

Happy 160th Birthday to SBC!!

"What a blessing!"

I was born in 1940 and dedicated in SBC when the church was almost 74 years old. I thought, after reading the August newsletter, I felt I wanted to say thank you SBC for all my memories. I remember the dumb waiter (a small lift in the space which is now the cleaning cupboard) being used. It was hard work for the ladies using it with crockery and sending it to the basement, where the kitchen was, to be washed up!

When I was nine years old, I met my husband at SBC Sunday School although I did not realise it until I was 21 years old. We married at SBC 65 years ago this month September.

I was baptised when I was 14 years old, and I've been a member ever since, although I wasn't able to vote until I was 21. The Baptistry is not the one that we have now, which was gifted to us by Hedley Butcher, who was a Deacon some years later.

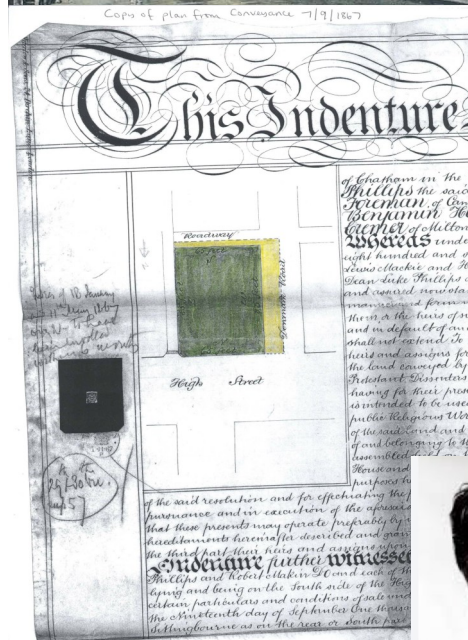
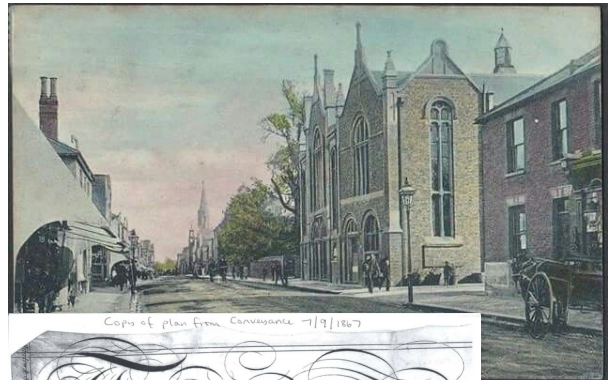
I was sad when the pews went, but in old age I love the comfort of the chairs!

The saddest change for me was losing the pulpit but hey Ho, I got used to it. I love the front doors of the Church now. David and I used to do the Church cleaning and all those brass handles were a nightmare! Now it is bright and light to enter. I've nearly come full circle knowing I will end my days at SBC.

I wanted to say thank you for the building but more thanks to all the Ministers and Christian friends I have made.

Mary Hancock.

This photo shows Mary in the front row –with a handbag!! at a Sunday School Anniversary. Ten years ago Mary went down memory lane for our 150th and described children being bussed in to Sunday School from all of the housing estates!! Also reading the small print on the deed of sale for the land the church stands on refers to the Baptist fellowship as Protestant Dissenters wishing to partake in public worship



Two former Ministers Rev G Cummings 1941-1947 and Rev Lloyd Ozanne 1968-1976





Minister

**REV
NATHAN GORDON**

Also find Sittingbourne Baptist Church on Facebook and Instagram for updates and information about our activities and our live streamed worship.



CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM



**RICKY GROSVENOR -
YOUTH PASTOR**



FLAVIE BALLIET



PAUL BLAKE



DAVID CASSE



**ADRIAN
CHEESMAN**



**CRESTA DUROJAIYE
CHURCH
ADMINISTRATOR**



**LISA
PENNINGTON**



**RICHARD
SILLS
Responsible for
Safeguarding**



**HYLKO
ZINGSTRA
TREASURER**

Services for the month of September

	Morning Service 10.30am	Evening Service 6.30pm
6th	Special Anniversary Communion Service "What makes the church the church? Pt. 1" 	"Do we baptise properly according to Scripture?" Rev Nathan Gordon
13th	"What makes the church the church? Pt. 2" Rev Nathan Gordon Followed by a brief Special Church members Meeting	Stories of Faith Testimony Service
20th	Gospel Message/ Testimonies 	Praise and Worship Evening Communion 
27th	Youth Led service	The Encounter—Music and Prayer

For those of you who serve in children's work or are unable to get to every service; we would like to apologise for some of the sermons not being on the church website.

Please continue to pray for Peter who has stepped down from this ministry due to ill-health. David Evans is picking up the baton so hopefully normal service will be resumed as soon as possible. The services will appear but not until the end of the service and David has had time to upload them.

And now for one of those official bits!!

Our deacons elections will be held on Sunday 25th October in the church members meeting after the Sunday service.

The deadline for nominations will be Sunday 24th September. As the deacons are immediately Trustees of the Charity Their names have to be published in the Church Magazine which will be published on the 27th of September.

The current church rules state

9. ***The church shall be served by not less than four and not more than twelve elected deacons***. They shall not be under 21 years of age and shall be baptised church members. They shall have been members of Sittingbourne Baptist Church for at least one year. They shall be elected by ballot. A third of their number (or such as shall secure the retirement of all deacons every three years) shall retire annually, but shall be eligible for re-election. Nominations for the office shall be sent to the Church Administrator in writing, signed by a proposer and seconder, not less than **four** weeks before the election is to take place, Notice of the election must be given at public worship on the two Sundays preceding the church meeting. Nominees standing as deacons must receive the support of over 66% of the eligible members voting.

There is a really useful explanation sheet about the role of a deacon. Bev has printed a batch of these and some nomination forms and they are available from the Office pigeonhole– please read them carefully, then pray then ASK the person face to face before nominating anyone!! Current information is that there are 7 vacancies.

Stationery not stationary! Notes from the Office...

Dear Everyone!

This will need to be a round of thanks, as despite August being the month when we are all meant to rest, it has been particularly busy one this year! We kicked off the month with a party in the park– special thanks to Phil and Dennis who serenaded us with hits from the decades and attracted plenty of attention to our fellowship day in the park. Thank you to everyone who turned up, brought food, chatted or sang or just rested in the shade of the tree we gathered under!

Next came the massive escapade that was youth camp this year– thank you to everyone who went as a leader, supported the group financially in so many ways; supported them in prayer, with equipment and expertise (Rupert and Karen) and so many other things like the cooking (Dani and Team) encouragement and support– Ricky, Cresta, Bex, Yemi, Erfan, JJ, David and Mary (Emergency transport) and anyone else who I really don't want to miss out!! Following on the heels of Youth Camp came holiday Club catering for Primary school age children alongside a huge batch of preschoolers– they are clearly pining for ABC!! Songs were sung, Crafts were done, stories were told and lots of toys were played with!! Only one week later we started our late great Summer clean-up. The church needed to look and smell it's very best for the Anniversary celebrations so everything has been wiped and hoovered and dusted to super shiny standards!! Furniture that Sonia and Julie can't move on a regular basis has been shoved around and Henry the Hoover has worked overtime. He isn't a robot cleaner though so thank you to everyone who put on their rubber gloves and went above and beyond with the cleaning. Special medal to Sandy for the loos!!

This is a spiritual place but there are lots of practical things which go on week by week. A handful of the leadership team also had a Meet and Mingle and said Hello to one of our newest congregation members. It would be such a good thing to carry this through every week!

