

# Tuckingmill Baptist Church, Camborne



## March 2021

So it has started ... or, it is about to start, one day after the technical publication date for this magazine: the gradual reversal of Lockdown.

I think the Government has been right to insist that *this* reversal has to be done even more carefully. We cannot allow another resurgence of Coronavirus. To take our national foot too quickly off the brake pedal, no matter how much we itch to do so, would only delay yet further the time when we can (hopefully) say that we are finally in the clear again.



And yet, as I commented recently, this final phased return to (the *new new*) normality could in some ways be trickier to navigate.

At the end of last March,

everything was thrown into confusion. We were totally unprepared for the situation of being unable to meet in church. By the grace of God, though, digital technology had advanced to the stage where some partial solutions could be put into place with (in retrospect) surprising speed.

So, if I remember rightly, we had a couple of Sundays where I suggested that as many as possible check out a couple of sermon videos that I had found online. And then we started our explorations of the wonders of Zoom.

Looking back on those days, we got used to that (for some, totally novel) new tech surprisingly quickly. Of course we learned *very* quickly that you can't sing together - all sharing sound - using Zoom. "Caterwauling" is scarcely the word! But we found that there were music videos online that we could share and sing along to (muted!). Initially

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just a couple each Sunday morning, but, more recently, typically four - and we've found some superb new songs to learn, as well as finding some of the "grand old hymns" (that are actually far more difficult to get suitable recordings of).

What I do remember from those early days of Lockdown One, though, was the amazing flexibility that absolutely everyone showed. I know that while some churches around are really concerned that some of their people have just refused to join in with anything online, no matter what help has been offered them, that hasn't been the case at Tuckingmill. Maybe not all with equal enthusiasm, but *all* of our regulars have remained with us, even if not every week, but substantially. We have adapted - we *had* to! - but we have held together, and in some ways, I'm sure, we have grown because of it. These strange times have forced strange measures upon us, but we have adventured and adapted together.

But, as I mentioned, the Un-Lockdown remains a new - and possibly even bigger? - challenge for us. What do I mean?

I think I see something of an analogy to that uncomfortable experience we call "pins and needles", when a part of our body has experienced a mild restriction of blood flow, and which is then restored. The initial sitting awkwardly isn't painful, for example, but when you try to get up, you find "My leg's gone to sleep". And then, as the blood

returns, we know, it's going to be (low-level) *agony* for a while, as that leg wakes up again.



So, a year ago, we had very little in the way of options. From the set date, meeting in person was not an option (Government). Not meeting at all was not an option (Scripture). "Digital fellowship" was the sole remaining option (I include digital telephony there, too) for meeting together - though it stretched the meaning of the phrase!

But now, as the pressure is released, we have options again. Actually, we have for the last few months had the option of meeting together, in the Chapel, but with sufficient restrictions (masks, distancing, *OPEN WINDOWS DURING WINTER!!*), and sufficient health concerns (a largely older congregation, pre--Vaccine) that we chose *not* to do so.

Only now, the weather is slowly warming, the majority of us will soon have had Round One of the various new vaccines, and the restrictions in society more generally are being, step by cautious step, relaxed.

Now we see the difference between unity and uniformity. Do we seek a uniform or a united re-

sponse from you all? It's not just a trivial difference between those two words. And it goes right to the heart of what we understand to be our *fellowship* together.

We've got a key passage in Scripture, for example, showing that believers should expect to be differentially gifted by the Holy Spirit:

*Are all apostles?*  
*Are all prophets?*  
*Are all teachers?*  
*Do all work miracles?*  
(1 Corinthians 12:29)

Implied answer, *No*. You are not expected to function identically. And I think we should apply a similar approach to our response to our recent canvassing for opinions about when to open up the Chapel again. *Do all think similarly?* The answer is even more obvious: no!

Do you see the difference between being united and uniform now? Uniformity insists that we all think the same way. In which case, uniformity will insist futilely!

So the challenge is not to somehow cajole or coerce uniformity, but to continue ...

*... bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*  
(Ephesians 4:2-3)

People will of necessity be in different circumstances, anyway. Some will have been vaccinated,

and some not. We may not yet be permitted to give someone outside our "bubble" a lift to church.

But people will just feel and think differently about just when is the right time *for them* to join in again. There can be better and worse motivations in play here, it has to be said.

It could be that the extra half hour (or more) in bed afforded by "pyjama church" features too heavily in the decision.



If we move Communion to the evening, initially at least, it could be that some people choose to ignore that word of Christ, *Do this in remembrance of me*, simply because they "only do Sunday mornings".

Or you could be concerned about whether you need your second dose of vaccine first. Or you could find that the restrictions still necessary - those masks, for example, or, for many, the fact that we're not allowed to sing is particularly galling - you honestly feel that you could not worship God appropriately with the feelings that those restrictions would cause to rage within you.

There will be substantial differences in how we think and feel about all of this ... and I have to

insist that we are *allowed* to differ.

We are not asking for uniformity. But I want to ask each one of you to strive to maintain that *unity* we have known. The Virus, if anything, has brought us closer together, in some ways. We must not lose this now, if other people choose to show up earlier or later than *you* think is right.

Un-Lockdown offers us a chance to unlearn and undo so much of what we have learned of late.



I can only expect what you might call “a phased return” to the Chapel, too, over several months. Please, please, fight not to be judgemental over whether others turn up sooner or later than you feel comfortable doing.

It will be wonderful to see you all again, in person - but only come when *you*, in good conscience before God, are ready.

