

CHALLENGE – July 2011

Editorial

Recently, on the 15th of June, my family and I stood outside in the freezing cold night air, staring into the sky, hoping to catch a glimpse of the predicted lunar eclipse – which seemed at first to be well hidden behind thick clouds. Every few minutes it seemed as if an opening in the clouds might provide a window through which to see the moon - but the clouds resolutely blocked our view.

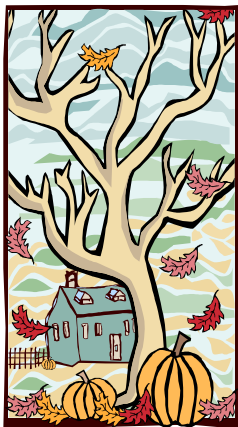


Suddenly a large patch seemed to evaporate and the moon shone brightly through, showing the edge of a shadow beginning to shift across the face of the moon. Despite the odd raindrop and much shivering we kept staring into the sky, waiting for the shadow to move across and cover the moon completely.

As it did so we were amazed by the colour, which first looked golden and then became transformed into an orange-red colour. We were spellbound for quite some time as the colour deepened, until the clouds drifted in front of the moon again and we ran for cover!

Our wait had been rewarded. We kept watch because we knew what was there, behind the clouds. It reminded me of how the disciples stood staring up into the clouds when Jesus was taken up into Heaven. They knew where he had gone and were reminded that he would return in the same way. They were filled with faith and hope and we can hold onto the same promise. Jesus is coming again!

In the meantime we can experience His comforting presence through the person of the Holy Spirit and know that we can believe in what we don't see...



I'm reminded again that it's mid-winter when all the trees in our garden are bare and the grass is covered with piles of leaves. I'm really thankful for the much-needed rain but for many folk in Cape Town, this is a time of tribulation, as some township areas are often flooded and homes are damp and uncomfortable. Our help and prayers can make a difference as we reach out to the communities around us.

Despite the weather, the Holiday Club promises to be a place of warmth and fun in the middle week of the holidays. Do contact Nick Thomson for more information if you know of children who might like to attend. It is always an unforgettable experience!

I hope that our readers will wrap up warmly and enjoy this July issue of the Challenge.

Blessings

Karen Anderson
Challenge Editing Team



From the study

Politics, Voting and Christianity



I know what you are thinking, “The elections happened two months ago, Grant, this article is a bit late!” But I have chosen to write this article now for two reasons: (1) I do not want anyone to think that I would write an article like this to sway their vote – and since your vote has been cast there is nothing that I can do to sway it now! (2) A Christian’s vote is private, but it has responsibility attached to it and I would like us to understand that responsibility.

Jacob Zuma and Christianity

The church and the state should be separate. The need for this has been shown time and time again in history and it was shown again in the recent build-up to our local government elections. Jacob Zuma is quoted as saying:



“When you vote for the ANC, you are also choosing to go to heaven. When you don't vote for the ANC you should know that you are choosing that man who carries a fork... who cooks people;”

and

“When you are carrying an ANC membership card, you are blessed. When you get up there, there are different cards used but when you have an ANC card, you will be let through to go to heaven.”

This is an irresponsible and offensive use of the church for political means. But it also raises a bigger issue for us as Christians. Should any political party try to obtain our support with the promise of a Christian state? In other words: is it the aim of Christians to vote into power those who would bring about a Christian government? The immediate answer is “no”, but with a little explanation (a bit later)...

A chequered history

The history of Christianity (in broad terms) is littered with examples of terrible crimes and outrageous events that resulted from a union between the state and the church. The church chose to use war to make political gains in the Crusades. The Holy Roman church sanctioned the attack of the Turks (Muslims) in an attempt to regain Jerusalem the so-called Holy Land. Another example is the Church of England: the monarch is the head of the church and this situation led to many politically motivated evils that were committed with the sanction of the church or the church leaders.

These are all glaring warnings to us that the advance of the Kingdom of God is not dependent on the advance of any earthly kingdom; the gospel is not well served when the church uses the state (or vice versa) to accomplish its purposes. In fact the opposite is most often true: the church is weakened when it becomes an instrument in the hands of

the state. The Crusades are a blight on the testimony of the Church and the Roman Church had to apologise publicly. The marriage of Church and state lead to the spiritual barrenness of the Dark Ages – the light of the Reformation only came when Huss, Calvin, Luther, Zwingli and Knox returned to the unadulterated Word of God.

