

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.

Back Cover: Irena Sadler Statue from Lorna Caddy

***The deadline for submissions to the Autumn 2023 edition of the magazine is
1st August 2023***

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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. Services on the third Sunday of each month are held on Zoom only.

To receive links to join the services, please contact
newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com
or scan the QR code.



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. A list of services up to April 2023 can be found in this edition of The Envoy.

London Road Congregational Church Manifesto

How we want to live

1. To follow the way of Jesus rather than rules and conventions;
2. To doubt and question WITHOUT fear, and never be daunted by orthodoxies and authority figures;
3. To live courageously, and resist being motivated by guilt or fear;
4. To look for God in every person and situation;
5. To embrace messiness and imperfection while aspiring to be all that we can be.

How we want to love

- To make a priority of kindness and compassion, and pursue justice for all people;
- To resist passing judgement, and befriend people in the margins;
- To love the world and honour it as God's body;
- To celebrate the uniqueness of everyone, laugh often, enjoy friends and welcome strangers.

These principles spell out what sort of church we are, and, importantly, will act as a guideline for future actions and decision making. We will judge all proposals and decisions in future against these principles and ensure that what we do is always supportive of them. As individual Christians we will endeavour to live our lives in accordance with these ideas.

Preaching Team

The Preaching Workshop on Saturday 29 April was excellent. Catherine Booton and Neil Chappell from the Congregational Federation provided us with heaps of information to help with the practicalities of leading worship and preaching, including some great technical help (some of which I've already put into practice.)



I was hugely encouraged that nine people from our church attended (as well as several from other churches) and I know there would have been more but for other commitments.

At the end of the session I rather unfairly asked the LRCC delegates if they would be prepared to come together as a 'Preaching Group' so we could meet regularly together to plan how we can help provide leadership of Sunday services. Everyone said yes.

One of the first things I hope to do is to arrange for Neil Chappell to run a webinar for us on how to produce a PowerPoint presentation to be the basis of a service.

We'll keep you informed regarding progress. Expect a few names of folks from our own church to appear on the preaching rota a bit more regularly than at present.

One of the things we might do is to theme some of our services to cover a particular topic. You might remember Martin and I did that a while ago with the 'I am...' sayings of Jesus and the parables.

We are so lucky as church to have so many people who are willing to help lead worship and I am really grateful to you all.

Mark

Film Club

Three more fascinating films for Film Club since I last wrote.



The Beautiful Fantastic was a whimsical film with a touch of magic. About an unusual young woman who was abandoned as a baby one of the things that stood out for me is that she would say to herself in the mirror each morning – ‘Today I’m going to make a difference.’ Wouldn’t that be a great thing for us all to try and do every day?

Good Will Hunting was about a mathematical genius played by Matt Damon, who was content not to use his gifts and to work on a building site. It featured an Oscar-winning performance by the much-missed Robin Williams. Among the things we discussed was whether people had a responsibility to use the gifts they have to their fullest, or whether it’s OK not to bother and just to take life easy. What do you think?



The Damned United was about the greatest football manager who ever lived, who was certainly another genius. I mean of course the incomparable Brian Clough. Martin Sheen gave an uncannily accurate performance as Clough. There were mixed feelings about Brian Clough’s character and there was undoubtedly a certain arrogance about him. We wondered whether a degree of arrogance was a prerequisite for great success. We also considered the role of partnerships: recognising what others could do for you and trusting them to do it. In Clough’s case he was always a better manager when he had Peter Taylor alongside him.

All very enjoyable films but hugely improved by meeting with other people to talk about the issues they raised.

If you want to watch any of these on DVD they can be borrowed free of charge from the growing DVD library in the church.

If you’d like to join in with Film Club (it’s great fun) just drop me a line at newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com

Mark

Bible Book Club

The highlight of our year so far was the visit to Newark by Dave Tomlinson, author of *'How to be a Bad Christian'* and *'The Bad Christian's Manifesto'*.

We've studied both of these books at Bible Book Club a while back and we were all very impressed with Dave's thoughts about being Christian in today's world. The church was so impressed that we adopted his manifesto as our own 'Mission Statement.' (You can find that on page 5)

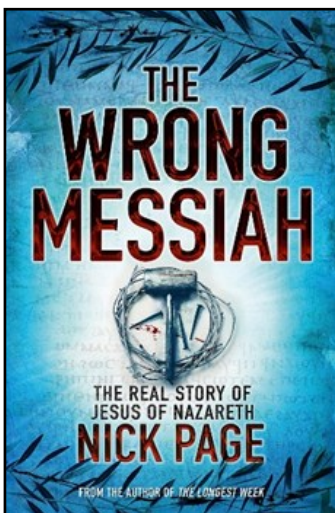
Dave attended Pub Theology on Thursday 30th March and then came to give his talk in the church on Friday 31st March. Around 40 people attended in person or online – some from as far away as the United States.

