



Ramsden Bellhouse Baptist Church

**Welcome to the
Autumn 23 Review**

Autumn Harvest

'Thanks be to God'



PAGE

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A FEW WORDS FROM YOUR EDITOR – TED ROOK

Welcome again to our new look and renamed RBBC magazine. We hope you liked the summer edition, and that this autumn edition will prove both interesting and informative to its readers.

Well, the summer weather this year has been somewhat of a damp squib. After a very hot (and sultry) start, things went very much downhill from there. The school holiday period (although not yet over as I write this) has been both wet and cold and certainly not like last summer. Let us hope that the youngsters do get the opportunity to enjoy some sun before they start the new school year, although for some of us golden oldies (like me) the cooler weather has seemed something of a blessing.

During the Summer 2023 period our RBBC combined church and **Zoom** on-line Sunday services have continued to very ably led by our Pastor Jim Hamilton, with additional preaching support given by our deacons Jenny Jacques and Daren Codd. Our Pastor Jim during that quarter commenced a new series entitled “**The Greatest Sermon**”, using as a basis **Matthew 5** and the “**Sermon and the Mount**” to support the points raised.

My thanks, as always, to all who have contributed directly to this magazine. It was great to have once again an article written by Ray Bolton, even if actually written some years ago.

This magazine is, as before, being sent to members of our fellowship in electronic formats for reading or printing as preferred. Anyone wishing to have a hard copy of the magazine can of course take one from the table at the entrance to our church building. The previous three quarters of our magazine are also now to be found on the Ramsden Bellhouse Baptist Church website.

Ted Rook

FROM OUR PASTOR – REV JAMES HAMILTON

Dear Friends

What kind of things cause you to feel stressed? Perhaps some of you might say that you never get stressed, although I think that is unlikely. I wonder if there are any places that tend to stress you out. For Pauline and me this summer, one of the places where we have felt most stressful has been the airport, or rather two airports.



Back in May after taking the service at church we made our way, full of excitement, to Heathrow, looking forward so much to our flight to California to spend some weeks with our son and his family there. In the hope of relieving some of the potential stress, we booked in to a hotel the night before our flight was due to take off on the following morning. We were relaxing in the lounge, having a drink, when suddenly my phone pinged. The message was that our flight had been cancelled and we were offered a different flight to a different airport much later than our original flight was due to depart. This would have meant that our son would have to rearrange picking us up with the result that it would be a much longer journey to his home. Our relaxation was gone, replaced by stress. What should we do? In the end we dashed over to the terminal and after what seemed like endless negotiations and phone calls we were reassigned to a flight to our original destination (San Francisco) with another airline nearer to the time of our original flight. We went back to our hotel but hardly slept, the stress had got to us.

Then a couple of weeks ago we were due to fly home from Belfast airport after a lovely time with our family in Northern Ireland. We were booked on the last flight of the day due to depart at 20.00. At lunch time my phone pinged. "Your flight has been delayed" was the message, but of course we still had to arrive and check in as if the flight was to be on time. Our daughter dropped us off at 18.00 and we duly checked in, being reminded that our flight was delayed. We kept looking at the departure board. The estimated time kept changing, each time saying that the delay was extended - an hour and a half, two hours, two and a quarter hours

etc. We began to expect that the delay was so long that the flight would be cancelled. Eventually it did take off more than two and a half hours late and we eventually arrived home at 1.30 the next morning. Again, the stress had got to us. Airports are not our favourite places at the moment!

