

TINSHILL FREE CHURCH

MAGAZINE



No 350 – March & April 2024

Pastoral Letter – March / April 2024

Resilience and Perseverance

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come....having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end”

(John 13 verse 1)

The Dictionary defines the resilience of a person “readily recovering from shock, depression etc; buoyant”. When we turn to the word perseverance we see it means “the steadfast pursuit of an objective or a belief”. To persevere means to continue determinedly.

Human beings are remarkably resilient in the face of many difficulties. It is now 2 full years since Russian special forces invaded Ukraine and the conflict continues with no quarter being given, substantial and devastating casualties on both sides and widespread destruction of homes, churches, communities and the very fabric of everyday life. And yet people somehow have to continue to endure it and carry on. The situation is equally desperate in Gaza where the common people suffer under the burden and threat of ongoing attack as world leaders seek to broker a peace deal and ceasefire between two opposing parties who want to destroy each other. It is amazing that way back in October last year the humanitarian situation with feeding refugees in Gaza and getting medical supplies to them was at crisis point and it has continued like that for the past 4 to 5 months. There are many other situations in the world where people experience ongoing difficulty and hardship and yet they continue on despite the poverty of their lives.

I have experienced, in a very small way, in the last few weeks the difficulties of struggling with illness, not being able to eat, drink and sleep normally and feeling unwell. It has made me appreciate these things so much more and that many others have a far worse “cross” to bear and do so with perseverance and resilience.

Easertime is such a comfort for the Christian and offers such hope for the unbeliever. As we approach another Easter our minds turn to the road to Calvary and the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. All that He went through and experienced was for us – His beloved people. It caused Him so much pain and anguish – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Yet He did not turn away from it but pursued His course with resilience and perseverance. He set His face to go to Jerusalem like a flint – determined and set. This was God’s will for Him and at the very centre of the eternal purposes of God – to die for sinners and provide the means whereby we can be saved forever and reconciled to a holy God. Only He could do it. No one else. Only God the Son – the perfect Lamb of God – fully human and identified with us and yet also fully divine – the God Man. Despite the enormity of the task and the devastating impact of bearing the punishment for our sins, despite His complete innocence, He did not turn back or falter from His God-given purpose in coming to this world. He had come for this very moment in the history of our world when God would provide “One sacrifice for sins forever” – never to be repeated and sufficient to cover all our sins in Christ and provide complete and total cleansing and forgiveness. We can have total confidence that the sacrifice made is resilient – it does the job – and that it lasts for all time. No more is needed other than we apply the blood of Christ to our hearts by faith recognizing our own personal sin. It is powerful and effective and long lasting. God demonstrated that the sacrifice of Christ had been accepted fully by raising Him from the dead and then glorifying Him in heaven through the ascension.

The work that God does in our hearts through the working of the Holy Spirit in conversion and then moulding us day by day into the type of people He wants to be is a permanent and ongoing work for God's glory. We can be confident, as with the great truths of the gospel, that God will complete His work in our hearts despite our weakness and failings. His Spirit has been given to us, living in our hearts, as a guarantee and deposit. He is our Helper and Comforter/Enabler. God's work in us is both resilient and will persevere. It does not rely upon us but it does mean we look to Him to sustain and keep us through the difficulties of life until our time here is over and He calls us home.

This month we celebrate the 350th edition of the Church Magazine since that first edition way back in January 1984 – 40 years ago. In a small way this demonstrates to us God's faithfulness and provision to us as a church over a sustained period. We see it also in the continuation of our world which is resilient and long lasting despite our best endeavors to spoil it – the wall displays at church remind us of that. We see it also in faithful Christian lives, lived for God, as we remember the testimony and witness of Alex Hamilton, recently called home after a long life.

As we focus again on the sufferings, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus during this Easter period may we give thanks for the resilience of our salvation in Him and the enduring benefits which are ours in Him because He persevered despite the huge cost.

With love, joy, peace and hope in Christ,

Martin Sellens

Easter Joy

The final triumph won,
the full atonement made,
salvation's work is done,
redemption's price is paid:
the morning breaks, the dark is fled,
for Christ is risen from the dead!

