

London Road Congregational Church

The Envoy



Church Directory



Ministry Team, Bible Book Club, Film Club & Pub Theology

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If you have any articles or photographs you think may be suitable for our magazine, we would love to receive them. Please email them to the editor.

***The deadline for submissions to the Autumn 2022 edition of the magazine is
1st August 2022***

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Website: newarkcongregational.com

Facebook: London Road Congregational Church Newark

What is a Congregational Church?

A Congregational Church is one that believes in the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Congregationalists share and respect each other's gifts, and worship, serve and decide things together as guided by the Holy Spirit at church meetings.

There are three principles:

- A church where Christ is the head, with no external hierarchy
- A church based on a covenant relationship with God and with one another, where seeking the mind of Christ is the basis of all that is done
- A church where all members are considered equal before God, and all skills and giftings are valued and recognised

London Road Congregational Church Services

Services are now taking place in the church building for those who wish to attend in person, and are live on Zoom at the same time for those who are unable to attend in person.

To receive links to join the services, please contact
newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com

Please keep an eye on our social media or website for information about services in the church building. Alternatively, please contact the above email address to be added to our mailing list. Your email address will not be shared.

Preaching Team

Martin and Mark have continued to lead most of the worship sessions in the last quarter. One of the things we have looked at, amongst the regular 'Special Sundays' that the Lent and Easter period brings, are some of the more challenging issues that arise from the Bible.



Martin has covered the role of women in church and the thorny topic of homosexuality, issues that are still the subject of some controversy. Meanwhile Mark looked at a subject that has now been settled, slavery – and reminded us that less than 200 years ago some people were using the Bible to justify slavery. Hopefully we have given you some food for thought, particularly about how we need to be very careful in how we interpret the Bible and to be aware of the importance of the context of the times when the Bible was written.

As we've mentioned before in Mark's presidential year he will be called away quite a lot and won't be in our church so much. This means that we will be relying more on other people leading worship, particularly on the second Sunday of the month. Hopefully this will be seen as an opportunity rather than a problem. The church is blessed in having a number of other people who can step up and lead worship and Julie is doing a great job of arranging other people to come in and help out. If anyone else would like the chance to help out we'd love you to give it a go – just have a word with Martin, Mark or Julie and we'll work something out.

Our last Church Meeting agreed that once a month (on the third Sunday) we are going to go back to a 'Zoom only' service. Although we are pleased with the way the hybrid services are working we are conscious that it's really difficult to make everyone feel an equal part of things when some are in the building and some online so just once a month we are going back to the arrangements which worked so well during the pandemic. Anyone is of course most welcome to join in either in person or via Zoom.

Mark and Martin



By the time you read this column the 2022 Congregational Federation Assembly will have taken place and I will have been installed as President of the Federation in its fiftieth anniversary year.

I still find it difficult to believe that this has happened less than two years after becoming a Minister. There are many people much more experienced than me that have never had the honour to hold the role of President. Why me?

I suppose it's not really for me to say. Someone obviously thought I was worth considering for the post when I was nominated. And then more people wanted me than the alternative on offer. In any case the job is mine and I intend to make the most of it.

I have chosen for my theme for the year the single word 'Hope'. I'm still working on my address to Assembly as I write this column so I don't know exactly what I'll be saying but I know this:

- It's not going to be a straightforward sermon. There will be a film clip – Shock! Horror!
- I'll be telling the Assembly that the hope we have for the future is only that we don't keep doing the same things in the same way we have for years and assuming the outcome will be different – that we need new ways of doing church for the 21st century;
- I'll be attacking
 - o The tendency churches have to look back and remember the 'Golden Age' when the churches were all full three times a day on Sundays;
 - o The tendency churches have to say 'But we've always done it this way';
 - o The tendency churches have to say 'There aren't enough of us to make a difference.'
- I'll be pointing out some positive options for change. And many of

these will be based on my experiences with the church here in Newark, where we've been so positive in trying out and embracing new things.

Now how all this goes down we shall find out on the day. It may well be that some people will regret ever having voted for me. But that won't change my approach, because there's not much point being given a responsibility like this and then not being true to yourself.

I hope what I have to say will give real Hope to churches in the Federation. It will certainly challenge them.

Yours, in His service

Mark

Queen's Jubilee Street Party

In celebration of Her Majesty's incredible achievement and years of service to this county, a street party is being organised for Sunday 5th June 2022 from 12:00 noon to 4:00pm on Hatton Gardens and including our church hall and grounds. All church members and hall users are invited. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Hatton Gardens and Walkers Close will be closed to traffic and tables and chairs laid out in Hatton Gardens. Attendees will be asked to bring along party food and drink, including BBQ items if they wish. Cutlery and crockery will not be provided, this up to attendees. As well as providing BBQ equipment our church has been asked to provide bowls of salad and cakes. All offers are gratefully received. Please speak to Julia if you are able to help with items.

