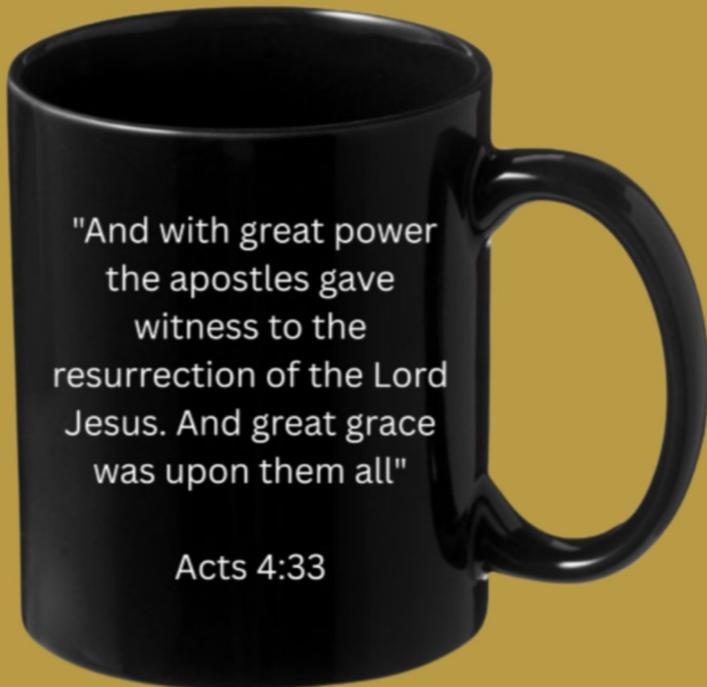


VICTORIA *Life*

Sunday 15th February 2026

THE ESSENTIAL CHURCH

"THE CHURCH: GREAT PEOPLE,
NOT SO GREAT COFFEE."



"And with great power
the apostles gave
witness to the
resurrection of the Lord
Jesus. And great grace
was upon them all"

Acts 4:33



The Essential Church

"The Church: Great people, not so great coffee."

Acts 4:23-37

Have you ever wondered what makes something or someone 'great'? How do we define it? The title for this week's message is *"The Church: Great people, not so great coffee."*

Is that how you might judge a church? We often make snap judgements about lots of things and often these judgements are just surface deep. They fail to take into consideration some of the background or context.

In our passage this week, the Church has experienced its first problem, a hurdle to overcome. How it responded reveals why the Church was 'great'! Do we respond in the same way? Could we call ourselves a 'great' church today?



This Evening

Our twice-monthly Prayer Meeting will be at 6.30pm. Much to pray about. Do come along if you can.

Next Week (22nd)

Jez Taylor will be leading us next week at our live@10 service, continuing the series on the Essential Church - "The Church Under Pressure"

Next Month

Please note we have a change in March with the All-Age Service moving from the usual slot of the 2nd Sunday to the 3rd Sunday - so it will be on the 15th, not the 8th.

STAFF/OFFICE MATTERS

Staff movements for next week

Chris annual leave

Colin off Mon & Fri

Kevin off Sat

Tim annual leave

Nadine in Mon & Thurs

Sandra off Thurs

Phil Tues am, Wed , Thu pm

Emily off Mon & Tues

Simon annual leave

Julie in Thurs

Lucy in Weds am, Thurs, Fri am

Jez in Wed am & Fri am

Senior Minister

Chris Short

PA to Senior Minister

Sandra Taylor

Church Administrator

Colin McMahon

Caretaker

Kevin Virgo

Head of Family Ministries

Emily Jenkins

Children's Ministries

Simon Grimes

CAP Debt Centre Manager

Phil Papps

CAP Debt Coach

Nadine Crawford-Piper

Treasurer

Mark Evason

Finance Assistant

Julie Hanks

Ministry Assistants

Lucy Craggs (Women)

Tim Nunn (Discipleship)

Jez Taylor (Life Groups)

Staff contact details:

firstname@victoriabaptist.org.uk

(eg chris@victoriabaptist.org.uk)

