



Pier Avenue
Baptist Church

FAMILY MAGAZINE

2026 September

Summer is Over and our Autumn Church Life is about to start





United in Diversity

A Prayer for Challenge, Hope, and Renewal

Lord, we come before You as one body — yet beautifully, intentionally different. You have gathered us not in spite of our diversity, but because of it. Knit our unique gifts, voices, and callings into something greater than ourselves. Where we see difference, grant us curiosity. Where we feel friction, grant us grace. Where ambition divides, let humility bind us together. Challenge us, Lord — to lead with courage, to speak truth in love, and to resist the comfort of easy agreement. May this retreat be a holy disruption that sharpens us, stretches us, and draws us closer to You and to one another. And yet — let hope be our anchor. You are faithful. You have called each one of us here for a reason. May we leave renewed in purpose, strengthened in unity, and ablaze with the confidence that what You have begun in this team, *You will complete.*

In Your name, Amen.

Unity

One Spirit, many members — bound together in love and shared mission.

Diversity

Each voice a gift. Each perspective a piece of God's greater wisdom.

Challenge

Courage to lead boldly, speak truthfully, and grow through holy disruption.

Hope

Anchored in God's faithfulness — renewed, purposeful, and on fire.



Living God's Word

Human beings can often be creatures of habit. We come to worship every Sunday and we tend to sit on the same parts of the same pews. We drink our tea or coffee out of our favourite, familiar cups. We may even have the same conversations with the same people or a similar version of it. Routine is reassuring.

We know where we stand. Even when things change, many people will want to establish a new routine.

If you're a Christian, a follower of Jesus, you read the Bible, don't you? Isn't that obvious? When I came to faith in my first church twelve years, a church member gave me a Bible and I started reading ... I was very confused by some of what I read, but I read it. Yet it is not the case that all Christians *thoroughly* read the Bible. Bible literacy in the UK is actually low, even amongst Christians. People might come to whole church worship and listen to a small section of the Bible read, but they might not go home and study it in depth on their own. This means that their understanding remains at a beginner's level. Others may have read it many years ago and not revisited it since. Therefore their knowledge may have become rusty, and the Bible isn't necessarily speaking to them today in the here and now. As for people outside the church, many do not even know who Jesus is at all, let alone what the Bible says.

We shouldn't rely on getting to know the Bible *just* by coming to the worship on a Sunday. I hope that we wouldn't drive a car without first having one-to-one lessons and devoting time to learning to drive. In a similar way, how can we expect to follow Jesus well and become more like him in character if we don't properly know the books he's the main subject of, the Bible?

Young children copy the adults they see around them to learn how to be grown-up. In a same way, we need to read about Jesus and talk to him to learn how to be 'grown up' Christians. I know that not everyone finds reading easy, but there are lots of ways to get to know the Bible better, such as different translations and apps.

There are many, many references to 'God's word' in both the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament and in the New Testament. The writer of Psalm 119 says to God, 'I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you'. Knowing God's rules helps him not to break them. He speaks these rules and that brings him joy. Later he says, 'your word is a lamp to my feet'. He is using the image of a hand held lamp, which he is using to light his way along a dark path. We might use a map to see which direction to go in. For this follower of God, God's scripture is his map, showing him how to live his life and not to be tempted to go the wrong way. Jesus himself is said to be 'The Word': 'The Word became flesh and lived amongst us', John writes in his Gospel. The Son of God, Jesus, was born as a human being. He is the walking, talking Word of the Bible. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul says, 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness'. In a similar way to how the psalmist used God's rules to find guidance on how to live his life right, so Christians should use both the Old and New Testaments to learn the Christian way to live.

I urge anyone reading this to follow a five-step process:

1. *Read God's Word. Read the Bible.*
2. *Be curious about God's Word. Ask questions about what you read. Read the notes in a Study Bible. Read or listen to commentaries about the Bible. Ask a minister or other committed Christian. Ask God when you're praying.**

3. *Live according to what you read in the Bible.* Now there is lots of very bad behaviour recorded in the Bible, so please don't copy that! But *definitely copy how Jesus behaves and follow his teachings.*
4. *Tell others about the Bible and definitely about its main subject, Jesus.*
5. *Repeat this whole process again and again.*

*If you get to this point and haven't yet committed to being a follower of Jesus, then speak to a Christian about how to become one.



