



West Bergholt Methodist Church

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THE LINK

JULY/AUGUST 2017

SUNDAY SERVICES

WORSHIP at 11 am will be led by

July 2nd Rev Ken Chalmers with Communion
July 9th Mr Ron Firmin - Action for Children Sunday
July 16th Rev John Robinson
July 23rd Mr Eddie Lansdown
July 30th United Service at Boxted Methodist Church,
Rev Ken Chalmers with Communion
Aug 6th Rev Ken Chalmers with Communion
Aug 13th Mr Jonathan Sparkes
Aug 20th Local arrangement
Aug 27th Mr Phil Bingham

Please note that our **Harvest Celebration Service** (and Church Meeting) planned for October 1st has been moved to **October 8th** to ensure our minister, Rev Ken Chalmers, is available.

If you would like to come to any of our services, or any other church activities, but would need a lift, please phone 01206 242511 or 241969.

OTHER MEETINGS

Please feel free to join us at any of these – you will be made most welcome...

Please note that there will not be any Shared weekday communions in July or August.

The next **COFFEE MORNINGS** will be on
Weds. 12th JULY 10 - 11.30am and then on
Weds. 9th AUGUST 10 - 11.30am
BRING A FRIEND WITH YOU
Coffee or Tea and Biscuits - 50p
Gifts for Cake and General Stalls
will be appreciated.



Greetings Cards will be on sale

Thank you for your support. June result - £47.69

Christian Aid Week May 14th to May 20th

The provisional sum raised from the village collection is £1,347, of which approximately a half is gift-aided. The total includes £65 from the collection at the recent United Service at the Methodist Church on April 30th. Thanks to all who helped collect and supported this effort.

THE LATE GREATS CHARLES HADDEN SPURGEON

The statistics of Charles Hadden Spurgeon's life and career are remarkable. Born in 1834, he was only 57 when he died in 1892. But he left behind more than 3,500 sermons, effectively something like a hundred for each year of ministry. The numbers who heard him were remarkable. New Street Chapel was built to hold 1200 and his congregation outgrew it. The Metropolitan Tabernacle (his main pulpit from 1861) had a capacity of 4,500. In 1857 he preached to more than 23,000 at the Crystal palace. He is credited with the planting of 48 churches in London and nearly 900 preachers were trained in his college in his lifetime.

The first statistic that caught the imagination was his age. He was only 17 (and had been preaching less than a year) when he was called to be Pastor of the Waterbeach chapel in Cambridgeshire. Two years later he was invited to take up the pastorate of a leading Baptist chapel in London, New Park Street. He was known as "the boy preacher"; some of his early popularity was due to curiosity at this prodigy. But throughout his ministry, crowds flocked to hear Spurgeon. Services at the Metropolitan Tabernacle were ticketed affairs and there were always queues for the non-reserved, public seats.

Clearly, a Spurgeon sermon was something to be witnessed. His diction was excellent and he worked hard on his elocution. He believed in being direct in his preaching. His illustrations were often simple similes; the effect of a Bible in the home is likened to the scent of lavender from the garden, the promises of God are compared to a cheque that only has value when cashed, and the thanksgiving that precedes supplication is pictured as a jumper's run-up. He was not afraid to use humour in his preaching and had a reputation as something of a showman – "The Barnum of the Pulpit"; he would lace his sermons with quotations from poetry and could produce mellifluous prose but he always aimed at simplicity. His aim was to be understood that the hearer might receive Christ who was invariably the subject of his preaching.

The simplicity of his approach may be due to his being largely self-taught; the founder of the Pastors College had no formal theological education but he was widely

read. Apart from the Bible, one book recurs much more than any other in his sermons – *The Pilgrim's Progress*. From childhood Spurgeon was an admirer of Bunyan and saw himself in the same tradition of dissenting preaching; his sermons are littered with passing references to the decisions taken by Christian, Pliable et al.

