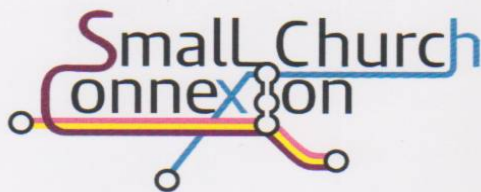


SMALL CHURCHES NEWSLETTER Autumn 2020



**B London
Baptists**



Welcome to the Autumn edition of SCC news. After a beautiful summer weatherwise, we are now very much into a chilly wet autumn. But with wind and rain there have been lots of stunning rainbows which always serve as a reminder of our Creator and His promises. In this edition we will look at the autumn webinar held in September and see how some of our churches are coping with this unprecedented time. We will also look forward to another webinar, and events that are being planned.

We hope that you will be encouraged and inspired by what you read, and that you will contribute to the next newsletter if you have something happening that will be a help to others.

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SCC Webinar on 12th September 10-12noon

Hilary planned the morning, with speakers bringing a 5 minute introduction to each section and then break out groups to discuss and feed back their thoughts.

Sue Wetherall from Emmanuel Church at Ham Christian Centre brought the first item: Looking **UP** with God. Sue told us about the recent history of Ham - a small church with just 10 committed to membership. A year ago at their weekly prayer meeting they were encouraged to work for revival and growth. Then Covid 19 hit and their building was closed. Their leader was struck down with cancer, yet God continued to give vision and goals for re-building, including: *"This little church, brought to its knees, will rise out of the ashes"*. They are repainting the church, ready for where God will lead.

What have we learned from listening to God while most former activities have been forced to close?



Stephen Maclean, Cricklewood Baptist Church brought the first part of **IN - with technology**. Stephen started after lockdown using Facebook Live which required a good camera on his smart phone and a church Facebook page, which they had. He said that it was very amateurish but people were very forgiving! However, not everyone had Facebook, so he began using a laptop camera to record to YouTube. After the service he would upload a copy of

the service video, upload it to YouTube and put it on the church website. He continued to research and decided to use an app called 'switcher' which he found very easy to use. He connected by iPad to his iPhone to act as a control panel, and could then insert videos, worship songs and pre-recorded material.



The church opened again for worship in August but Stephen continues to livestream for the benefit of members unable to attend for health or work reasons. He has been encouraged to be joined by contacts in other countries including family in Scotland who didn't attend church.

Part 2 of **IN without technology** was brought by Rev Gerry Stanton at Union Church, Crouch End. He was aware of what other churches were doing and felt bad not to be doing likewise, but his people were not tech savvy. Personally he spent more time praying for the people in the church, and had more time with God. Where he could safely visit and talk to people on their doorstep he did so. Otherwise he would phone them. He set up an Excel spreadsheet with the date of contact and the type (phone, email, visit), which alerted him if anyone had been missed for a while.



They have now returned to the church building on the first and third Sundays, using a reflective service with YouTube.

Rev Nick Graves, Old Lodge Lane Baptist Church at Purley spoke of being **OUT** of buildings and **IN** the community. A group from the SCC team visited Nick in the summer of 2017 and saw how their Thursday Tea filled the premises with people of all faiths and none on alternate Thursdays. The community meal attracted up to 90 people and became exhausting for Nick and his team. 2020 was to be a sabbatical for him while the Tea had a break. Lockdown broke into that sabbatical and Nick returned to take up a Croydon Council project called the One Stop Food Stop. This meant receiving fresh, chilled and frozen food and supplying £20 worth of shopping for £3.50 to those who were struggling financially. Council officers would attend to provide support and advice where needed. The Council financed commercial fridges and freezers and someone from the church offered to be project manager. 30 volunteers responded to an appeal. In just 2 weeks the project was up and running, and they were soon delivering food parcels to 90 families across south Croydon. Some volunteers had to return to work once lockdown eased, but 60 families a week are still being fed, though most come to the church to collect the bags. Nick has been able to have conversations with both volunteers and visitors, some very deep. They are now having services again, but on Thursday evening rather than Sunday morning. Very exciting times!



