

HEATH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Sept 2019



Newsletter 1050



The Wedding at Cana, John 2:1-10,
as interpreted by the Sunday Club.



Heath Street's Harvest Festival with
members of the Sunday Club.

LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

I'm writing my minister's letter for September on the edge of Helsinki, and in fittingly autumnal surroundings, although it's only mid-august. The change of the seasons can be felt everywhere: the local children have long been back at school, within days the mist will be on the lakes, and the first night frosts are a few weeks away at most. It's peaceful here, and I am conscious of time passing in a way I rarely am in London. I'm feeling grateful for the chance to reconnect with some good friends, and also with some good habits (not least my beloved sauna!). That said, looking after four children on your own is a challenge, even it is only for ten days. Getting back to work will feel very much like a holiday...

What better setting to translate another Nordic hymn of celebration and of gratitude? Actually, this is another of those African songs that I've got to know in Finnish disguise. And as in my letter

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for the previous edition, I've chosen to accompany my meagre effort with a wonderfully resonant text from one of the best Christian writers of eighteenth century England, William Law, who has this to say about "chanting in our private devotions":

You will perhaps say, that singing is a particular talent, that belongs only to particular people, and that you have neither voice nor ear to make any music. If you had said that singing is a general talent, and that people differ in that as they do in all other things, you had said something much truer.

For how vastly do people differ in the talent of thinking, which is not only common to all men, but seems to be the very essence of human nature. How readily do some people reason upon everything! and how hardly do others reason upon anything! How clearly do some people discourse upon the most abstruse matters! and how

confusedly do others talk upon the plainest subjects!

Yet no one desires to be excused from thought, or reason, or discourse, because he has not these talents, as some people have them. But it is full as just for a person to think himself excused from thinking upon God, from reasoning about his duty to Him, or discoursing about the means of salvation, because he has not these talents in any fine degree; this is full as just, as for a person to think himself excused from singing the praises of God, because he has not a fine ear, or a musical voice.

For it is singing, and not artful, fine singing, that is a required way of praising God.

Our blessed Saviour and His Apostles sang a hymn: but it may reasonably be supposed, that they rather rejoiced in God, than made fine music.

Do but so live, that your heart may truly rejoice in God, that it may feel itself

affected with the praises of God; and then you will find that this state of your heart will neither want a voice nor ear to find a tune for a psalm. Every one, at some time or other, finds himself able to sing in some degree; there are some times and occasions of joy, that make all people ready to express their sense of it in some sort of harmony. The joy that they feel forces them to let their voice have a part in it.

He therefore that saith he wants a voice, or an ear, to sing a psalm, mistakes the case: he wants that spirit that really rejoices in God; the dulness is in his heart, and not in his ear: and when his heart feels a true joy in God, when it has a full relish of what is expressed in the Psalms, he will find it very pleasant to make the motions of his voice express the motions of his heart.

With love,
Ewan

William Law: A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, 1729

Fountain of ever-flowing water

Fountain of ever-flowing water,
sweet spring of never-failing peace,
flowing to mercy's sons and daughters
from Him whose mercies never cease,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Lord, let your gracious river roll,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
reviving every thirsty soul.

I was in trouble when you found me:
death's shadow crowded out the light;
throwing your loving arms around me
you lifted me out of the night.
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
you lead your people like a flock,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
O God, my refuge and my rock.

And then to buy back my tomorrow
on Calvary you wore the crown:
you bore the agony and sorrow
so I could lay my burden down.
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
your mercy makes the broken whole,
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
I offer you my heart and soul.

Now to the Lord of song and story
be blessing, honour, power and might,
and to the prince of peace be glory
for bringing us where it is light,
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
may our glad music never cease!
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
for your great love has brought us peace.

TREASURER'S NOTE

Special Collections

At the Communion service on the first Sunday in July, Ewan announced that the voluntary offerings that day would be put towards maintaining the fabric of the church and that he and the Deacons planned to suggest at most of the Communion Sundays that we have a collection for a specific purpose – either to assist our own Church in a particular way or to raise money for an external charitable cause. If you take the amount put in the collection plates that morning, and a week's worth of the money given in standing orders straight into the bank for general church purposes, and you add the Gift Aid that I can claim on most of that money, then the July special collection raised £215. Many thanks to all who contributed.