The quintessential example is apartheid in South Africa. Parts of the church sanctioned and “theologically” supported the practice of apartheid. Today we are still dealing with the fallout of this evil – the church has largely lost its right to speak with any authority or prophetic voice.

A Christian’s responsibility

This does not mean that the Christian does not have a responsibility to vote and a responsibility to seek out the party or person that will best represent his/her values. This also does not mean that Christians should not be active in trying to drive back the darkness that we see around us. As Christians we should labour for things like: equal opportunities, basic human rights, religious freedom, and care for the marginalized. The Book of James makes it clear that a Christian’s actions should match his claim of faith – otherwise his faith is dead; and that those actions should meet not only the spiritual but also the physical needs of people (James 2:14-26).



But it is a question of priorities and faith. Do we believe that the saviour of South Africa is political reform, or a two-part state, or a purging of political corruption? Do we believe that job creation, foreign investment, better education, economic equality, land redistribution or any other necessary reform will bring the hope that South Africa really needs?

The interesting thing is that the political state of a nation has never stopped the progress of the gospel. In fact the so-called “Christian nations” of the past few centuries are in spiritual turmoil now, while the gospel has made great advances in China and the previous Eastern Bloc countries.

Only the gospel of Christ will bring the change we need! Proclaiming, not lobbying, is how we make truth known. Gospel, not law, is what changes sinful hearts. Service, not dominion, is the most effective way to win people in any culture. Think of the life of Christ. He lived at a time when oppression by the Roman government was severe, taxes were exploitative and freedom was at a low. Yet he did not spend his life engaging with Herod or the Romans. He did many “good works”, but his unashamed emphasis was the gospel of God’s grace. This too should be our emphasis as a church and as individual Christians: godly living and faithful proclaiming the gospel.

God bless

Grant, Annie, Seth and Ben



The minister's memo ...

Those needing prayer and care



Please would you remember the following people in your prayers:

- Those facing cancer: Agassi (nephew of Goliaths), Roger Horwood (Congregational minister), Gloria Laubscher, Carol Hubbard, and each of their families
- Paddy Case, Elizabeth Enslin, Penny Hoffman, and Christen Pietersen – all working overseas for a period of time
- The family of Vera Attwood after she passed away
- Those whom we visit with communion: Daisy Kotze, Sue Herringer, Phyl Bryant
- Ron Mitchell as he recovers after a fall off a motor bike
- Betty Jones who is on oxygen most of the time
- Miems Magnall who is recovering after a stroke

God Bless

Grant Peers

Tribute to Vera Attwood

Vera Attwood was one of a number of adults who were role models for me as a child growing up in the Sunday School. Some have already gone to be with the Lord, like Des Riley; some continue to inspire me today, like Harry Attwood and Peggy Brown.

Vera's friendly smile and kind words showed me that she cared and I felt reassured and safe just talking to her. She was one of the people I wanted to be like when I grew up and I count it an honour to have known her.

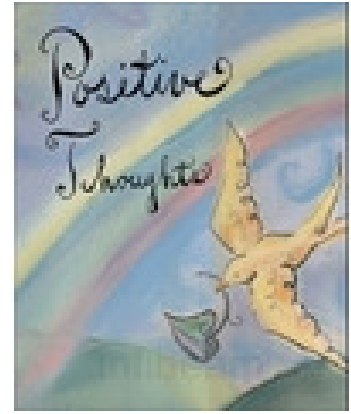
At this time my prayers for the Attwood family are that they will know the very real comfort and presence of our Lord, day-by-day, as He faithfully continues to meet their needs.

Karen Anderson

The writings of Max Lucado

Today I will make a difference

Today I will make a difference. I will begin by controlling my thoughts. A person is the product of his thoughts. I want to be happy and hopeful. Therefore, I will have thoughts that are happy and hopeful. I refuse to be victimized by my circumstances. I will not let petty inconveniences such as stoplights, long lines, and traffic jams be my masters. I will avoid negativism and gossip. Optimism will be my companion, and victory will be my hallmark. Today I will make a difference.