VBC Bank Details

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Victoria Baptist Church Trust

Account Number: 00010297

Sort Code: 40-52-40

01323 737974

Eldon Road, Eastbourne BN21 1UE

helpdesk@victoriabaptist.org.uk

www.victoriabaptist.org.uk

- Sun 15 9.30am Prayer Meeting in Chris' office
 10.00am live@10 with Jez Taylor
 6.30pm Prayer Meeting
 7.00pm Sunday evening Youth
- Mon 16 7.30pm CLT meeting
- Tue 17
- Wed 18 7.00am Prayer Meeting
 8.15am Community Fridge
- Thu 19 7.30am Men's Prayer Meeting
 10.15am Men's Fellowship with Katy Bourne (Police Commissioner)
 2.30pm Women's Fellowship with Emily Jenkins
 6.30pm Omega (contact Tim or Ruth Nunn for details)
 7.30pm Ukraine Prayer Meeting
 7.30pm Bible Journalling
- Fri 20 10.00am Outreach Prayer
 12.30pm Friends, Food & Fellowship
- Sat 21 4.00pm Hope Lebedyn Anniversary Event
- Sun 22 9.30am Prayer Meeting in Chris' office
 10.00am live@10 with Jez Taylor
 7.00pm Sunday evening Youth

The Week Ahead

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Mon Feb 23rd - 1.30pm. Please let the office know if you are considering attending the Thanksgiving Service of Brian Nottage at King's Church. We can supply you with an official invitation which the family would appreciate being completed. Brian and his wife, Irene, attended VBC for a while a couple of years ago before Brian's health deteriorated.

Wed 25th Feb Church Business Meeting for Members

Wed 11th Mar - The funeral for Daphne Phillips will be at Eastbourne Crematorium at 12 noon. Refreshments will be served here at VBC at 1.15pm so, if you want to join the family, please sign-up on the sheet in the Welcome Centre.



CORRIE PAXTON

Most of you will be aware that Corrie went to be with the Lord on Wednesday. Keith & Jo P have asked if those of you who knew Corrie well might like to respond to this request - "We are aware that Corrie was extremely supportive and helpful to many people, especially within Victoria. In a few sentences, please send any details you may like mentioned at her Thanksgiving Service to the Church Office by email."

Hope Lebedyn

February 24th marks the 4th anniversary of the full scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. As in previous years, we are holding a prayer service here on **Saturday 21st February at 4.00pm**. We would love to see as many people join with the trustees of Hope Lebedyn to unitedly pray for peace, for the team in Lebedyn, for the people of Ukraine, and to thank God for His many answers to prayer. We will also have the opportunity to hear first-hand from the team in Lebedyn, via video. We look forward to seeing you there if possible. We also hope to have a live link to the service if you want to join us but cannot attend in person. Please let us know if you would like to attend this way.



And a big thank you to those of you who supported Hope Lebedyn at **Flow Café** last Saturday. An amazing £400 was raised. Our next Flow Café takes place on **7th March** when we will be raising funds for Eastbourne Street Pastors.

Men's Christian meeting
Speaker Rev. David Jackman
(founder of Cornhill Training Course)
Subject:
'The Christian Man in Retirement'

Free Attendance, No booking required

Friday 27th Feb 2026
10:00 am to 12.00 noon
All Saints Church Centre,
21a Grange Road, Eastbourne BN21 4HE

MADE FOR YOU

1 DAY CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

WITH *Lois Fellingham* + FRIENDS



 EASTBOURNE

Saturday 14th March 2026
With Cathy Madavan
& Philippa Hanna



7 Eldon Rd,
Eastbourne BN21 1UE

 **Open Doors**
www.opendoorsuk.org

TICKETS: [MADEFORYOU.EVENTS](https://www.madeforyou.events)



GIRLS' BRIGADE

Do you have a heart for building into the lives of girls as they grow up in a world of significant challenges? Our Girls Brigade needs more leaders. There are several loyal and committed leaders / helpers already but more are needed if GB is to meet safeguarding responsibilities. Please pray about whether this is something you can commit to. With enough helpers a rota could potentially be set up. More girls have signed up this new year which shows the need for GB to thrive. PLEASE help it to thrive. Talk to Jenny or Emily to find out more.