Peter Ham

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**Church website:**  
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**Zoom meetings - “online church”:**  
maintaining the times we have become used to over the previous months, but possibly with *some* people able to meet at the chapel  
Sundays: 10.30 and 6.30  
Thursdays 7.00

	<b>10.30 a.m.</b>	<b>6.30 p.m.</b> (cafe church)
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Mothers’ Day guest service: “Simples!”	Video / led discussion
21 <sup>st</sup> March	Phil Willetts	Video / led discussion
28 <sup>th</sup> March	Exodus 19	Video / led discussion
2 <sup>nd</sup> April	Good Friday	
4 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Sunday guest service: “A matter of life and death”	Video / led discussion

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### Wet Feet

Max Lucado

Retaliation has its appeal. But Jesus has a better idea.

John 13 records the events of the final night before Jesus' death. He and his followers had gathered in the Upper Room for Passover. John begins his narrative with a lofty statement: "Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God" (John 13:3 NLT).

Jesus knew the who and why of his life. Who was he? God's Son. Why was he on earth? To serve the Father. Jesus knew his identity and authority, "so he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him" (John 13:4–5 NLT).



Jesus -- CEO, head coach, king of the world, sovereign of the seas -- washed feet.

Even Judas. The lying, conniving, greedy rat who sold Jesus down the river for a pocket of cash. Jesus won't wash his feet, will he? Sure hope not. If he washes the feet of his Judas, you will have to wash

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the feet of yours. Your betrayer. That ne'er-do-well, that good-for-nothing villain. Jesus' Judas walked away with thirty pieces of silver. Your Judas walked away with your virginity, security, spouse, job, childhood, retirement, investments.

You expect me to wash his feet and let him go?

Most people don't want to. They use the villain's photo as a dart target. Their Vesuvius blows up every now and again, sending hate airborne, polluting and stinking the world. Most people keep a pot of anger on low boil.

But you aren't "most people." Grace has happened to you. Look at your feet. They are wet, grace soaked. Your toes and arches and heels have felt the cool basin of God's grace. Jesus has washed the grimeiest parts of your life. He didn't bypass you and carry the basin toward someone else. If grace were a wheat field, he's bequeathed you the state of Kansas. Can't you share your grace with others?

"Since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you" (John 13:14–15 NLT).

To accept grace is to accept the vow to give it.

## **You know you trashed a conversation when ...**

by Ed Welch

Christian Counselling and Educational Foundation



We should keep a list of how our words have damaged relationships and undermined sensitive conversations. Our growth in wisdom depends on remembering and changing our foolish habits.

For example, one of my foolish habits during disagreements with my wife has been to prioritize my own sense of being rejected. When I perceive rejection from her, it seems to reach into my soul and rob me of spiritual power. Suddenly, I can't hear and can't love, and it is all her fault. A truly foolish, deadly practice. I am gradually prioritizing my

relationship and my calling to love over my sense of rejection, but the pace seems glacial.

What is on your list? Listen especially for words spoken calmly. These are easy to miss. You know you trashed a conversation when you . . .



... say “never” or “always.” We know this and still do it.

... say something like “Look who’s talking. That’s exactly what you do.” Does anyone not do this? It has everything to do with being right-er and nothing to do with love, but it still evades detection.

... say nothing and walk away. Some couples agree to do this — a cooling-off period — and it is better than violence, but too many people never return for a follow-up conversation.

... confess your sins but don’t invite more discussion about what happened. Confession turns the trashed conversation in the right direction; it is not necessarily the final word. Let the other person say what is on his or her heart.

And here is one more. You know you have trashed a conversation when you invoke witnesses who are not in the room, but who allegedly agree with you.

“Your mother says the same thing about you.”

“I was talking with \_\_\_\_\_ and he/she said \_\_\_\_\_ (“you can be very difficult;” “I am a saint;” “you are crazy, out of control . . .,” “most people would never be able to live with you”).

You have just dragged the conversation into a courtroom. There, you don’t listen, love is not even a relevant category, and you march out witnesses to support you in the accusation of your adversary. Like most other diabolical strategies, it is cruel and divisive. Yet, you feel righteous in it all and are blind to the consequences on the other person.

You think, perhaps, you are helping people see themselves more clearly. To make matters even worse, you have just trashed, or at least complicated, your adversary’s relationships with all the alleged witnesses. You might not be lying about what other people have said, but your

witnesses would probably say that you certainly misrepresented them and they resent being used that way.

What keeps us from seeing this? Perhaps it's because our self-assessment is limited to, "Did I speak the "truth"? If yes, we think we have done well. And, with this example of court witnesses, we are certain we are right because we know other people agree with us. Case closed.

But the apostle Paul would ask, "Did you speak in love, 'with all humility'?" (Eph 4:2). Here, it gets tricky. "Well . . . I spoke what is true" (1 Cor 13:6). But the New Testament's use of truth is more often the truth about Jesus. That is the non-negotiable truth.



Our claims to accurate judgments [i.e., "truth"] about another person, especially when we have a vested interest in those judgments, are not always reliable and are best approached with a bit less confidence in ourselves. At about this point, we remember that we would be clueless apart from the Spirit himself, who opens our eyes to see the selfish motives of our hearts.

The Spirit has, indeed, come to us, so we don't shy away from these careful searches. Given how our confidence in our right-ness can blind us, we also ask others to help us see clearly. The Spirit graciously reveals sin and takes us immediately to Jesus, our High Priest, who is full of mercy, so our true confidence is that we can draw near to him, receive power to stand against these tendencies of our hearts, and be peacemakers in God's kingdom.

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