

June - July 2018

Newsletter no. 1042

NEWS LETTER

Heath Street Baptist Church Hampstead



Minister: Ewan King

Note from the Minister

I'd like to use the opportunity of my 'note from the minister' to introduce a little series of services that will stretch over the period covered by this newsletter. The series is entitled 'Seven Kings', and its (anti)heroes are going to be Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Ahab, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jehoiachim and Zedekiah.

Who are Jeroboam and Rehoboam? Not to mention Ahab, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jehoiachim or Zedekiah? Well I'm afraid there are no prizes for guessing that they're none other than the 'Seven Kings' of our title. But why focus on these ancient and obscure figures from the history of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah? What relevance can all this have for us? And if we really have to think about it, why do we have to do so now?

I'll take the last question first. This is the part of the church year sometimes called 'Ordinary Time'. It isn't Lenten-tide, nor is it Christmas-time. It's just ordinary time – which I find a beautiful concept. Christian life isn't all high drama and religious ecstasy, festive jubilation or penitential self-humiliation. A good deal of it is just plain ordinary time. And that's the ideal time to get on with the Christian's ordinary business, part of which is getting to know and love the Bible. We do that with a view, hopefully, to knowing and to loving the Word of God, Jesus Christ.

For the majority of our friends and neighbours it's safe to say that the Good Book is a closed book. Or to be precise it's a book not found on the shelf, a text not stored on the Kindle, an app not even installed on a phone. And if that's true for the gospels, it's still truer for the Old Testament. In fact many a committed Christian is distinctly reluctant to peer at all deeply into the well of the Old Testament. Why waste time on a history so full of passion, confusion, violence, and names we aren't sure how to pronounce?

My hope is that our 'Seven Kings' series will answer that question by giving an enjoyable short, sharp shock-raid into the Bible. Hopefully we'll get a basic sense for the landmarks of this chunk of Old Testament

history. Hopefully we'll also catch the inexhaustible fascination which the Bible exerts – one it has exerted for so many centuries, and one it always will exert on anyone who reads it steadily and without prejudice. Hopefully we'll also begin to see the sense in which this dynastic chronicle is the history of *our family*, the chronicles of the clan into whose story we were plunged when we were baptised into the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary.

Out of the many partly or wholly unfamiliar faces in the family portrait gallery (including no less than forty-four royal faces) only Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Ahab, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jehoiachim and Zedekiah have made the cut. This was almost, but not quite, a random choice. Saul, David, Solomon were obviously out. (Too famous). 'Three Kings' didn't seem sufficient to give the idea. Whereas 'Forty-Four Kings' seemed excessive. (For one thing some of them were queens; for another it would have meant a ten-month series, which even I felt verged on the over-enthusiastic). So seven it is, for now. Naturally I will be happy to preach on the other thirty-seven, should congregational demand prove insatiable.

What kind of a God will this series invite us to meet? I hope we'll meet the God whom Jesus calls Father. A God whose people's history is tortuous, obscure, fascinating, violent, lively, confusing, and full of moments of incomprehensible mercy and grace – which is to say, exactly like our own life.

The God whom Jesus calls Father is a God worth getting to know. So if you're someone who keeps the Sunday School prize for Old Testament Knowledge on the mantelpiece, I hope this makes you hungry to refresh your memory. And if so far you have never picked up a Bible in your life, I hope this might whet your appetite to begin. As ever, my prayer is that God would lead us all deeper into the joy and mystery of His eternal life, as we meditate on these seven kings over the spring and summer Sundays of these weeks of 'ordinary time'.

With love,
Ewan

Treasurer's notes

We have the good news that Heath Street's registration as a charity has been agreed. Once the rather long-winded questionnaire had been completed and sent, the response from the Charity Commission was rapid. The Church is now constituted as a CIO, a Charitable Incorporated Company, and our number is 1178001.

We had to register formally although technically we were already a charity but previously "excepted" from registering with the Commission, which now wants all churches to come into line with other charities. The big advantage to being a CIO is that the legal responsibility for the church and its buildings and people is now the charity itself, not the individuals on the Diaconate. That will help us sleep at night! We have the same name and the same Deacons so it won't seem very different.

Other good news is that the vestibule refurbishment is complete and so far everyone who has seen it seems really pleased with the improved lighting, lighter, fresher colours and a more welcoming feel about it. We shall all have to try to keep it uncluttered and cared for. Many thanks to the generous people who contributed to the cost of the work. With Gift Aid we are close to £1,200 raised.

Several years ago a Church meeting made a commitment to getting a better piano for the sanctuary and we set aside a fund for this. John Baker has been keeping an eye on a good piano auction that happens four times a year and, with some expert guidance, he has now bought a grand piano for us which will be a terrific asset. A very generous donor has contributed £500 towards the purchase. The upright piano is now downstairs in the hall.

On a less exciting note, our Annual Report and Accounts for 2017 have been prepared by the Deacons and accepted by the recent Church meeting. A copy has been put on the website.

With love and good wishes,
Gaynor

Florida Project – Review

To residents of London, or indeed Hampstead Village, it is no surprise to see one's home turf writ large on the silver screen, in varying degrees of Hollywood-ification. But when *The Florida Project* opened onto a little-loved stretch of highway about 10 minutes away from my childhood house, I was shocked. However, I was even more amazed that they'd gotten it right... There, wrapped in my January coat in Kensal Rise's Lexi cinema, I could *feel* the steam rising from the asphalt, the humid Southern air thick with the drone of cicadas...

The story follows three children and their guardians running amok in two garish (and real-life) motels on US Route 192 – a road that bisects Florida and, more importantly, is a main vein ferrying tourists to Walt Disney World.

