

The Annual Service 2021
Order of Service
(incorporating the Annual General Meeting)
14th November 2021

Welcome, explanation of proceedings, (birthday box)

This year, I am calling our Celebration Service the Annual Service, mostly because it has an Act of Remembrance for Remembrance Sunday and it seemed a bit inappropriate to call it a Celebration service. We had a recorded service last year and even though it served as an AGM we actually took no Minutes, so we've no minutes to approve this time other than to record in this year's minutes that it did happen! We approved the 2019 AGM minutes at the November Church Meeting.

PRAYER

Let's Pray:

Father, we have come to remember an eventful year and start by thanking you that you that even though we have not had a normal year, it is one where we can say that we have experienced Your presence through the darkness, the difficulty the isolation and uncertainty. You are our rock, our shield, our light and guide.

We thank you that despite the difficulties that the pandemic has brought, You direct us to what is beyond; to the hope that we have within us in Christ in whom we have trusted and continue to trust. Help us today to realise afresh the blessings that You have brought us despite the difficulties and point us to what you have for us in the coming year.

We ask this in Jesus' name

Amen.

Declaration (responsive)

Leader **What a God we worship!**

Group A **He has always known us; he is our Maker.**

Group B ***He has always loved us; he is our Saviour.***

Group A **In our darkest hours he is our light;**

Group B ***In our fiercest fight he is our shield.***

Group A **When we need direction, he is our guide;**

Group B ***When our joy runs dry, he is our song.***

Group A **At the point of despair, he is our hope;**

Group B ***at the moment of danger, he is our refuge.***

Group A **He is just and true, loving and merciful;**

Group B ***He is Rock and Shepherd, King and Father.***

All **What a God we serve!**

2052 *There is an endless song*

Each year I make a summary video and this one is no exception. Much of what we had done normally never happened, but we still did quite a lot online which I hope this video records. Hope I haven't missed anything out.

Review Video

Our God is good – let's praise Him now.

1441 *Lord, You've been good to me*

We will remember them

We are fortunate that we live in a generation marked by peace. Go back 80 years and the nation was experiencing from the reality of war coming to them as Britain's largest cities were bombed during the Blitz. Ordinary people found themselves in the firing line as bombs rained from the sky. Here is the story of one such city.

Video: a few for the many

That wartime sacrifice we have just heard about was experienced in the vast majority of communities as young men went to war and never returned.

Two of ours

I was recently in contact with someone who give me short biographies and photos of two men from this church who died in wartime service. Their names appear on our war memorials and reading these pictures and biographies help us to understand that these are not just names, but bright young men whose lives were cut short by war.

Clement Roy Blackshaw SMITH

Eldest son of Clement Charles Smith, Farmer and Dairyman, and Jessie (nee Blackshaw). Searson's Farm, Trimley St Mary - and members of this church. At the time Clement was killed his parents had moved and were living at Walton Hall. His Father was a Justice of the Peace. Private in Suffolk Regiment but promoted to 2nd Lieutenant with 3rd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment on 7.2.1917. Killed in Action 28 April 1917 : Arleux, Northern France (near Arras). Clement has no known grave.

Eric Charles Mutum

Born 04/12/1916 Brandon, Suffolk. Eric grew up as part of Brandon Baptist Church and by 1933 he was addressing the monthly meeting of the Senior Christian Endeavour, which indicates faith was a leading light in his life. Around 1935 he and his family moved to Felixstowe, where was part of MRBC and also became Lieutenant of the Church Company of the Boys Brigade (Felixstowe). In April 1940, at the age of 24, he had joined the Royal Army Service Corps. Three months later he left for the Middle East. He was a driver and the only one killed when his vehicle took a direct hit on 20 July 1941. Buried in Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery Egypt. He was one of 3 brothers serving in the forces.

We will remember them.

STARTS AT 10-58 Act of Remembrance & Prayer

Safeguarding

Annual Reports and Accounts for 2020-21

Thanksgiving prayers

The Lord has brought us through another year and we give him praise. I am going to say a few short prayers that end with **God of gracious blessings** and we will all say *we thank You*. So let's pray.

Father, we thank you for bringing us through another year as a church. We thank you that despite the constraints placed on us that we still managed to worship and we still managed to have fellowship, even though it was quite different to what we were used to.

God of gracious blessings

We thank You

We thank You that you have provided for us in the last year; for financial resources, for people skills to operate technology, for those who were able to do practical things, for those who kept us in touch with one another, for those who made comforting phone calls and visits. We thank you that the building has been repaired and made safe.

God of gracious blessings

We thank You

We thank you for the links that we have with various mission organisations. We thank you for all that they have been in encouraging us during the year, and for helping us put into perspective the damage the pandemic has caused worldwide.