Spurgeon's theological position was avowedly Calvinistic and passionately Protestant. He was overtly conscious of standing in a tradition that he traced back to the Puritans (to Richard Baxter and his beloved Bunyan). In relation to other (Arminian) evangelicals Spurgeon could be irenic but he was trenchantly polemical against those of a more Catholic persuasion. He was brought up a Congregationalist but became persuaded in his teens of the necessity of a believer's baptism. It was apposition he would defend throughout his ministry, on the grounds of unquestioning biblical literalism: that which the text commands was not to be questioned.

This biblical literalism was typical of Spurgeon's preaching, all of which was closely tied to the text. He believed that the art of preaching was to find the text and the sermon would follow. According to his biographer, Spurgeon left preparation to the last minute. He entered the pulpit with only a few notes; the published sermons were the work of scribes in the congregation. This was in part because he was heir to a tradition that valued extemporaneous word; his account of the beginning of his preaching ministry was on one evening when he believed he was going to keep the preacher company but was told en route that he was to deliver the sermon.

"It seemed a great risk and a serious trial.... but I would not allow the people to go home without a word." He would continue sometimes to find preaching a trial throughout his life, but millions more who have read his sermons attest to receiving a word.

Key features of the preaching of Charles Hadden Spurgeon:-

- Preaching is to offer Christ. Therefore, preaching is Christocentric and aims at conversion.
- Preaching is based on the scriptural text and does not depart far from it.
- Illustrations are simple and memorable.
- Delivery is important: preaching should be in clear but elegant language and the preacher must be clearly audible.
- Preaching is founded on clearly thought-out theological position.
- The sermon has a life beyond the time of delivery through publication. Spurgeon offered notes to guide other preachers and was happy for others to preach his sermons.

(The above is from an article by Rev Jonathan Hustler in "Preach", the magazine of the Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust.)

Copy for the September edition should be with Andrew Wilks by the third Sunday in August – August 20th please.

FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Our next meeting will be at 2.30pm
Wednesday 19th July – a Garden
Party at the home of Judith Fletcher, 85, Albany Road.



There will not be a Fellowship meeting in August.

SUNDAY JULY 23rd AFTERNOON TEA

We are holding another afternoon tea from 3.00 to 5.00 for the older members of our community, particularly the **housebound and lonely**. We would like to hear from anyone who would appreciate an outing and the company of others for the afternoon. Do you know of a neighbour or friend whom we could contact to invite? Transport will be arranged as necessary. **Offers of help with catering and transport will be appreciated**, please speak to Judith or Andrew.

Action For Children - the sponsored walk (very warm) at West Bergholt on Saturday June 17th was enjoyed by fifteen walkers. The initial sum of over £430 was raised with some more still to be collected. Much of the sum was also gift aided. Thanks to all who supported.

Property Matters

The Church Council has agreed that a range of necessary property maintenance works should be carried out to our Chapel and Hall premises. It is hoped that these works will be carried out during the summer and we will do our best to keep disruption to a minimum. However, some impact on activities is inevitable and it is likely that the Hall will not be available for at least a week at some point. Further information will follow once firm dates are known. There is a significant cost attached to these works but they are essential for the future use of our premises. Any contributions towards the cost would be gratefully received. Please speak to Andrew (01206 242511)

School Holiday Activities

We will be providing fun activities for young families (children please bring an adult along) at our **Coffee and Craft** mornings during the school holidays. These will take place in the West Bergholt Methodist Church Hall, Chapel Lane, CO6 3EF from 10.30 – 12.00 on the following Mondays – July 31st and Aug. 14th. For further details phone Andrew (242511).

ALL WELCOME.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun. July 9 – Action for Children Sunday
Sun. July 23rd – Afternoon Tea 3.00.
Mon. July 31st - Coffee and Craft in the hall
Mon. Aug 14th - Coffee and Craft in the hall
Sat. Sept 9th – Village fete
Sat. Sept 16th Free Family Fun day in the Castle Park.
Sun. Oct. 8th – Harvest Festival 11.00am

Sun. Oct. 8th – Church meeting after morning service.