And Dave certainly didn't disappoint as he spoke on his subject of 'Losing our religion – or ripe for something new.' As I expected his talk was challenging but also optimistic as he looked at the reasons behind the decline of Christianity and church attendance and what can be done about it. We're trying to put some of these ideas into practice in Newark Congregational Church.

He shared a quote with us - we need to 'face the future and not back into it'.

I need to offer huge thanks to Richard and Julia for hosting Dave and his wife for the weekend.

We really hope to have Dave back in Newark to continue the conversation.



In our regular sessions we are continuing to study *'The Wrong Messiah'* by one of our favourite authors Nick Page.

We've had three sessions looking at the stories around Jesus' birth, life in Nazareth when Jesus was young and the Wilderness with John the Baptist. There is an immense amount of fascinating information in this book and we are enjoying the challenges it is bringing to us.

Pub Theology

We had a record turnout for our March meeting when, as mentioned elsewhere, Dave Tomlinson joined our discussion. An incredible 19 people showed up, some of whom we hadn't seen for quite a while.

To be honest that's probably too many - it works better with between 6-12 people so everyone gets a fair chance to contribute - but it does indicate just what sort of appetite there is for discussions of this kind.

Here are the diverse things we spoke about at that session:

1. The importation of hunting trophies into the UK is to be banned. Is this the right thing to do?
2. How much should we be worried by the race to develop artificial intelligence?
3. *Each of us has a vision of good and of evil. We have to encourage people to move towards what they think is good... Everyone has [his/her] own idea of good and evil and must choose to follow the good and fight evil as [she/he] conceives them. That would be enough to make the world a better place* - Pope Francis. How much is good and evil a subjective issue? Are there any absolutes?
4. Baroness Casey's report suggests the sacking of hundreds of Metropolitan Police officers for racism, homophobia, misogyny etc. So why hasn't it happened?
5. William Hill has been fined £19.2 million pounds for failing on social responsibility and anti-money laundering. Revenue was £1.85 billion. Discuss.

If you are interested in discussing topics similar to this all you need to do is turn up at The Prince Rupert at 7.30pm on the last Thursday of the month (except in December), go up the stairs and you'll find us.

Or if you want to find out more send me an email to:

newarkpubtheology@virginmedia.com

If it continues to be this popular we might have to run more than one session – that would be really great.

Mark

Just Sing! Community Choir

We're continuing to have healthy attendances at our rehearsals as we prepare for several upcoming events.

On Tuesday 4th July we will be singing at a ceremony in Newark Town Hall to celebrate the erection of a new statue of General Sikorsky, the Polish war-time leader, in Newark Cemetery where he was buried for 50 years. A local composer has written a powerful new composition based on the life of Irena Sendler, a Polish woman who helped Jewish children escape from the Nazis. A lovely statue of her is in the Fountain Gardens opposite the church (see the back cover).

If you would like to know more about Irena there is a film which outlines what she did in the war called *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler*, starring Anna Paquin (winner of the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her role in *The Piano* at the age of just 11.) It's available to watch on Amazon Prime.

Our biggest event of the year is our annual concert at which we raise money for charity. This will be held in the Ballroom at the Town Hall and this year it will be a summer concert rather than one near Christmas. The date is Thursday 20th July at 7.30pm. Tickets will be available soon and they sell quickly so watch this space.

Our first event of the year though is a performance as part of the Kelham Church Festival at 7.00pm on Friday 30 June. I hope to have tickets available for this soon.

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

Newark Foodbank Update



FOODBANK SHOPPING LIST

February 2023

**PLEASE DO NOT DONATE ITEMS
CONTAINING ALCOHOL – THANK YOU**

Shortfall Items

Also check our website for other items we need

Food

- Tinned Meat
- Tinned Carrots
- Tea Bags (40s preferred)
- Sugar
- Cereal Bars

Other Items

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Washing Up Liquid

PLEASE!

Do not donate fresh food items without checking with us first.

**Check that your donation is well inside its use-by date.
It takes time for us to process donations and too often they pass the use-by date before
we can distribute the food to our clients.**

We cannot distribute out of date food.

Items of which we have a plentiful supply:

- Baked Beans
 - Coffee
 - Feminine hygiene
 - Tinned Chickpeas
 - Tinned Tomatoes
 - Pasta
 - Tinned/Packet Veg Soup
 - Tins of mixed beans
 - Packets of Rice (dried)
 - Pet Food
- Our warehouse continues to be well stocked. However, we are grateful for all regular donations, especially the shortfall items.
 - Please take your donation to one of our many collection points in supermarkets. See our website for a complete list.



<https://newark.foodbank.org.uk/>

