1-11

God, we thank you that you come into our lives as the Lord of peace. You rode in victory to bring peace into our lives and remove the barrier between us and God.

Where you are why don't you ask God to bring His peace into areas where you need it.

Monday 29th March

Read Matthew 21:10-17

God, forgive us if we have replaced things of you with the things of this world. Holy Spirit, please reveal them to us and lead us away from them. Please heal and restore us.

Where you are lift up anything that you need healing for in your life, be it spiritual, emotional, physical or mental.

Tuesday 30th March

Read Matthew 26:36-46

Jesus, thank you for going to the cross for us. Forgive us for when we have taken this for granted. Thank you for wrestling and choosing the cross for all of us.

Where you are give some thanks for Jesus choosing to go to the cross for us.

Holy Week Prayers

Wednesday 31st March

Read Matthew 26:27-56

Jesus, thank you for all you went through for us. You put up with betrayal from friends and people letting you down. You went through a trial and humiliation for us and you forgave us for all of it. Thank you.

Where you are have a think of people in your life that you might need to forgive and ask Jesus to help you to forgive them now.

Thursday 1st April

Read John 13:1-17

Jesus, thank you that you came and you modelled and taught us how to serve one another. Thank you for the gift of service as a way of showing your love to one another. Thank you for all the ways you serve and love us.

Where you are pray and ask the Holy Spirit where and who you can serve with the love of Christ this Easter.

Good Friday 2nd April

Read John 19:1-37

Jesus, thank you for going through that pain and suffering for me. Thank you that you died for my sins so that I wouldn't have to.

Why don't you take communion today, repent of any sin and give thanks to Jesus for the cross.

Saturday 3rd April

Read John 19:38-42

God, thank you that even though there was silence between the cross and the empty tomb that the victory was always won, it was never in doubt. Thank you that whether we can hear you or not that never changes the victory of the cross.

Why don't you make some space for quiet reflection today and simply listen to God and your heart in the silence.

Easter Sunday 4th April

Read Matthew 28

God, thank you for the empty tomb. Thank you for the greatest day in history. Thank you that Jesus has risen conquering both sin and death so that we might be forgiven and have an eternal life and relationship with you.

Make space to worship God today and give thanks.



APPRECIATION BAGS. January 2021

While sitting at home during lockdown, feeling a little down after Christmas, I started to think what I could do for the community, that was safe, secure and giving.

I had been shielding during lockdown as my husband has underlying health conditions. I thought what has brought me the most joy in this season. It was receiving letters, cards, texts and the occasional gift.

I opened my bible to study and read from Hebrews 13 verse 7.

“ Listen to your leaders, who have spoken God’s word to you, notice the fruits of their lives and mirror their faith” taken from The Voice new testament.

These words planted the seed to grow the fruit.

The idea of giving back to the community, thanking them for all the support and giving during lockdown. I thought it would be lovely to put together a small bag of comfort items alongside chocolate of course !!! I spoke to pastors Steve and Liz about my vision and the Appreciation Bags were born.



With all the donations of items from church, we have so far made and delivered over 85 bags to the surgery, pharmacies, butchers and bakers. The next 50 will go out the third week in February.

Thank you so much Riverside for your donations to enable us to give back to all who have kept Bewdley going during this past year.

Love and blessing.

Liz Walton

My father fought in the 1st World War and single handed
destroyed the German lines of communication.

He caught and ate their pigeons.



Riverside Mission News & Prayer

Some of Jacky Garbett's March edition.

Philippians 4 : 4, 6-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again Rejoice. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And He will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In our prayers let us give thanks for all that God has done during the past few difficult months. I pray that we find encouragement in all that God has done, to help us move forward to continue praying and trusting. God answers prayer. We come to him, as his children, and trust Him. He promises us His peace in our hearts and minds. Let's pray for this for ourselves, and for those mentioned here in this newsletter. Let's use this scripture in our prayers.

Operation Christmas Child

1. As our Bible verse says – Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice. Let's give thanks for over 250,000 gift filled shoeboxes sent from the UK this year – to Belarus, Albania, Nigeria, Liberia, Moldova, Bosnia, Serbia, Georgia and certain difficult areas of Central Asia. Give thanks too for the many churches, schools and community groups who supported OCC this year. Every single contribution is valuable. Give thanks too for all the volunteers who helped pack, check and carton all those shoeboxes in our socially distanced warehouses.

2. On February 25th the final lorry of shoeboxes (about 8,000 boxes) left the North West Processing Centre heading for Moldova. Please pray for the Moldovan team who will be organising and distributing the shoeboxes at various locations around the country– in churches, schools, hospitals etc. Pray that at each distribution event, the team will have the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus. Pray too as the children are invited to attend a Fun-filled Bible Course entitled The Greatest Journey, that many will be willing and eager to attend, and again hear about the love of God. Pray for many children and families to come to know Jesus as their Saviour, and for local churches to be encouraged.



Unloading boxes at a school – Tracy, OCC NW Regional Manager UK + Mihail , one of the key Moldovan leaders of OCC. Jacky G was part of this OCC distribution in Moldova 2019

Laughter

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

Author Barbara Johnson said, “Laughter is like changing a baby’s diaper. It doesn’t permanently solve the problem, but it makes things more acceptable for a while.”

One day, comedian/author David Brenner was signing books. A young man handed him a newly purchased copy to be signed and said, “I want to thank you for saving my life.” Without giving it much thought, Brenner replied flippantly, “That’s okay.” But the young man stood his ground and said, “No, I really mean it!”