As I have been reflecting on this, I have realised a number of things. First of all, in both situations we eventually got to our destinations, albeit a little bit later than we had hoped. Secondly, stressing about them didn't really help, the situations were out of our hands. We would still have got to our son's; we would still have arrived home. Then I remembered some words that Jesus spoke, **"Therefore do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear...."** Maybe He would add today, **"Don't worry about your flights!"**

The summer, such as it was, is almost over. For many people the cost of living, the fact that the heating will need to be put on again, the on-going rises in food prices, the news about the war in Ukraine, the extreme weather caused by climate change and many other things all contribute to the onset of stress. The fact is that none of us has tomorrow yet. My mother-in-law used to have a little poster hanging on the wall in her living room, it had these words, **"Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday, and all is well."**

There is an old chorus we used to sing in church when I was young. It reads -

***"I do not know what lies ahead, the way I cannot see
Yet one stands near to be my guide, He'll show the way to me
I do not know the course ahead, what joys and griefs are there
But one is near who fully knows, I'll trust his loving care
I know who holds the future, and He'll guide me with His hand
With God things don't just happen, Everything by Him is planned
So as I face tomorrow with it's problems large and small
I'll trust the God of miracles, give to Him my all."***

I pray that whether you plan to be in an airport or not, you will have an autumn and winter free of unnecessary stress. Blessings.

Jim

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Many of you will remember with affection the series which was published quarterly in this magazine and entitled **REFLECTIONS** and written (over many years) by our friend and church member Reverend Ray Bolton. They were Ray's thoughts on matters of the day and were always "bang up to date" even though Ray was 103 years old when he finally "hung up his pen" with this series.

However, I recently received the following e-mail from his daughter Margaret, with an accompanying attachment written by Ray and which I feel you will find both interesting and enjoyable:

Now that Dad has gone into a care home, I am gradually sorting out things in his house and came across some stories he wrote 'for fun' in his retirement. The following is his account of something which really happened to him in his first church in Chesham.

'THE OLD ROGUE' Rev Raymond Bolton

It must have been 1950 when I was still very green about ministerial matters. There was a knock at the manse door, and a middle-aged man introduced himself as a fellow Baptist who needed help. He probably gave me a name, but that is long forgotten. He was from the north of England and looking for work, anything would do, even as a builder's labourer. He told me the name of his church and claimed to be very familiar with the minister, whose name he gave me. I was astute enough to look up the Baptist Handbook and the details were all as he said. As it happened, one of my deacons was a builder and, as we were not on the phone then, I wrote an introductory note and sent the man off with it.

It must have been the next day when he came again. Everything was wonderful. The deacon had no vacancy but had contacted another builder who did. My new friend went for an interview and could start work on Monday. (Later I discovered that this part of the story was correct). There was, however, a problem. He had found somewhere to live, but as he wouldn't be paid until the end of the week he needed money to pay the rent. This seemed very reasonable, and I handed over the amount. He was grateful and apologetically pointed out that if he

went to work in the clothes he was wearing he would have nothing else for best. I wasn't well off for clothes myself, but knew what the Bible says about such things, and supplied my second-best suit. He was delighted with this and assured me he would be in church on Sunday.

You will have guessed the outcome. He neither came to church nor reported for work and I never saw him again. I regretted the loss of the suit more than the money, but he taught me a valuable lesson. Every minister becomes familiar with beggars, and it is easy to become hard-hearted. But not every beggar is as professional as my old rogue. One day many years later, the phone rang and the operator asked if I would take a reverse call charge. I agreed and the caller, from a phone box, actually wanted me to go to the church to give him money. When I refused, he threatened to write to the News of the World, so I told him that would be a good idea and ended the call. That fellow had little chance of success, but I sometimes remember the old chap from my first pastorate who went to such lengths with all the details worked out. Did he travel the country with his tale and make a good living? Did he have a Baptist Handbook with details of churches and ministers? **And what happened to my suit?**

SOME "BACK TO SCHOOL" SMILE LINES

Off to school (very self-aware)

Mother to young daughter after first day at school: "Well, dear, what did they teach you today?"

Daughter: "Not much. I've got to go back again tomorrow."