Paula and Deirdre (CLT)



PRAYER DIARY : 16TH - 22ND FEBRUARY

"... And what does the Lord require of you?, To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Monday Father God, we pray for Your protection over those suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse. May they find support and guidance to bring the perpetrators to justice. Fill them with Your Holy Spirit to know they are loved unconditionally by You. Father, give us the courage to speak out when we see abuse happening around us.

Tuesday Lord, we give thanks for the beauty of Your creation. As Spring brings signs of new life, may we too be filled with new beginnings, new ways of serving You & a new growth in our love for Your Son. Help us to be good stewards of Your precious creation.

Wednesday Dear God, we lift up to You all those in our church and in our families living with cancer, and may those currently undergoing treatment know Your presence. Strengthen them, Father, fill them with courage and let them not fear, for Your light shines upon them even in the darkest of times. We lift up to You their carers and ask You to grant them patience, resilience and a steadfast faith as they support their loved ones. Fill them with the eternal hope that comes from knowing Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Thursday "Unless the Lord builds the house the builders labour in vain". Psalm 127:1 Father, we hold in prayer those that seek to be leaders of our country and our local communities. Grant them wisdom and conviction to lead with honesty, justice and humility, putting the needs of others before themselves. Protect their hearts and minds from corruption, selfish desires and worldly influence. Empower them, Father, not to labour in vain but to be guided by You, to strive and build Your kingdom now.

Friday Prayer enables us to express gratitude, to deepen our faith, to intercede for others and to present our needs to God. Lord, help us to commit to every opportunity to pray -on our own, at a life group, through a podcast, or at a prayer meeting . Thank you, Father, for bringing us into a stronger and closer relationship with You through prayer.

Saturday Father Almighty, we ask for Your presence today at our service to mark the 4th anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We thank You, for Your protection over Pastor Sergey, Bohdan & the team in Lebedyn during this time. Encourage and resource them, as they reach out Your love to so many broken by the war. We ask for Your protection over the young of Ukraine who have had their childhoods stolen from them, and most of all, we pray for peace and restoration of family life.

Sunday Dear Lord, as we gather this morning to worship and praise You, we joyfully acknowledge that You are the King of Kings, Holiest of Holies and Lord of Lords. May Your Holy Spirit fill our church and may our worship be a joy to Your ear. We lift up to You the worship team and thank You for putting it upon their hearts to use their time and talents to glorify You in such a wonderful way. Fill our speaker with the Holy Spirit so he can boldly tell out the word You have given him today.

FUEL FOR PRAYER

CLT Elections

There have been 2 nominations for the forthcoming elections - to be held at the church members' business meeting on Wed Feb 25th.

Trevor King

My father was born in Kent and trained on the Chatham Dockyards as a carpenter and joiner. He was sent to North Africa in the Second World War, where he met and married my mother, who was born in South Africa. Following the war, they settled in what is now Zimbabwe, where I was born in 1956. I am Jewish by birth through my maternal line, but was brought up as a Christian by my parents in the Anglican Church, where I was confirmed as a teenager. I went to school in Zimbabwe and subsequently went on to study medicine there. In my first year at medical school, following long discussions late into the evening with a Baptist friend, I gave my life to Christ. I still remember his advice – ‘go and pray to God tonight and read the Gospel of John’! In my second year at University, I met my wife to be, Susan nee Smithyman. Sue had been a Christian for many years since her senior school days and she is a woman of amazing faith. We were both baptised as adults in a Baptist church in Harare. After graduating in 1979 I worked as a doctor for 5 years in Zimbabwe, including working in some very remote areas. In the mid 1980s we emigrated from Zimbabwe to the UK and I began my specialist training in anaesthesia in Brighton, Guy’s Hospital, and Canterbury. In 1990 I was appointed as a Consultant Anaesthetist at the DGH where I worked for 35 years. I am now retired. My wife and I are regular attenders at Victoria Baptist Church. I have been on the Core Leadership Team for 3 years and I am now standing for re-election for a further 3 years.