Finally the Pastoral team have only had one meeting in August so please let Bev in the office know if there are hospital visits or home communion times to be done. Please continue to pray for everyone undergoing treatment over the next few months – that they all remain well enough to continue each course of treatment, helping them to heal and recover.

As we head into the last third of the year– thank you to everyone who has filled in their data form– please do grab one from around the church if you haven't had one yet and we can carry on compiling the Prayer Diary for everyone to receive . This will hopefully be in the next few weeks.

God Bless, Bev Sills



160 Years of Making Jesus Known in Our Community!

160 years ago, none of us was present on 4 September 1866. We would hardly recognise the country as it was then. Queen Victoria was still on the throne, Britain was in the middle of the Victorian era, and the country was changing at a remarkable pace as industrial, social and technological transformation began to reshape everyday life.

In June 1866, 1,500 women signed the first petition presented to Parliament calling for women to be given the right to vote. Public health was also a major concern, with new legislation being introduced to improve sanitary standards across the country. In 1866, Liberal Prime Minister Lord Russell resigned after his Reform Bill was unsuccessful, leading to a change in government — at least some things never change!

Great change was also taking place in Sittingbourne. The town was becoming increasingly industrialised, with brickmaking and barge-building becoming prominent industries. The town's first police station was erected, along with a magistrates' court on Park Road, in the building that is now home to the Golden Hope pub.

It was against this backdrop of significant societal change that a group of 13 founding members, together with 11 witnesses, came together with one purpose in mind: to see spiritual change and renewal in Sittingbourne. They wanted to make Jesus Christ known, to see people come to faith in Him, and to disciple believers in sound biblical doctrine. The vision that led to the beginning of a new Baptist church has continued to stand strong in the face of many adversities and societal pressures throughout the years. Yet the same God who was with those 13 people who started the church continues to lead, guide and sustain us today.

As a lover of history, it has been a real joy to read through our historical records and reflect on our journey. I am incredibly humbled to serve the same vision that was established in 1866, in the residence of George Hambrook Dean, and which remains just as relevant today. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life! We exist to make Jesus known in our community, to see people turn away from lives plagued by sin, and to witness lives transformed by the love, grace and light of the cross.

History is a wonderful tool that offers valuable insight and teaches us how we arrived at this point. However, we must never become so fixated on history that we lose sight of the future, because we serve a God who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

We thank God for all that has taken place over the past 160 years. We rejoice in the rapid growth and large Sunday School attendance experienced under the leadership of Rev. John Doubleday, who served the church for 40 years (1881–1920). We thank God for the expansion of the building in 1883 and for the Gospel outreach missions that took place from 1889 to 1982. But I am excited about what God is doing in 2026 and about what He will continue to do through us in the years ahead.



Church in 1985 and March of Witness 1989 courtesy of the heritage society.



As we celebrate our history, may we remain focused on our mission: keeping Jesus at the centre of everything we do and loving our community with His unending and unfailing grace.

On behalf of my family, I want to express my sincere appreciation to each and every one of you for your support, encouragement and prayers since 2016, and especially since 2022, when you extended the invitation for me to become your Pastor. It has been, and continues to be, a tremendous privilege to serve this church and to be part of a family that loves God and loves people.

Happy 160th Church Anniversary, SBC!

To God be all the glory for the past 160 years — and for all that is still to come!

God bless,

Rev. Nathan Gordon

We really don't know where we are going until we get there!!

As we have been chatting about the Church Anniversary recently Richard and I talked about being here for 31 years! Then I told him a story about a longer standing connection with SBC– I thought I was repeating myself but it seems not– or maybe Rich wasn't listening the first time around!! Surely not! Anyway start at the very beginning– in the photo where the table is set up for an Easter breakfast, (wonder where I got that idea??) you are seeing the inside of a little church in Hartlepool on the North East Coast.

Just about under the centre of the cross they have created is their baptistry– it's about 6x9 feet or 2mx 3m if you are all metric– not as big as SBC and quite a tight squeeze for two people!! Entered by a tiled set of lethal steps!