There was a time when Heath Street had lots of special collections, all on top

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of the weekly contributions from the congregation. There was a flower fund and a newsletter fund (to cover postage to far-flung members and friends) and a “Work Beyond” Fund which enabled us to make donations to Baptist causes like Home Mission and Regent's Park College. If you like the idea of giving to one of our own specific needs as a church – regularly or as a one-off donation – feel free to talk to me about it, as this would be very welcome.

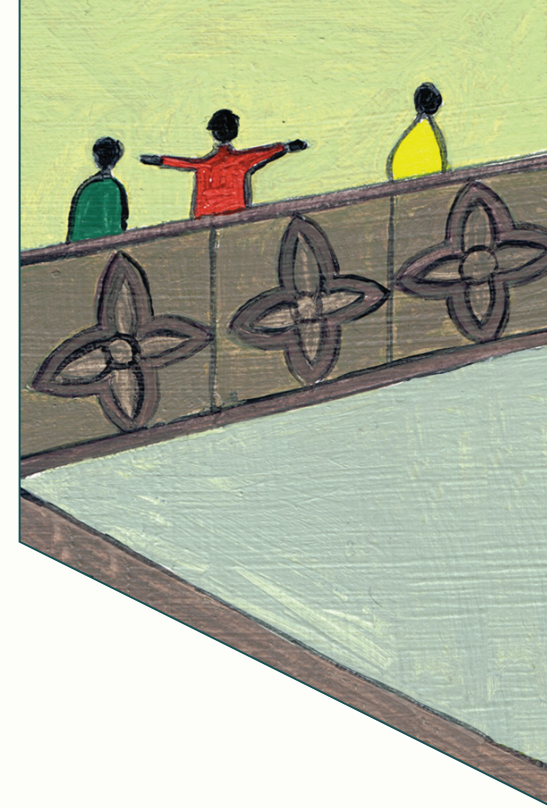
This year, as I keep reminding us all, we need £250 a day to stay afloat, and that is before our spending on building maintenance.

Refugee Welfare Fund

At the start of 2019, Heath Street set up a Fund that could offer support and emergency assistance to people who are part of our church and coping with all the uncertainty and injustice of being in the

UK with refugee status, few rights, difficult officialdom, insecure housing and many unexpected obstacles. There was a great response from many people. So far we have raised £5,300, and for the time being this is being added to at £500 per month from two people's generous bank standing orders. So far we have spent about £2,550, much of it to assist with deposits to help secure housing. Several people in our church community have also offered a great deal of practical support over school matters, language learning, formal meetings over legal status, and many other areas.

Wilf Merttens, Sarah Harper and Eleanor Patterson can tell you more about all this. They are currently looking for more people to volunteer, so if you know someone who can give some time, please speak to them. I can advise on setting up a standing order. And everyone will be invited to give money to the Fund on the day we celebrate

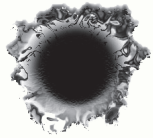


Harvest, 6 October.

With love and best wishes, Gaynor
gaynor@eandghumphreys.plus.com

Next special collections:
Sunday 1 September, for the cost of printing the newsletter
Sunday 6 October, to add to our Refugee Welfare Fund
Come with lots of money, please!

Do violent movies play an active role in creating or maintaining a violent society?



Quentin Tarantino makes very violent movies. They have all been 'pulp fiction': not imitating real life, but rather other movies. Violent ones mostly. Once Upon a Time in Hollywood is no exception, sporting gratuitous violence that had me covering my eyes, despite its cartoony presentation.

Tarantino has said this movie is his last and critics have responded by calling it his 'love letter to Hollywood'. I disagree.



It is an interrogation of the role of violence in Hollywood and the role of Hollywood in a violent society. It is a self-conscious questioning of his and his fellow filmmaker's place a violent, imperialist culture. In order to explain I need to spoil the movie, so don't read on from here if you don't want to know the ending.

Sharon Tate (played by Margot Robbie), is, as she was in real life, a Hollywood movie star. She is obviously a loving and joyful person, who sees the best in those around her. She loves entertaining others. Rick Dalton (played by Leonardo DiCaprio), is a fictional star of a TV western who is attempting to break into the movie business. He has an agonised relationship with his work and worries that he is not good enough. Cliff Booth (played by Brad Pitt) is Dalton's stunt double, driver and

best friend. He is all relaxed machismo: he can beat up anybody (including Bruce Lee), he does what he needs to do to get the job done, he never worries, women love him, he obeys an honour code, he loves his dog (who is just as tough as he is and who obeys his every command), he lives in a trailer and he's Brad Pitt. Lastly we have the notorious Manson gang, who in real life 1969 murdered Sharon Tate and others in her house. The Mansons are dropouts upon whom the scorn of mainstream society is poured. In turn, they are critical of the mainstream: both its violent TV culture and its violent imperialistic wars. They are attempting to live a different kind of life. (As it happens, on a commune that resides on a faux- cattle ranch that was once used as a Hollywood movie set.)