I will be grateful for the twenty-four hours that are before me. Time is a precious commodity. I refuse to allow what little time I have to be contaminated by self-pity, anxiety, or boredom. I will face this day with the joy of a child and the courage of a giant. I will drink each minute as though it is my last. When tomorrow comes, today will be gone forever. While it is here, I will use it for loving and giving. Today I will make a difference.

I will not let past failures haunt me. Even though my life is scarred with mistakes, I refuse to rummage through my trash heap of failures. I will admit them. I will correct them. I will press on. Victoriously. No failure is fatal. It's OK to stumble, I will get up. It's OK to fail, I will rise again. Today I will make a difference.

I will spend time with those I love. My spouse, my children, my family. A man can own the world but be poor for the lack of love. A man can own nothing and yet be wealthy in relationships. Today I will spend at least five minutes with the significant people in my world. Five quality minutes of talking or hugging or thanking or listening. Five undiluted minutes with my mate, children, and friends.

Today I will make a difference.

From Shaped by God

Copyright (Tyndale House, 1985, 2002) Max Lucado

The Wedding Prayer

Create in us a love, O Lord.
An eternal love ...
Your love.

A love that forgives any failure,
spans any distance,
withstands any tempest.

Create in us a love, O Lord.
A new love.
A fresh love.

A love with the tenderness of a lamb,

the grandeur of a mountain,
the strength of a lion.

And make us one. Intimately one.
As you made a hundred colors
into one sunset,
A thousand cedars into one forest,
and countless stars into one galaxy ...
make our two hearts as one,
Father, forever ...

that you may be praised, Father, forever.



From Shaped by God (original title: On the Anvil)

Copyright (Tyndale House, 1985, 2002) Max Lucado

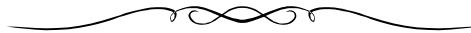
Greetings from Peter and Barbie

Barbie and I send our love to you from Gold River, just outside Victoria in Canada, B.C. We are with my brother's widow and are being spoilt all the time. We are thankful for all that the Lord Jesus is doing and especially that we are well and able to hike, ride bicycles and Harley Davidson's, drive and visit so many people. We were privileged to conduct the Christian fellowship twice on board the Artemis cruise liner (Barbie played the piano) and shared Jesus in several other places too. I will be preaching in St Ives soon. It is so good to be part of the Kingdom and be welcomed into so many different churches and homes. The Kingdom is all about our relationship to Jesus and His family.



Love to all at ECCC Peter and Barbie.

(The picture was taken when we visited Mount St Helens where a volcano erupted in 1980 - Snow!)



"... LET GOD TRANSFORM ... THE WAY YOU THINK ..." (Romans 12 : 2)

Behind everything you do, there's a thought! So if you're serious about changing your life, you must change how you think. That's not easy, and it doesn't happen instantly.

Picture yourself in a boat with the automatic pilot set to go in a certain direction, then you suddenly decide to go somewhere else.

First option: Willpower. Grab the wheel and force it to go where you want; by sheer willpower, overcome the autopilot. But you'll feel constant resistance. Your arms will get tired, and when you let go of the wheel, guess what? The boat will go the way it's programmed to go. Get the idea? That's what happens when you try to change your life through willpower: "I'll force myself to quit drinking, cheating, or overeating", and so on. Your willpower can only produce short-term change, but it creates constant stress because you haven't dealt with the root cause and reprogrammed your mind. The change doesn't feel natural so eventually you give up, revert to your old patterns and say, "I guess this is just the way I am. I'll never change."

Second option: God's power. There is a better way! The Bible says, "....Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think". Change always begins in your mind! The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act. You say, "How can I change the way I think?" By programming your mind each day with God's Word. "How can a man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word." (Psalm 119:9).

Of this and that

HOP ALONG TO SOCIAL MORNING

Join us in Craven Hall on the last Thursday of every month at 10h30



***S**uper Entertainment*

***O**utstanding Fellowship*

***C**aring People*

***I**nteresting Guest Speakers*

***A**nnual Outings*

***L**ots of Refreshments*

For more information, contact Anne Snyders on (021) 671 8732

The Friendship Club

The Friendship Club is a group of women of many ages. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month and take turns in hosting the group.

We meet to discuss matters of interest, the latest news and anything else that may pop up.

We also enjoy tea, delicious eats and the sense of community that having this brings.