GIRLS' BRIGADE

At the end of last term, we held our Display and Awards evening when the girls received the badges they had achieved during the past year. For those who had reached the required attendance for Company nights and Church attendance, a metal badge was given, with the number of years thereon. One of our young people has been with us for 14 years. Certificates were also presented for 100% attendance on Tuesdays and those who had come to all 6 Church Parades. We would like to thank Ian Smith for presenting the awards. The girls then performed items they had been rehearsing over previous weeks which were enjoyed by the parents and friends who came to celebrate the girls' achievements.

Our final evening was spent on the beach when girls from all sections enjoyed fun and games, including a peg hunt, egg throwing and team games. Drinks, crisps and cakes were given out during the evening.

Our summer camp was held during August at Thorrington Scout Camp site when around 10 young people enjoyed 5 days of activities including kayaking, assault course, mini axe throwing, bouldering, 3D maze, pedal karts, craft and games. We were allowed to have a small campfire each evening subject to certain restrictions due to the dry conditions. Members of our Explorer section joined us for two days (10am-4pm) when they loved being with the older girls for indoor and outdoor activities. The lunch and snack times were also well received. Our daily devotions followed the theme of 'Roadways', when we looked at the roads our lives should follow - those for good and not for bad. The most important path we must travel is the one God has prepared for us. Each day we had a memory verse relating to the things we had spoken about. The final day's verse was Psalm 119 v 105, emphasising the importance of reading our Bibles. It was encouraging to see a couple of our girls taking some bible notes that were offered to them.



I would like to thank the Leaders for all the preparation and active involvement in making this such a successful event.

Please pray for the leadership team as we prepare for our return with a new programme of activities. Also, for the girls as they learn new skills and come under the sound of the Gospel. It is good that we have contact with so many families.



Gill Stennings



Joyful News from Enfold Church!

The Enfold Project was set up to offer food, support and company to those who are homeless or vulnerably housed. Over the last few years, the prayers at the start of each Thursday morning meeting have developed into a new expression of church, which I realised in 2025 when one guest was speaking about his experience of God and how comforted he felt on Thursdays.

We had another exciting turning point on 3rd September when Enfold Church had its first baptism! Roberta had first come along to Enfold, then begun volunteering and now she attends worship on both Thursdays and Sundays. She completed the *Christianity Explored* course, during which she decided to follow Jesus! Pauline and I baptised her in the garden area outside the Atrium. Her testimony is on the next page.



After Roberta's Baptism!

13:48

Roberta's Testimony 'Good morning, people of God.

I come before you today with JOY and THANKSGIVING.

I come fully acknowledging who I am: a child of God.

If it were not for God's grace, I would not be here with you right now.

I wouldn't even be alive. Hear this:

Before I ever knew His presence... HE KNEW ME.

Through every abuse I suffered. Through every trauma I endured.

I FELT HIM NEAR. And even then, deep in my spirit, I knew —

SOMEHOW, ALL WOULD BE WELL. Right now my life may look uncertain.

There is turmoil. There is bewilderment.

BUT NONE OF IT IS REAL.

NONE OF IT MATTERS. Because I KNOW WHO JESUS IS NOW.

He's been with me since I was 5 years old, when my turmoil began.

AND HE HAS NEVER LEFT.

He is my refuge. My strength. My hiding place.

I want you to know: I AM WOVEN INTO GOD'S TAPESTRY.

And today, I have finally laid down other teachings and PICKED UP THE CROSS.

There is NOTHING — nothing — more fulfilling than this.

Thank you to Michelle, Pauline, and Dell —

God used you as instruments through PROJECT ENFOLD to bring me to this transformation. I am forever grateful.

So yes... I WILL SHOUT THE GOODNESS OF GOD!

Because HIS MERCY NEVER FAILS.'

From Claire

One Minute With God

Everyday mission

You do not have to cross the ocean to be a missionary. Your mission field is right where you are - in your kitchen, your cubicle, your neighbourhood, your gym, your child's school. Every interaction is an opportunity to reflect the love of Christ. The way you tip your server, the patience you show in traffic, the kindness you extend to the cashier-these are all acts of mission. Most people will not read the Bible, but they will read your life. You are the only gospel some people will ever encounter. That is not a burden to carry, it is an honour to steward. Live your ordinary life with extraordinary love, and watch how God uses the everyday to accomplish the eternal. Who is God placing in your path today?! Matthew 5:16.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Acts 1:8

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

TINY TREASURES PARENT/CARER BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

We ended our sessions on 13th July with a Teddy Bears' Picnic where the children enjoyed a teddy bear hunt in the Church followed by stories and songs. The morning ended with an indoor picnic on our special teddy bear rugs.