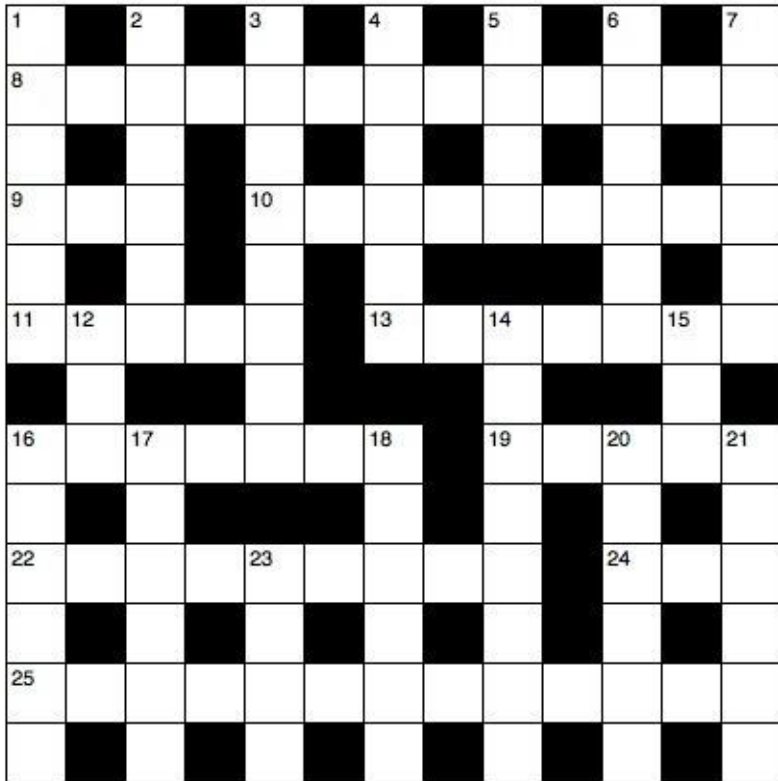
In common (to clever by half!)

I was the supply teacher for a class that was learning about groups. In one exercise, pupils were asked to label a group of items according to their common characteristics. Pictured were onion rings, doughnuts, and party biscuits. The correct answer would have been that all the items have holes in the centre.

But one health-conscious boy pointed out: "All of those things contain far too much cholesterol."

A CROSSWORD PUZZLE ON A CHRISTIAN THEME

Answers will be found on page 14.



Across

- 8 Where the Ark of the Covenant was kept for 20 years (1 Samuel 7:1) (7,6)
- 9 One of the parts of the body on which blood and oil were put in the ritual cleansing from infectious skin diseases (Leviticus 14:14–17) (3)
- 10 Uncomfortable (3,2,4) 11 'Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have —' (Malachi 1:3) (5)
- 13 Where Paul said farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:17) (7)

- 16 'Jesus bent down and — to write on the ground with his finger' (John 8:6) (7)
- 19 Prophet from Moresheth (Jeremiah 26:18) (5)
- 22 Comes between Exodus and Numbers (9)
- 24 and 2 Down 'Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under — the — ' (1 Samuel 2:11) (3,6)
- 25 There was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7) (4,3,6)

Down

- 1 Rough drawing (2 Kings 16:10) (6)
- 2 See 24 Across
- 3 Underground literature (including Christian books) circulated in the Soviet Union (8)
- 4 Lo, mash (anag.) (6)
- 5 The Bible's shortest verse: 'Jesus — ' (John 11:35) (4)
- 6 'Can a mother forget the baby at her — and have no compassion on the child she has borne?' (Isaiah 49:15) (6)
- 7 Can be seen in a dying fire (Psalm 102:3) (6)
- 12 'Send me, therefore, a man... experienced in the — of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem' (2 Chronicles 2:7) (3)
- 14 Second city of Cyprus (8)
- 15 United Nations Association (1,1,1)
- 16 One of the women who first heard that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:1) (6)
- 17 Braved (anag.) (6)
- 18 — of Evangelism, outreach initiative in the 1990s (6)
- 20 'Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and — in their own sight' (Isaiah 5:21) (6)
- 21 'Neither — nor depth... will be able to separate us from the love of God' (Romans 8:39) (6)
- 23 What Jesus shed in 5 Down (4)

E-MAIL FROM ELISABETH

Ted. Here is a possible contribution for our magazine. Feel free to use it, another time, or not at all as appropriate. I was quite moved when I read it, reminds me that refugees are people like us. It's too easy to say the word 'refugee' and not consider the personal trauma that brought them here.