63	Mr R. W. Wilkinson	135 W. 04
64	Mrs M. Wilkinson	163 W. 04
65	Miss T. Read	72 W. 04
66	Mr T. W. J. Hancock	72 W. 04
67	Mr D. J. Hancock	72 W. 04
68	Mrs G. M. Jeffery	
69	Mr E. G. Tucker	
70	Mrs I. Tucker	
	Mrs East	

Anyway 40+ years ago, a man called Rev John Tucker baptized me! Now skip further back and see the two people who were members 69 and 70 when they rewrote the SBC register in 1979.

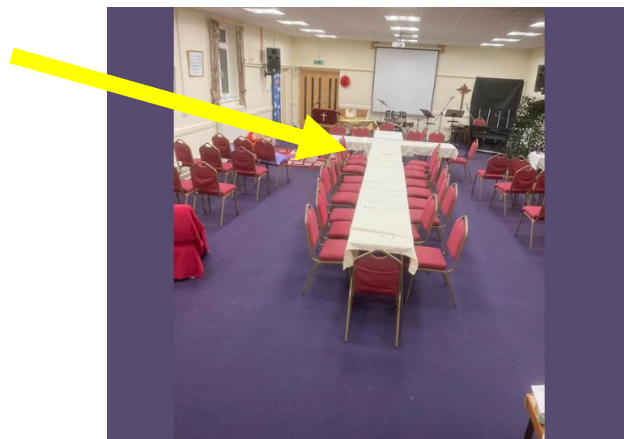
Two spaces below the entry for David H we have Mr and Mrs Tucker. Turns out their son was the Minister who baptized me!! The archive of knowledge that is Mary Hancock, also told me that John Tucker has preached here in SBC when he came to visit Mum and Dad– travelling the nearly 300 miles to check in on them.

Rev Tucker had a ministry at two churches in Harlepool– first at Oxford Road Baptist Church and then at West View Baptist Church– the one in the picture above.

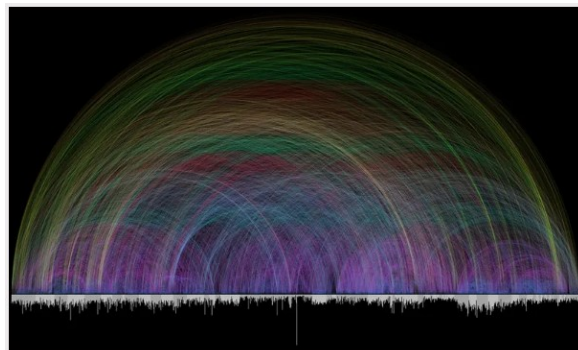
I never knew there would be a place for me here at SBC, nor that Mr Tucker senior was a member here and according to Mary was a deacon!

I kept saying "I'm sure he went by George not his first initial which is an E"

Mary's response was that deacons were always Mr So she didn't know his first name as a child anyway!!



If you have any Christian presence on social media I'm sure that you will have been sent an image that looks like four or five rainbows in a row.



It represents the multitude of cross references and links forward and backwards through the Old and New Testaments. You may have even seen the movie or heard the term sliding doors – where one step in a different direction is supposed to change the way your life goes.

I didn't know when I stepped forward to give my life to Christ and be baptized all those years ago that I would end up serving in a church with such a strong connection to the Minister who baptised me!

Sometimes we don't get to join the dots with events and happenings in our lives but God sees it all and has His hand in it all.

If you are here at SBC on Anniversary Sunday on 6th of September, give thanks to God for the pathway that brought you here and be encouraged by the love of this big family of God.

Thank you to everyone who has prayed for Richard, Emily, Abbie, Katy and I throughout the whole time we have been here.

(Bev)



160th Celebrations:- The ideas have been coming in—watch out for some dates for diaries for our big birthday. Also see the article about Jesus : The Evidence Taking place on the 12th of September—if you pray for someone to come along to that, start now!