Sadly we said goodbye to some of our little ones as they start school in September. We wish them well in this new phase of their lives.



On 17th August we held our Past and Present Picnic at the children's play area on the West Greensward. It was lovely to meet up with both present and past families and hear how they are getting on. Some photos showing the children enjoying the play equipment.

We start the new term on 7th September when we will participate in autumn themed crafts.

Sylvia Burns



When the Storm Won't Stop — Finding God's Peace in Life's Longest Winters

There is a particular kind of suffering that the cheerful Scriptures about joy don't always seem to speak to directly: the suffering of the long season. Not the sudden crisis that arrives and departs, but the winter that simply refuses to end. The chronic illness that stretches into years. The marriage that has been quietly cold for longer than anyone outside the home knows. The grief that is still raw eighteen months on, when everyone else has gently moved along. The prayers that have been prayed ten thousand times with no discernible answer. If that is where you are, this article is for you.

The Psalms, more than any other part of Scripture, have the theological courage to sit in that place without rushing toward resolution. Psalm 13 opens with one of the most brutally honest sentences in all of sacred literature: "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" David is not performing spiritual distress. He is genuinely asking. He cannot see the end of his winter from where he stands, and he says so. This is not a failure of faith. It is faith in its most muscular and honest form — the willingness to remain in conversation with God even when God feels

The Theology of "Not Yet"

God's silence is not the same as God's absence. Throughout Scripture, the most significant divine interventions were preceded by extended periods of waiting. Joseph waited in prison. Israel waited in Egypt. The disciples waited in an upper room. The waiting was not wasted time — it was forming time.

Peace That Passes Understanding

Philippians 4:7 promises a peace that "surpasses all understanding" — which is to say, a peace that cannot be explained by circumstances, only by the presence of God. It is peace that visits the prison cell, the hospital ward, and the three o'clock darkness of the sleepless night.

The Community of the Suffering

You are not uniquely abandoned. Every generation of the church has produced men and women who walked through seasons they could not understand and emerged — not unscathed, but undefeated. Their testimonies are your inheritance. You stand on the shoulders of survivors.

The German theologian Helmut Thielicke, writing in the ruins of post-war Germany, observed that the Christian does not possess answers to the great sufferings of life — the Christian possesses a Person. And a Person can do what an answer never can: the Person can be present. He can sit with you in the dark. He can hold what you cannot carry. He can weep, as Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus — not because He did not know what was about to happen, but because the suffering of the people He loved was real to Him and deserved to be honoured with tears.

There is also this: storms are not the final word in the biblical narrative. They are always, always, followed by something. The flood was followed by a rainbow and a covenant. The Red Sea was followed by the other side. Calvary was followed by Easter morning. This does not mean your particular storm will end quickly, or that it will end in the way you have hoped. But it does mean that God is a God of sequels. He writes next chapters. He is, as the old preachers used to say, not finished yet.

So if today you are in the middle of a long winter, here is what we would offer you: permission to be honest about how hard it is, and the anchor of a hope that is not rooted in how things look today but in what God has already done and what He has already promised. The storm is real. The horizon is realer still. And the God who stands at that horizon is closer than you think.

Zoom Boys Club



Zoom Boys Club ended the Summer Term with a trip to the beach on our last evening. We were so busy enjoying ourselves nobody remembered to take a photo to prove it. Our summer term was down on numbers but we continue to have great fun evenings.

We begin this week starting on the 10th and meet every Thursday from 6pm till 7:30pm for all Primary age boys.

At our Team meeting last week we began to map out an exciting programme for the Autumn and Winter sessions up to Christmas.

To encourage boys to bring a friend we are creating a 'Rewards' idea and each boy that brings a friend (who stays for at least 2 weeks) will receive a small reward as will the boy who joins Zoom. We hope this incentive will hit the mark and encourage recruitment in this new term.

We are sharing our new recruitment poster on another page—do have a look.

Please continue to pray for our group.

International Sunday

We had a great time last Sunday (6th) celebrating everything 'International' with a very full Sunday morning programme with contributions from many cultures—songs, readings and scripture shared in native tongues and all bringing Glory to God.

The church was resounding to the rhythms of African music with many participating and processing around the church.