The tomb in which He lay
lies empty now and bare;
the stone is rolled away,
no lifeless form is there:
the sting is drawn from death and grave,
for Christ is risen, strong to save!

For us the Saviour died,
with us He lives again,
to God the Father's side
exalted now to reign:
to throne and crown by right restored,
for Christ is risen, Christ is Lord!

As one with Him we rise
to seek the things above,
in life that never dies,
in righteousness and love:
let praise unite our ransomed powers,
for Christ is risen, Christ is ours!

Timothy Dudley-Smith
(Hymn 284 in Christian Hymns)

A Personal Tribute

I remember well how I first got to know Alex & Laisan. Chen-Wei was very ill and we had to take him to the A&E at Leeds General Infirmary. Eva called Alex as we were very distressed. I'd only met him briefly before this, but he and Laisan came straight away, prayed with us, and told us that everyone in Tinshill Church was praying too. Although I wasn't a Christian at the time, this was a great comfort.

Over the years our friendship grew stronger and we met up often. Alex was kind, caring, generous, humble and unassuming. He was always ready to help others, nothing was too much trouble for him. He had a strong faith and I remember how patient and encouraging he was on my journey to find Jesus.

Alex worked as a police officer in Hong Kong for many years and then as a probation officer back in this country. He truly had a heart for the Chinese people. When he was out walking or in the supermarket, he would approach a Chinese person and talked to them in fluent Cantonese. He'd tell them about Jesus and invite them to church.

In the later years of their life together, Alex and Laisan would more often go to the Chinese church where Laisan found it easier to follow the sermons but Alex was always eager to hear what was going on at Tinshill. As they advanced in years and were not able to go out, especially after they have moved to Mytholmroyd to be nearer their daughter, Alex always asked for news when we visited or spoke on the phone and he remembered each and every one of us.

On our last visit before Christmas, Alex asked us to pray with him. I think he sensed that it would be the last time we would see each other. He was a dear friend and brother in Christ and I will miss him greatly.

Philip Ng

Remembering Alex

Our brother in Christ, Alex Hamilton went home into the presence of his Saviour and Lord on the 26th January 2024. He and his wife Laisan had moved to Mytholmroyd in 2020 to be near to their daughter Jeanet, having been members at Tinshill for many years.

Alex was born in Dunmurry, N. Ireland in 1938 and was the youngest of three. His father was a Police Sergeant and his mother a Nurse. His older brother, Ronnie passed away last year and his sister Elizabeth and sister-in-law May still live in N. Ireland. Alex went to Queens University in Belfast to study and from there in his early 20's he went to Hong Kong where he remained for 15 years serving in the Royal Hong Kong Police Force. He became fluent in Cantonese and whilst in Hong Kong he met and fell in love with Laisan. When he returned to the UK with Laisan they got married in Belfast and Alex went to Middlesex University to study to be a social worker. When he and Laisan moved up to Yorkshire they lived in Meanwood, Leeds for 38 years.

The photo shows Alex, (with Laisan) pictured outside the church at Tinshill in a relaxed upright pose - as we remember him for most of the time we knew him. As his human form declined with the passage of years he became slower and more bent latterly but our lasting memory is of a strong, upright capable and reliable man.

In 1988 Glyn had been asked to speak at the Leeds Chinese Christian Fellowship and it was there that he first met Alex and got into conversation. Alex at the time was working as a Probation Officer in H.M.Prison, Armley, Leeds, and somehow as Glyn and Alex talked the idea of a Christian Basics Course in the prison came into being. Alex

was well able to handle himself in the Hong Kong police and within the prison at Leeds!

From his position within the prison Alex was able to organise and facilitate the running of such a course where Glyn as a Pastor, with several teaching men from the church here at Tinshill were able to go in and teach basic Christian doctrine on one evening a week over a seven week period. The course was attended by twelve prisoners who were convicted men (not on remand), one being in prison for life, who were 'vulnerable' because of crimes against women and children. The course ran very well and was repeated several times with different groups of men attending. (God certainly worked in the hearts of three of these men - no follow up was permitted because of rules and regulations).

