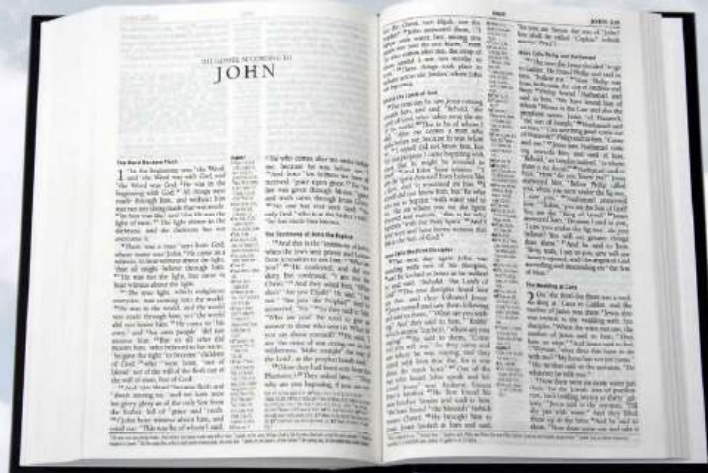


THE WEATHERVANE

Newsletter of the New Church Centre
West Wickham

Behold,
he is coming
with the clouds ...



Revelation 1:7



Summer Issue
No. 231 June 2026 to August 2026

The Clouds of Heaven

Do you like clouds? Probably not if they are always grey and are continually blotting out the direct light of the sun and the blue of the sky. But white clouds in all their amazing variety of shapes and sizes can be very attractive. However if you are a sun worshipper, carefully covered up in an appropriate sun cream, even the smallest cloud in front of the sun is a disappointment. But for most people a few small clouds on a glorious summer's day are a bonus as they limit the power of the sun and give some welcome protection.

We are very familiar with the idea that the sun is a symbol or correspondence of the Lord Himself. The brilliant light of the sun reminds us of the fact that all the truth we can 'see' comes from the Lord alone and the amazing warmth of the sun reminds us that all the love and goodness we can share with others also comes from the Lord alone. Spiritually speaking heat and light are goodness and truth or love and wisdom and the Writings of the New Church tell us that in heaven the Lord is seen as the sun.

If we desire to seek the truth that can help us lead ever better lives then we must turn to the Word and find the Lord there. But what about the clouds? One of our hymns, number 389, has the words:

*The sun shines down and makes the day.
It's only clouds that get in the way.
And even when it's dark for us,
the sun is shining on someone else.*

When we read the Word what we 'see' and understand will vary greatly. Sometimes a passage will seem dark and dismal and we will have difficulty in seeing any light that might help us in life.

[Clouds have got in the way completely]

But there will be other occasions when although we may have difficulty in understanding all we read, nevertheless some light will shine and we will glimpse the truth within.

[Some clouds are blotting out part of the sun]

However there will be other times when we will read something that is so clear to us that our understanding seems to have been illuminated by a brilliant light.

[There are no clouds getting in the way]

We can read in Matthew 24:30,31

... they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

These clouds of heaven are the literal sense of the Word, which provide a kind of veil protecting us from the brilliance of the spiritual sense within until we are ready to be enlightened by it. And we become ready to be enlightened when we seek truth for the sole purpose of being more able to care for and love other people - that is the true use of truth.

Alan

The Lord's second coming, is not in person, but in the Word, which is from Him and which He is.

We read in many passages that the Lord will come in the clouds of heaven. But no one up to the present has known what the clouds of heaven mean; they have thought that He would appear in them in person. It has so far been unknown that the clouds of heaven mean the Word in its literal sense, and that glory and power, with which He is to come at that time (Matt. 24:30), mean the spiritual sense of the Word. This is because no one has even guessed that there is a spiritual sense in the Word, as there is in essence in this example. Since the Lord has now revealed to me the spiritual sense of the Word, and has allowed me to associate with angels and spirits in their world, as if I were one of them, it has been disclosed that the cloud of heaven means the Word in its natural sense, glory the Word in its spiritual sense, and power means the Lord's strength through the Word.

True Christian Religion 776

Calendar for June

Sun	7	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Symbols in Worship'</i>
Sun	14	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Take, eat'</i> With the Sacrament of the Holy Supper
Sun	21	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'God's gifts of love and wisdom'</i>
Sun	28	No Service	

Calendar for July

Sun	5	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Moses in the basket'</i>
Sun	12	11.00	Worship led by David Brooks
Sun	19	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'The Gate of Heaven'</i>
Sun	26	No Service	

Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank.