Brenner stopped signing and looked at him. The young man continued: “My father died. He was my best friend. I loved him and couldn’t stop crying for weeks, so I decided to take my own life. The night I was going to do it, I happened to have the television on and you were hosting *The Tonight Show*. I listened to your opening monologue, and the next thing I knew I was laughing hysterically. I realised then that if I was able to laugh, I was able to live. So I want to thank you for saving my life.” Humbled and grateful, Brenner shook his hand and said, “No, I thank you.”

The Bible says, ‘A cheerful disposition is good for your health.’ Experts confirm that laughter boosts your immune system, enhances your memory and learning abilities, relieves tension, slows your pulse rate and blood pressure, releases endorphins that reduce pain, decreases anxiety and stress, puts people at ease, and brings unity. Furthermore, the effect lasts for eight to twelve hours. It promotes emotional healing, and best of all - it’s fun. That’s why laughter is God’s prescription for stress!

UCB Word for Today. 07/11/2020

Digital Imaging

An elderly widow had a picture of her late husband when they had first met. He was dressed up in his best suit and wearing his favourite hat.

She took the photo to the Digital Imaging shop in the high street and asked them to copy the photo and at the same time remove the hat.

The assistant asked for her details and then enquired as to her late husband’s hair style and what side he parted his hair.

The lady replied, “*You will find that out when you remove his hat!*”

GOD'S HOPE

A coach with many passengers was going down a hill when the driver realised the brakes were not working correctly.

He knew that the hill would soon get steeper and at the bottom of the hill was a very sharp 90 degree bend to avoid a precipice.

As the coach gathered speed the passengers shouted in terror for him to do something.

He then noticed a narrow lane that went uphill and swung the coach into and up the lane. Then he noticed a young lad walking up the lane in front of him. He had no choice and hit the boy. Gradually the coach slowed and stopped on level ground.

Immediately the passengers screamed at him shouting, "You've just killed that lad, why."

Turning round and sobbing, the driver replied.

***"That lad was my son. If I had continued down the hill,
you would all have died."***

<i>For God So loved the world,</i>	(That's you),
<i>That He gave His only begotten Son,</i>	(That's Jesus),
<i>That whosoever believeth,</i>	(Fully trusts)
<i>In Him, should not perish,</i>	(In Hell),
<i>But Have everlasting life.</i>	(In Heaven),

John 3:16



Youth

Lockdown has brought all sorts of challenges to young people, which most of us have never experienced and may not really understand. No generation before has had to deal with the issues they have faced with regards to their education delivery, segregation from friendships and support groups.

As a youth group we have been able to largely keep connected through WhatsApp chatting and Zoom meetings. We have continued with various opportunities to engage through the week including

- **MemoryVerseMonday** - looking at a range of bible verses that can be learned and give opportunity to discuss aspects of the Christian faith;
- **TaskTuesday** - giving challenges to try at home including poems, photography and tower building;
- **WhatIsItWednesday** - where a picture or sound is shared with the group and the challenge is to guess what it is? This has brought about a wide scope of guesses.



- **TheologyThursday** - where I have been able to share videos 2-3 minutes long on giving a theological summary on various topics including the environment, wisdom and identity.

- **On Thursday evenings** we have online meetings with our 16+ youth, and on Friday evenings the 11-16s. These meetings are often quite fluid with regards to where the conversation goes on how people's weeks are. We always try to share a short passage of the bible and give chance to comment and question on it.

Please do continue to pray for our young people. Several of them have not been able to engage through these online connections and are in real need of fellowship and personal contact. We have some amazing young people as part of our group and I really look forward to a time when the whole church is able to see them

face to face again soon and benefit from each other.

Can any reader suggest WhatIsItWednesday picture is.

I can't.

Les the Ed



Riverside Zoom Quiz.

Friday 19th March.

Often, when I have prepared for hosting quizzes I have in the back of my mind, ‘will anyone turn up?’ ‘What subjects will they like being quizzed on?’ ‘In what ways can I make each round interesting?’

As I prepared for our first Riverside Zoom Quiz, all these and many more thoughts raced through my mind. I was reasonably happy with what we had as I jogged to Dog Lane, praying for good fellowship and clearing my mind for our time ahead.

Opening the Zoom meeting, and seeing each screen appear in front of me, with many familiar smiling faces and even some new ones was such an encouragement. It was great to see my church family and others who they had chosen to invite along.

After the initial chaos of working out teams and allocating people into breakout rooms within the Zoom meeting, we got down to business.

We started with a round about what has been in the news lately, covering subjects from the cold weather to St Valentine. This allowed people to work out how they could act as a team within their own chat room.

We moved on to Round of 10, with 5 specialist knowledge questions and the challenge of ordering your answers, before taking a first look at the picture round.

The TV round allowed people from all age groups and interests to contribute, before taking another stab at the picture round on screen.

Finally came the Observation round. Though the video feature didn’t work, the quiz ploughed on as the questions were actually around various information to be observed on and off screen.

It was lots of fun to see the different levels of competitive edge across the teams. We all suspected Tim Scarborough would challenge some of the answers in his striving for victory and he lived up to the expectation.

Unfortunately, it wasn’t enough. With 29 different log-ins to the meeting bringing over 50 people online to spread across the 8 teams it was a great time for Riverside family and friends to have some fun together.

The Second Place team came First (I know that doesn’t make sense), and I can reassure you that it was purely coincidental that their team included my boss, my wife, my father in-law, my youngest child along side Liz Robinson and Liz Walton. A thoroughly deserved win and an enjoyable evening for all.

We look forward to the next time soon.

Barry

**We will need more volunteers to serve in
Just Love @ Clementines
when we open again after the lockdown.**



It can be weekly, daily, mornings, afternoons etc.

Training will be given

If you feel you want to help contact Steve, Liz or Les, details below.

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