Mark is planning a special service of thanksgiving for Her Majesty's years of service from 11:00am to 11:30am. It is hoped that many people will join us to start this day of celebration.

This is truly a once in a lifetime event and we do look forward to seeing you there.

At the fundraising table top sale on Sunday 22nd May 2022, we raised £65. Thank you to everyone who came by and supported us.

Film Club



At our April Film Club session I am pleased to announce that we discovered the meaning of life, the universe and everything*. We were watching and discussing the film 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' based on Douglas Adams' acclaimed series of humorous books – a 'trilogy in 5 parts'.

Although the film didn't match up to the humour in the books it did provoke a number of interesting discussions, including:

- What would be the impact on faith of 'First Contact' with an intelligent alien species;
- The benefits and potential dangers of artificial intelligence;
- The role of science fiction in predicting developments in technology;
- The actual meaning of life – does life have a meaning at all?

Fascinating and really deep questions from what is a lightweight comedy film.

We also looked at the Disney Pixar film Soul, which led us to thinking about life after death.

At our May meeting of Film Club we reached the milestone of 10 years since I first launched the group. In that time we've watched and talked about well over a hundred films.

I think it's been a great success and hugely enjoyable. If you'd like to join in just drop me a line at newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com and I'll give you more information

Just Sing! Community Choir

Numbers attending choir are getting close to where they were before the pandemic, although some people have yet to return to our sessions. We are also attracting new members, including some younger people – one of whom is a very welcome 15 year old bass who swells the number of basses (the most important section of the choir – it's all about the bass) by 33%.

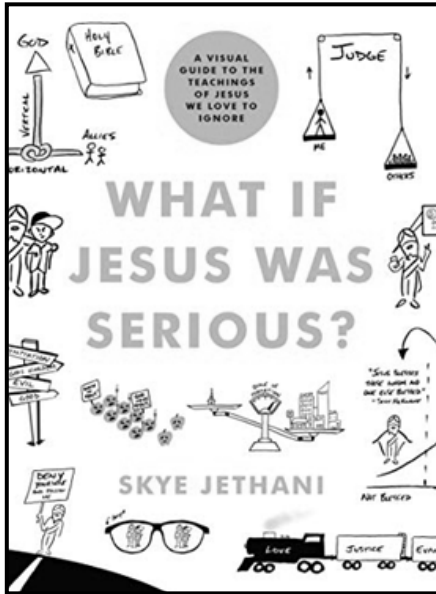
Unfortunately we didn't win the choir section at the Donald Woolfit Festival, having to be content with joint second place this time. Which sounds more impressive than it was as there were only three choirs in our section! But the most important thing was that we really enjoyed singing competitively again for the first time in three years.

We are practicing two numbers to perform at the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – the classic Handel masterpiece 'Zadoc the Priest' and a piece especially written for the Jubilee 'A Life Lived With Grace' which we expect to sing at St Mary Magdalene Church on Thursday 2nd June 2022.

Just to remind you – the choir is open to everyone. There are no auditions and you don't even have to pay to attend (though there is a recommended donation). As with other things email me at newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com if you're interested, or look on the church website for details of our upcoming meetings.

Mark

Bible Book Club



We are continuing to read and talk about 'What if Jesus Was Serious' by Skye Jethani. This book is all about The Sermon on the Mount. A whole book on just 3 chapters of Matthew's Gospel which will keep us going for almost the whole of 2022, which just goes to show what a huge amount of important topics Jesus covered in his great sermon.

In the last session we looked at:

- If Jesus was serious...then we will love the people who annoy us every day
- If Jesus was serious...then we will value God's words more than our traditions
- If Jesus was serious...then we will love with our actions not merely our feelings
- If Jesus was serious...then our self-sacrifice should extend even to our enemies
- If Jesus was serious...then prayer will transform how we see our enemies.

If this sounds interesting why not join us. You don't need to belong to London Road Congregational Church to join in.

We meet via Zoom on the fourth Wednesday of every month. As we are now online there is always room for new people to join our group, and you don't have to wait until we start a new book to join in. If you are interested contact me at: newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com and I'll add you to the emailing list.

I was really pleased that our April meeting was led by two members of the group other than me. One was Richard Gascoyne and the other Margaret Lathlane, a Catholic member of the group who brings a different perspective that we can all learn from. My thanks go to them.

Mark

Environment

As spring marches on and our gardens are busy waking up, it's time to consider what we can do to help the environment whilst planning our garden activities. Our hedgehog is out of hibernation and we are putting out food and water daily. Water is especially important during this dry period we are experiencing. We are advised not to cut the grass too low during any dry spells and reduce the frequency of cutting. Indeed, if your grassed area can cope with it, the latest environmental recommendations are to enjoy 'No Mow May' to help our insects with food sources too.