Exodus 2:1-3

Calendar for August

Sun	2	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Shoes and Sandals'</i>
Sun	9	11.00	Worship led by David Brooks
Sun	16	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'The Seven Churches - Philadelphia'</i> Followed by the Quarterly Meeting
Sun	23	No Service	
Sun	30	No Service	

Advanced Notice for September

Sun	6	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Thanksgiving and Praise'</i>
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Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

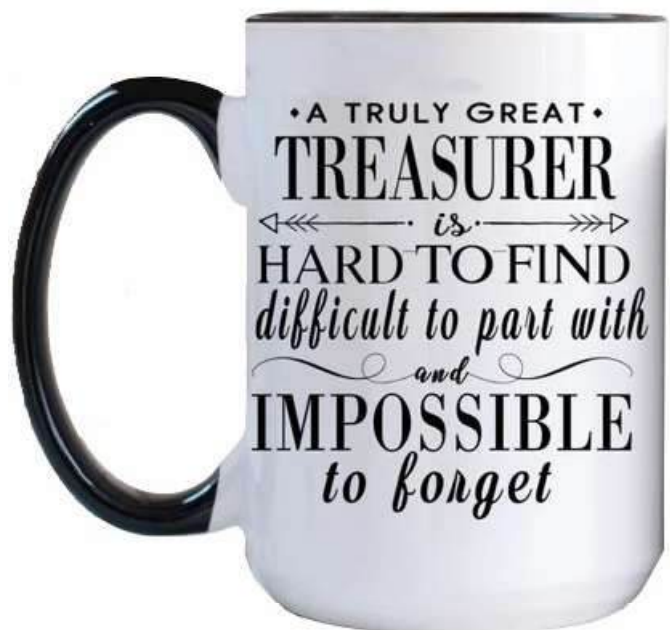


Exodus 3:1-5

Looking Back

In the last newsletter I wrote about the very sad passing of Colin Skinner who for very many years was the treasurer for the West Wickham New Church. This role has been so important and Colin's involvement so long-standing that there was a lot of concern as to who might take it over. Fortunately we need not have worried as Tim Nicholls, with the help of his wife Lara, agreed to take it on.

However this has involved a great deal of work as bank accounts and investment accounts all needed to be changed to reflect Tim's involvement and the need for other signatories. Also the actual West Wickham accounts had been maintained by Colin in paper form for many years and needed to be transferred to computer based systems. I am pleased to report that good progress has been made and last years accounts were reviewed at our Annual Meeting on 1st March and Tim was able to report further progress at our recent Quarterly Meeting on 17th May. So thank you Tim and Lara for stepping into the breach so readily and taking on this significant responsibility.



Looking Forward

Last year we held services on 44 Sunday mornings but at our recent Quarterly Meeting on 17th May we made the difficult decision to further reduce our planned services to 3 each month or 36 in total for the year. We have done this because of our falling numbers and the pressure on our Worship Leaders.

It seemed sensible and the simplest approach to choose to regularly meet on the first three Sundays of the month and this process will start from June as can be seen from the schedule of services on pages 4 and 5. However this arrangement may not always work around Easter because it is a moveable feast and it will impact Pentecost because of its fixed relationship to Easter. So please consult your newsletter to make sure what is happening.

Managing through the sort of decline that we have experienced in the last 10 years or more can give rise to all sorts of feelings:

- Grief that what we have loved and supported for so long seems to be passing away.
- Guilt that maybe we have failed in some way to play our part in maintaining or even growing the church.
- Anxiety about what will happen in the future.
- Loss and loneliness because the church we knew seems to be disappearing.
- Doubt about our beliefs.

... and probably other feelings as well.

Many of the above feelings are also associated with bereavement which is perhaps not surprising since the personal experience of the long drawn out decline of the church can really feel like a personal bereavement.

But we are still continuing, albeit on a reduced basis. So let us continue to worship the Lord and thank him for all the blessings we daily receive.

Officers of West Wickham New Church

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Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!
Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!
Know that the Lord, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Most psalms have ascriptions at the start which dedicate the psalm to its writer – in many cases to David but some psalms have nothing at all. By contrast Psalm 100 starts with the words:

A Psalm for giving thanks.

Our church doesn't really have gates unless you count the one into the car park but it does have many doors, whether at the front or the back. And it doesn't really have a court or courtyard unless you count the area at the back of the church where we have coffee or perhaps even the area in which we sit. Nevertheless let us enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise!