

# the : tablet

## tabernacle : penarth

purpose: to reflect God's love in our church, community and world.

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## ***Baptists in major change for mission***

Baptist Union Council, the governing body of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, has agreed major reforms of the denomination's structures to strengthen the support it gives to local churches.

The reforms arise out of a year-long review which was initiated by financial concerns but which has been undertaken with a much broader remit to establish structures more fitting for mission in the 21st century. At the heart of the changes is a new way of working together between the national office in Didcot, the regional associations and the Baptist colleges to support churches. The changes are designed to enhance the inter-dependence between churches, associations and members of specialist teams.

As a result there will be downsizing of the national office in Didcot, with some work taken on by associations whilst removing duplication of activity carried out both in Didcot and the associations. At Baptist House (Didcot) the number of staff will be reduced by 14 full time equivalent posts from 46 to 32. The role of General Secretary, currently held by the Rev'd Jonathan Edwards, will

have a new job description incorporating many of the tasks done by the current General Manager Richard Nicholls. A nominating group has been established to look for a new General Secretary. Both of the current roles will cease at the end of July 2013, but Richard has agreed to serve as Transitional Manager for a limited period whilst the new arrangements are put in place. Council expressed their love and prayers for Jonathan and Richard at this very difficult time.

A new leadership team, the Baptist Steering Group, will replace the Senior Management Team at Baptist House and will be responsible for implementing the strategy of the Union that has been agreed by Baptist Union Council.

Part of the money received by the Union from its members through the annual 'Home Mission' appeal is dispersed as grants. Grants are awarded to support a minister's stipend or mission project in situations where these posts and projects would not otherwise be possible. This has been done centrally at Baptist House but will in future be administered through six association partnerships. In these partnerships two or three associations will decide together who is awarded grants in their regions.

Other reforms agreed at BU Council included reducing the size of Council and making its role more strategic, encouraging the establishment of networks of Baptist churches and a reduction in the number of committees reporting to Council.

Jonathan Edwards commented, 'This is a very painful time but it is clearly right for the Baptist Union to make serious financial cuts. My colleagues and I at Baptist House have all done our work out of a profound sense of God's call, and we appreciate the sensitivity and support of the denomination as we seek to discover his will for our future.'

'My visits around the country constantly remind me of the energy, initiative and deep commitment of churches, colleges and associations to share in the mission of Christ. Amidst the challenges there is a great deal to encourage us and I look forward to seeing the way in which God leads the Baptist family in the coming years.'

To read the full article visit [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk) and follow the link called "Baptists in Transition for Mission".

# THE BIG ISSUE

Each issue of *The Tablet* will look at one issue that has been discussed at a recent Church Meeting and explain some of the background. Our hope is that you will use this as a guide for prayer, but also that you might be encouraged to attend future Church Meetings. The matters we deal with are sometimes mundane, sometimes

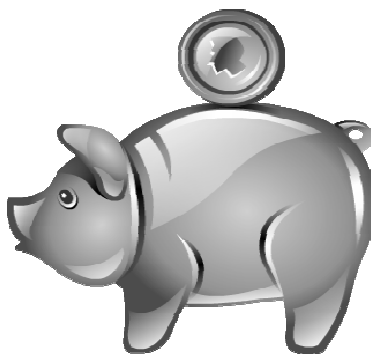
routine, but sometimes of incredible importance to our Christian life together. This issue we reflect on **Money ...**

It has been a tough time financially throughout the world this year, and Tabernacle is not immune from the pressures which have been affecting governments and national financial institutions. This year the leadership found itself in the position of having to cut items out of the proposed budget for the first time in 5 years, and present the reduced budget to the church meeting for approval.

However, it was not all doom or gloom: Tabs is debt free for the first time in a generation, and that follows major refurbishments of both manses in the last 4 years, significant improvements to the fabric and equipment of the church centre, major repairs to the facade of the church and several major evangelistic efforts including 2 Big God tents, 3 summer fun days and the Jubilee celebrations. In the last three years we have had 7 members in full time theological training and a further 4 in part time training for ministry. On top of this the church has grown in membership by 15% since we revised the membership roll in 2009. Not bad during a time of austerity!