When considering what to plant this year, don't forget the myriad of bee and butterfly friendly plants. Again, if you have an area that you can put aside to wild flowers, why not consider a packet of wild flowers that you can scatter and leave. Bee and butterfly friendly plants include Echinacea, buddleia (you can buy small versions for gardens), foxgloves (remembering to take care if you have young children, as this is poisonous), potentilla, lupins (again you can buy smaller versions) hollyhocks and black eyed susan. Last year we put water and medium sized stones in a plant pot saucer. Bees also need a source of water and we found this being used regularly throughout the summer. The bee pictured here is on Sea Holly, a tall, spikey plant with gorgeous silver blue colouring.

Julia



Recipes

Tagliatelle with Blue Cheese Butter

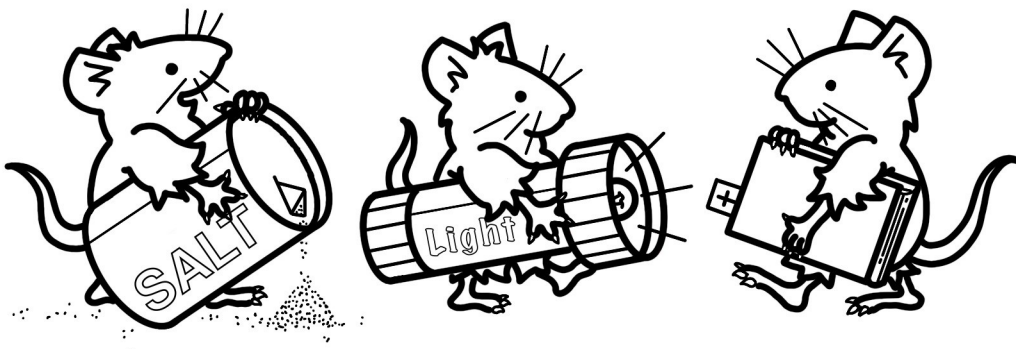
Serves 1

Ingredients

40g (½oz) Stilton or other creamy blue cheese
25g (1oz) butter, softened
Pinch of grated nutmeg
75g (3oz) dried tagliatelle
150g (5oz) broccoli, cut into bite sized pieces
Salt and pepper

Method

1. Mash the cheese in a bowl with a fork to break it up. Add the butter, nutmeg and a little pepper and beat well to mix.
2. Cook the pasta in a large saucepan of lightly salted boiling water for 6-7 minutes until softened but not quite cooked through to the centre. Add the broccoli and cook until the pasta and broccoli are tender.
3. Drain the pasta and broccoli and return to the pan. Dot half the cheese butter into the pan so it melts over the hot pasta.
4. Dot the remaining butter into the pasta and serve immediately.



Banana and Peach Crumble

Serves 2

Ingredients

2 peaches, halved, stoned and sliced into wedges

1 banana, sliced

50g (1¾oz) plain flour

25g (1oz) butter

25g (1oz) light brown soft sugar

Method

1. Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 5/190°C/fan oven 170°C.
2. Place the peach wedges and banana slices in the bottom of a 600ml (20floz) ovenproof dish. Add 3 tablespoons of water.
3. Place the flour in a bowl and rub in the butter until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar.
4. Spoon the crumble mixture over the fruit and bake for 15 minutes until golden.

Summer Gardening Tips

At this time of year, it's a good idea to trim your perennials so that they flower for longer and keep their strength and vigour. It's also important to deadhead flowering plants to keep them healthy and blooming for as long as possible.

You may not need to water as much as you think, especially if the soil is healthy and the ground is covered by plants or mulches. Give your plants a drink if they are starting to wilt but don't just water the surface of the soil as this will cause shallow rooting. It's best to water your garden first thing in the morning or in the evening.

Gardeners warn against a lot of digging in dry weather as it damages the soil structure, increases moisture loss and disturbs plant roots.

Late summer is a good time to plant autumn bulbs, including cyclamens, colchicums and dahlias. You can also take and raise cuttings from your favourite flowering plants, so you have a plentiful supply for next year.

Newark Foodbank Update

The following items are needed urgently:

Food

- Sugar (500g preferred)
- Long Life Fruit Juice
- Tinned Meat (Cold)
- Tinned Potatoes
- Pasta Sauce

Other Items

- Hand Wash

Please note: this list is correct at the time of printing. For up to date information, please check the board in the church hall or visit newarkfoodbank.org.uk

Coffee, Craft and Conversation

Coffee, craft and conversation has been running for three months now and we have a wonderful attendance of between twelve and fifteen people. Some continue with their own home projects, whilst others knit or sew items for care homes and Neo-natal units. Here's a sample of the hats, cardigans, fiddle mats and incubator blankets produced already.

New friends are being made and ideas exchanged. If you'd like to join us, we meet in the church hall on the first Friday of the month from 10am to 11:30am with an entrance fee of £1. Victoria and Julia look forward to seeing you soon.

Julia





Left: The
Pantaloons
performance of
Great
Expectations.

Right: Mark's
installation as
President of the
Congregational
Federation (page 6)



Below: The 10th
Anniversary of Film
Club (page 8)

