



OEFC BULLETIN FOR 2–10 MARCH, 2024

Saturday, 2 March

08h30 **Prayer Meeting**, via Zoom

link available on request

10h00 **elders' meeting**, in the extension

Sunday, 3 March

Gary@oefc.co.uk

10h30 **Morning Service**, with **Communion**

Continuing our new sermon series on the epistle of "joy in Christ", we shall consider **Philippians 1:9–11** and *Paul's Joyful Prayer*.

18h30 **Evening Service**

Continuing our look at scenes of hope in the life of Jesus, we shall consider **Luke 18:9–17** and *hope for the non-religious*.

Monday, 4 March

10h15 **table-tennis** session for men

contact John Wilson

19h00 **English Conversation Club**

Steven@oefc.co.uk

We warmly welcome new people to join this informal club, more details of which are given overleaf.

Tuesday, 5 March

10h00 **Coffee Break**

contact Cathy Burton

Come; come with your friends; come to make friends. An informal time of coffee and chat – and then, welcoming Nisha Popat back again and definitely staying seated, we shall get fit!

Wednesday, 6 March

09h30 **Shining Stars**

contact Jane Green

Our 'stay and play' group for pre-school children and their carers.

19h30 **meeting of church members**, C.238

Lance@oefc.co.uk

We urge all church members to join us this evening, when among other things we shall consider a Special Resolution concerning the appointment of a deacon. If you cannot be with us, please present your apologies in advance to Lance Atter, who is to chair the meeting.

Saturday, 9 March

08h30 **Prayer Meeting**, via Zoom

link as before

Mothering Sunday, 10 March

Gary@oefc.co.uk

10h30 **Morning Service**

Continuing our new series on the epistle of "joy in Christ", we shall consider **Philippians 1:19–26** and *The Joy of Christian Confidence*.

18h30 **Evening Service**

Continuing our look at scenes of hope in the life of Jesus, we shall consider **Luke 5:12–16** and *hope for the unclean*.

in communion

Routinely on the first Sunday morning and on the third Wednesday evening of each month, unless advised otherwise, we celebrate a time of Communion – a simple act of remembrance and testimony in obedience to the command of Christ – see 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.

As is our usual practice, we welcome all those who know Jesus, love Him as their Lord and Saviour, and are in fellowship with His people, to share bread and wine with us.

If you have yet to put your faith in Jesus, please pass the elements by as you witness and reflect on the meaning of our simple act of obedience. At the same time, might you not turn to Christ in repentance and faith? His gracious words of promise still stand: “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” (John 6:37)

in conversation

We know of a number of adults who would like help in improving their spoken English. To this end, we have started running – as a short pilot course in the first instance – a weekly ninety-minute **English Conversation Club**.

The Club meets on Monday evenings at 19h00, and each session is self-contained: you do not have to have come last week to come this week! If you, or someone you know, would like to take part in the Club, please chat to Steven Green.

a crafty plan

Join us at 19h30 on Friday, 15 March for a fun craft evening, to include the making of Easter cards and Easter wreaths. The evening will end with cakes, hot drinks and a short talk.

There will be a charge of just £5 per person for the session.

For more details of the evening, or to reserve places for you and your friends, see Jane Green as soon as possible.



Life in Oadby

If you are looking for an evangelistic magazine to give away that's good, godly and attractive, then we have the very thing for you!

The Spring/Summer edition of the *Life Magazine* is now available. It contains a fascinating mix of articles – camping, rugby football, weeding, and an elephant all feature – as well as some good puzzles, recipes and the stories of people whose lives have been changed as a result of their faith.



The magazine has very broad appeal, so is perfect for giving to colleagues, family members, friends, and neighbours – and to those casual contacts you may make at the door or in the shops. Please pick up copies for them, and for yourself, this Sunday.

missionary news

The church has long had a particular interest in the work of God in four areas – Costa Rica/Latin America, southern France, northern Madagascar and Tamil Nadu. These are mentioned each week in the **prayer points** given in the Bulletin, and we are pleased to be able to support these mission partners financially as well as in prayer.

We regularly receive news from our mission partners, often now in the form of e-mail prayer letters. Some of these letters used to come to those who asked for them via members of the church, but *from now on you should be receiving directly from our mission partners all the letters that you have asked to receive*.

If, in the next month or so, you think that you are *not* receiving the letters you expected, have a word with Judy Wilson. Chat to her, also, if you have never received any mission-related prayer letters but would like to do so. They are invaluable fuel for our praise and prayer!

So let be it; I agree...

part 1

All of the names, words and phrases listed in the bullet-points below are very familiar to us. But do you know what they have in common?

- Abigail, Adam, David, John, Joseph, Michael, Rachel, Sarah, Toby;
- alphabet, camel, cherub, hallelujah, jubilee, manna, Messiah, rabbi, sabbatical;
- to fall flat on one's face, a heavy heart, the land of the living, nothing new under the sun, sour grapes, the skin of my teeth, to put words in one's mouth, a fly in the ointment, a man after his own heart.

All of these – and many more names, words and phrases that could have been listed – have been adopted into English from Hebrew, the ancient Semitic language in which the Old Testament was written. Another 'English' word of Hebrew origin, used particularly in Christian circles, is *amen*. We say it routinely at the end of prayers, particularly when we are praying together, and we find it at the end of the Bible – it is, in fact, the last word in Scripture, in Revelation 22:20,21. But what exactly does it mean?