If you are interested in joining us, we would love to see you.

Phone **Jill Greer** (021) 671-1664



Enquiries about the use of Craven Hall for functions

*Please contact Jill Greer well in advance
so as to avoid clashes*

Hire of the hall:

The rate for hire has been revised. This is available on request.

It is also possible to borrow the church's tables and chairs (excluding the metal tables) for functions.

Challenge by email?

If you would like to have your copy of the Challenge sent to you by email, please send your email address to Karen Anderson (kanderson@escs.org.za) and we'll add you to the email list.

Once the Challenge is posted on the church website, we'll be able to send you a link enabling you to download and print your own copy of the Challenge.

Church trailer for hire

Contact – Dave Watts – (021) 671-5574

The blanket crocheted and donated by Wendy Mallett raised R779 and was won by Cecilia Hutchinson.



PLEASE HELP - We need donations of unwanted wool (any thickness) which will be knitted or crocheted into blankets for the babies at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital". Wool can be handed to Heather Heiberg at Church or contact Rosemary Hacha on (021) 671-4736 or Cell (084) 846-2824.

Bread tags for wheelchairs

Please don't forget to collect all the tags you get off bread loaves, cotton wool, fruit, etc. I have placed a glass jar in the foyer of the church for the tags.

The tags are sold to a recycling company and every 270 kg collected pays for a wheelchair. Sasko and Kwikloc, the manufacturers of the bread tags, have also pledged to donate two wheelchairs for every one wheelchair that is "bought" with the bread tags.

The Bread Tags for Wheelchairs Project already has over 100 coordinators in different communities all over South Africa. In 2010 over 70 wheelchairs were given aim to do better in 2011.

Thanks
Jaqui Sterrenberg



Dear Friend(s)

We need a few of the old style rectangular canvas camp cots (with the fixed plywood base on a fold up metal tube frame).

They were normally available in shades of blue.

If you know of anyone who no longer needs theirs and is prepared to donate to us, then please contact us on 021 785 4049 between 9 am and 1 pm weekdays and ask for JP. (If the mattress is also available, that will be a bonus.)

With sincere thanks and regards

Phillip and Pat



**ECCC banking details
(for direct deposits):**
Account name: East Claremont Congregational Church
Bank: First National Bank
Account number: 50170468844
Clearing Code (Branch code): 201509
Account type: Current account

Thoughts for the month

***The Lord is with you, mighty warrior
(Judges 6:12b)***

***For when I am weak, then I am strong.
(2 Corinthians 12:10b)***

Gideon a mighty warrior? When you read Judges, the opposite seems to be the case. Gideon was a timid, disappointed Israelite. Yet, God called him a mighty warrior.

Was God being cynical? No, God is never sarcastic. God did not see what Gideon was, but what he could become. God sees us in a different way than we view ourselves. God chooses the weak to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27).

He can turn a weak and frightened Gideon into a hero and leader.

Don't look upon yourself in a negative way. 'I can't do anything, I am a nobody. I have nothing to offer.'

Whoever dares to answer 'Yes' when God calls, will be anointed by Him.

For the weak are strong. For the weak can count on God's help. And will receive it. Even today.

DAY by DAY
by Jan Pit

Birthdays to remember in July:

10th Barbara Anderson
15th Debbie Hill
16th Steve Bassingthwaighte
19th Shireen Attfield
21st Betty Jones
22nd Beryl Fouché
24th Sharon Nixon
27th Eddie Sterrenberg



Wedding anniversaries in July:

4th John and Merle Kotze
27th Eddie and Jaqui Sterrenberg
30th Peter and Barbara Anderson



Blessings to all on their Special Days.