Kim Bames from Waltham Abbey Baptist Church spoke next about **GOING BACK INTO THE BUILDING**.

The church started by consulting the BU website and the government advice, and then reviewed the risk assessment tasks to be completed. They put together a plan for social distancing, and another for cleaning. They then put together a plan for leading services having regard for restrictions. Finally they made a video to show the signage and directions, and to explain how services would be different as preparation for those returning.

The final speaker was Pastor Sandra Kimber from Hampton Wick Baptist Church, who looked to the future with **A CALL TO MISSION**. She had lots of questions for individual people about why they were worshipping in their present church, and whether God was calling them to remain there. She concluded with the hope to "*see a new breed of missionaries sent out across the UK to help, revive and refresh churches who long to see the kingdom of God grow in their area*".

The 47 people attending were then divided into groups of about 6 people who had 25 minutes to meet one another, share their situation/experiences and ideas/plans for the future. I'm sure most groups could have shared for double the time! Positive messages of using more time with God, and growing faith, were encouraging from almost everyone in the feedback.

Hilary can supply a copy of each speaker's notes and also Zoom hints and tips prepared by her husband, if you contact her direct.

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Harvest Thanksgiving



It is the season for celebrating the harvest and all the provision that God supplies. But as with everything, this year was different! In my church the fresh

fruit and veg, were entirely replaced by packets and cans for the local food bank. And we were seeing them on Zoom - apart from a few people without technology who are going to church and sitting 2m apart, wearing their face masks. The food bank has been extra busy this year and is expecting more demand as people lose their jobs, so the contribution was very welcome.



The main feature of our harvest service was the BMS World Mission video called Operation Chad. This was heart wrenching but also encouraging as the focus was on the staff at a remote hospital in Chad. Both local people and missionaries shone with the love of Jesus,

and we were shown those who benefitted physically from their care, and also those who came to faith or had their faith strengthened. It was most uplifting and led us to praise God. What a privilege to share the Good News of Jesus as new life is combined with healing!

What a harvest to come!

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SCC "In touch Webinar"

Saturday 14th November

10-12noon

If you came to the previous webinar, you won't want to miss this one. If you missed the last one, be sure to book soon for 14th November. There will be the opportunity to share with leaders from other small churches about problems and blessings and the chance to pray together. "In touch" with God and one another.

Not many people were attending church this time last year, but now more are joining services through technology. This is an opportunity to find out from one another how we are managing. Maybe your problem is how to conduct a baptismal service during lockdown. Praise God, it is for some. Or perhaps you have bereaved members who would be blessed by a memorial service. Other denominations do this every year at the beginning of November. Can we learn from them? Then there is the challenge of Christmas with Coronavirus!

Let's share together. Let's pray together.
Book with Hilary.

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Spring Retreat

6th March 10.30 to 3.30

Southwark Cathedral

Please book the date and pray that by March we will be able to meet. Sandra Kimber will be leading this day of reflection. We will send more details in the new year.

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Christian Resources Exhibition is being held online this year from 13th to 15th October. A handbook is available online and you can join for morning prayers at 10am.

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For **Coronavirus guidance** from the BU go to <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/337630/Coronavirus.aspx>

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For the **BU website for small churches** go to <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/305953/SmallerChurches.aspx>

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Spurgeon's College is unable to hold Quiet Days at present.

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Don't forget to look up 'small church connexion' on facebook and press like to join the group.

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We value your feedback. Please contact me at valeriewinchester@btinternet.com or by post to

73 St Johns Road, Dartford DA2 6BE
or Hilary Taylor at hilary.taylor@londonbaptist.co.uk
phone 07986 759034

If you want to phone some news rather than write it down, you can contact Valerie on 01322 223148