The Next Meeting for our Christian Singles Fellowship is 26th September 7-9pm— these are really good evenings— speak to Michelle for more details.



Don't forget to sign up for the Women's prayer breakfast on the 19th and there is an afternoon tea 2pm on the 26th of September too— lots of food and fellowship times available this month.

As part of our safeguarding policy we have to maintain DBS checks on everyone who volunteers at church particularly with the youth or children— if you get an e-mail reminder please can you make an appointment with Bev to verify your documents as soon as possible. Times available are 9am-3pm Mon., Tues., Thurs., 5-9pm Wednesdays and 9-2 Fridays. (Bev) 01795-420990

Office.manager@sbc-church.org.uk

Thank you so much to everyone who responds to the reminder e-mails. It is all for free too!

Some are overdue— please make an appointment soon if Roger has been in touch!!

Our Church magazine is published once a month usually just before the beginning of the month — if you have poems, articles, testimony stories or topics you wish to include please do send them into

Office.manager@sbc-church.org.uk



Thankyou so much to everyone who came to the Colour the Legacy afternoon— this Water colour was painted by a gentleman called Joe Whitehead. Joe went to be with his Lord some years ago but the legacy of his painting lives on.

Here we go with Birthday and Wedding Anniversary mentions!

September



**1st Paul H (Big one!)
2nd Nicola and Hus 32 years wedded bliss! Also Jade B's birthday
9th Bev and Rich
18th Grahame; Richard
19th Carol Rawlins
21st Lisa P
25th Peter
29th Laura Z
30th Kay for her birthday and yes Mary and David H for 65 years of Marriage and they share it with David And Mary C for 37 years— whoop whoop!**

Don't forget to send in your special mentions for the October Magazine— The deadline will have to be 24th September. Then we can all pray for you too.

The Ministry of Welcome (Part One!!) J. John

Welcome. Such a small word. Such a big ministry. To welcome someone is to say: We see you. We value you. We're glad you're here. There's room for you.

Perhaps that is why welcome lies so close to the heart of the Christian gospel. Paul writes, 'Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God' (Romans 15:7 ESV).

Notice the standard.

Not: Welcome people when they agree with you.

Not: Welcome people when they behave like you.

Not: Welcome people when they vote like you, worship like you, dress like you or share all your opinions.

Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you.

That raises the bar considerably because Christ welcomed us before we had sorted ourselves out.

Thankfully. If Jesus waited until we were perfect before welcoming us, the church would be the emptiest building in town.

Evangelists are not called to guard the drawbridge. We are called to lower it.

The gospel is not: Keep out. The gospel is: Come in.

We have become remarkably good at guilt by association. Yet if association implied approval, Jesus would have been in serious trouble. He ate with tax collectors. He spoke with Samaritans. He allowed a sinful woman to anoint his feet. He touched lepers. He welcomed children. He spent time with society's outsiders.

Jesus never confused loving people with endorsing everything about them. Neither should we. This is a distinction our culture – and sometimes the church – desperately needs to rediscover: welcome is not endorsement.

I can welcome you without agreeing with everything you believe.

I can listen to you without adopting all your opinions.

I can sit at your table without signing my name beneath everything you have ever said.

I can love you even when we disagree.

Christians ought to be exceptionally good at this. Grace does not require agreement before it offers kindness. You don't have to agree with someone to treat them like they are made in the image of God. Hospitality isn't just making tea, it's making room – room at our table, room in our conversation, room in our church and room in our heart.

The church must be careful that in defending truth we don't forget grace. Jesus was 'full of grace and truth'. Not 50 per cent grace and 50 per cent truth. He was full of both. Truth without grace can become brutality. Grace without truth can become sentimentality. Jesus embodied both perfectly.

And here's the challenge. The holiest person who ever lived was also the person sinners wanted to be near.