Steve Francis

I’m Eastbourne born and bred - and have been coming to VBC since 1980. I went through Sunday School, Boys Brigade and youth group here, and was baptized in 1984. I’ve been a member since then – learning and growing in my faith through the influence of other Christians and experiences God has brought me through.

After school I had 7 years of commuting to London each day for work with Barclays Bank - and then took a year out to work with SIM as treasurer at Luampa Hospital in Zambia for a year. I never went back to Barclays, and 1 year turned into 10 very happy years in Zambia during which I met Sherree who came from USA as a nurse to Luampa. We married in 2003 and then continued with SIM in Suffolk (2003-2005), then Chiang Mai, Thailand (2005-2016) and finally Kathmandu, Nepal (2017-2020). VBC generously supported and prayed for me/us over those 27 years overseas – for which we’ll always be grateful. Many individual members ...



... also supported us, and some visited us in person too.

We moved back to Eastbourne in May 2020 during the lockdown and have now settled here for the next season of life. I've stayed in accounting for now, currently working for a UK holiday company in Bexhill.

I've been on the CLT for the last 3 years, and am willing to stand for a further term.

Open Ears

Open Ears is a Christian charity established and run to support anyone affected by impaired hearing. We understand the challenges of hearing loss and provide accessible Christian fellowship, and a supportive loving community where everyone feels included, understood, and valued.

Open Ears encourages all who are isolated by hearing loss to fulfil their potential and find purpose and belonging. United by our shared experience of hearing loss, you do not need to be a person of faith to be welcomed and included at Open Ears, however, as an ecumenical Christian charity, we want to see people grow in their Christian lives, feel confident to take part in their local church and to have real fellowship with others in a similar position.

You are invited to join our Open Ears Fellowship Group on [Facebook](#). This is a closed group, i.e. not open to the public. All enquirers will need to submit a request and answer a few simple questions in order to join the group.

We keep up to date with our friends and members through a weekly e-send, 'Open Ears Together', personal anecdotes, joys, sorrows and prayer requests - and answers - are shared; subscribe here together@openears.org.uk. We're also on social media! You can find us on: Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). These accounts are public, so feel free to take a look and stay connected.



ALPHA

Next course - starts Wed March 4th, at 6.45pm, runs for 9 weeks.

For more information, or to sign up, contact Lucy Craggs:

lucy@victoriabaptist.org.uk



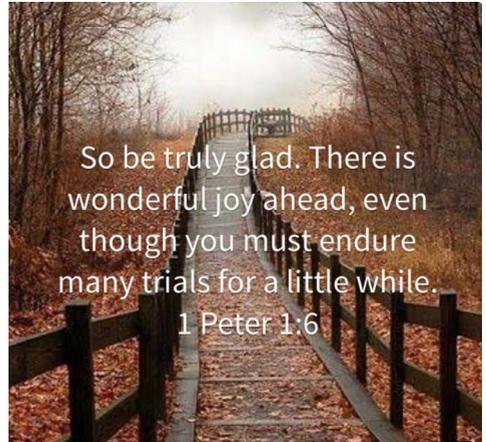
FACING TRIALS

'In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.' 1Peter1:6

Our friends in the Hope Lebedyn Mission, working in the Sumy region of Ukraine near the Russian border, face trials each day because of the war with their neighbour, yet their faith and joy in the Lord remains undaunted and is increasing. What is their secret? Peter, writing to the suffering, scattered Christians in Asia Minor, in the verse above, gives us a clue which can help us also in the trials we face, It shows how keeping a right balance between grief and joy is key to a vibrant faith which even those who aren't Christians take notice of.

