



OEFC BULLETIN FOR 17–25 FEBRUARY, 2024

Saturday, 17 February

08h30 **Prayer Meeting**, via Zoom *new link available on request*

Sunday, 18 February

Gary@oefc.co.uk

10h30 **Student Service**

We welcome all students, and guests from Friends International, who are with us this morning; see overleaf for student-related content! The service will be led by Gary Prickett, our minister; he will speak to us on the story of *The Lost Son* recorded in **Luke 15:11–32**.

18h30 **Evening Service**

Looking at another scene of hope in the life of Jesus, Stuart Glover will consider **Luke 8:43–48** and *Hope for the desperate*.

Monday, 19 February to Friday, 23 February in the Hall

This is half-term week for local colleges and schools. During it, work will be under way in the Hall to replace the central-heating boiler and inspect our electrical systems.

This work means that we shall not be able to hold any meetings in the Hall from Monday to Friday, so it will be a half-term break also for men's *table tennis*, *Coffee Break*, *Shining Stars* and the *Life* group which meets twice a month on Wednesday afternoons.

Our out-of-Hall activities will take place as normal, as listed below.

Wednesday, 21 February

19h30 **Life group** for Bible Study and Prayer *Paul@oefc.co.uk*

This is the new day of the week, and the new time of meeting, for the *Life* group which has met hitherto on Monday evenings; the home venue is unchanged. For more details, please chat to Paul Whalley.

Thursday, 22 February

19h30 **Life group** for Bible Study and Prayer *Luke@oefc.co.uk*

For details of the focus and venue of this group, please have a word with Luke Carter-Whittle.

Saturday, 24 February

08h30 **Prayer Meeting**, via Zoom *link as before*

Sunday, 25 February

10h30 **Morning Service**, at the North Memorial Hall

Continuing our new series of sermons on the epistle of “joy in Christ”, Lance Atter considers the *Joyful Perspective* of **Philippians 1:12–18**.

16h30 **Bring and Share Tea**) meeting at the URC premises on Rose-
17h15 **short Evening Service**) mead Drive; *see over* for more details
Steven Green will address, “*What do Christians believe about Jesus?*”

for students: life, lift and lunch

If you have come to Leicester to study at one of the local universities, we extend to you a very warm **welcome** to OEFC. Many of us in the church have been students, even students here in Leicester, so know a little of what you are enduring and, we hope, enjoying!

We meet little more than a ten-minute walk from the Oadby Student Village, but if you are living further afield, we can arrange a **lift** for you to and/or from our services; ask us in church, or call us on 0786 428 0545. If you prefer to use public transport, the Arriva bus service 31/31A runs from central Leicester along the London Road to Oadby; get off at Sandhurst Street (as the bus turns off the A6 to enter Oadby Village Centre) and then walk up Stoughton Road – i.e., to the left of the BP petrol station on the A6 – to the church.

We also host students for **lunch**, usually in one of our homes, every Sunday during term-time. Do not hesitate to ask us about this!

OEFC at Rosemead Drive

For the period January–June 2024, and usually on the last Sunday of the month, we shall hold a buffet tea and short early-evening service at the Rosemead Drive premises of the Oadby United Reformed Church (postcode/satnav LE2 5SF). The next time will be on **Sunday, 25 February**.

For the **tea**, please bring to share – on your own crockery or on disposable plates – something *savoury* and something *sweet*. Please chat to Jane Green if you need any advice about this!

The **services** we hold at Rosemead Drive will be short and simple. Each will include a children's talk and craft activity and, for adults, a brief talk on key elements of Christian belief:

- in January, we addressed the key question, *“What do Christians believe about God?”* (and there is available a recording of that talk);
- in February, we shall address the question, *“What do Christians believe about Jesus?”*

Our special services at Rosemead Drive should be of wide interest. Please pray about them and consider whom you could bring along with you.

in conversation

We are in touch with a number of adults who would very much like to improve their spoken English. Responding to this need, we shall be running an **English Conversation Club**. This will meet from 19h00–20h30 on Mondays, the first session being planned for 26 February.

If you, or someone you know, would like to take part in a five-week pilot course, or you simply want to know more, chat to [Steven Green](#).

on the calendar

If you have not done so already, please pick up a copy – from the information table at the back of the Hall – of the A4 ‘calendar’ listing all of our expected activities for February and March.

We plan to issue a new calendar at the end of each month, covering the two months to come. If you spot corrections that need to be made to the calendar, or are aware of events that ought to be added to it, please do let us know: you can contact Lance Atter via Lance@oefc.co.uk

We know already of two additions to the calendar for March. More details of these meetings will be given nearer the time, but note for now:

Friday, 15 March, at 19h30

a crafty evening, including refreshments and an interview testimony...
(see Jane Green for more details)

Good Friday, 29 March, at 19h00

OEFC and Little Hill Church will join forces for a joint service in Wigston
(note the start time)

reading a letter

Please pick up a copy of our simple introductory **leaflet** on ‘Philippians’ – the epistle, written by the apostle Paul, which is supremely a letter of joy in Jesus. From the pulpit, we shall work our way through this letter on Sunday mornings over the next couple of months or so.