Children came to him. Outcasts came to him. Tax collectors came to him. The broken came. The curious came. The ashamed came. The religious came.

Somehow, they knew, 'I can approach him.'

Who Would Feel Welcome with Us?

Perhaps every Christian should occasionally ask, 'What do people experience when they encounter me?'

And every church should ask, 'What do people experience when they encounter us?'

Do they meet folded arms or open arms? Suspicion or hospitality? Coldness or kindness? An examination or an invitation? A barrier or a bridge?

Would the lonely feel welcome?

Would the successful feel welcome?

Would the struggling feel welcome?

Would the person with complicated questions feel welcome?

Would the person with a complicated life feel welcome?

Would the person who disagrees with us feel welcome?

Would a sinner feel welcome?

I hope so. Because if sinners aren't welcome, none of us can come in. The church doesn't have a VIP entrance, because the ground is level at the cross. (Part 2 next month)



SEPTEMBER 2026

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1 10am-12pm <i>Bourne to Sing</i> 7.30pm Deacon's <i>Business Meeting</i>	2 1.30 & 7.15pm Church based housegroups	3 2pm Bright Hour 6pm First steps Bible Study- hub 6.30pm Youth Band	4 9.30am Pastoral Team meeting- Hub 9.30-11.30am Café 3:16 re-opens 12-2 pm <i>Glory Girls</i> 7-9.30 Youth Start of term Party	5 10am-12 noon <i>Contact Centre</i>	6 10am Prayer in Hub 10:30am special Anniversary indoors and outdoors Com- munion service and outreach 6:30pm "Do we baptize cor- rectly according to Scrip- ture?"
7 10-12 ABC Restarts 7:15-8:30pm A.A. Recov- ery	8 10-12 Choir	9 Office closed 7.30-9pm Women in Prayer	10 10.45 Faith Talks at Woodstock care home 2pm Bright Hour Time tbc First steps Bible Study- hub 6.30pm Youth Band	11 9.30-11.30am Café 3:16 12-2pm <i>Glory Girls</i> 7-9 Underground	12 10am-12noon <i>Contact Centre</i> 11-1 Outreach on High St. 1-2.30pm Feedback 6pm Jesus the Evidence	13 10am Prayer in Hub 10:30am - TBC Rev Nathan Gordon 6:30pm-Stories of faith
14 10-12 ABC 7:15pm <i>Writers group</i> 7:15-8:30pm A.A.Recovery	15 10am-12pm Choir 7.30pm Deacon's Prayer time	16 1.30 & 7.15pm Church based housegroups	17 2pm Bright Hour Time tbc First steps Bible Study- hub 6.30pm Youth Band	18 9.30am Pastoral team meeting 9.30-11.30am Café 3:16 12-2pm <i>Glory Girls</i> 5-6.30 JAM Club re- starts 7-9 Underground	19 10am-12 noon <i>Contact Centre</i> Offsite- 9.30- 12.30 Women's Prayer Breakfast	20 10am Prayer in Hub 10:30am—Baptism Sunday 6:30pm Praise & Worship With Communion
21 10-12 ABC 7:15-8:30pm A.A. Recov- ery	22 10-12pm Choir	23 2.30pm Pine Lodge Care Home Service	24 10.45am Wood- stock Care Home 2pm Bright Hour Time tbc First steps Bible Study- hub 6.30pm Youth Band 7.30pm Worship Team get together	25 9.30-11.30am Café 3:16 12-2pm <i>Glory Girls</i> 5-6.30 JAM Club 7-9 Underground	26 10am-12 noon <i>Contact Centre</i> 2pm Ladies Afternoon Tea 7-9pm Christian Singles Fellow- ship	27 10 am Prayer in Hub 10:30am Youth led service 6:30pm The Encounter
28 10-12 ABC 7:15-8:30pm A.A.Recovery 7pm Writer's Group- Hub	29 10-12pm Choir	30		Advance notice that the office will be closed 2nd-15th of October.		

