

### Jesus at the Centre

The church weekend is in prospect and the theme of the teaching will be on our Strategic Objective for 2017: **Jesus at the Centre**. The teaching to be undertaken by Alistair Purss is from Romans 5 and Romans 12:

- My Personal Salvation
- My Personal Discipleship
- My Participation in the Church
- My Perseverance in the World

It will be a challenging time I'm sure but also a time of blessing. Alistair was born and brought up in Irvine, Ayrshire. After leaving School he studied at the GLO (Gospel Literature Outreach) Centre in Motherwell. The one year 'Training for Service' Course at the GLO Centre led to working alongside the Youth Pastor at his home church in Ayr (Riverside Evangelical Church where Alistair Simmons was a Pastor for a number of years). From 1988-91 Alistair studied at the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow. It was there that he met Sharon. Sharon spent a year of study at 'Capernwray Hall' and a year on staff at the Compass Christian Centre in Perthshire before coming to study at BTI in 1989. They were married on 23rd June 1990. Since 1991 Alistair has served as Pastor in Enfield (1991-1995); Brentwood (1995-2005) and Senior Pastor, Houghton-le-Spring (2005-2010). In November 2010 Alistair was ordained as a Baptist Minister and inducted as Senior Pastor of Dumfries Baptist Church. Alistair's interests include ball sports and reading. He has some addictions which include tray bakes, Walkers baked salt 'n' vinegar crisps, Somerset brie and chocolate biscuits straight from the fridge! Sharon's interests include gardening, flower arranging and reading. They enjoy days out together, coffees, lunches and meals out and quality time with good friends over a meal at home! They have three children, Ryan, Kieran and Aidan and the youngest is 18.

The theme of Jesus at the Centre was recently used at the recent Men's Prayer Breakfast where we shared and committed to praying for a prayer partner about what it means to have Jesus at the centre of 'My personal walk' and 'My marriage and family'. What a theme!

One of the exciting series in our teaching framework for 2017, '*Knowing Jesus*', will be discovering more of Him as we consider His humanity, Deity, sufferings, glorification and his three 'offices'. The series kicks off on 5 March with Dr Stephen McQuoid. At the recent meeting of Home Group Leaders, I made arrangements with various ministry leaders including Home Group Leaders, the Visitation Team, The Ladies Bible Study and Young Adults to meet with them and plan out the priorities for pastoral visits. These routine visits will hopefully include a spiritual - and confidential - discussion of how this 'objective' is relevant to each member of the TCF Family.

### Alpha

It has been such an encouragement to be running Alpha and for the groups who have formed to have their confidential discussions around the big issues of life. Pray that those who are seeking or enquiring will be helped and that they will find an answer in a personal relationship with Jesus. The course will finish on Monday 6 March but we are already thinking about a Discipleship Explored group for later in the year. The benefits of Alpha go far beyond helping those who may be seeking. The catering team, the deacons and helpers, the TCF members who are praying throughout each evening and of course the committed individuals ahead are leading, helping or participating in the discussion groups. These latter brothers and sisters are also being blessed and gaining confidence in their own faith - and some are very young believers! We thank God for the blessing the far and look to you to pray for outcomes from this course.

### Bereavement Awareness Training

We will be hosting a training event run by Care for the Family on Saturday 25 February 2017. So far we have 16 names from 4 churches. The event will be free to TCF attendees as the church will underwrite the £20 fee. Speak to me if you would like to attend but places are limited by Care for the Family. This builds on the Strategic Objective from last year '*care and share through working together*'.

### A parable from C S Lewis and the 'Voyage of the Dawn Treader'

For many in TCF the start of 2017 has been tough beyond description. For some, there are particular struggles still being fought. As we live in our spiritual family together, looking to Jesus, we need hope and direction and the scriptures are full of this but I trust you'll forgive me for indulging in a favourite 'parable' from other literature:

*"Well, don't tell me about it, then," said Eustace. "But who is Aslan? Do you know him?"*

*"Well - he knows me," said Edmund. "He is the great Lion, the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, who saved me and saved Narnia. We've all seen him. Lucy sees him most often. And it may be Aslan's country we are sailing to."*

The application is obvious, but worth stating explicitly: Jesus has saved us, the world is His and He will change it forever but we're sailing home to be with Him which is far better!

