

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I pray and hope your summer has been a good one. I took a break from writing last month as I contemplated a new season at GMC, and to be honest was lacking inspiration to write. In ministry, as for many people, life carries on apace even as summer breaks interrupt daily life. We still met weekly for church and our OpenHouse Café didn't stop serving, though some of our groups do take time for a break, for instance the Guild and Sunday Encounter evening worship. For me, summer was a time to recharge a little as well as praying over what the autumn through to Advent and Christmas season will bring.

The first new thing getting off the ground (as part of our discipleship program) are four *Life Groups* (see over for details). The role of *Life Groups* are to develop and strengthen our Christian community at GMC, to mature us in faith whilst providing opportunities for discipleship, pastoral care and witness. There are **four important 'W's to a Life Group**, namely

Welcome: to greet one another well. It's about good hospitality

Worship: to recognise why you gather, and so welcome and give thanks to God

Word: to hear from the word of God, where wisdom and revelation are found

Witness: to share with one another and think how we can share what we learn.

Life Groups will seek to share values of friendship and support, openness and trust, along with encouraging and praying for one another. It should also go without saying (but I'll say it anyway), that respect, inclusiveness, non-judgement and confidentiality are all bywords of *Life Groups*.

Our *Life Group* Co-ordinator is Rev. Maggie Lane so please see her in the first instance with any questions or sign-ups (which can also be done via the church office). My prayer is that as the groups do Christian life and fellowship together, we will grow in depth of faith, all

coming closer to God our Father, and to one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This new preaching season in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is also about growing in faith as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is about grounding ourselves as a Christian community in Christ and Him alone, and in so doing knowing that His saving grace is found among the gathering of God's people. Those called by the Lord's salvation, achieved by Christ's ugly death on the cross, save us from the consequences of our sin, but is also in freedom calls us too something. Freedom's cost is a call to holiness and it is to that the church is being called to today.

The vision of God today, as it has always been, is for the church of Jesus Christ to be holy and blameless (Ephesians 1.v4). Not something achieved by looking inward. Not something achieved by working harder for it. Not something achieved by good works. In truth, a holiness is only fully possible in the life to come in glory, but can be part of God's people today as we, in sisterhood and brotherhood endeavour to serve Christ sacrificially, just as He sacrificed Himself for us.

So, maybe your asking, what does that look like in reality for me today? If complete holiness, and righteousness is not fully achievable, **how can I move toward those holiness here and now?**

In Thanksgiving: recognising God for who He is. Namely creator of everything and all there was, is and ever will be, and therefore your dependence upon Him for all you have had, do have and will have.

In Prayer: seeking God in the day to day. Righteousness comes to us by Jesus Christ, but relationship and growth in faith, and therefore holiness grow by and in prayer.

In Reconciliation: with God and with one another. Through Jesus' sacrifice we are reconciled to God, and also how we are reconciled with one another. Reconciliation for all life starts with forgiveness. Without forgiveness of self and others it is hard for holiness to grow.

By Not living as the world does: the world is corrupt because it is governed and administered by us. The world is a fallen place and lacks the holiness of God's intended creation. So, the Christian is called to live in the world but not be of it. We are not to retreat from our world and our

communities but neither are we to live in their ways. Yet this is so easy to do. Perhaps more than ever, with societal influences and unrighteous dogmas and ideologies pushed by schools, governments, the media, employers and so many more, we are influenced to live as the world does and ignore the call to holiness in our daily living.

I'm not talking about being ostentatiously pious and puritanical, but I am talking about addressing issues in our lives and setting an example to



"I have come that they might have life" John 10:10

Welcome | Worship | Word | Witness

Monday – Centre Café 7:30-9pm | Emma & Maggie

Tuesday – Centre Café 2-3:30pm | Lee

Wednesday – Aitken Home 7:30-9pm | Ronnie & Viv

Thursday (Fortnightly) – St Margaret's Street 2-3:30pm | Marion

one another in our church, being an example to the wider church, to our own families, our colleagues, friends and community.

My concern is that many, I believe, are afraid to outwardly uphold lived Christian faith outside of the church walls and family, in places we see the holiness of Jesus profaned and challenged in secular society. I know the Coronation of King Charles in Westminster and the Honours of Scotland service at St. Giles were state occasions for a monarch who is head of a multicultural and multi-faith country. Personally I found it unfathomable that a Hindu Prime Minister and a Muslim First Minister were reading the Word of God at these services. What does it say when God's Word is proclaimed publicly by those who don't believe it, whether those of no faith or other faiths? Is the church allowing God's Word to be diminished, not recognising its holiness and our call to holiness? Maybe controversial, but I believe if the church does not believe the word of God to be Holy, how will it become what God has called it to be? Namely Holy.

So my call to us all at GMC as we head into a new season, as I feel us moving out of the season of *waiting upon the Lord*, with which we started 2023, is to now move toward *becoming holy in the Lord*.

So, invite Jesus to be Lord of all areas of your life, and let us care for and keep one another accountable, for in the end we are accountable to our creator.

Your servant in Christ, *Pastor Mike* (Minister, GMC)

THANK YOU for supporting GMC in all our ministry We still need:

- **PRAYER**: please pray for opportunities to change lives for Jesus?
- **PEOPLE**: please offer some time in serving your church community?
- **POUNDS**: please make a regular offering to the work of your church?

Are you in need of pastoral support? Do you want to support our kingdom work, or financially support the work of GMC? For all matters contact Rev. Mike Weaver

OR the Office

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