Growing up in the shadow of Disney World is a unique experience full of strange juxtapositions and blurred lines between reality and fantasy – long have I thought it could be worthy of ethnographic study. Yet the film takes a magnifying glass to something far less familiar, happening under my nose: screenwriters Sean Baker and Chris Bergoch have looked deeper to report on an even lesser-known subculture. They tell the uncomfortable tale of America's modern-day nomads. The number of displaced families has increased all over the states in the last decade, and many of these technically homeless parents and children have ended up in crumbling motels, where weekly rates are better than rentals and no objection is made to poor credit or a criminal record.

The Florida Project is filmed at one of these real-life residences, aptly named 'The Magic Castle', yet you would be forgiven for initially mistaking the fictional movie for a documentary. In fact, one of the film's stars, 10-year-old Christopher Rivera, was casted while living in local motel. His co-stars were discovered locally too, or by the director while perusing Instagram profiles. The performances they give, perhaps as a result, are unstudied and deeply affecting. Willem Defoe, who perfectly

plays the good-natured motel manager, is the only recognisable face, which helps to anchor the story in the realm of the imaginary.

The photography is up-close, immersive, and unadorned by a score that may sway sentiment. An intense portrait of human feeling and foibles, the film thrives on ambiguity. No character is black and white, wholly good or bad. *The Florida Project* relays desperate measures and economic downturn but somehow manages to avoid the Kitchen Sink trope. Though often disturbing, this glimpse into another life is also enormously freeing. A pervading transience and liminality affords the characters, both children and adults, a hungry brashness, a ruthlessness even, as well as the ability to relish completely moments of happiness when times are good, as everything is seemingly soon to fall apart. In spite of its raw depiction of social issues, *The Florida Project* doesn't come across as a strident platform for political critique – at its core is a primarily heart-warming tale about children, friendship, and creating adventure out of nothing.

The writers expertly paint Disney as both oppressor and saviour, letting it loom as a symbol for capitalist culture and illustrate how economic disparity can so cleanly cut a dividing line through human experiences. The candy-coated buildings along Highway 192 are aspirational pastiches of the famous amusement parks. They are the “Magic Castle”, “Arabian Nights”, “Paradise Inn”, but no matter how luridly lilac Willem Defoe's motel manager character paints the façade of his inn – pastiche is what it remains, nor can something more sinister lying beneath be concealed.

Yet importantly, Disney is also the ultimate escapist dream, especially for children. In a wonderful and heart-rending climax, the story's two friends run frantically for Disney's Magic Kingdom park, as if to safety, as if to love, as if to normality.

Yet, tragic, painful, ugly things can happen here, in a place that actually brands itself “The Happiest Place on Earth™”, and indeed in any place where they are least expected. The film reminds me that, amid the same

swamps and scrub oaks where I played as a child, there were people having a far different experience to my relatively privileged upbringing. Perhaps this is something important to remember around London too, especially in our leafy NW3 enclave.

May 21st - 26th

21st Thaddeus King
22nd Isabelle Somers
23rd HM
24th Ethan McLeod
25th Beauty Kunene
26th Konrad Biadun

Ezekiel 37.1-14

May 27th – June 2nd

27th Judith Peak
28th Nomsa Ndebele
29th Birgit Leuppert
30th Lydia Baker
31st Josh Somers
(June) 1st Wilf Merttens
2nd Jen Finamore

Psalms 97, 98

June 3rd – 9th

3rd Tom Somers
4th Susan Le Quesne
5th Josi Mbombo
6th Hildegard Williams
7th Laura Somers
8th Heini King
9th Edward Humphreys

1 Samuel 3.1-10 [11-20]

June 10th – 16th

10th Wilf Merttens

11th L Gh

12th Andrea MacEachan

13th Nesa Thorne

14th Michael Bloxham

15th Margaret Biadun

16th Christina Cairns

1 Samuel 8.4-11[12-15]

June 17th – 23rd

17th Euan McLeod

18th Joachim King

19th Hildegard Williams

20th Beryl Dowsett

21st Frida King

22nd Susan Brandt

23rd John Baker

1 Samuel 15.34 – 16.13

June 24th – 30th

24th Annie Fang

25th Tom Brandt

26th Evelyn Baker

27th Nathan Biadun

28th Rebecca McLeod

29th Mysie Johnson

30th Robin Thorne

1 Samuel 17.32-49

July 1st – 7th

1st E Gh

2nd Ali Gh

3rd Miriam M

4th Gaynor Humphreys

5th Beauty Kunene

6th Bezawit Geberebziaher

7th Anselm King

2 Samuel 1.1, 17-27

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sundays	11am-12 noon 7.30-9.30pm	Divine Worship (including Sunday Club for children) Contact Club
Mondays	7.00-8.00pm 8.00-9.00pm	Swing Patrol: Beginner swing dance class (Level 1) Swing Patrol: Improvers class (Level 1.5)
Tuesdays	10-11am 1-2pm	Oldtime Nursery Lunchtime recital
2 nd Tuesdays	7.30-9.30pm	Sacred Harp hymn singing
Wednesdays	4.30 pm	Storymakers Club
Thursdays	10.30am 7.30-9pm	Oldtime Nursery Heath Street Choir
Saturday		Coffee Morning (alternate Saturdays – see website for details)

Church Officers: Gaynor Humphreys (Treasurer)
 Wilf Merttens (Church Secretary)
 Annie Fang (Deacon)

To contact Ewan King
please email: ewan_king@mac.com

Copy for the next newsletter should reach Ewan King
(ewan_king@mac.com)
Not later than Wednesday 20th June

*For requests regarding church membership,
Baptism, or opportunities for Christian ministry in the church
please contact the minister.
For questions regarding space use and room hire
please contact the minister.*

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