



### January 2021 Newsletter

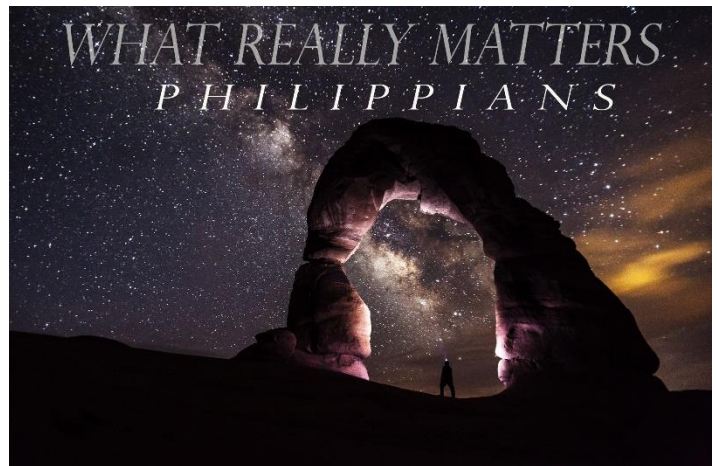
Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2021, we hope to bring one of these to you at least once a quarter this year. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions please do get in touch!

Last year was definitely eventful if nothing else, with changes to every area of our lives. Church was no exception and we had to learn quickly how to stream services online – thank you for continuing to engage each week whether it is now in person or online. A huge thank you goes out to our tech team, worship team and stewards for ensuring that we are able to continue to gather together each week. Please do make sure you stay in touch with each other and support one another through these challenging times. If you used to be part of a Life Group that is no longer running, please do contact one another and why not consider meeting over Zoom even just to pray for one another? If you need some help getting started please let us know, we'd love to help out.

We have started a new preaching series in the book of Philippians on a Sunday morning entitled '**What Really Matters**' and have a new motto verse –

***"Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry to on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6.***

No Bethel Motto would be complete without a fridge magnet! Get in touch and we can make sure you get one if you haven't been able to make it along to church just yet.



Bethel Church, Spon End, Coventry. CV1 3HB    [www.bethelcoventry.org.uk](http://www.bethelcoventry.org.uk)    [www.wlacademy.org.uk](http://www.wlacademy.org.uk)    024 7625 6874

*Pastor:* Joshua Kindness

*Elders:* Ian Grindell, Chris Page

*Core Leaders:* Lindsey Pearce, Tom Owen, Liz Gray, Jane Rubacki, Derek Seedhouse

*Trustees:* Ian Grindell, Chris Page, Joshua Kindness, Lindsey Pearce, Tom Owen, Liz Gray, Jane Rubacki, Derek Seedhouse

### **Members & Friends Meeting – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021, 6pm**

Please join us for this special meeting as we vote for Gordon Sprouse to join our Elder team and have the opportunity to hear updates from our ministry teams about what the last twelve months have been like and what they are praying for in 2021.

***Due to the current restrictions voting will need to take place remotely as at our AGM last year. You will receive an email around a week beforehand asking you to vote, or if you don't use email then you will receive a telephone call. The meeting will be hosted live online but a recording will be available afterwards if needed as well. Please do try to join in on the evening if you are able – details will be released nearer the time.***

Gordon and his wife Karen have been an integral part of Bethel for several years and now support our various life groups and we wanted to give Gordon the opportunity to share his heart;

“Eldership certainly wasn't in my thinking when Karen and I started attending Bethel when the meetings were held in the Railway function room over the road some 5 or 6 years ago. At that time, we had left the Elim Church down the road, after some 23 years of active involvement, because we wanted to move to a church where we could grow spiritually and build good relationships, both of which we have been able to do in our time here at Bethel. During our time at Elim I had served in various capacities, including leading a large teens and twenties group, being part of the sound team and a stint as a deacon. I also had led a house group for quite a few years which kind of came with us.

I think it is true to say that I haven't always been a model disciple or follower of Jesus at all stages of my journey prior to attending Bethel and I'm certainly far from perfect now! However, as I got to know Keith a little, he evidently saw some qualities in me that prompted him to suggest that I consider becoming an Elder and invited me to attend some of their meetings to enable me to gain an understanding of what's involved as well as giving the existing elders an opportunity to get to know me too.