However, the reality is that over the last 2 years a number of members have moved out of the area (several of them to undertake new ministries in other parts of the UK or the world) and often these people have been generous givers. Those who

are now joining the church are younger and less established in careers or many have young families or new mortgages, so they have less disposable income. Investment income has been almost nil, a number of members have become unemployed or had their income reduced in other ways, and many of those who would normally give generously to the church out of annual bonuses from work have been unable to do so this year. 2013 will be a time of financial caution in our financial budgeting.



After much reworking and negotiation between leaders our treasurer (Jon Morse) was able to bring a budget to the church meeting which anticipated a modest increase of 4% in the total spend during 2013 despite us having one extra full time member of staff compared to 2012. The total budgeted expenditure for 2013 is anticipated to be a few pounds short of £190,000 and is expected to be fully covered by the giving of the church members. In other words, despite pressures on money we have been able to avoid a deficit budget or big cuts in overall expenditure.

However, this relies on your continued sacrificial financial support. Our budgets mean nothing if YOU do not give so please

prayerfully remember the church as you plan your personal budgets for the coming year. Have you updated your standing order lately? Have you increased your giving in line with any increases you may have received in the last 12 months? Have you signed a "Gift Aid" declaration, as this is the easiest way to increase your giving to Tabs by some 20%? Have you considered including the church as a beneficiary in your will? Tabernacle is here to serve the Kingdom of God and give itself in service and witness in the church, local community and the world, but we can only do this with your continued financial support.

One item cut from budget requests submitted this year was a significant sized request for money to update the projection system in church. The current system is some 10 years old and starting to come to the end of its useful life. If you have been in the sanctuary during morning services recently, you will know that on sunny days the main screen becomes virtually impossible to see. As time goes on the quality of the picture will continue to fade and we will need to do something about it.

Options include replacing the current projector with a brighter, more modern one; replacing the projector with 2 overlapping projectors installed nearer the front of church (more than doubling the brightness of the picture) or replacing the projector with very large flat-screen T.V.s at the front of church with repeater screens further back. This matter will be brought to a Church Meeting early in 2013 with a view to using the Gift Day next year to address the current problem.

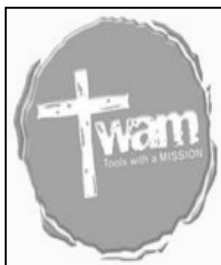


The Kingdom of God is not about me but about transforming the world and everything in it, said Brian McLaren at a conference in London this month. Speaking on day two of the Faithworks conference, the popular emerging church leader asserted that Christians tend to put themselves and their entry to Heaven at the centre of their faith, while neglecting to consider the significance of their faith for the world around them.

Christians, he said, have become “consumers of religious goods and services” who view the church as something that exists to fulfil their needs and house their soul until they went to Heaven. “Our theology is perfectly designed to produce the results we are now getting. If you want a change in results you need a change in theology”, he said. “The world exists so we can extract people and money to come into the church. The idea of what church is about is producing a lot of the results we’ve been getting.”

He said that although Christians were not of the world, they were still in the world and called to be agents of transformation by bringing God’s Kingdom to Earth. “We are not passive players conforming to the world but with transformed and renewed minds, we are agents of transformation, The Kingdom of God is about God’s Kingdom being done on Earth. It’s not a plan of upward mobility and how we get to Heaven but about how God’s Kingdom comes down to Earth ... it’s a downward movement.”

McLaren urged Christians to realise that they had a part to play in the Kingdom of God coming on Earth by being Jesus’ arms, hands, feet, and smile in the world.



TWAM (Cymru) continues to expand. Thanks to some small local firms connected to Tabs we were able to exhibit at the Eisteddfod. We now have supporters from Milford Haven in the west to the New Forest in the east and stretching up into mid-Wales. We take deliveries at the centre three mornings of the week and every six weeks we dispatch an overloaded van of selected goods. Our work has been noticed at head office and Andy Bowdler, the area co-ordinator, has been invited to join the board of Tools With A Mission.

If you are interested in finding out more about the work of TWAM, or how you can get involved, speak to John Haggitt or Andy Bowdler or pick up a leaflet from the Coffee Lounge.

John Haggitt  
Chairman, TWAM (Cymru)



## Small Groups during Advent

For those groups that need them, there are three small group studies available on an Advent theme. They look at our attitude to money and possessions, our understanding of the Nativity and our response to the poor at this time of year. If your group needs these studies because you have completed ‘Love Wins’, then they are available from Cedric Longville or Graham Niblett.

