

27 September 2020, 11am
*Christ Church New Southgate &
Friern Barnet*

Please join with us at 11am to read this service together either in printed form, whatapp or via the youtube link on our website www.christchurchnsfb.org

Each person in the church is assigned a deacon who will call you to see if you are alright in these times and to pray for you. Please feel free to call Ruth too if you wish – only happy to help! 020 8368 8157

Welcome

Our service today is a thanksgiving service for the life and mission of Grove Road Hall. This online service is the same as the in-person service on Sunday at 2pm at Grove Road.



Living God
At Grove Road
Used to be the sound of singing,
Where there have been
church services, meals and social events,
And adventures enjoyed by
Rainbows, brownies, guides,
Cubs, beavers and scouts.

At Grove Road
Where some wept,
and others filled with joy,
Where people struggled with life,
Prayed urgently,
Been stirred and changed,
Where you have so often been with your
people
Be with us now Lord.
ALL: Be with us now Lord.

Holy and faithful God
Whose love knows no limits
And upon whose grace
and mercy we depend,
As we gather today to give thanks for is past
To hear your words for today
and to commend to you our future:

**Fill us afresh with hope and vision
So that having shared in worship today
We may live to your glory
In Jesus name we pray. Amen**

Lord, for the years here
Your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us,
cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us,
pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years,
**we bring our thanks today for Grove
Road.**

Hymn: I stand amazed in the presence

I stand amazed in the presence
of Jesus the Nazarene,
and wonder how He could love me,
a sinner, condemned, unclean.

*How marvellous! how wonderful!
and my song shall ever be:
How marvellous! how wonderful!
is my Saviour's love for me!*

He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calvary,
and suffered, and died alone.
How marvellous . . .

When with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see,
'twill be my joy through the ages
to sing of His love for me.
How marvellous . . .

Reading: Matthew 28.16-20
Read by Sarah Hawkins who grew up at
Grove Rd

¹⁶The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. ¹⁸Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."

All age prayer – Heads or tails

Take a coin and look at it, find the Queens head on one side – that's the head. Turn it over – the other side is the tail. We're going to pray today for that God has done for us in the past. We can thank God for friends, family and the food we enjoy. And we'll pray for what we worry about for the future. Maybe you are worried about next week at school or home, maybe you are worried about Covid-19. Jesus said that he will always be with us helping us whatever happens. So if you're ready to flip your coin

– tails are for thanking God and heads for prayers for the future. Let's do a few.

All age active Lord's prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Time to remember

Led by Joan Gray the wife of the late Rev.
Rooke minister at New Southgate Baptist

Gentle God
Who shares our laughter
And our tears.
It is good to know
that you are with us.

**We call to mind
memories of services and activities
we have shared
And the people we have loved
As we lay down
and let go what is ending,
we take up what now begins.**

Hopeful God, in these moments
Help us to dream new dreams,
To imagine new opportunities for witness

**To continue to encourage
and empower each other
as we seek**

to grow in grace and love.

In these moments
where the meeting of past
and future is so real

**Show us the memories to cherish
And the values we must continue to live
As we journey with Jesus,
in whose name we pray
Amen**

Sermon

Today we are remembering the life and mission of Grove Rd. Before Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet was created, there were two small churches – one URC and one Baptist. This afternoon we will have our first in person service at Grove Rd, the first service we have held since March 2020. How fitting this seems, for it was in Grove Rd that the first Baptist church was built, and to Grove Rd we will return to say farewell.

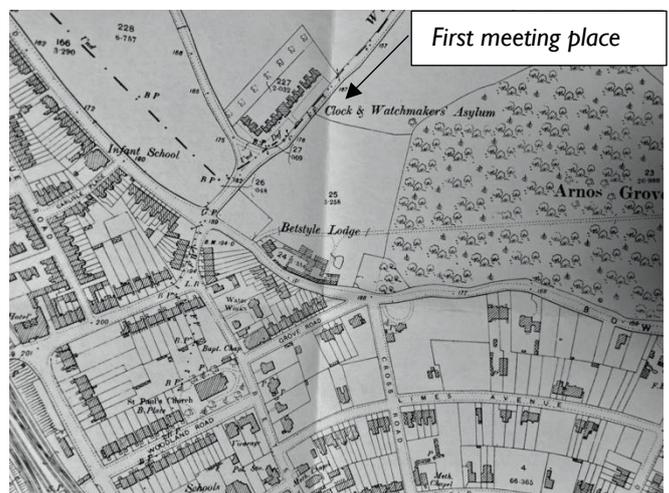
Jesus' life and ministry began in Galilee, a place tucked away from view, not popular with tourists or a powerful capital city, just Galilee. After Jesus had been crucified, he rose from the dead and first spoke to the women who had stuck by him. The women then tell the disciples go to Galilee – go to where it all began. And it is here that they meet him and he draws near to them. Christ draws near to the disciples, and today he draws near to us.