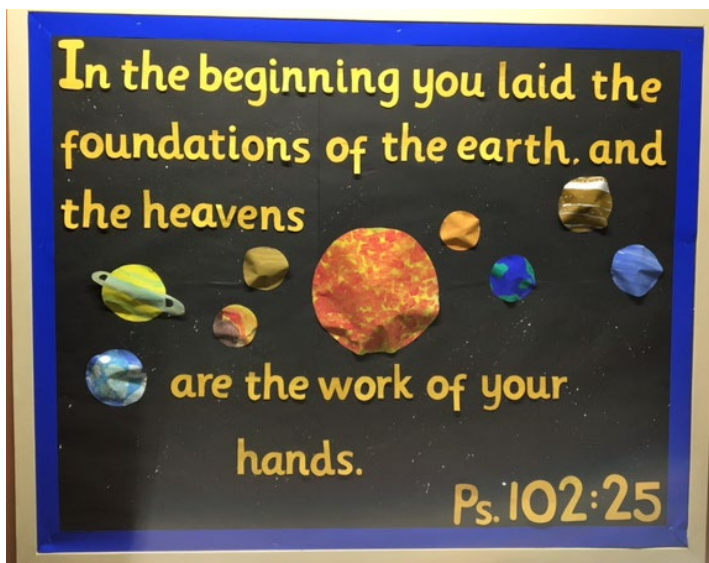
Alex and Laisan became members at Tinshill on 5th December 2004, though always having strong love and support for the Chinese Church in Leeds. They were kind and very generous. One lovely personal memory we have is that for a good number of years, when Glyn was the full time Pastor, they arrived at our house on Christmas Eve or just before with their "little something of thanks for the pastoral work". They had a Cosco card!! Our gift usually contained a whole fresh salmon, ham, chocolates, large gateau, sweets and biscuits. They would wave away thanks as they went off together down the drive. Alex was a self effacing man who never wanted "any fuss". They arranged things on the quiet and were often busy giving lifts where they knew a need. For a number of years Alex was our "Security Man" during the Bible Exhibition weeks, unlocking and locking the building, guarding the main gate and checking the car park regularly - he took his job guarding the hundreds of school children coming through the Exhibition very seriously. He and Laisan were also strong supporters

of Second Tuesday, the bible seminars which ran for many years each month. Alex had clear views and enjoyed the stimulation of the in-depth seminars on doctrine and related topical/ethical issues and would happily interact in discussion.

Alex loved everything Chinese and was greatly loved and appreciated for his love, service and hospitality to the Chinese church in the UK - as demonstrated by their numbers attending his funeral/thanksgiving service at Lawnswood, Leeds on Thursday 23rd February which was taken by Martin Sellens with Glyn speaking a little of the history of the Christian Basics Course.

We give thanks for Alex's life and witness. He has joined the ranks of God's faithful servants in the glory of Christ's Presence. And we remember in prayer Laisan and Jeanet, their daughter.

Glyn and Margaret Williams





Jesus' attitude to prayer

Recently I was reading in Luke chapter 5 and was struck by a very small word. The passage in question followed on from the healing of a man with leprosy, and reads "Then the report went around concerning Him (Jesus) all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."

Picture the scene: Jesus surrounded by huge crowds; people clamouring left, right and centre for Him to help and heal them; Jesus is rushed off His feet – SO He withdraws to the wilderness and prays. Jesus' extreme busyness is the reason for His getting away to the wilderness.

How might somebody else have responded to all that crowd pressure? "I'm too busy, just look at all those people... It's too much effort just now... I'll pray tomorrow"? Not Jesus. We read that He was massively in demand, so He withdrew and prayed.

This was not an isolated incident, there are other places where it is recorded that Jesus prayed, especially after a lot of people contact, for example:

Matthew 14:23 - After the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus sent the crowds away and went up on a mountain by Himself to pray;

Mark 1: 35 - After a busy evening of healing Jesus got up very early the following morning, went out to a deserted place and prayed;

Luke 6:12 - Jesus went out to the mountain and prayed all night before choosing His 12 disciples.

We are not told what Jesus prayed when He was alone with His Father. Maybe He asked for the salvation of the crowds; for strong spiritual life

for His disciples. Maybe He meditated on the Scriptures to commune with His Father; or asked for strength and perseverance to carry out what He had come into the world to do. I imagine all of these and much more at different times.