*Suffer little children to come unto me
and forbid them not*

THE HANDY CORNER

GENT'S HAIRSTYLIST - Rosemary Hacha - 021 671 4736/084 846 2824

LADIES' & GENTS' HAIR STYLIST - Yvonne Legg - 021 671 5908

BUYING & SELLING OF MOTOR CARS, BAKKIES & LDV's - Ron Wilson - 084 608 8925

SELLING OR BUYING A HOME? Diane Hosty - 082 775 2777. (Referrals paid)

TO SELL OR BUY COMFORTABLE HOMES - Elizabeth Tromp - 021 671 5846. (Referrals paid)

VALERIE JEAN'S CATERING SERVICE - Valerie Jean Oliphant - 021 697 5626/072 234 9579

ELECTRICIAN/HANDYMAN - Clyde Oliphant - 021 697 5626/072 643 4949

CARPET AND UPHOLSTERY CLEANING - Hennie Storm - 072 528 7743

ELDERLY/YOUNG/PETS-SITTING AND CARING - Janine Alger - 021 683 0598/082 789 1720

HOUSE-SITTER OR WATCHER also CLEAN & FIXIT - Steven - 072 328 2673

*Any member who wishes to have their name placed on the above list,
please let the Editing Team know before the 20th of the month.*

Tea Roster

July/August

The Morning Tea after Service will be run as usual by the Home Cell Groups.



Any nice little bits and pieces for THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH? Do let us have them by the 20th of the month



Do we have a record of your birthday or wedding anniversary?

Even if you are not a member of the church but you attend regularly, drop us an email at kanderson@escs.org.za and Melody.Graham@gmail.com

and we'll ensure you get your birthday wish.

Flower Roster

July

3rd A Snyders
10th S Palframan
17th B Glazer
24th C Meyer
31st V Olifant

August

7th N Case
14th E van Zyl
21st J Peers
28th E Roos

Flowers and More in Belvedere Business Park have very kindly agreed to give our ECC members 20% discount on flowers bought there for the Church. They will of course need to show the **Challenge List** with their name on it when buying.

What love means to a 4 - 8 year-old

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

Rebecca - age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth."

Billy - age 4

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs."

Chrissy - age 6

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK."

Danny - age 7



Message from the Youth Pastor

What an amazing job I have

There have been so many things that have caused me to be excited. For sake of brevity (and my one page allotment) I will merely mention two of the most recent things that have caused a few sparks of excitement.



I'm really excited by the willingness of our congregation members to get involved in our Junior Youth ministry (in using the word "involved" I include: helping make and eat Pizza; sprinkling nice things on doughnuts and then enjoying them; ensuring that while the kids tie dye their T-shirts, they don't dye their faces too; taking part in a number of very creative crafts; and just being there to show love and encouragement to the children). Thank you so much, you have no idea how much God has been using you and is able to use you in the lives of our children.

The second thing that I'm excited about is: I have seen how ready our Primary school children, and teenagers are to serve. At the beginning of the year our Junior Youth kids held a party for the pre-primary kids, and they didn't just help eat the food. They were helping to dish food out, wash dishes and clean up. I'm so excited to see how God is going to transform these children into teenagers who are ready to do his will. If God is clearly using them at such a young age, just imagine what he will be doing through them in a few years.

But that is not all...

The teenagers are also breaking stereotypes by being willing to serve... regularly. Every youth evening we have teenagers who arrive early to help wherever they can; and leave late because they are helping clean up. But their serving doesn't end there. They also arrive early on Sunday evenings to help set up for Come4Answers.

I believe that the reason why they serve so willingly is because they see that there is something different and valuable, which is found in our congregation. Apart from Jesus, they love this church because you are a part of it. They love and value how you have made an effort to encourage them, made an effort to show them love. It is because of the relationships that they build with you, that they will stay serving in our church.

Thank you so much for supporting the ministry to our young people.



Much love to all of you!

Nick Thomson
Youth Pastor



Praying Like Jesus

The eleventh in a series of extracts from the book by Julie-Allyson Ieron – readers might like to use the prayers as a springboard for their own conversations with the Lord.



[The prayers are based on a study of the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17.]

Father of truth,

Thank You that you are the Truth. As I have come to understand the importance truth carries in Your sight, I come before You now to acknowledge the truth about who I am.

I acknowledge that I am ...

I also acknowledge those untruthful things I have said and done, those truths I have left unsaid. Things like ...

I thank You for the forgiveness and cleansing You offer when I own the truth about myself. I ask that the Spirit of Truth would search me and make me worthy for Your use.



All Challenge articles are due on the 20th of the month.

*Contributors please note:- Articles for the Newsletter should not exceed an A4 half-page typed or A4 full-page hand written, (250 words). Unfortunately photographs involve scanning so are not usually accepted **unless** they are digital photographs.*

*(Please see the note below regarding this.) **Editing team.***

Digital photographs

For those of you who send articles into the Challenge, if you have any digital photographs relating to your article, please could you send them in JPEG format (jpg) to Melody Graham at the following email address – Melody.Graham@gmail.com.

