



# INSPIRE

**AUGUST 2022**



**“Let your light so shine before men, that they might see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16**

## A Great Walk

During our recent trip to France, we went for a walk to Lac de Gaube, a beautiful lake nestling in the mountains at 1,725 metres above sea level. A combination of car and cable car got us up most of the mountain, so our walk only featured gentle slopes. Alongside the lake itself, the path was narrow and made up of rocks of various sizes, many of which were very loose. It was necessary to pick our way a step at a time, trying to avoid stumbling or twisting our ankles. I led the way, anticipating that Jean would spot where I was putting my feet and thereby know where to tread. Because I was concentrating on my own steps, I failed to realise for a while that Jean was not walking as quickly as me. As a result, she was having to find her own way!

As we continued our walk, I thought about the way Jesus walks with us. The gospels record how he called twelve ordinary men to follow him as his core group of disciples. Jesus was very patient with them as they saw miracles and heard his teaching but failed to understand who he was and what it meant. And then there came a moment when in response to Jesus's questioning, Peter said "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matthew 16:16). We read that from that time, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. You will recall that Peter didn't take this news very well!

In Luke, 24, we read how Jesus walked alongside two of his followers on the road to Emmaus. Not recognising him, they told Jesus everything that had happened in Jerusalem. In response, Jesus explained what was said about himself in the scriptures. But still the penny didn't drop. Reaching the village, Jesus acted as if he was going further. "*But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.'*" So he went in to stay with them" (Luke 24:29). Over a meal, as Jesus broke bread and gave it to them, their eyes were opened, and they recognised him.

Jesus knows where each of us is on our faith journey. He is the good shepherd who knows us by name. He leads us out, he goes on ahead of us, and we follow him because we know his voice. (John 10:3-4). His love for us ensures that we can experience Jesus patiently walking with us whenever we hear and see without understanding, whenever we stumble and fall, whenever the storms hit, whenever life seem overwhelming. And when we invite him to stay with us, we can expect to receive fresh insights and blessings – because he is with us. These will bring hope and encouragement, alongside challenges to our attitudes and lifestyles that we need to address to keep in step with him.

From 1 September 2022, Rev Robert Foster will be our minister. This is therefore my final leading article for Inspire. I hope that some of my 77 articles have been helpful. They have reflected my personal walk with Jesus over the last two- and a-bit years, together with topical events affecting our shared life as a church. I praise God that he has walked with us as a fellowship throughout lockdowns and re-establishment of well attended Sunday services, with Zoom enabling folk to join from home and elsewhere. I believe that walking with Jesus has made all the difference to us as individuals and as a gathered church, particularly through very challenging times for many in the fellowship.

We should be really excited by what God is doing in the church. A new ministry, with many new gifted people already being drawn to share worship and fellowship with us suggests that God is honouring our faithfulness and is equipping us for moving forward in spiritual growth and

active mission in the community. God is at work. Walking with Jesus is about joining in with what he is already doing. We can follow in his footsteps with absolute confidence. He will never be too far away.

*"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2)*

*David Harvey*

## Ministry Update

Following the Church meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July, Robert Foster has accepted the church's invitation to become our next minister and his appointment will start on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Robert will be leading and preaching at the 4<sup>th</sup> September morning service. There will be an induction service on **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September at 3pm** to which all are invited. This will be followed by light refreshments.



"We know that the path isn't always easy. Jesus said we don't build the kingdom of heaven by putting our hands to the plow and then turning back. We all put our hands to the plow when we made our baptismal covenant promises. And some days we're hanging on for dear life to the handles of that plow. Some days we have smooth going, and some days there are rocks. Some days there are trees. Some days we can hardly make it an inch further, but when we're together, it's a little bit easier to do. When we're walking with each other, everything is easier. When we're looking for the common ground that we share, we can all find hospitality, and that's good news." *Linda Taylor, Episcopal Priest, California, 2016*

I lift my eyes  
to the quiet hills  
in the press of a busy day;  
as green hills stand  
in a dusty land  
so God is my strength and stay.

I lift my eyes  
to the quiet hills  
to a calm that is mine to share;  
secure and still  
in the Father's will  
and kept by the Father's care.

I lift my eyes  
to the quiet hills  
with a prayer as I turn to sleep;  
by day, by night,  
through the dark and light  
my Shepherd will guard his sheep.

I lift my eyes  
to the quiet hills  
and my heart to the Father's throne;  
in all my ways  
to the end of days  
the Lord will preserve his own.

'I lift my eyes' by Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)





Thank you so much to all of you who were praying during my recent trip to Ghana. I personally probably encountered the most health problems in one 10-day trip for some time! However, we still managed to do what was needed. In the end, only the Lord can measure success. The ten-day slot was chosen to coincide with Catherine's recovery from her operation, but before she started any treatment, and from my point of view, to slot into my own hospital visits. What a pair! But as I said to the stewardess who kindly helped me put my cabin bag up onto the rack (since I cannot lift heavy weights like that), it doesn't stop us. We look after the Lord's call, knowing that He will look after us.

