

## June - July Dates

8 <sup>th</sup> June	Trustees Prayer meeting 7.30pm
11 <sup>th</sup> June	St Nicholas 3pm
18 <sup>th</sup> June	St Peter's 10.30am
24 <sup>th</sup> June	FACT Open Day
28 <sup>th</sup> June	Little Fishes Toddlers
29 <sup>th</sup> June	Seedlings Toddlers
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Minnows
4 <sup>th</sup> July	Tiddlers Toddlers
6 <sup>th</sup> July	Little Tots Toddlers
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Playtime Toddlers
9 <sup>th</sup> July	St Nicholas 3pm
13 <sup>th</sup> July	Trustees Meeting 7.45pm
16 <sup>th</sup> July	St Peters 11am
30 <sup>th</sup> July	St Peters 11am

All these dates are correct when going to print but inevitably there will be additions and changes that will occur.

## Toddler Groups

This half term 6 groups have been visited. I'm pleased to say that this number has grown steadily through out the year.

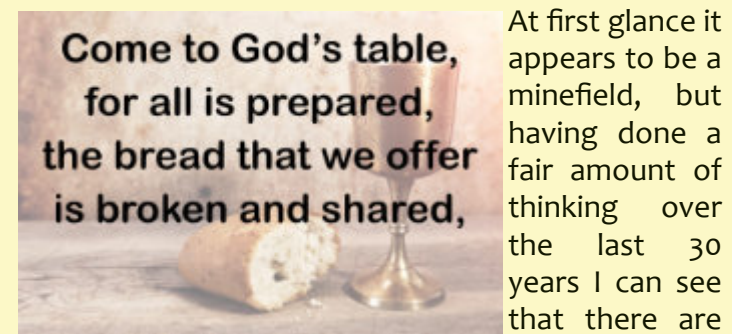
It's been good to use one of my 'big Books' to tell the story of Jesus walking on water. It allowed the adults to consider the incredible, while allowing the toddlers to home in on the friendship of Jesus helping Peter (by preventing him from drowning!) There was a song with rhythms to partake in and of course one of my many friends to offer their particular wisdom!



## Intergenerational Communion

One of the important tenets of Intergenerational Worship is that there is no segregation of ages, genders, skills, understanding or status. We gather to worship together in ways that allow everyone opportunities to encounter God.

With this as a set aim, I have wondered, pondered, and now created a service for Intergenerational Communion. Each individual church within its denomination has a different theology and practice of who might be able to fully partake in an Eucharist/ Communion / Mass / Lord's Supper / etc.



ways past the obstacles that are erected.

I've started with the Anglican churches as there are already processes that allow children to fully partake in Communion. I will be looking at Non-Conformist church practices and what could be offered to them in the next round. Ironically, they tend to be more rigid in their thinking and practices.

There are a number of stumbling blocks for churches relating to who may partake in the 'elements'. The first lies around the meal being one for believers who have been baptised. Certainly all early church practices endorsed this and church today would hold to it theoretically, yet there is a lot of turning a blind eye to what parents do with the bread / wafer once they have been given it and also the practice of trusting those who present themselves being eligible is never checked.

The reality that less people are being baptised or having any understanding of what is going on in this sacrament means we either have to hold a very rigid approach with checks on who is permitted to partake or we rethink what we are doing. One of the big drivers of spirituality today is the desire to belong and be valued. So, what does our practice of rejecting people from fully partaking have on them? Churches still tend to work out of an idea that understanding comes before belonging.

Should it be the case? Do you want to chat further?

At first glance it appears to be a minefield, but having done a fair amount of thinking over the last 30 years I can see that there are

# Fact

## Faith Awareness in Children Trust

FACT, Ashford Baptist Church, Church Road, Ashford, TW15 2TT

Mob 07733360009 office@thefact.co.uk www.thefact.co.uk

www.facebook.com/FACT.FaithAwarenessinChildrenTrust

# FACT OPEN DAY

## 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### 3pm - 4.30pm

I do hope that you have saved the date in your diaries for The FACT Open Day. There is an A5 flyer tucked inside for you to pin to your notice board at home or stick to the front of your fridge! Even better why not use it to invite someone to come with you and find out about FACT for themselves. Perhaps someone from your church or even your minister or key leader! We have long desired to have an opportunity to meet up with our many supporters and 'Stake Holders' once again. In the past we have done this on a semi-regular basis but since Covid it has dropped off our radar. Therefore, this Open Day is even more significant to us.

