



West Bergholt Methodist Church

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THE LINK

JUNE

2017

SUNDAY SERVICES

WORSHIP at 11 am will be led by
June 4th Rev Paul Howes with Communion
June 11th Mr Jonathan Sparkes-MHA Sunday
June 18th Mr Phil Bingham
June 25th Rev Ken Chalmers with Baptism
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.

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All children are very welcome. Crèche facilities will be provided when necessary.
For further information please contact Mrs Susan Windscheffel.

OTHER MEETINGS

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

Shared weekday communion at St. Mary's on TUESDAY JUNE 13th at 11am

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our next meeting will be at 2.30pm



on Wednesday 21st June –the speaker will be Mr David Ablewhite. **All are welcome.**

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 - a sponsored walk will take place here in **West Bergholt** on **Saturday June 17th** at 10.00am, starting from the Methodist Church Hall. All are welcome to join in the walks (two choices - one or two hour) and sponsorship for the walkers would be

welcomed. Please speak to Sylvia Wilks for details.
TRUTH -TELLING IN AN AGE OF MISTRUST

During the United States presidential race, establishment figure Hilary Clinton was pitched against the self-proclaimed outsider, Donald Trump. Neither were hugely trusted by the public, but Trump's popular support was against all the odds largely because he was not "one of them", the hated political elite.

Similarly in the Brexit referendum, mainstream economists looked intently into the camera and swore blind that the UK risked Armageddon if it left the European Union. "Nonsense", was the outraged response, "you are just scaremongering to frighten us into voting to remain".

Commenting on the US election, the documentary film maker Michael Moore claimed that a lot of the people who supported Trump did so because they wanted to lob a "Molotov Cocktail" into the heart of the government machine.

After the EU referendum, many who opted to leave admitted that they didn't expect to win; they just wanted to send a message to Westminster. To borrow a line from Romeo and Juliet, "a plague on both your houses", Shakespeare might as well have been talking about the Commons and Lords, or the Senate and the House of Representatives.

According to popular view, professionals in general and political in particular cannot be trusted.

Preaching in an age of cynicism is no easy matter. Yet while the establishment class often appears bemused by the hostility towards it from the general public, those who front it out most weeks as speakers and preachers are less surprised.

Older clergy and ministers can just remember the time when to be a pastor, priest or vicar was to be respected in the community. Not anymore. For the most part these are dim and distant memories.

Preachers spotted years ago how disaffected people have become with experts, authority figures and professionals who claim to know best. In fact it is

becoming so commonplace in ministry that it is hardly noticed its happening. This is the new normal for those called to share the Gospel in our generation. According to research by the Bible Society, two out of ten people in the UK are critical of the church, and seven out of ten are unconvinced at best. Yet rather than wallow in a slough of despond, preachers have learned how to minister against this unfavourable backdrop. Ironically, perhaps politicians could learn a thing or two from preachers.

Harder to combat today is the disregard many Western believers have for the place of the theologian. Try quoting scholars in a sermon and the choice nugget offered to back up exegetical thought can very often fall on deaf ears. People are losing confidence in all forms of authority.

Ours is undoubtedly the age of the Bible expert. Vastly more commentaries and daily Bible reading aids are freely available in print and online today than at any other time in history. Yet we are perhaps the most biblically illiterate generation for two hundred years.

Why is this? Why do believers have so little time for serious reading and so little respect for the scholar in our midst? Most likely (and unfairly in my view) it's the same reason why the wider world is so suspicious of the career politician. We've fallen out of love with insiders.

While the public don't care for journalists, economic gurus and professional politicians, church members are more wary of the expert expositor and the professional preacher. How often does a speaker leave the pulpit wondering if the congregation really get what they have been saying?

So how do we speak effectively in an age of mistrust? For an answer I would look outside the UK.

Growing churches across the globe share some important characteristics. Perhaps unsurprisingly they share a common concern to care for the poor, the sick and the marginalised. They also almost always warm the heart and bring about substantial character change; often in observable and verifiable ways. And they share a profound devotion to Christ that borders on the pietistic.

Yet an additional feature of impactful churches speaks directly to the popularity of Trump and Brexit; still largely ignored in the West, growing global churches stand out as liberating alternatives to arbitrary power.

In some specific contexts the best way to contextualise the gospel is to speak very publicly about the social issues of injustice in society. Quite simply the call upon the preacher is to speak truth unto power, often at a very high price personally as a result.

Yet more widely the patient witness of the church shows that individuals really do matter and that overbearing government and corporate culture is not

the whole story. We speak to the fine texture of a richer life with God that is compelling, compassionate and deeply personal.

From the slums of Nairobi to the skyscrapers of Singapore, churches are showing in very practical ways that ordinary lives matter. Building community toilets that help with waste management through to Bible studies where everyone's voice is heard, the church offers a robust alternative to the faceless anonymity of so many.

This is no passing fad. For a generation with more education and yet less power than ever before, this is the prevailing environment for our witness today. So what would our response look like?

Done well we would converse with a generation dispossessed of its value and identity. We would recognise that what's fuelling the anger of today is a profound sense of disempowerment. And we would preach freedom to the captive who feel they are slaves to the machine.

Surely this is the time to say with Paul "it is for freedom that we have been set free"?

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

"Our Story"

We have completed our seven sessions of "Our Story" with Rev Ken Chalmers. The theme began with the story of "Jesus the true vine" showing how we need to plant small seeds, nurture them, feed and grow, spread the branches and prune. As a visual aid we planted sweet pepper seeds and were challenged to see how they grow and produce fruit, as we grow in our faith and mission in this church and as our ongoing story. It has been very thought provoking, needing much consideration, discussion and prayer.

The next **COFFEE MORNING** will be on
Weds. 14th JUNE 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. May result - £55.48

.DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun. June 11th – Methodist Homes Sunday.
Tues. June 13th – Communion at St. Mary's
Wed. June 14th – Coffee morning in the hall
Sat. June 17th – Action for Children Walk, West Bergholt
Wed. June 21st – Fellowship in the hall
Sun. July 9th – Action for Children Sunday
Sun. July 23rd – Afternoon tea 3.00pm.
Mon. July 31st – Coffee & Craft in the hall
Mon. Aug 14th - Coffee & Craft in the hall

**Copy for the July/August edition should be with
Andrew Wilks by the third Sunday in June – June 18th
please.**