The word is derived from a root meaning 'to be firm, steady, trustworthy' and can be translated *certainly, truly* or *verily*. One writer notes that the word means "it is and it shall be so" when said by God, and "so let it be" when said by men.

The first mention of the word *amen* in the Bible is to be found in Numbers 5:22, where "Amen, amen" is the response that a woman accused of adultery had to make to a solemn oath outlined by a priest. The next occurrence of the word is in Deuteronomy 27:15–26, where we read that the people of God were told to acknowledge the curses that would befall them were they to dishonour God; twelve times we read that "all the people shall say 'Amen'."

We take a solemn oath – in a court of law or at a wedding, for example – by repeating aloud a set form of words. The equivalent for God's people was formally to respond 'Amen'. As the Scriptures above reveal, *amen* was said by the people of God to confirm their understanding of and assent to what God required, and their commit-

ment and willingness to submit to the penalty that God ordained for a failure to obey Him (see Nehemiah 5:13 in context). It follows that to say 'Amen' was to make a solemn declaration.

Such declarations were made also, of course, in response to a prayer – as, for example, at the end of David's song of thanks in 1 Chronicles 16:7–36

"Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and deliver us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise. Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!"

Then all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

Or recall the account in Nehemiah 8:5,6 of what happened after the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in about the year 445 BC:

Ezra opened the book [of the Law of Moses] in the sight of all the people ... and as he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen", lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

This response at the end of a prayer is seen also in the Psalms (41:13, 72:19, 89:52, 106:48). It is clear, however, that *amen* was much more than a formula to mark the end of a prayer, an exclamation of approval along the lines of the modern "hear, hear!" said at the end of a speech, or the expression of a vague wish that the prayer might be answered. Rather, it was said in earnest by all who had followed the prayer and wanted to confirm publicly their support of and commitment to all that it contained. It was as if to say, "I agree with that; I share those beliefs and concerns; I want to add my voice to those words of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication."

If we are to say *Amen* to a prayer in this way, we must follow the prayer carefully and not let our attention be distracted. Then, by saying aloud the *Amen* (a practice sadly ignored in some denominations!), we must recognise that we are adding our voices – casting our vote, as it were – and identifying ourselves with the sentiments of the prayer: a vocal *amen* was, and should be for us, a considered act of committal and worship.

prayer points

- “David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD ... all the days of his life” (1 Kings 15:5), so he is a most helpful example to us, not least in relation to his great enthusiasm to consider God and worship Him. The prayer of David recorded in **1 Chronicles 16:8–13** gives us much encouragement and fuel for praise before we go on to pray for the matters below.
- We continue to pray for countries in turmoil – Afghanistan, Israel and the nations around it, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen etc. Pray for God to restrain forces of evil and the spread of godless ideologies, and that the governments being elected this year will be caring, diligent, honest, peace-loving – and willing to grant Christians gospel freedom.
- Pray for our nation: for the Royal Family; for politicians in our national and devolved governments; for those who direct and lead our armed forces, emergency services, educational establishments and the NHS; for the role we play in the international community.
- Pray for the extremely valuable informational, legal and lobbying work being undertaken by The Christian Institute, for a revival of religion nationwide, for the work of Hope Community Church in Wigston, and for the work of God: in Tamil Nadu, especially through the varied work of Valathi Outreach Church Ministries; in Madagascar, focussing on the wide-ranging ministries based at and reaching far beyond the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara; in Nigeria, particularly in Jos, where the Wallis family is now serving; in France, particularly the ministry of L’Église Protestante Baptiste Carcassonne-Berriac; in Costa Rica and Latin America, and for Ian and Brenda Darke who are working there.
- Pray for OEFC, thinking particularly of all its preaching and teaching ministries; for our outreach activities and events; for those in hospital, recently out of hospital or struggling with illness or infirmity; for those facing problems at home or at work; for our impact on the community of Oadby.

members' ministry

Paul Whalley is leading the service at Laburnum Road Community Church on 3 March at 10h45.

Mike Stringer will be leading the 10h45 services at Carley Evangelical Baptist Church, in the city centre, on 3 March, 10 March and 17 March.

Madan Kallow will be leading the devotions:

- at 09h30 on 6 March at Pilgrim Gardens, and
- at 11h00 on 12 March at the Evington Home.

He makes of the rebel a priest and a king,

He has bought us, and taught us
this new song to sing:

*Unto Him who has loved us
and washed us from sin,
unto Him be the glory for ever! Amen.*

How helpless and hopeless
we sinners had been
if He never had loved us
till cleansed from our sin!

Unto Him who has loved us...

Aloud in His praises our voices shall ring
so that others, believing,
this new song shall sing:

Unto Him who has loved us...

These are the final verses of *With harps and with viols*, a hymn written by Arthur Tappan Pierson (1837–1911), an American who entered the Presbyterian ministry in 1860 and was a great advocate of foreign missions. He visited England and Scotland, was a friend to George Müller and C.H. Spurgeon and actually succeeded the latter in the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. Pierson died in New York after ill health forced him to curtail a missionary tour to East Asia.

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Gifts towards God's work in and through OEFC can be posted to us, placed in our offertory box or sent by bank transfer to 'OEFC' (use account number 93854876 and sort code 20–49–08).

Please chat to Stuart Glover if you want to know more about boosting your gift via Gift Aid.