For Jesus, prayer was a huge priority. Nothing in Scripture suggests or hints that Jesus was ever reluctant to pray. Communing with His Father was as natural to Him as breathing.

There is a great challenge here to me. When a little prompt comes into the mind saying “Go and pray”, how easy it is to think “Not now... I’m too tired... I don’t feel like it... I don’t know how or what to pray.” These thoughts were surely never entertained by Jesus

How much better if it could always be said of us - God prompted the thought to pray, SO they immediately went and prayed. May God help us all to become ever more like the Lord Jesus Christ in our attitude to prayer.

Rosemary Hilton

A principle within

1. I want a principle within
Of *jealous, godly fear, [*watchful]
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.
I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or *fond desire, [*wrong]
To catch the wand’ring of my will,
And quench the kindling fire.

2. From Thee that I no more may part,
No more Thy goodness grieve,
The filial awe, the fleshly heart,
The tender conscience, give.
Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make;
Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake.

3. Almighty God of truth and love,
To me Thy pow'r impart;
The mountain from my soul remove,
The hardness from my heart.
Oh, may the least omission pain
My reawakened soul,
And drive me to that blood again,
Which makes the wounded whole.

The Principle Within spoken of in this hymn by Charles Wesley is that commitment to absolute INTEGRITY... To uncompromising, honest living that squares with the character of God as revealed in Scripture.

"If you abide in My word... you will know the truth..." (John 8:31 and 32). "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6)

How would I know if I am living by that "Principle Within"? Here are three specifics:

Motives: I am resolved that in my dealings with people, there will be no hidden agenda: No manipulation of others toward my own ends.

"Let your love be without hypocrisy." (Romans 12:9)

Impressions: I am resolved to not knowingly allow any impressions about myself or my business that do not square with reality: No shading of the truth. No delaying of payments. No cutting of corners on the quality of service or on the quality of the product.

"You... outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy..." (Matthew 23:28)

Speech: I am resolved to discipline my conversation in such a way that what I think I will say and what I actually say are precisely the same:

"Whatever you have to say let your 'yes' be a plain 'yes' and your 'no' be a plain 'no' — anything more than this has a taint of evil."
(Matthew 5:37 Phillips Translation)

Principled men and women who are determined to adhere to that godly "Principle Within" are sensitive to the slightest inkling of compromise within them.

QUESTION: "Are you man or woman enough to belong to that rare breed of principled disciples of Christ in an age of unprincipled people?" Let us ask the Lord to make us so!

Facts of the Matter submitted by Paul Crossley

Editor's Note – Charles Wesley's hymn is reproduced in full here and was published in 1749. It is not in our hymnbook although 85 of his hymns are. He was a prolific hymnwriter during his life (1707 to 1788) writing over 6,500 hymns. Amongst those included in Christian Hymns are the following (to name just a few!);

Jesus! The Name high over all; Ye servants of God; Hark the Herald; O Love divine! What have You done?; Christ, the Lord, is risen today, Hallelujah!; Come, Thou long expected Jesus; Rejoice the Lord is King; Father of everlasting grace; Spirit of faith come down; And can it be; Christ, whose glory fills the skies and Jesus, lover of my soul.

Bible Studies

Wednesdays at 7.45pm at the church with a Zoom option

Mar	6th	Martin Sellens	2 Corinthians 6 v 1 to 7 v 1
	13th	Alan Brearley	2 Corinthians 7 v 2 to 16
	20th	Night of Prayer	
	27th	Visit of Pastor Firouz	Armenia/Iran
April	3rd	Paul Crossley	2 Corinthians 8 v 1 to 15
	10th	Martin Sellens	2 Corinthians 8 v 16 to 9 v 5
	17th	Andy Thomson	AEM Deputation
	24th	Martin Sellens	2 Corinthians 9 v 6 to 15
May	1st	Martin Sellens	2 Corinthians 10

Preaching Plan

		Morning	Evening
Mar	10th	Mick Lockwood	Martin Sellens
	17th	Alan Brearley	Paul Crossley
	24th	John Harris	John Harris
	31st	Alan Brearley (EASTER)	Martin Sellens
April	7th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens (Com)
	14th	Jonathan Chell	Jonathan Chell
	21st	Martin Sellens	Mick Lockwood
	28th	Matt Corrick (York)	Martin Sellens
May	5th	Stephen Bowers (Com)	Martin Sellens

(Com) = (Communion)

Note: There may be some changes to these arrangements as Martin awaits a date for his operation to go ahead and a recovery period afterwards.

