

Dear Friends

I do hope that you are well and that the arrival of September hasn't come as too much of a shock to you! We've had a great August and have succeeded in keeping the diary quite light, so there will be a noticeable contrast as we head into the new month. Sue and I had a lovely few days staying in Devon whilst C went to the Somerset Christian Camp near Crewkerne, and for the rest of the month we have had lots of days out and chilled time at home.

ZEPHYR – It's a long time since Zephyr, our Labrador, got a mention in one of these letters but he is well known to many of you. He will be 16 at the beginning of next month and is now, bless him, on his last legs. He is partially deaf and blind and his back legs are struggling, but overall he is much the same as usual and is certainly a very much loved member of the family.

CHURCHES – It continues to be a joy sharing in the life of Eastleigh and Waterlooville Baptist Churches. Eastleigh have now been actively looking for a minister for over a year and although the church is thriving there is an understandable eagerness to find the right Senior Minister. We have interviewed ten candidates to date and, as you will see, we are meeting a further minister at the end of the month. Please pray for us as we do so and also for Waterlooville who will begin their search for a minister this month.

SPURGEON'S COLLEGE – It is an honour to have become a Governor and I have done so at a time of considerable challenge. The Government's newly established Office for Students has refused to grant registration to the College and so during August we had to have an emergency Governors' Meeting. There are no problems at all with the teaching of the College but there were anxieties about the College's financial sustainability. As a Governing body we are convinced that the College is financially sound and that the OfS decision was based upon an incorrect understanding of our finances. The College can continue to teach but the OfS decision prevents students from accessing student finance which is obviously a key issue. Please pray for us as we mount a legal challenge to the OfS decision and as we seek to find a way through this difficulty.

I am so grateful for your interest and prayers, and always delighted to hear your own news.

With our love,

Jonathan

SEPTEMBER DIARY

Sunday 1st
Newbury Baptist Church

Monday 2nd
Family visit to Giffords Circus in Marlborough (we do love this circus and have visited it on many occasions. Duncan has a week off and so he and Beth will be joining us)
Mentoring in Newbury

Tuesday 3rd
Take C to her Play Therapist
Oxfordshire visits

Wednesday 4th
Premier meetings in London

Thursday 5th
Leading the First Thursday Lunch-time Service at Newbury Baptist Church
Waterlooville Church Members' Meeting

Friday 6th
Spurgeon's College visit

Saturday 7th
Eastleigh Baptist Church Deacons' Away Morning
Ali Boulton's Commissioning and Farewell Service – Swindon

Sunday 8th
Preaching at Whitchurch Baptist Church, Hampshire

Monday 9th
Eastleigh Baptist Church Day including Ministry Team Meeting, pastoral and Leadership Team Meeting

Tuesday 10th
Newbury Office

Wednesday 11th
Premier Visit

Thursday 12th
Meeting with C's Play Therapist
Waterlooville Baptist Church Deacons' Meeting

Friday 13th
Enabling Church Course promotion (this is the excellent 8 week course prepared by Churches for All which helps churches to explore how to welcome people with disability. Do ask me if you would like more details. I am doing some promotional work on behalf of Churches for All.)

Saturday 14th
DAY OFF

Sunday 15th
Preaching at Waterlooville Baptist Church

Monday 16th
Meeting with our supervising Social Worker

Tuesday 17th
Gloucestershire visits

Wednesday 18th
Loddon Stamp Auction

Thursday 19th
Churches for All network meeting at the offices of the Evangelical Alliance in London
(Churches for All is a really valuable coordinating group for Christian disability organizations)
Spurgeon's College overnight Governors' Meeting

Friday 20th
Governors' Meeting

Saturday 21st
Woking Postcard Fair

Sunday 22nd
Newbury Baptist Church

Monday 23rd
Mentoring in Wiltshire
Visiting Christ Church, Abingdon, a large Evangelical Anglican church which is exploring the possibility of appointing a Parish Nurse. I am going there in my capacity as an Advocate for the charity.

Tuesday 24th
Mentoring in Eton (you must wonder why Eton?! It's simply a compromise location with my mentee. We meet in Costa ... not the College!)

Wednesday 25th
Newbury Office

Thursday 26th
Oxford visits

Friday 27th
DAY OFF

Saturday 28th
Count Everyone In Trustees' Meeting (Count Everyone In is the charity for ministry amongst people with learning disabilities set up by my good friends Pete and Christine Winmill, who used to work for Prospects)

Sunday 29th
Preaching at Eastleigh Baptist Church

Monday 30th
Meeting with a candidate at Eastleigh Baptist Church