There will be time to wander and take part in a number of table top activities. There will be a labyrinth to gently prayer walk. A welcoming video showing some of the most recent work undertaken in churches, toddler groups and resources for the home environment. There will be sign up sheets for you to make sure we have your correct data to keep in touch with you and for you to indicate if you would like to pursue the possibilities of FACT working with your church / toddler group etc.

Simon will give a short address to help you understand what is currently going on and what is hoped for in the future.

Our Trustees will be around to chat on a one-to-one basis with people about what's involved with being a Trustee. Perhaps that's something you might wish to explore.

There will be **free** light refreshments on offer during the afternoon and we will aim to cater for various dietary requirements or preferences.

There is limited parking at the church, both front and back but there is a pay and display car park 50 metres away with very reasonable rates.

Please come to support, come to catch up with other supporters, come to hear and see what's going on, come to find out how you might get more involved, come to investigate how FACT might be able to work with you in your church situation or toddler group, but if you come for just one reason, then let it be to take the opportunity to encounter God through others, the activities, and examples of Intergenerational Worship so that you leave having received. Please come.

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.  
Issue number 159 June 2023

FACT enabling children and households to reflect on the Christian Gospel

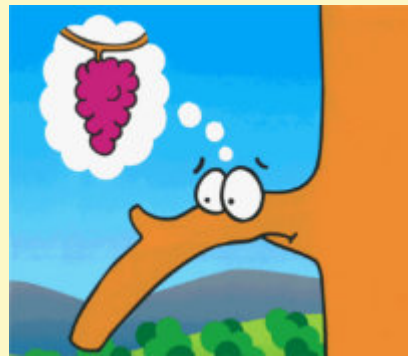


## Time2Worship Together

Another 2 months of services have been delivered and well received. In April we considered how as Christians we can be fruitful, based on the metaphor that Jesus used and is recorded in John 15. He spoke about us being the branches that abide in God and so produce fruit.

It was good to use the story of 'Basil the Branch' that can be found as a simple video on YouTube.

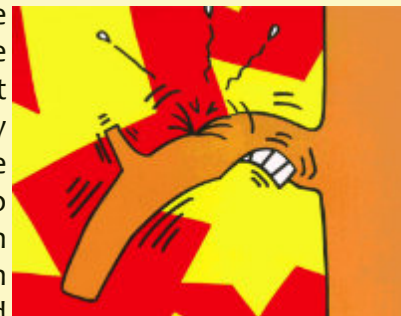
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=omihy2WN19M&t=27s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omihy2WN19M&t=27s)



Basil the Branch longed to produce a bunch of grapes and he tried with all his might to make it happen, but every time he tried he failed.

He convinced himself that it was due to insufficient effort on his part.

Time after time he strained as hard as he could, but without success until one day the Vine gave him the answer. All he had to do was to focus on the Vine, on abiding in the Vine, and he'd become fruitful!



The simple activity during the service was to construct a keyring with part of the text from John 15 and a prayer on the reverse.



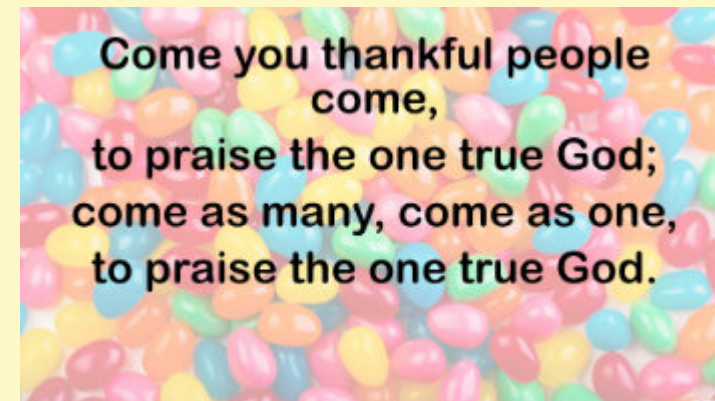
People were challenged to clip a set of keys on it and every time they used them to read the simple prayer and verse on the reverse side. We held our keyrings and used them as a visual aid during our time of prayer.