(I personally felt it very appropriate to use it as it is a stark reminder of, despite everything, how fortunate we are in this country – Ed)

WAR IS

With the war in Ukraine continuing, these are the thoughts of an eleven-year-old refugee now living in the UK, and at school with my grandson. These are her words shared in a school assembly:

I was a happy girl in a happy place until war woke me up on the 24th February 2022.

War is when you are suddenly woken by a loud explosion and told your family is not safe.

War is when instead of getting breakfast, your parents tell you the war has started.

War is when you are watching heavy fighting instead of the sunrise from your window.

War is when you no longer store stuff in your basement, but you hide down there to stay alive.

War is when you begin to identify weapons used by the incoming sound of the shelling.

War is when your school is destroyed, and you know you will never go there again.

War is when you have ten minutes to pack your whole life in a small bag and leave most of what you love behind.

War is when you must choose which of your pets to leave behind as there is not enough space in the car to take them all.

War is when your mum writes your name on your arm while evacuating and tells you what to do if your parents don't survive.

War is when you must leave your city as the Russian tanks arrive, there are only two ways out and you must guess which one to take – and you realise this is not one of your video games – this is real.

War is when you don't like a traffic jam because it is annoying but because you become a sitting target for fighter jets. You are one of hundreds of cars with scared and injured people inside, but you are still lucky because you have fuel for a journey.

War is when you are scared to check your smart phone because you only expect bad news like when my bestie's house was shelled, and we don't know if she is alive.

War is when you must share a glass of water and a chocolate bar with several people.

War is when your home and your quiet and cosy neighbourhood is flattened and no longer exists.

Just look around and imagine, everything you see may be gone in seconds – it makes no difference if you are rich or poor, well-educated, or protected. You must never tolerate war, aggression and aggressors, because they destroy peace, and peace is what you've got and don't appreciate until war wakes you up one day at 4am.

We never thought we would be among over 35 million refugees in the world. But we are some of the lucky ones, we have been welcomed into a safe country, in a safe town, in a safe school.

Perhaps one day it will feel like home.

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At the end of 2022, of the 108.4 million forcibly displaced people, an estimated 43.3 million (40%) are children below 18 years of age. Between 2018 and 2022, an average of 385,000 children were born as refugees each year.

HARVEST SERVICE 24TH SEPTEMBER 2023 Jenny Jacques

Harvest is when we particularly remember to be thankful and to share what we have with others. It's a time to rejoice in the provision God has given us, to celebrate the beauty of the world and to be 'good soil'.

So each year, at harvest time, we hold a service of thanksgiving for God's love and bounty, whilst remembering that there are parts of the world where the harvests fail through drought, war, economic difficulties and floods.

To acknowledge these difficulties, gifts of food and toiletries are brought to support those in need in our community. The recipients this year will be Billericay FoodBank and St Luke's Hospice. In addition, there will be a monetary collection which will be sent to the BMS World Mission's (formerly the Baptist Missionary Society) Uganda Appeal to help people in that country, which has been so badly affected by wildfires, famine, and climate change. Years of civil war have left farmers rebuilding their lives from scratch. The situation has been exacerbated by the embargo on exports of grain from Ukraine due to the Russia/Ukraine war. These people are in desperate need of a future, and we want to assist the appeal in helping to ensure that individuals, families and communities are given the means and education to build better lives in the years to come.



The church is always beautifully decorated for Harvest, and our thanks go to those who work hard at dealing with this and with the distribution of items received. Our service will be led by our minister, Jim Hamilton, and all the hymns chosen will reflect the theme of thankfulness.