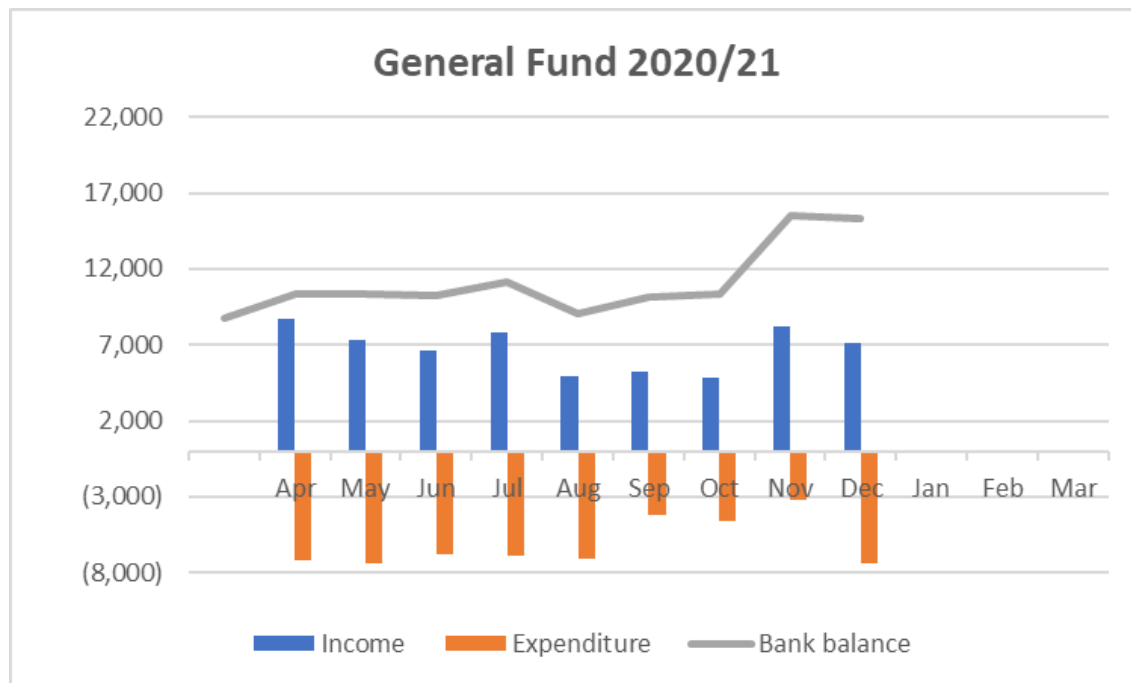
Being an elder is not something to be taken lightly and I am mindful of the qualities pertaining to the office of an elder as presented in 1 Timothy (you will be glad to learn that Karen is my only wife!). As mentioned already, it is not a position I have sought or aspired to obtain, but as I have spent time getting to know Chris, Ian and Josh and prayerfully considered what the position entails, it seems right to me to allow my name to be put forward for election. I can assure you all that whatever the outcome of the vote I will continue to look to actively participate in and contribute to the spiritual growth of the church.” – Thanks, Gordon

### **Bethel Financial Update**

We are grateful to God for the way He has undertaken for us in so many ways during the difficult times we have experienced in 2020. We would like to thank all members and friends of Bethel for your faithful support throughout these times, not least in regard to offerings. We also acknowledge that personal circumstances may change for some of you and we continue to look to God as our ultimate provider.

Our general fund offerings have held up well throughout the year and this, combined with reduced expenditure due to our restricted use of our premises, scaled back ministries and lower monthly salaries since Keith moved on has all resulted in an improvement in our General Fund bank balance.

The graph below shows monthly income and expenditure and end of month bank balances:



We do have a number of further items of expenditure between now and the end of the year (primarily mission support payments) and one or two essential repairs to undertake.

Our Redevelopment Fund does give us more concern. Movements in the Redevelopment Fund for the 9 months to December can be summarised as follows:

Offerings		£18,157
Gift aid reclaimed		£4,333
Interest		£3
		£22,493
Loan repayments		£18,893

Whilst this looks rather healthy it should be noted that between April and September we were paying interest only against the loan, but from October onwards we have resumed repayments of capital as well. Currently repayments exceed income by approximately £500 per month. At December, our redevelopment account stands at £13,800, but £8,500 of that relates to the Community Fund, so we have only around £5,300 relating to redevelopment. The Leadership team will be looking to utilise the Community Fund to support projects in the Spon End area as the estate is redeveloped.

The Charity Bank loan currently stands at £371,400 and our monthly repayments are £2,798. The loan is due to be repaid by January 2038, but given the current level of funding we are contacting Charity Bank to see if we can extend the term, which will result in us paying a lesser sum each month but we will pay substantially more interest over a longer period.

Please pray for the ongoing work here at Bethel and how God wants each of us to be involved to further God's Kingdom in Coventry. If you need any more information about finances, please contact Derek Seedhouse on [finance@bethelcoventry.org.uk](mailto:finance@bethelcoventry.org.uk)

## **Introducing our New Nexus Students**

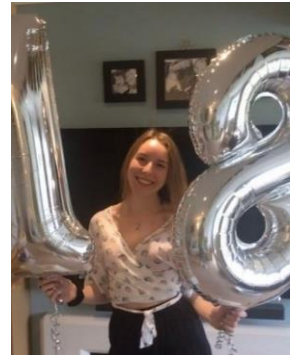
Although we haven't had the chance to meet them yet due to Covid we have two new Nexus students this year and we wanted to give them the opportunity to introduce themselves to all of you!

"Hi Bethel, I'm Charlotte O'Leary and I am 18 years old. I grew up in Welling, Kent, which is located on the border of South East London and Kent. I was part of my church for 12 years before moving to Coventry. Apart from playing keys at church, I love to create digital content for any occasion. The plan is to complete 3 years at Nexus to get a degree in Popular Music and Worship but of course we will see where the Lord takes me! I love Coventry so far and your online services have been really good. I can't wait to meet you all in person and I can't wait to see what God does in everyone in the new year. God bless, Charlotte xxx"



"Hello Bethel Church!