A fellowship meal followed with a focus on international flavours representing the varied cultures and cuisines that make up the church family at PABC.



Scripture Focus: Key Bible Verses That Anchor Our Hope

Hope, in the biblical sense, is not wishful thinking or optimistic guessing. It is confident expectation grounded in the character and faithfulness of God. These verses are not plasters to place over pain — they are anchors that hold when everything else is moving.

Read them slowly. Let them settle -

Suggested Practice:

Choose one of these verses this week.

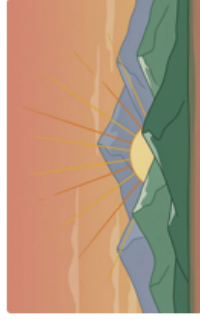
Cut out the scripture (when your finished with the magazine) or write it on a card and place it somewhere you will see it in your most difficult moments — the bathroom mirror, the kettle, the dashboard.

Let it speak before the worry does.



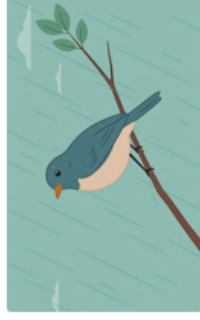
Romans 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." — The word "all" includes the things that feel most unlike goodness. This is either the most outrageous promise in Scripture or the most comforting. For the believer, it is both.



Lamentations 3:22-23

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." — Written in the middle of Jerusalem's ruins. If Jeremiah could find new mercies there, they can be found anywhere.



Isaiah 40:31

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." — Notice the order: soaring, running, then walking. Sometimes hope looks like a single step forward. That counts.



Revelation 21:4-5

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain... He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'" — The ultimate horizon. The end of the story is not ruin but renewal. Not loss but restoration.

TOP SECRET
SPY MISSION

★ **YOUR MISSION:**
BRING A FRIEND,
EARN YOUR REWARD!

Join the **ZOOM BOYS CLUB** –
New Members = **BIG Prizes!**

THE MORE FRIENDS YOU BRING, THE **BIGGER** THE REWARD!

COOL PRIZES!
EPIC FUN!
REAL FRIENDS!

MISSION DOSSIER
RECRUIT ACCEPTED
AGENT: **YOU!**

FAITH **FRIENDSHIP**

MISSION ACCEPTED!

ZOOM SQUAD

PIER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
ZOOM BOYS CLUB

PABC Wellness Drop In

Drop In – open to all

Our wellness session welcomes everyone looking to make positive health changes in their lives.

First and third Thursday of the month

at 10:00 -11:30

Located at Pier Avenue Baptist Church
117 Pier Avenue

You may pop in for a quick weigh-in or if you're looking for more, we're happy to see you. You're welcome to simply use our scales and be on your way, or feel free to stay a little longer. We offer a comfortable and supportive environment where you can enjoy a chat with us, we're here to lend a listening ear.



Weigh In

Drop in for a
weigh in and a chat



Lifestyle Change

Encouraging
lifestyle changes



Self-Help

Facilitating you to
help yourself



Resources

Signposting to
relevant services
where necessary

FUTURE EVENTS

11th September - 4.00 - 8.00 p.m. Prayer event in the Quiet Room

20th September - Harvest festival parade and all-age service followed by Harvest Lunch (Please sign up if you want to come)

27th September—Church Members Meeting @ 12:15

29th September - 9.30 a.m.Prayer@Church in the Quiet Room

9th October - 4.00 - 8.00 p.m. Prayer event in the Quiet Room

27th October - 9.30 a.m. 9.30 a.m.Prayer@Church in the Quiet Room

31st October - 'Light Event' in town

1st November - 4.00 p.m. Three Church meet up with Holland and Thorpe @ PABC- Bring and Share tea

13th November - 4.00 - 8.00 p.m. Prayer event in the Quiet Room (or on Zoom)

24th November - 9.30 a.m.Prayer@Church in the Quiet Room

All are invited to **Prayer before Worship**

at 10am every Sunday In the Quiet Room

Hiring the halls at PABC for anyone within the congregation will now be £10 per hour.

Please speak to Ian D or Karen for further details, or email:

hallhire@pabc.org.uk

We have missed Verity for this Edition and you will notice its not up to her standards but we have got it together in her absence—get well soon Verity.



Magazine Editor Verity Coulthard 07770558771 or email magazine@pabc.org.uk. Information to be included in the next issue will be appreciated as soon as possible please.