

TINSHILL FREE CHURCH

MAGAZINE



No 361 – January & February 2026

Pastoral Letter – January & February 2026

Certainty in a time of Uncertainty

When I was studying for my MA Degree in Environmental Planning at Nottingham University one of the books that I bought for my course in the late 1970s was by the then well-known economist John Kenneth Galbraith. It traced the history of economic theory from Adam Smith back in the 1700s to the present day and gave biographical accounts of the lives and ideas of prominent economists over that period. It was called “The Age of Uncertainty”. I think I still have my copy upstairs in the attic in a trunk hidden away and not looked at for decades. I remember that the book was a best seller at the time and I think there was a TV series as well. JK Galbraith died in 2006 aged 97.

We are still living in that age of uncertainty in our world. That has been exemplified even over this last weekend with American intervention in Venezuela. Whilst it seems that it has been in the planning for some years it has caused great uncertainty in terms of how we should react to it and what it means for the world and the other big powers – notably Russia and China who have their own desires in Ukraine and Taiwan. And what of Greenland and their future? In our own country the political landscape seems to be changing according to the latest polls as people seek a better alternative to what we have at the moment.

Then there is the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence which is already making an impact on our everyday lives and which is likely to increase with time. Some of that is very good particularly in medical advances but there are significant dangers if the right safeguards are not put in place and we have already seen some of the negative effects on individuals and their privacy and mental health.

The impact of all this uncertainty and change in our world and lives can and does give rise to anxiety and instability. However the Christian gospel is a stabilizing force in our lives and can give us the certainty that we need to live settled and secure lives amidst all the change and chaos around us. We crave this security especially because we are not in control of our lives – but God is! So at the start of this year let us be certain of what we believe and who we trust. We need that anchor of the soul which is sure and steadfast to give us stability no matter what else happens (Hebrews 6 verse 19). Do you have it?

The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians succinctly sets out the gospel truth for us;

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...” (1 Corinthians 15 verses 3 and 4).

This is the truth which the Corinthian believers were saved by, were standing on and were holding fast to (verses 1 and 2). It is the same truth that we need to continue to stand on and rely upon – it is the bedrock of our faith – constant because God does not change and wants us to have certainty in our relationship with Him and not constant change and uncertainty. Luke writes his eye witness account of the life of Christ in his gospel (good news) so that Theophilus and us might ***“know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed”*** (Luke 1 verse 4).

The cross and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are facts of history and have stood the test of time over the centuries since – they speak to us of God’s love and justice and of the work of God’s Son on our behalf to save a people for Himself from every tongue, tribe and

nation. We need the cross and resurrection now more than ever in a sinful and wicked world where God is ignored and people live for themselves. But in His mercy God continues to offer forgiveness and salvation to those who turn from their sin, believe in His Son and live for Him. The gospel offers certainty in our relationship with God through all the changing scenes of life bringing peace in the heart, joy knowing God's presence and help and future hope of eternal life with Him.

Let us then enter this New Year not anxious in an uncertain world but with the certainty that Christ is our Saviour and Lord and does all things well. And let us keep the great truths of the gospel firmly fixed in our mind and heart. Consider the wise words of Solomon;

“Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge; for it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; let them be fixed upon your lips, so that your trust may be in the Lord; I have instructed you today, even you. Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, that I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who send to you?”

(Proverbs 22 verses 17 to 21)

May we trust the Lord in the coming year and walk closely with Him, knowing His certain and constant love and care, that it may keep us steady, consistent and faithful in an age of uncertainty.

With great thankfulness for the constant love of the Lord Jesus to us, His people, as we step out into another year,

Martin Sellens

God's Amazing Memory

A little while ago I was reading Psalm 25, and as I read verses 6-7 the thought came to me, God has a "selective memory". Martin used the same phrase in a sermon a few days later, when speaking on 2 Peter chapter 3, and this prompted me to think about memory – both human and divine.

In the psalm, David prays to God: ***"Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your loving kindnesses, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me..."***

David asks God to remember His own attributes – the mercy that He has always shown to His people; the lovingkindness that so expresses His tenderness toward His people; indeed, all God's good and beautiful characteristics. David asks God to consider them and act in accordance with them. Then David asks God **not** to remember his sins and transgressions. He desires that God will not think of his sins ever again; that He will never again call them to mind or hold them against David. Thirdly, David asks God to remember him – as a person. He desires that God should think of him positively, lovingly, in a kindly way; that God's mercy will prompt favourable treatment from God rather than the punishment that his sins deserve.