Please join us at 10.30am and give as generously as you can in these challenging times to people who have so little and who live in such a challenging environment.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT/TOYS & TINS SERVICE
ON 17TH DECEMBER 2023 Jenny Jacques

We're all aware that Christmas is a time of giving. For us, as Christians, it's a time when we celebrate the greatest gift of all when God gave us his only son, Jesus, to live among us and to show us the way to a better and eternal life.

In our *Carols by Candlelight/Toys and Tins* service at 4.00pm on 17th December, we will celebrate this great gift in the singing of carols old and new and in listening to the story of Jesus' birth.

As part of our theme of giving, we will once again support the work of Little Havens Children's Hospice with the monetary collection. We also ask that new toys and cans of food be brought to help the work of Basildon District Resource Centre, assisting those in significant financial need. The toys provide each child with a gift and the tins ensure that families will receive boxes of groceries and toiletries to see them through the Christmas period.

After the service, drinks and Christmas food will be served in Emmanuel Hall and all the children attending will receive a selection box to take home.

We're already looking forward to Christmas, and hope that you can join us in our candlelight celebration. Look out for further details on the church website in the next few months on www.rbbc.org.uk

RBBC CHURCH WEBSITE UPDATE

Yes, don't forget our RBBC website (link above). Now established for over a year it provides regularly updated details of upcoming special services, special events, and activities such as the date for Saturday breakfasts.

Links take you to the last four quarter editions of the *RBBC Review* magazines, and to the following websites: **The Baptist Union**, **The Eastern Baptist Association**, the **Billericay FoodBank**, and the **Ramsden Bellhouse Village Hall**.

A POEM OF REFLECTION

Pauline Hamilton

God has not promised skies ever blue,
Flower strewn pathways all our lives through.

God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God has promised rest for the day,
Rest for the labourer,
Light for the way.

Grace for the trials,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love.

ANSWERS TO THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE ON PAGE 8

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M	A	R	Y	A	N	D	J	O	S	E	P	H
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AND SOME MORE SMILE LINES TO ENJOY

Church bulletin notices that didn't turn out quite right....

- Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7- 8:30 pm. Please use the back door.
- Ushers will eat latecomers.
- The third verse of 'Blessed Assurance' will be sung without musical accomplishment.
- Next Sunday Mrs Vinson will be soloist for the morning service. The minister will then speak on 'Terrible Experiences'.
- The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who laboured the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.
- Don't miss this Saturday's exhibit by our Christian Martian Arts group.
- At our recent church deacons meeting, the agenda was adopted, the minutes were approved, and our secretary gave a final grief report.

Bathroom tidy

Constant nagging didn't seem to provide any relief from having to clean up the bathroom after each of my three teenage children. After I cleaned it one day, I resorted to posting a sign that read: 'Please leave the bathroom as you found it'.

Then I noticed the bathroom was in the usual mess after my son used it, so I called sharply: "Brian, how did you find the bathroom?"

After a brief pause, he replied, "Straight down the hall, first door on the right."

Couch

Friends sympathized as our young minister complained that his back was really sore from moving furniture. "Why don't you wait till your teenage son gets home?" someone asked.

"Well, I could," our minister replied, "but the couch is easier to move if he's not on it."

STREET PASTORS SITUATION UPDATE

Val Rook - *Street and Rail Pastor*



The info-graph above (for July 2023 operations) is the latest example of our activities and involvement with our local community, showing the various areas of community support currently given by the Billericay *Street Pastors* over the four Friday patrols carried out in Billericay in July. Since the April info-graph (Summer magazine) **WALK-INS** and **PATROLS** have doubled and **VOLUNTEER SESSIONS** are up from 7 to 13.

During the summer months several training sessions have been run, some of these in conjunction with the **Southend Street Pastors**. Hopefully it will mean more Street Pastor patrols will be possible as autumn progresses.