It was in 1859 that a small group of Christians in the rural village of Colney Hatch began to meet at the Clock and Watchmakers Almshouses - now the corner of Waterfall Rd that meets Betstyle circus. Colney Hatch was a village of 2000 people with only an Anglican church.



Original church on Grove Road

By 1862 they bought land on High Rd and formed a church with Rev Wills of Holborn as the first minister.



OS map 1898

The founding members were Peter Terry, Elizabeth Terry, David James, Elizabeth James, John Press and Emma Press. It is significant that each person including the women were named individually, as so often women are not named but noted as a wife only. The founding principles of the church constitution were to employ Baptist ministers and to have open membership and open table for communion. Open membership means that any Christian could join and open table means that any Christian could take communion. This is in stark contrast to other Baptists of the day who specified that you had to be baptised in that church to be able to take communion. So, what does this tell us? The

Baptists of Colney Hatch were open to women in leadership, broad-minded and liberal. These were pioneering and gutsy people welcoming all Christians to join them and even women in leadership in 1863. These Baptists were cutting edge and have to say I'm super proud of them. Let us not forget that Jesus called all sorts of people to be his disciples, those judged by the world as respectable or unsuitable. For all are equal in Christ as the Spirit equips us all to follow God.

Often Matthew 28 is used for encouraging the church to be missionary minded. Jesus gathers his disciples and gives them a commission, to go and make disciples. Go and share the good news about God and encourage others to do the same. Spread the word! Jesus was particularly keen that they should go to all people, to all nations. Without doubt New Southgate Baptists embraced Jesus' commission. Having started a church in New Southgate, by the 1860s and 70s they held evangelistic homegroups called 'cottage meetings' in Whetstone and Bounds Green. They started a mission in Hornsey which later become Campsbourne Baptist Church and in Muswell Hill which became Pembroke Rd Church. In the 1900s members were involved in the Hazleville Road Mission becoming Palmers Green Baptist Church and provided the first workers for Winchmore Hill Baptist Church.

International missionary works were also vital with Miss Birdie Davidge sent as a missionary in 1897 to the China Inland Mission, Stanley Pearce with the Baptist Missionary Society to India in 1902 and latterly in 1961 Miss Doreen West also with the Baptist Missionary Society to Africa. These local and global missions speak of a resourcing church, a larger church able and willing to continue sharing the gospel in new places again and again. They speak too of a church that heard the words of Jesus and understood that they

required action, for which they are to be highly commended.

There is so much to be thankful for in the history of Grove Rd, each of us will appreciate the early efforts of these pioneers and many of you have more recent fond memories of this church. However, we cannot look back without acknowledging the very real difficulties face by Grove Rd by the turn of the century. Both World War One and Two affected the church deeply. Reflecting on World War One the church noted 'faith had to break through the terrible apathy that lay like a blanket over men's hearts' and both in 1941 and 1944 the buildings suffered severe bomb damage. Miss Stella Groves writes in the excellent historical account of the church 'The Family Church', 'They still had the Father and all His resources, they still had Faith and they still had Fellowship, Fellowship not being dependent on the building but the building upon the fellowship.' For a while in World War Two the Baptists met at the Friends Meeting house on Waterfall Rd where the bonds of fellowship were forged deeply. We remember too that the disciples were bonded together at the time of Jesus death and resurrection. As they met him again resurrected in Galilee, they worshipped him but some doubted. Jesus meets us likewise, those who are sure and those who are unsure, and he offers us his presence and peace whatever circumstances we face.