David is confident that God, in His tender mercies, will hear and answer this prayer, because of His own character. Psalm 145 v8 comes to mind: ***"The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy"***.

So David has asked God to remember; to **not** remember; and then again to remember!

Further on in the Bible, God Himself speaks of His memory through some of the prophets; in Isaiah 43 v25 God says to His people, “**I will not remember your sins.**” And in chapter 44 v21 He says, “**You will not be forgotten by Me!**” In Jeremiah 31 v34 God says, “**I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more**”. In effect, God says to us, “I will remember you but I will **not** remember your sin”.

All of this tells me that God’s memory is something amazing, infinitely superior to human memory. People’s memories fail and can be perverse. I’m sure I am not the only one who forgets that which I want to remember, and remembers the things that I would rather forget! But God’s memory is not like that. He does not forget anything. Forgetting is human, it is a failing. But God can choose to remember – and He can choose **not** to remember. God is in complete control of His memory. How awesome is that!

This gives us great cause to praise God. We can be confident that He will not hold our sins against us once we are forgiven in Christ. When we go through hard times we can be assured that God has not forgotten us, however low and however far from Him we may feel. When we can’t remember something, God can. Let us praise Him for His infinite superiority, and the way that He always works for our good and His glory.

Submitted by Rosemary Hilton

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Cast your burden on the Lord; only lean upon His Word;
you will soon have cause to bless His eternal faithfulness.

He sustains you by His hand; He enables you to stand;
those whom Jesus once has loved from His grace are never moved.

Baptisms

It was such an encouragement at the end of last year to witness the baptism of three of our young people. Artin's testimony was included in the last Magazine. In this edition I have included Joe and Niahm's testimonies given on the 2nd November before a full church at Tinshill on a memorable evening. The picture is of them taken after their baptisms sitting on the edge of the baptistry. Do continue to pray for all three in the coming year.



Joe Hickman's testimony

I grew up with Christian parents going to church every Sunday, going to Sunday school and the kids groups. I knew I believed what I was being taught, that God made the world and that Jesus died on the cross, but it never really affected the way I lived. Whenever someone asked me if I was Christian, I would always tell them yes, because what I knew they really meant was "do you go to church". I knew that going to church isn't what makes a person a Christian but I never explained to people what it really was. I had said sorry for my sins to God before, but because everything I had been taught didn't really mean anything to me I never really meant what I said in my prayers. Whenever I prayed it was like I was repeating empty words. I knew I was supposedly talking to God but deep down I was just saying my prayers because I had been told to, and not because I meant what I was saying. I also didn't really think I'd get any answers, despite the fact I had been raised being taught that God does answer prayer.

I don't know exactly when, but roughly a couple years ago, we were given a sermon on prayer. The preacher said that when we pray, we must have faith, because otherwise what is the point. If we continue to worry about whatever it is we have prayed about after we have prayed about it, what is the point? Sitting through this sermon I was thinking, have I been doing it wrong this entire time? So the next time I prayed for something, I had faith that I would be answered. I told myself, now that I've prayed about it I should stop worrying because I have given it to God. And very soon after my prayer had been answered. It was like this pin-drop moment. I realised I had in fact been doing it wrong my whole life.

I am not saying that God always answers prayer in the way we want, because He doesn't. But that moment I experienced was enough to convince me. I knew what I had been taught my whole life was real, but now I really felt that it was real. Not long after this, I realised all

those times I had been told Jesus died for me, people were telling the truth. He died specifically for me on the cross. I think one of the things that helped to bring me to this realisation was the Bible verse in Matthew 26 verse 39 which says **“He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will but as You will.”** Learning that Jesus was scared of going up to the cross yet still willingly went up to take our place upset me and showed me how much He loved me. I thought about how as humans we sin every single day without failure no matter how hard we try, and the only one who could get us out of the punishment we deserve for that was Jesus. So I prayed to God knowing that He could forgive me of my sins, and that I desperately needed forgiveness. And I felt sorry for what I had done and prayed that moving forward God would be able to help me to stop my sinning. Being Christian doesn't mean never sinning again but now I know I am forgiven and nothing can change that.

Niahm Hickman's testimony

Hi I'm Niamh and I'm getting baptised today because I know Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.

I have grown up in a Christian family and been going to church my whole life but never fully understood what it meant to be a real Christian. I have been going to various youth groups and holiday bible clubs but again never truly understood what it meant to be a Christian. I always said I was a Christian but was never truly a Christian as I hadn't asked for forgiveness.