## Time2Worship Together

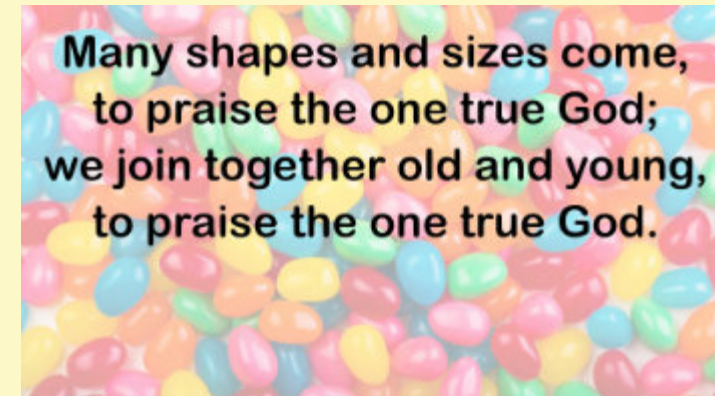
In May we focused on the theme, 'Faith at Home'. We considered the story found at the end of the book of Joshua, where the conquest of the promised land was complete and the tribes had settled. At the age of 110 and just before he died, Joshua challenged the people.

Probably the best known verse in the story,

**'Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.'**



There were new songs to sing and these 2 verses from one of the songs encapsulated one of the important elements of intergenerational Worship in today's society.



Other activities helped developed the ideas of treasuring the words of Scripture. All this allowed opportunities to wonder and encounter God. Finally at the close of our time together everyone was offered a free [Time2Share @Home](#) box to use with their household during the week. The challenge was to only take one if you had a genuine intention of trying to use it. It was okay to take one with that intention and to fail but not simply take it because it was free!

## Why do we need to change?

The desire to cling to that which is known and deemed to be safe can help give a sense of security. I suspect there is a little bit of a bunker mentality in all of us that cries, 'We've always done it this way, it's part of our tradition'. This can be a defensive reflex action.

Every generation has had those who have rocked the boat calling for Christians to rouse themselves and express the reality of faith in an ever changing world. I'm reminded of the post Second World War Archbishop, William Temple, who famously said,

**'The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.'**

Paul Tillich, Lutheran theologian of the last century, noted how we tend to answer questions that no one is asking.

**'The fatal pedagogical error is to throw answers like stones at the heads of those who have not yet asked the questions.'**

Recently I was listening to a podcast from an Australian group called, 'Intergenerate' and one of the contributors said,

**'Church is designed for a world that no longer exists.'**

The latest managerial thinking about the world we live in uses the acronym, 'BANI'.

**Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear and Incomprehensible.**

They describe a world that is ever changing and could easily break. The heightened and growing anxiety everywhere. Everything is interconnected so we can't have simple answers or thinking and how the world is incomprehensible for the human mind, hence the growth of AI.

What does the church of God have to say to the 98% of people in the UK who neither attend or understand what we believe? How will we offer them ways to encounter and explore the God of our faith? If the structures and processes no longer allow that to happen then surely we need to, at the very least, try new ways.

**Malachi 3: 6 "I the Lord do not change."**

How can we help people to know this certainty in an uncertain world?

## Other news

I know I'm getting older as occasionally I find myself saying, 'It seems like only yesterday...' Well it has been nearly a year since we moved into [our new office at Ashford Baptist Church](#) and yes, it does seem like only yesterday! We are very grateful to the church for their support in offering this space. It is bright, modern and very comfortable. It truly is a wonderful space in which to work, think and pray. The timing of the move proved to be extremely advantageous as within a couple of months I was incapacitated with my injury and couldn't drive but the new office is within walking distance from my home. I'd like to say that it has increased my fitness but that would be stretching a point!

The [Franking Machine](#) that we use for all our postage is coming to the end of its contract. We can save a little money by not having one and returning to stamps. I'm glad they no longer need licking!

With Covid becoming a distant memory it is interesting to read some of the reflections being done by church leaders about their experience. So many used the internet to offer services and many became quite slick at it but the statistics have proved to be very unhelpful with knowing who and how many people really engaged with them.

The understanding is to return to the previous approach, that disciples are made in community and not in isolated individualism. As one writer put it, **'The excuse that the elderly or infirm can log into a service and not be left out really doesn't happen as I would visit them as I always did!'**

To that end I have always valued face to face meetings and 'catch up coffees'. Sometimes information is best sent via an electronic means but intonation and nuance is often missing in those exchanges. Let's be frank, you can't eat a chocky biscuit electronically and I have a stash in my fridge just waiting for visitors to consume.

**Finally**, along with all that's currently going on ministry wise and some of the creative ideas that are being developed and offered I am starting to look at another new and exciting concept, but oh dear, no room to tell you about it here so you will have to come to our Open Day on the **24<sup>th</sup> June** to find out more.



**I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.**