God of gracious blessings

We thank You

We thank you for the links we have maintained with other churches in town. We thank you particularly for the Lent Course that helped us to see the damage we as the human race have done to the environment

God of gracious blessings

We thank You

Finally Lord, we thank you that we have been able to return to the building and worship You again.

God of gracious blessings

We thank You

May Jesus have the glory.

Amen.

1528 Thank You for the cross

Looking Forward – Challenges and Opportunities & Dates

In this section of the service, having looked back, we look forward. Let me read a few verses from **1 Samuel 7:10-12**

While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'

It is sometimes difficult to keep our perspective of God and His purposes, whilst faced with a global calamity like Covid. In this generation we have had little experience of the hardship, uncertainty, and danger that war or natural hazards bring on a national or international scale. We would have to go back to the second world war to have experienced that and not many of us were there.

But these things have been with us since the Fall and rather than see them as negative calamities and live in fear, I believe God calls us to trust Him and recognise He brings us through it, so that what we build afterwards will be better and greater than that which was before. Life's downs, even more than it's ups help us to trust God more completely and celebrate even more his love and grace.

EBENEZER

When I was young, I used to occasionally visit my Dad's boyhood church, Ebenezer Gospel Hall in Cardiff. It was common in South Wales (as in many other places) to name nonconformist chapels after Bible places. Someone once said that travelling the Welsh valleys was rather like taking a trip through the Holy Land because of its Bethels, Zions, Shilohs, Mizpahs, Bethesdas or Ebenezers on almost every street. Ebenezer comes from 1 Samuel 7 where after yet another astounding victory wrought by the hand of God, Samuel builds an altar to celebrate called Ebenezer, which means *'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'*

VERSE

As we look forward we need to look realistically back at the last year and see beyond the difficulty, the pain, the fear, the depression, the isolation, the uncertainty of 2020 and 21 and see how the Lord has kept us taught us how to trust, has blessed us in ways we've not have thought of before. And what of the blessings of years previous? Ebenezer stood as an altar – a place – that reminded Israel where they had been and what God had done so they may continue to trust Him in the future, whatever it may bring.

I expect 2022 will continue for a while much as 2021. Much has changed as a church. We have fewer people, less activities and still the uncertainty of where Covid may or may not take us next. But we need to continue to raise our Ebenezer and recognise that with doing fewer things that He has the opportunity to shape us into being His people for the 2020s.

We will still have an opportunity to do many of the "usual" things in 2022 as our sheet this morning says. We also know that there is also an, as yet "Undiscovered Country" in 2022 as we will explore this coming year what the future direction and ministry will be. See that as a challenge, and exciting prospect rather than something with uncertainty and fear in it, because we know that *Thus far the Lord has helped us.'*

Look at FUTURE EVENTS SHEET

Prayers

Father as we come to the end of our service this morning we proclaim *Thus far the Lord has helped us.* As we look at the future ahead of us it seems full of uncertainty because things are not as they were. We are doing less as a church. There are fewer people. Many have not returned to church because of ill health or fear of Covid. Help us to see beyond the current issues to the possibilities you present us. You have brought us to this place, please use us to do Your will in Your way that we will be servants who will be and speak Good News to the people of the post-Covid generation.

We know that in the fellowship that there are many people struggling with bereavement and illness right now. There are some who can no longer meet because of frailty and old age. Lord we lift those we know of in silent prayer right now.

Father of all mercy, be with each person we have prayed for and thought of now. We are Your church, build us up afresh to bring glory to Jesus.

We ask this in His name.

Amen.

1404 King of Kings, majesty

Closing Declaration (Responsive)

Forthcoming Events 2021-22

Leadership Team Meetings 2022

4th Jan, 1st Feb, 1st Mar, 5th Apr, 3rd May, 7th Jun,
5th July, 2nd Aug, 6th Sep, 4th Oct, 1st Nov, 6th Dec

Church Meetings 2022

18th Jan, 15th Mar, 17th May, 19th Jul, 20th Sep,
5th Nov (Date of AGM 20th)

Prayer Meetings

Jan 8th, Mar 5th, May 7th, Jul 2nd, Sep 3rd, Nov 5th.

Christmas Services 2021

Sunday 12th December

10-30am Nativity Service

Sunday 19th December

4pm Candlelight Carol Service

Christmas Day

10-30am Christmas Celebration (to be confirmed)

Sunday 26th December

10-30am Service to be confirmed

Sunday 2nd January

10-30am New Year Service

Saturday 22nd January

CTF Pilgrimage (times to be confirmed)

Sunday 23rd January

3.30pm CTF United Service at River of Life Church