Did you know.... You can download the transcript of Grant's sermon each week from the church website (www.eccc.org.za). You'll also find the cell group questions for the coming week there.

You can even download the latest copy of the Challenge from the website. Remember the colour copy of the Challenge is much more attractive than the black and white version ... and to have your own personal pdf copy emailed to you, just send a request by email to kanderson@escs.org.za and we'll put you on the mailing list!

JESUS LOVES YOU

Income and expenditure

The Income and Expenditure statement will be available on request from the treasurer or as a hard copy at church meetings.

Church directory

Description	Person/s responsible	Tel. No.	Cell. No.
Church Office		021 674 6819	
Minister	Rev G Peers	021 683 9680	083 681 6803
Secretary	G Laubscher	H: 021 671 0862 W: 021 674 1820	
Min Secretary (church)	B Anderson	021 671 4688	
Min Secretary (deacons)	N Case	H: 021 683 6787 W: 021 674 2077	082 588 9374
Treasurer	B Wehrli	021 671 5474	
Children's Church Superintendent	N Case	H: 021 683 6787 W: 021 674 2077	082 588 9374
Social Mornings	A Snyders	021 671 8732	
Challenge Editing Team	K Anderson M Graham	021 671 4608 028 254 9638	083 698 3236 072 219 6380
Youth Pastor	N Thomson	021 674 6819	078 744 4333
Youth Pastor Assistant	M Jones	021 671 2483	082 707 7931
Flowers	E Roos	021 671 1227	072 811 5467
Friendship Club	G Greer	021 671 1664	
Library	M Jones	021 671 2483	082 707 7931
Worship Group	Mike Begg	021 685 2293	
Bible Study	C Watts	021 671 5574	
Craft Class	A Snyders	021 671 8732	
Love Loaves	W Kalis		082 575 7169
Cleaning Dept	C Meyer	021 671 5908	
Property Stewards	P Goliath D Watts	021 703 2106 021 671 5574	
Regional Council Reps	P Anderson	021 6714688	0834223490
Celebration Teas/ Hiring of hall	G Greer	021 671 1664	
Organ	J Ross	021 696 6105	
Fund Raisers	S Palframan	021 671 4409	
	D Hosty	021 761 4468	

Calendar – July 2011			
Day	Date	Time	Event
Fri	1		School Holidays
Sun	3	09:15 18:00	Morning service: The Minister - Communion Combined evening service at the Baptist Church
Mon	4	am	Holiday Club
Tue	5	am 20:00	Holiday Club Maggie's Book Club
Wed	6	am	Holiday Club
Thu	7	am 19:00	Holiday Club Prayer meeting in Church lounge
Fri	8	am	Holiday Club
Sat	9		Maintenance party
Sun	10	09:15	Morning service: Nick Thomson
Mon	11	14:00	Craft Club
Thu	14	19:00	Prayer meeting in Church lounge
Sun	17	09:15 18:00	Morning service: The Minister Evening service: The Minister
Mon	18		Start of school Term 3
Tue	19	10:30 19:30	Bible Fellowship / Cell group Deacons meeting
Wed	20	10:30 19:30	Bible Fellowship / Cell group Training 4 ministry
Thu	21	19:00 19:30	Prayer meeting in lounge Bible Fellowship / Cell group
Fri	22	17:00 19:00	Kids on Fire in hall Senior Youth Club in hall
Sat	23		Cell Leader's Breakfast
Sun	24	09:15 18:00	Morning service: The Minister Church meeting after the morning service Evening service: The Minister
Tue	26	10:30	Bible Fellowship / Cell group
Wed	27	10:30 19:30	Bible Fellowship / Cell group Bible Fellowship / Cell group
Thu	28	10:30 19:00 19:30	Social morning Prayer meeting in Church Lounge Bible Fellowship / Cell group
Fri	29	17:00 19:00	Kids on Fire in hall Senior Youth Club in hall
Sun	31	09:15 18:00	Morning service: The Minister Evening service: The Minister



BIBLE STUDY INFORMATION ON WEEKLY CHURCH BULLETIN