- 1) The problem with having 11 branches, for the most part spread out over villages, is the cost of buildings. This soon becomes a distraction from the main point of church. On my second weekend there, the leaders, plus elders, deacons etc, plus pastor's wives (About 35 in all) gathered where I was able to do teaching and vision building for the mission of the church prioritizing, "Make Disciples ... teaching them *to observe all* that I have commanded you." That this should be our priority mission above everything else; our 'hallmark'. The teaching was well received, and in truth it is the third time that I have come at this one. When I sat down after 2 hours, I felt I had discharged what the Lord had given me for them.
- 2) The first Saturday there saw us meet as the Leadership group of the whole network. Although we have had some excellent 'Zoom' meetings as a team, there is no substitute for meeting face to face from time to time. We were able to agree budgets for this year and to decide and agree on financial priorities. As reported last time, we are trying to ensure that finance is now aimed at investment to achieve more financial independence. This is a challenge when half of our branches are in very poor villages. As a 'for-example', we must help the General Overseer with a new vehicle. This will be a van or minibus which he will use for 3-4 days week, the vehicle then being used commercially the rest of the time to earn its keep. Next year, the priority will be another commercial vehicle to be used 100% to finance the network.
- 3) On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July, there was the graduation from the Berea Bible School. This now has an affiliation with a local Bible college in Nsawam, which takes things forward to possibly issuing nationally recognized diplomas soon.
- 4) I was able to deliver a new laptop and video projector, to enable conferencing from this country by Zoom. Even if we must give financial help to leaders to gather where there is good WiFi for a day down there, it is far, far, cheaper than actually making a visit! We have discussed doing some training for the Bible School this way. This approach would open the way to other 'guest' speakers in this country. We've yet to see how that works out, but experiments 'on the ground' indicate that all should work well.



I also took down with me three "Talking Bibles" that were supplied free by an organization recommended by our good friend Andy Corley. These will be trialed at three remote locations to see how church members get on with it, if (say) such a device was available in the local church for a couple of hours on a Sunday. In a society where reading is not a part of the culture, and where literacy is patchy in poor villages, we are hoping that this be a way forward for getting the reading of scripture up the agenda.

Let's not also forget another good friend's offer to buy footballs for each church! That is a work in progress but should be good fun when they have them!

So, there we have it! A multipronged visit with a lot happening. Some other things worth mentioning, that can only be seen when there: Diesel is nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  the price in Ghana at present than it is here. That in an environment where wages on average would be 10% what they are here. The simple arithmetic of that is that it is as if we were paying £13.45 per litre in this country. How could you afford that? It is pushing the prices of everything through the sky. Inflation is now 22% and rising.

One of the pastors has just lost one of a set of twins born a couple of months ago. Whilst I was there, I discovered that the other one was poorly. How do people on £20-£30 per month subsistence income afford hospital bills in a country with no NHS?

Then again. how do church members who have relied upon subsistence farms for their meagre income manage when a large land corporation comes in and buys up all the land and simply throws them off their farms, as has happened to our members at Kwame Duodu, and Darmang? I was reminded of the old song, which I hope you will excuse: "It's the same, the 'ole world over, it's the poor what gets the blame, it's the rich what gets the pleasure, ain't it all a bloomin' shame!"

My dear praying brothers and sisters. 2 Corinthians 8-9 (esp 8:13-14) talks about there being 'equality in the Body of Christ.' This is why we are trying to invest there. I simply commend this report to you.

Love to you all

*Greg Hall*

## **Dates for your Diary – August**

Sunday 7th      Morning Service:10.30am – Leading: Julia Bell, Preaching: Greg Hall

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>      Morning Service: 10.30am – Leading David Harvey, Preaching: Derek Allan

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>      Communion Service :10.30am -Leading: Jonny White, Preaching: David Harvey

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>      Morning Service: 10.30am – Leading: David Harvey, Preaching: David Harvey

## Notices

### Sunday Services:

Sunday services have resumed in the building but any who cannot come in person will also be able to join via Zoom using the details below:

You can join by visiting <https://zoom.us/j/3431622013>

... or using the Zoom app and meeting ID 3431622013

... or phone (0330) 0885830 and enter the meeting ID 3431622013 then #

The meeting password is 1893

Please pray during the week for those who are due to lead, preach and cover the technical aspects of the service. Also please pray for all those who lead the online children's work before, during and after the service.

### Prayer Meetings

There will be daily prayer meetings at 7.30am every weekday morning and 9am on weekends and bank holidays – using the following Zoom details: Meeting ID: 899 0084 1018 /

Password: 1893

### Food and Community Hub:

We have **many gaps** so if you are shopping in the near future and could donate one of these items we would be very grateful:

Tinned Potatoes and Packets of Mash

Tinned Fruit

Steamed Puddings

Rice pudding

Tinned Meat Meals e.g: curry, chilli

Fray Bentos style pies

Vegetarian Meals

Corned Beef/Cooked Ham, Hotdog  
sausages

Toilet Rolls, in smaller packs preferably

Tea, Coffee

Sugar

Shampoo, shower gel, deodorant etc.

Wrapped cake bars and biscuits

UHT Milk

Cat and dog food