THE REALITY OF TRIALS ('..you have been grieved by various trials')

As Christians we are not immune from grief. It is right and natural to feel the pain and sorrow when going through difficult experiences and not to deny those emotions as some have falsely taught. The Greek word for 'various' refers to 'multi coloured, different forms' of trials; persecution for our beliefs, sorrow because of illness or passing of loved ones, financial loss, mental and emotional struggles etc. The Bible and church history are full of examples of Godly people hurting under 'various trials'. For example, Abraham 'mourns and weeps ' over the loss of Sarah his wife (Gen. 23:2), Jeremiah laments his personal sufferings because 'God is 'making him walk in darkness without light.. and has broken his bones' (Lam. 3:1-20), Jesus weeps over Jerusalem for the Jews' hardness of heart, and Paul, in prison, bemoans the loss of a faithful companion, Demas, who had 'deserted' him (2Tim.4:10). During the Second World War, Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch Christian, and her sister, were sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp for hiding Jews, where they endured brutal treatment, starvation and misery.



TRIALS HAVE A PURPOSE ('..if necessary..')

This phrase in the Greek is not some vague conditional phrase regarding trials but denotes THEIR NECESSITY to help believers' faith, that is part of God's plan for them. In Christianity, faith is not a static thing; it is meant to grow, and God uses trials for that purpose in various ways. It can be to discipline us, as His children, 'for our good to share in His holiness' and help rid us of the remnants of sin left in us after our conversion (Heb. 12:5-11). Or, it might be to test the genuineness of something (that is the meaning of the Greek word 'trials' used in our text), which in this case is our faith. The following verses in 1 Peter 1:7 confirm this. 'These

..... have come so that **the proven genuineness of your faith...** may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.' In addition, God uses trials to prepare believers for the service He wants them to do later. Joseph's many hardships with his brothers, being sold into slavery, then put in prison prepared him for leadership in Egypt to be that country's and Israel's saviour. Even Jesus, God's Son, 'learnt obedience from what He suffered, to become the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him' (Heb. 5:8-9).

GRIEF IS NOT THE END FOR CHRISTIANS (*'In all this you greatly rejoice'*)

Though the Christian suffers grief like other people he doesn't stop there, or shouldn't. He goes on, as we have seen, to see the bigger picture and think spiritually about the matter; that God is with believers, even in their darkest times. That's why God says, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you' (Heb. 13:5) and Jesus adds, 'Don't let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me' (John 14:1). In addition, scripture reminds us of God's sovereignty in our affairs and, amazingly, how He can use even trials for our good. Joseph, who had been so harshly treated, understood that in his later years when he told his brothers, 'You meant evil against me. But God meant it for good' (Gen. 50:20). Lastly, our text points out these 'various trials' are only 'for a little while'. Peter, in the preceding and following verses to our text, reminds his audience they are destined for heaven where there is no suffering and which is eternal. As we think in this way our faith is enlivened, grows and, despite the trials, we 'are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy' (1 Peter 1:9).

Faith is key to keeping the right balance between grief and joy and the more we exercise and add to it when trials come, as Peter reminds his hearers in his second letter (2 Peter 1:5-7), the greater our joy and witness will be, as our friends in Lebedyn have experienced. To hear a helpful sermon on this subject go to: [Trials: A sermon on 1 Peter 1:6-7](#)

John Demetriou



Cavendish Connections

Are you a Christian parent/carer with a child at Cavendish School? If you'd like to meet up monthly and pray for the staff and children, please contact Caz Kelly

caz@livingstoneschurch.co.uk or 07421 816802

FLOWER MINISTRY

The flowers last week were donated by

Luanda Hoxha



I have just come home to find lovely flowers in the porch. Thank you so very much. I am really blessed. BH

We are looking for someone to fill a gap in our delivery team on Monday mornings. It involves collecting the flowers from the church and then delivering them - usually 4 bunches - to people generally in the local area. It would involve about 1-1.5 hours of your time - a car is essential!

Please contact Chris McMahon if you would like more info. Many thanks.