The actual murder of Tate and others by the Manson gang looms behind this otherwise very 'once upon a time' movie. We know it is the 60s, and we know

that one of the main characters is a representation of someone who really did die in horrible circumstances in 1969. The movie is about the interplay between the fictional story shown on the screen and the audience's knowledge of the real story. Using this dynamic, Tarantino allows us to interrogate the very movie we are watching, and through that, Hollywood's production of violent fiction in general. Tarantino is asking if Hollywood (including he himself) bears any responsibility for real violence, domestic and global.

In the film, the Mansons, whose role as subcultural movement is to critique the mainstream, are shown to have insufficiently removed themselves from the mainstream. They live separately, but their lifestyle is actually a kind of fantasy version of the violent dreams that are sold by Hollywood (they even live on a film set). The climax of the movie sees



the gang go to murder Tate just as they did in real life. However, in this fictional version they find themselves distracted by Dalton, who is Tate's neighbour. They discuss his role as a TV star and how as children they watched him shoot bad guys with much appreciation. It is people like him, they decide, who have made them and their society so violent. They change their plan from killing Tate to killing Dalton and his household. They decide they must 'kill those who taught us to kill.'

The irony of the Manson's simplistically Hollywood solution to the Hollywood problem (i.e. kill the bad guys!) is glaring. The Mansons' anger is impotent, and their solution is both evil and stupid, but if Hollywood violence really is a scourge, then they are the only ones in the film who ever try and do anything about it. The only other reaction against violence we see is the occasional sickness that Dalton seems

to feel when considering his own movies.

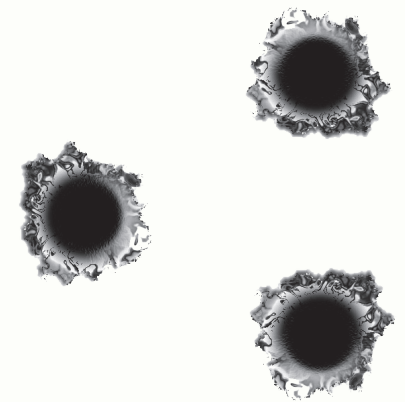
In fact, when the Mansons go and try and kill Dalton what happens is that Booth and his badass dog kill them first. This happens in a scene of really shocking violence. Narratively, this of course means that Tate is saved — by a heroic man no less, how perfectly Hollywood! The fictional characters, specifically the machismo of Cliff Booth/Brad Pitt, step in and change reality to give us a happy ending. (The last thing we see is Dalton making the superior Hollywood contacts of Tate and her entourage.)

So the movie takes an act of hideous violence from real life, replaces it with a fictional act of hideous violence, and thereby saves the day? The movie is surely performing the same despairing narrative that the Mansons did: trying to replace evil, but only having more evil to replace

it with. Hollywood consistently presents the 'good guy' as the man who violently suppresses evil. Contra Hollywood, in real life we all know that people who set out to violently suppress evil are themselves evil (the Mansons being the case in point). Tarantino allows the audience to be attracted to Booth as the likeable symbol of masculinity that he is, and then just makes us sit with our unease as he does what Hollywood heroes always do: fix the world with violence. Critics have been angered by the last scene's viciousness, but I say that it is in that very scene that Tarantino forces Hollywood to witness the ugliness of the stories it tells.

Is there any hope in this film, or is it just a sadly ironic rerun of Hollywood's violent tropes? If there is any hope at all here, I believe it is with Dalton's self-doubt, and his occasional reaching out for friendship and for artistic integrity. And it is with

Sharon Tate/Margot Robbie, whose loving interactions with others have nothing to prove, and whose movies are romantic, generous, funny, self-deprecating, non-violent and very silly.