## COMING SOON

### Sunday Mornings

#### Sunday, December 9th

2. There will be peace  
Isaiah 11:1-10

#### Sunday, December 16th

3. There will be singing  
Isaiah 35:1-10

#### Sunday, December 23rd

4. God will be with you  
Isaiah 7:10-16

#### Sunday, December 30th

6. New beginnings  
Isaiah 34:14-28

#### Sunday, 6th January Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord

1. An introduction  
Isaiah 6:1-13

#### Sunday 13th January Annual Covenant Service

2. Repentance  
2 Chron 7:1-22

### Sunday Evenings

#### Sunday, December 9th

13. Jesus’ testimony  
John 8:2-20

#### Sunday, December 16th

14. Dispute over Jesus  
John 8:21-59

#### Sunday, December 23rd

Carol Service

#### Sunday, December 30th

No evening service

#### Sunday, January 6th

New Year’s Message

#### Sunday 13th January Annual Covenant Service

15. Jesus heals a man  
born blind  
John 9:1-41

All Sunday sermons preached at Tabs are available for listening at home from the website:  
[www.tabspenarth.org.uk](http://www.tabspenarth.org.uk)

Click ‘Downloads’ followed by ‘Sermons’.

# Family Time & First Sunday Worship:

## A message from Pastor Roger

My time as pastor at Tabernacle has been one of great joy over the last 11 years. However, one of the areas of biggest disappointment for me has been in the area of Family Time services which we started in the current format in 2008. For the first year the service was well supported by the congregation and a large team of volunteers. Sadly, over subsequent years it is becoming increasingly clear that Family Time is now deeply unpopular both with adults and children and it is not working. Many people take the opportunity to have a Sunday off and those few children that come are not engaging with the service. As a result, **with immediate effect I am suspending Family Times and replacing them with two alternatives.**

I want to move the Family Time service downstairs into the conference room. Each month a team of people will plan a service with worship led by the worship group and aimed purely at children. The service will include a Bible story, talk, video, games and other activities and 'break-out time' into arts and crafts activities. In effect we will follow the pattern of the summer holiday club and pack it into one hour of activity downstairs. In due course, if this service proves to be successful, I would like to see permanent projection and sound equipment installed in the conference room to facilitate ease of setting up and also to be used by other groups using the room during the week. This service/Sunday club would need a good number of adult volunteers in the same way that holiday club does. The pastors will be involved as necessary and we would want to see the very best being provided in terms of resources and musicians. Children would be dropped off at the beginning of the service in the conference room and there would be activities going on from 10.15 am to engage them as they arrive.

Meanwhile, upstairs there would be something approaching a more traditional service with sung worship, Bible reading, sermon and prayers. I would like to use the opportunity to develop worship from sources such as Iona or Taize and more reflective styles of devotion and worship. I would also like us to pursue the use of visual and performing art in the worship.

Both upstairs and downstairs services would be aimed to start at 10.30 am and at 11.30 I would like the children and helpers from downstairs to join the congregation in the sanctuary for a closing act of worship all together. I hope that in time this would be a shared communion for the whole church family together.

The 'split service' pattern will probably take a few months to become established and will need grace and give and take from both services. We would need to understand from day one that both services are equally important and have equal status. Upstairs is not 'real church' and downstairs is not second best. It may be that if the children's service becomes very popular in the way that holiday club has over the last 10 years then it moves upstairs into the chapel and the other service moves downstairs to the conference room! This idea would also need a degree of restraint and tolerance: the building is not perfectly soundproofed and noise will easily travel between the two locations, so grace will be required!

My hope is that this pattern of worship will address the very particular needs of children and young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by providing relevant, high quality worship and teaching. We want our young people to feel valued and loved and not 'put out' while the adults have 'real church' upstairs. At the same time I hope that we will provide a service for adults which meets their particular needs and worship preferences.

### *Christmas Services at a Glance*

<b>December 23rd</b>	<b>Carol Service at 6.00 p.m.</b>
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>Crib Service at 3.00 p.m.</b>
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>Midnight Communion at 11.15 p.m.</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Family Celebration at 10.30 a.m.</b> <b>Bring along your favourite Christmas gift to show to everyone else.</b>