As we consider Philippians, we remind you of our **challenge**: to read through the book, in a single sitting, at least once a week – a valuable exercise taking less than ten minutes!

Luke 2:22–38 introduces us to “a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon” (25). He was most likely an elderly and undistinguished layman, yet we have seen that he was:

- commended for his devotion to God;
- confident in the promises of God;
- endowed by the Spirit of God; and that he
- embraced the Son of God. Note also that

Simeon understood the gospel of God

He knew that Jesus would be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” (32), and had been “appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed” (34). These are striking words and teach us three key things:

the gospel is universal

The truth that the salvation of God would be offered to all nations and not just to one was by no means novel. In making His covenant with Abraham, the father of the nation of God’s people but also the archetypal man of faith for both Jew and Gentile (Rom 4), God said “I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing ... and in you *all the families of the earth* shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:11)

Yet this great truth had often been forgotten and, by Simeon’s day, Jews had very little to do with non-Jews – all the peoples whom, lumped together, they described as Gentiles.

But the great glory of Israel would not be that the Jews alone would know the favour of God. Rather, it would be that *to* them the Messiah would come, *amongst* them He would live, and *through* them His message would be revealed to a waiting world whose great need for salvation could be met only by Him.

the gospel is divisive

Jesus said, on one occasion, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever

loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” (Mt 10:34ff)

Hard words indeed, but exactly the same message that Simeon declared in the temple as he blessed Mary and Joseph and said, “this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed” (34). Did you notice that – “the fall and rising”? The *fall* of all who will have nothing to do with Jesus and even seek to oppose Him; the *rising* of those who will embrace Him and His teaching. For each one of us, it is either the one or the other: we shall either fall and perish, or rise up and be saved; we shall either look away from Jesus and reject Him, or look up to Jesus and recognise Him; we shall either dismiss Him or put our faith in Him. Which shall it be: will you fall or will you rise?

the gospel is costly

Simeon’s last word was to Mary alone, “because of the prophetic insight that Joseph will no longer be among the living when the things that are now stated shall come to pass. Joseph died long before Jesus began his ministry.” (Lenski)

The message to Mary was a sombre warning that “a sword will pierce through your own soul also” (35) – which surely happened when Mary stood with others at the foot of the cross, and saw there the awful sight of her first-born son, in the prime of life, dying a cruel death through no fault of His own (John 19:25). May we never forget that the glorious good news of the gospel – of sins forgiven and peace with God – was bought with the blood, the very life, of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ:

He *died* that we might be forgiven,
He *died* to make us good,
that we might go at last to heaven,
saved by His precious *blood*.

One final thought: Simeon caught the fullest glimpse of the Saviour *after* he had put his faith in God. Often people want a sign *before* they will put their faith in God. But the greatest confirmation will come *after* we take Him at His word and put our faith in Jesus. So why not embrace Him now, as Simeon did in the temple?

prayer points

- The background to Daniel being cast into the lions' den is revealed in **Daniel 6:1–10**, with verse 10 being in many ways a key verse in the whole book.. Daniel's life of prayer was, at least, determined, focussed, reverent, regular and joyful. Prayer mattered much to Daniel, so it is not surprising that he achieved much for God. May we pray as he did, to God's glory.
- 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 local and national government, having to face so many issues and deal with so many conflicting voices; for our role in the international community; for a mighty revival of religion.
- Pray for the work of Carley Evangelical Baptist Church as it seeks to minister to the needs of people on the St Matthew's Estate. Pray also for aspects of 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 are 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 the ministry of OEEFC, not forgetting the children in crèche and Sunday School, our student visitors, Rosemead guests, etc. for those in hospital, recently out of hospital or struggling with illness and infirmity; for those facing problems at home or at work; for our continuing lease negotiations, and for the practical work being done at the NMH; for our impact on the community of Oadby.

members' ministry

On Sunday, 18 February,

- Mike Stringer is leading the 10h30 service at Holywell Church in Loughborough;
- Steven Green is leading the 11h00 service at the West Park Church in Wolverhampton.

Madan Kallow will lead devotions at 09h30 on Monday, 19 February, at Pilgrim Gardens.

Paul Whalley will be leading the 11h00 service at Glen Hills Church on Sunday, 25 February. (Glen Hills Church was recently planted by Glen-croft Church; both churches are in Glen Parva.)

taking a break

Gary and Linda Prickett will be on holiday from 19–28 February, and we wish them well for a peaceful and pleasant break.

if you need help

or have any questions about the church or its various activities, please do chat to one of us:

elders : Gary Prickett (our minister), Lance Atter, Steven Green, Stuart Glover (our treasurer, *pro tem*)

deacons : Alejandro Joya, Judith Chinnery

† During the time that Gary is on leave (see dates above), please contact one of the other elders.

If you have the means to do so, you can contact us electronically: use the address X@oefc.co.uk, where X is the first name of the elder or deacon whom you wish to reach.

OEEFC is a registered charity, number 10340055, and is affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), to which nearly 650 churches now belong.

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

If you pay income tax, you can boost your gift, at no cost to yourself, by 25p for each £1 you give. For details of this government-backed Gift Aid scheme, please have a word with Stuart Glover.