In year 7 I started going to a new youth group called SNL and loved it. After a while I went to my first Yorkshire Camps with SNL. This made me think about my faith more - however I still wasn't a Christian.

The more I thought about my faith, the more I realised how good God had been to me and my family through my Mum's illness. This also made me realise I needed to be changed. I began to realise that I wasn't living the way God wanted. I wasn't praying or reading my Bible which I needed to do. I didn't deserve God's grace and knew I needed to do something and be changed.

I started praying and reading my Bible more. Eventually I repented and felt forgiven. God had shown me what it meant to be a Christian. Through His grace I had repented, believed and now I am being baptised like God told us to in Acts 2 verse 38. ***"Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."***

One verse that helped me was the first verse I learnt at Yorkshire Camps, it helped show me God's grace and how much He really loved us, that He loved us so much He gave us His one and only son. Romans 5 verse 8 ***"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"***.

I now know what it means to be a Christian but I will continue to sin as there isn't one day Christians go without sinning but I know I am forgiven. I will continue to try and live God's way, not mine. I will try and live for Jesus, the way He wanted because He died to save us from our sins and He is the Ruler and Saviour of us all.

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Note: The great desire of the apostle Peter for every Christian is expressed at the end of his second epistle (2 Peter 3 verse 18);

"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."

Diary

January

Wed 7	1.15pm	Tots Club restarts
Thu 8	2pm	Thursday at Two
	7.30pm	Rock up restarts
Fri 9	6pm	Ketchup restarts
Tue 13	7.45pm	Elder Deacons Meeting
Thu 15	7.30pm	Missionary Prayer Meeting
Thu 22	1pm	Thursday at Two Special – Winter Meal
Mon 26	10.30am	Trustees Meeting
Thu 29	7.30pm	Rock up

February

Thu 5	2pm	Thursday at Two
	7.30pm	Missionary Prayer Meeting
Sun 8	4.30pm	Fellowship Tea
Thu 12	7.30pm	Rock up
Thu 19	2pm	Thursday at Two
Thu 26	7.30pm	Rock up

March

Thu 5	1pm	Thursday at Two – Soup and Sweet Special
	7.30pm	Missionary Prayer Meeting
Sat 14	9am to 4pm	Connected Conference at Dewsbury Evangelical Church Subject: Gospel Driven Change Speaker: Paul Watts

Note - There will not be a Men's Fellowship Meeting in January or February.

Bible Studies

Wednesdays at 7.45pm at the church with a Zoom option if you are not able to attend in person but no Zoom option for Deputations

January	14th	Joel Chapter 1	Martin Sellens
	21st	Joel 2 v1-11	Martin Sellens
	28th	Joel 2 v12-27	Alan Brearley
February	4th	Joel 2 v28-32	Paul Crossley
	11th	Joel 3	Martin Sellens
	18th	Prayer Meeting	
	25th	Possible Deputation	Tbc
March	4th	Nahum 1	Alan Brearley
Tbc = To be confirmed			

Preaching Plan

		Morning	Evening
January	11th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens
	18th	Martin Sellens	Steve Harding
	25th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens
February	1st	Alan Brearley	Paul Crossley (Com)
	8th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens
	15th	Mick Lockwood	Alan Brearley
	22nd	Roger Fay	Roger Fay
March	1st	Martin Sellens (Com)	Tba
	8th	Tba	Martin Sellens
(Com) = (Communion)		Tba = To be arranged	

Outside Appointments

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

Paul Crossley;

Sunday Jan 14th am - Garforth

Sunday Feb 8th am - Garforth

Rotas

Cleaning for week ending

Jan	10th	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	17th	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
	24th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens
	31st	Hickman family, Natalie Sellens
Feb	7th	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard
	14th	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	21st	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
	28th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens
Mar	7th	Hickman family, Natalie Sellens

Flowers for Sunday

Jan 11th	Mavis Mathers	Jan 18th	Rosemary Hilton
Jan 25th	Anne Sellens	Feb 1st	Carole Brearley
Feb 8th	Kathryn Hibbard	Feb 15th	Elaine Snuggs
Feb 22nd	Angela Mathers	Mar 1st	Deborah Williams
Mar 8th	Colette Hickman		

Next Magazine - The next edition of The Magazine will be for March / April 2026 - the deadline for the submission of items and contributions to Martin will be Wednesday 25th February - 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
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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
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