As you might expect the geography of this part of London has changed a great deal since 1859. Colney Hatch village became New Southgate in 1888. By which time larger church facilities now included a Sunday School tin hut among the apple trees on Grove Road. But by 1928 the nearby woods were cleared for housing between Waterfall Rd and Bowes Rd – and the manse was built! While the rail station existed from 1851, the tube arrived in 1928 which along with new

housing developments created a suburb out of a village. By the 1960s the council decided on redevelopment of the High road, with a slum clearance programme and changed the road layout of New Southgate. The High Rd used to be a main road running parallel to Station road. Over 60 High Rd shops were cleared, terraced housing demolished, small factories cleared, the road was blocked to Betstyle roundabout and Grove Rd became a dead end.

Often geography affects churches more than we would like to acknowledge. As many houses surrounding the old church became vacant, exceptionally high levels of vandalism were experienced at the church resulting in only having ½ the windows left and both the church and the hall covered in graffiti. Here we see glimpses of social change too, where urban areas of London are being abandoned and church attendance reflects this change too. As members move away or pass away, the congregation declined and so its finances are deeply affected. By 1983 Rev. Rooke from the Baptist church met with Rev. Scopes from the URC and shared that New Southgate Baptist Church was unable to meet the neighbourhood needs with the blocked off road, vandalism and a dwindling and ageing congregation. They first discussed a link-up between the two churches and began shared services at Easter and Christmas.

In the end it seems that the economics of the old church building proved too challenging. Grove Rd was easier and cheaper to heat, while the flexible layout enabled the rooms and hall to be rented out in the week to generate income. After Rev Rooke sadly died in 1988, it was Rev Ingoed Davies a local retired minister who moderated the church for some years. In this time Rev Douglas McBain (the LBA superintendent) galvanised the church into considering her future. New Southgate Baptist moved into the Grove Rd hall site. This was not without its challenges

as the surveyor's report from 1990 noted that the new roof at Grove Rd was to be made 'using steel tiles that will be resistant to bombardment from footballs and other missiles.' It was decided to accept the surveyor's recommendation to sell the church, and it was sold on 16 December 1991.

By June 1990 a 50/50 shared ministry with URC was sought. Miss Stella Groves was the Baptist Church secretary at the time, and from the evidence of the paperwork was an excellent administrator. She and the deacons attempted to find a new minister but in vain. It was not until 1992 when URC minister Rev Robert Barthram was appointed to lead the new shared church Christ Church NSFB. Barthram's careful and thoughtful leadership maintained the use of both sites with social and community events happening here at Grove Rd as well as uniformed groups and various youth groups. After a pastoral vacancy of over two years, Rev Caroline Rogers was appointed as a new Baptist minister of Christ Church for three years then to follow her calling as an army chaplain. I was called to be minister of Christ Church afterwards and was inducted just a year after Caroline left.

For a long time, it has been difficult to manage two sites, and the challenges of development have understandably stalled the churches progress in recent times. However now we have planning permission for an extensive redevelopment programme at Christ Church main site and hopefully will be able to sell this site soon to finance both the rebuilding work and to secure the financial future of the church. I have been in ministry for 14 years now, and never before have I truly felt the necessity to fight for the church's existence. For the future of Christ Church, especially after the COVID 19 pandemic we are called to be courageous, creative and steadfast. For all the way of life that we knew

and loved has changed. Thankfully we have found new ways to engage with our community online through YouTube services, through WhatsApp messaging and by traditional printed services. We have met however we could, cared for each other by phone, text and email.

It is as if Jesus is asking us, just as he asked his disciples to go and make disciples again. Our responsibility now is to look ahead with Christ's words ringing in our ears – go. For the church that Jesus began is not one that stops. A church is supposed to be a group of people who are always on the move, always trying new things, sending people into new places always innovating and welcoming people from all over the world to meet with Christ. Jesus calls each of us to obey his teaching, to go and share the good news and assures us of his presence. Grove Rd and this site has been a place of witness to Christ since 1863. Now the gift of our forebears is to continue mission in new and exciting ways and in the full and certain knowledge that Christ sends us, he goes with us and remains with us always to the end of the age.

Blessing

Lord of the years

**We once more thank you
For all that is past
And commend to you
All that is to come.**

May we who have
encountered your love
Share it with the world;

We whose lives have
been changed by Jesus
Share the good news in word and deed;

We who are refreshed by your Spirit
Grasp the vision you set before us.

**Walk with us we pray,
Turn our sorrow to joy
And grant us your peace,
today and always. Amen**

Lord, for all of Christ Church;
in living power remake us –
self on the cross
and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us,
for the future take us:
Lord of our lives,
to serve Christ alone.
Amen.