My name is Savannah Congdon. I have come from a small village called Churt in Farnham, Surrey and moved to Coventry as a Nexus student. I found out about Nexus in the summer of 2020 and decided it was the place that would help draw me that much closer to God. I felt that I needed to spend time initiating a deeper connection with him and at the same time, learn more about a great interest of mine, vocals! This course sounded so perfect for me and I am truly enjoying my time at Nexus currently, despite the circumstances, I know I have learnt so much already and I am continuing to grow in faith. I am looking forward to getting to know the church and spending time with you all!"



## **Worship & Leadership Academy Update**

WLA has continued through restrictions and lockdowns in the last twelve months to deliver teaching and support to a wide range of students studying on the Hands-On course and the BA

Theology degree in partnership with For Mission college. The Bonhoeffer Project discipleship cohorts moved online in March with a small gathering able to take place in August. New cohorts started in November again all online spanning the breadth of the country. If you would like to know more about the Bonhoeffer Project, just speak to Josh.

**wlaacademy**  
equipped for ministry

Many of the planned events including the Bonhoeffer Project UK annual conference had to be postponed but the Academy has still been able to financially support several individuals to assist in their learning. Moving forwards into 2021 much of the facilitation is still happening online which seems to be the new normal at least for some time yet. Please pray as we seek to start some new projects that the Lord would grant wisdom and reveal His plans for the Academy in the future.

## Our ForMission Students

We have been blessed as a church by a number of ForMission College students being placed with us over the years. They have been a great encouragement as they have been involved with a wide range of church ministries, this year we have three students and we wanted to give them the chance to share their heart and give an update on what's been happening with them;



Tom Houston – “It seems crazy that my first time at Bethel was back in 2018 for a Portugal mission trip meeting after the morning service. Fast forward three years and I find myself towards the end of my BA degree course where I feel like a completely different person and a better disciple of King Jesus. When I first started coming to Bethel, I always referred to my church back in Kent as my ‘home church’ but now I see Bethel as my ‘home church’. God has really put this place on my heart as it has invested so much in me over the last three years and now I feel God calling me to stay around after my degree has finished and continue to serve in this amazing church.”

Karen Sprouse – “When I started the WLA Hands On course in 2015 I never thought I would go on to study for a BA (Hons) Degree at ForMission College afterwards; I didn't think I was capable of studying at that level. It turns out I am capable but what is it all for? I have no idea if I'm honest, I just knew it was the next step for me and I wanted to continue learning. At times it has been a challenge and I have had to do things I that have taken me out of my comfort zone but looking back I can see how I have grown in confidence (just a bit) and knowledge. I've been involved in lots of different areas at church including Oasis café, ladies discipleship, pastoral ministry and supporting life groups as well. From experience, I think next steps will become clear when I have finished the degree at the end of May, so, until then I just need to keep trusting that God will reveal everything I need to know when I need to know it.



Laura Penny – I'm now in my second year of the ForMission degree and I'm really developing a heart for the marginalised and vulnerable people. I'm currently volunteering with the Red Cross, working with people going through pain and crisis. I feel God is calling me to is to get alongside really vulnerable people such as those who are victims of or at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

Please pray for all of our students as they seek to know what God has next for them!



## **Oasis Café Update**

Life at Oasis has been interesting these past few months. The café was closed for around seven months due to the pandemic and when we eventually reopened, during the first week of November, we were definitely COVID - 19 compliant. Thanks to external funding we have to employed two cooks which enabled us, with volunteers, to open five days a week. We appointed Nabeela Gill (from CLM) and also Joshua Manley to cover the week and then with our team of volunteers we opened the door on 2nd November. The funding also covered the cost of a bright new sign outside the café and some new promotional materials as well.



Sadly, the government announced that we would be entering into higher COVID restrictions the same week we were due to reopen so the café was able to welcome people in for only three days and then operate for takeaways only. The first day we had a steady stream of people coming through the cafe and we were able to chat to some of our regulars who had missed us. During these initial conversations it emerged that some of our regulars are no longer with us. Some had passed away since we last opened. Some could not face coming into the building as it holds memories of those passed and some of our regulars have different routines and so won't be passing by the cafe anymore.

The whole Spon End estate is undergoing change with plans to see the ugly maisonettes bulldozed and the whole area redeveloped. Some people have already begun to move out and the estate and community is changing. We have had a few workmen in through the door but this has been somewhat sporadic.

Despite the obstacles, constant change, and lack of footfall we were still able to have some meaningful conversations with those who did make it along. At the present time we have decided to close until the restrictions ease. Please pray for wisdom as we seek the Lord for His heart for the café and try to understand what the next steps are. God bless, Lindsey and the Oasis Team

We hope you are encouraged by this latest newsletter! We are always looking for suggestions and content so if you have a testimony, praise or an update please do send them in. Please do try and stay connected through these challenging times with one another.

Every blessing

Bethel Leadership Team