BILLERICAY FOODBANK UPDATE

The work of the Billericay FoodBank continues, with ever increasing activity levels but with significant changes having taken place.

As before work normally starts on Tuesday with St Johns church, Hub, and supermarket collections, followed by sorting of goods ready for “order picking”. On Wednesday there is mid-day frozen food packing, followed in the evening with supermarket collections of fresh goods and cake packing in the Hub. On Thursday, commencing at 10.00am the food is individually packaged, and deliveries are then sent from the hub to some hundred plus individuals and families.

And it is here that the big change has been made.

The centre of operations has moved from its previous location on the Billericay High Street to a new location on Radford Crescent (off Radford Way).

This is a factory unit (shared with

the *Hamlin Trust*) and hopefully will provide a long-term secure location and room for expansion in this ever more needed service.



As always, those generous food donations received each week from our own small church in Ramsden Bellhouse help keep those deliveries flowing to those who often are in desperate need.

RBBC REVIEW – MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Articles for the **Winter 2023/24 Review** edition of the magazine are requested to be with the editor by **18th November 2023** latest to enable the magazine to be compiled, edited, and ready for electronic distribution on or about the **30th November 2023**.

Remember, as always, this magazine is written by its readers for its readers, and I remain very grateful to all those of you who contribute articles for the magazine. **KEEP FEEDING ME WITH MATERIAL** for the future! Every contribution is valuable.

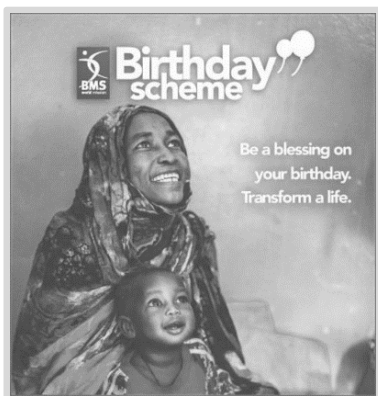
BMS WORLD MISSION BIRTHDAY SCHEME

Church Fellowship and friends' birthdays for the coming period:

September	4	Richard Jerrom
September	26	James Codd
October	1	Jenny Jacques
	9	Marion Jerrom
	21	Paul Buxton
November	8	Daran Codd
	27	Roger Newton

Wishing you all a very happy birthday.

We celebrate the gift of life because it is a gift. Celebrate the knowledge that God knows you personally and you are uniquely precious to Him. You need never travel alone; Jesus will be your constant companion every step of the way if you will ask Him for His company.



Many of our Fellowship already contribute to the **BMS Birthday Scheme** and anyone of any age can join.

On a day when we have much to celebrate, **BMS Birthday Scheme** members donate, an amount of your choice, to help others in need. On your birthday you will receive a card along with a birthday message from BMS. Inside the card is a bulletin sharing

some of the projects your money supports, and a gift envelope to make your donation.

If you would like to support BMS World Mission in this way, please ask Elisabeth for details.

RAMSDEN BELLHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH

PASTORATE: **Rev. James Hamilton** Tel: 07794 358240

CHURCH OFFICERS:

Treasurer: **Jenny Jacques** Tel: 01268 711082

Deacons: **Marion Jerrom** Tel: 01268 710287

Judy Little Tel: 01268 710945

Daren Codd Tel: 07411 789779

For information contact any of the above.

WEEKLY CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sunday: A service is held on Sunday mornings at 10.30am with Communion twice a month, normally on the second and fourth Sunday. Tea and coffee are usually served after the service. All are welcome.

 Associated streaming of the service via **Zoom** is continuing for the present. Any future changes to this will be advised at the appropriate Sunday services.

Wednesday: Our 7.30pm *Prayer Meeting*, continues to be held as a **Zoom** session and is open to everyone.

Anyone wishing to join in any of these sessions, can get joining details by telephoning any of the church officers above.



**Ramsden Bellhouse
Baptist Church**

Autumn 2023