Outside Appointments

Do pray for our men as they minister outside in the coming months as follows;

Alan Brearley;

Sat March 23rd at 2.30pm – Torch Trust for the Blind

Rotas

Cleaning for week ending

Mar	9th	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard
	16th	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	23rd	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
	30th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens
Apr	6th	Hickman Family, Natalie Sellens
	13th	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard
	20th	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	27th	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
May	4th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens

Flowers for Sunday

Mar 10th	Kathryn Hibbard	Mar 17th	Sue Chell
Mar 24th	Christine Crossley	Mar 31st	Eva Ng
Apr 7th	Natalie Sellens	Apr 14th	Margaret Williams
Apr 21st	Mavis Mathers	Apr 28th	Rosemary Hilton
May 5th	Anne Sellens		

Leeds Torch Trust 50th Anniversary

This special anniversary is being celebrated at City Evangelical Church on Saturday 20th April at 2.30pm with a speaker from Torch House and a male voice choir – folk from the church are very welcome to join them for this special occasion.

Diary

March

- Tue 5 7.45pm Elder Deacons Meeting at 68 Moseley Wood Walk
Thu 7 2pm Thursday at Two Speaker: Paul Crossley
7.30pm Rock up
Thu 14 7.30pm Missionary Prayer Meeting
Fri 15 9.30am "What's Easter all about" with Holy Trinity School
Thu 21 2pm Thursday at Two Speaker: Glyn Williams
7.30pm Rock up
Fri 29 7.30pm Good Friday Service with communion
Sat 30 12pm Start of British Summer time – clocks forward 1 hour

April

- Thu 4 1pm Thursday at Two Easter Meal Speaker: Alan Brearley
7.30pm Missionary Prayer Meeting
Tue 16 7.45pm Elder Deacons Meeting at 23 Kirkwood Drive
Thu 18 2pm Thursday at Two Speaker: Mick Lockwood
Sun 21 Fellowship Lunch after the morning service
Tue 23 7.30pm Mens Fellowship
Tue 30 7.30pm Ladies Craft Evening

May

- Thu 2 am/pm Church open as a Polling Station for the local Elections
2pm Thursday at Two

There will be no Ketchup or Rock up during the two weeks of the Easter Holidays from 29th March to 14th April.

Next Magazine - The next edition of The Magazine will be for May / June 2024. The deadline for the submission of items and contributions to Martin will be Wednesday 24th April - all contributions welcome.

Diary of Services and Activities

Sunday	Sunday Morning Worship	10.30am
	Key Club (children aged 4-11)	10.30am
	Prayer Meeting	5.30pm
	Evening Worship	6.30pm

A Communion Service is held every month alternating between morning and evening on the first Sunday of the month and follows on from the main Service.

Tuesday	Men's Fellowship (3rd Tuesday – bimonthly)	7.30pm
----------------	--	--------

Wednesday	Tots Club (term time)	1.15pm
	Prayer Meeting and Bible Study	7.45pm

Thursday	Thursday at Two (seniors - fortnightly)	2.00pm
	Rock Up (school years 7-11- fortnightly)	7.30pm
	Missionary Prayer Meeting (monthly)	7.30pm

Friday	Ketchup (Children aged 5-11 in term time)	6.00pm
---------------	---	--------

Tinshill Free Church

Holly Avenue, Leeds LS16 6PL

Registered Charity No. 511933 CIO No. 1198328

www.tinshillfreechurch.org.uk

Elder:

Mr Martin Sellens, 68 Moseley Wood Walk, LS16 7HG

Tel: 2679529 Email: martin.sellens@gmail.com

Deacons:

Mr Nigel Hibbard (Fabric) nk_hibbard@btinternet.com

Mr Tim Hickman (Treasurer) tim_hickman_2000@hotmail.com