READINGS

September 1st – 7th

Song of Solomon 2.8-13

1st	For all places of learning
2nd	'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower.'
3rd	Christina Cairns
4th	Theresa Thom
5th	Annie Fang
6th	Cole Ellenbogen
7th	'He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.'

September 8th – 14th

Proverbs 22.1-2, 8, 9, 22, 23

8th	For those who clean the church
9th	'Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.'
10th	Laila Ranjbar
11th	Laura Somers
12th	Eleanor Patterson
13th	Joachim King
14th	'You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.'

September 15th – 21st

Proverbs 1.20-33

15th	For all who sing in our Community Choir
16th	'Abide in me as I abide in you.'
17th	Frida King
18th	Susan Le Quesne
19th	Tom Somers
20th	Michael Bloxham
21st	'I am the vine, you are the branches.'

September 22nd – 28th

Proverbs 31.10-31

22nd	For the life and ministry of St. John's Parish Church, Hampstead
23rd	'My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'
24th	Evelyn Baker
25th	Thaddeus King
26th	Beauty Kunene
27th	Mysie Johnson
28th	'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you'

September 29th – October 5th

Esther 7.1-6, 9, 10; 9.20-22

29th	For the life and ministry of St. Mary's, Hampstead
30th	'abide in my love.'
(Oct) 1st	Wilf Merttens

2nd	Ewan King
3rd	Lydia Baker
4th	Josh Somers
5th	'If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,

October 6th – 12th

Job 1.1; 2.1-10

6th	For children, parents and carers who attend Oldtime Nursery
7th	just as I have kept my Father's commandments
8th	John Baker
9th	Bala Kapi
10th	Andrea MacEachan
11th	Victoria Tjirimuje
12th	and abide in his love.'

October 13th – 19th

Job 23.1-9, 16, 17

13th	For Panzi hospital
14th	'I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you.'
15th	Anselm King
16th	Isabel Somers
17th	Nathalia Bell
18th	Francesco Gioannoccaro
19th	'and that your joy may be complete.'

October 20th – 26th

Job 38.1-7, 34-41

20th	For our church treasurer
21st	'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.'
22nd	Tom Brandt
23rd	Nomsa Ndebele
24th	Heini King
25th	For children, parents and carers who attend Oldtime Nursery
26th	'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

October 27th – November 2nd

Job 42.1-6, 10-17

27th	For the children who attend Storymakers
28th	'You are my friends if you do what I command you.'
29th	Peter Forrest
30th	Selena Barrera
31st	Peter Yarde Martin
(Nov) 1st	For the World Baptist Alliance
2nd	'I do not call you servants any longer,

READINGS

November 3rd – 9th

Deuteronomy 6.1-9

3rd	because the servant does not know what the master is doing'
4th	Rebecca McLeod
5th	Thomas Roy
6th	Rhona MacEachan
7th	Nesa Thorne
8th	For the work of Henderson Court
9th	'but I have called you friends,

November 10th – 16th

Jonah 3.1-5, 10

10th	because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.'
11th	Elya Ghasempour
12th	Hildegard Williams
13rd	Leo Patterson
14th	Sarah Harper
15th	For all in hospital
16th	'You did not choose me but I chose you.'

November 17th – 23rd

Daniel 12.1-3

17th	For those who have been married in our church
18th	'And I appointed you to go and bear fruit,
19th	fruit that will last,
20th	Salma Dreyer
21st	Godfrey Old
22nd	For the bereaved
23rd	so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him

November 24th – 30th

Daniel 7.9-10, 13, 14

24th	in my name.'
25th	Ali Ghasempour
26th	Susan Brandt
27th	Coco Ellenbogen
28th	Léonie Scott-Matthews
29th	For all in prison
30th	'I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES



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.

Copy for the next newsletter should reach Eleanor Patterson not later than Wednesday 13th November

Sun	11am-12 noon 7.30-9.30pm	Divine Worship (inc Sunday Club for children) Contact Club
Mon	7pm 8pm	Swing Patrol:(Swing dancing) Swing Patrol:Improvers class (level 1.5)
2nd Tues	7:30-9:30pm	Sacred Harp hymn singing
Weds	4:30 pm	Storymakers Club
Thurs	10:30am 7:30-9pm	Oldtime Nursery Heath Street Choir

Lunchtime Recital and Oldtime Nursery days and times t.b.c.

Full information about all our weekly activities is available on our church website.
www.heathstreet.org

HEATH STREET BAPTIST



Minister Ewan King

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