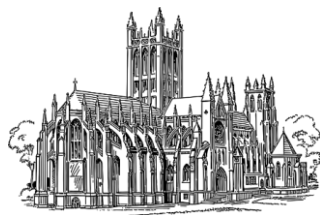
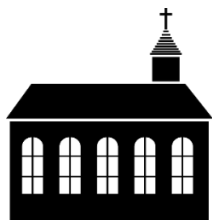


CCH Sermon 21st June 2020 Acts 2:42-47

I wonder if you were to draw a pic of the church what it would look like?
Maybe like this? Or this?!



Actually, a church looks more like this or this...(pic on my desk!)



Church is actually a group of people who are following King Jesus. And we see that as we continue to look at early church in the book of Acts.

When Jesus left the planet, he didn't stop working, but sent his Holy Spirit to give his people strength to share the good news, and what happened? v41. More people became Followers of Jesus. We saw that a couple of weeks ago, when we saw...

1) A new day has dawned, 2) A new King has come, 3) A new response is required (to turn and trust Jesus and show that with baptism).

Do you know 3000 people started to follow Jesus- that would be about 1/8 or 1/10 of our town- (guess who's been doing fractions this week)!

Now what we are going to see today is that when people start to follow Jesus, they don't do so on their own, but they become part of a community, a family: the church. We're going to look at that family in two ways.

1) God is at work in the church!

2) People are at work in the church!

Let's pray!

1) God is at work in the Church

Let's look at v41 and v47b the two sentences that top and tail our passage. The church is a miracle! It's a miracle of the Holy Spirit.

It was a miracle when the church first started 2000 years ago, and it was a miracle when our church started! And every time a new person turns to Jesus and joins the family a miracle happens. God is at work in the Church. There's a clue in the word saved in v47.

I wonder if any of the older kids know who this is? Boris Johnson the Prime minister said "there was no doubt that the NHS saved my life". That word "SAVED" means he had to have people help him and rescue him, because he needed help. They looked after him, they helped him breathe, they helped him get better. They saved his life. He was dying, and the NHS rescued him.

Kids can I ask you, are you following Jesus today? If you are, then God has done a miracle in your life to make you follow him. He has saved your life. Now if anyone tuning in today is not following Jesus, you need to call out to him to do that. Being a Christian isn't about being good, it's about being rescued by his death on the cross to forgive us.

This is something that should cheer us up in a difficult time. I know a lot of people have had difficult weeks. There's been rain, kids have been stuck at home, you can't see your friends, you can't see your grandparents. Some of you don't know if you can get married, or whether you'll have a job. It's a very very worrying time, there have been tears (and that's just the adults!) But be encouraged God is at work! He's at work. He's in the business of saving lives. He did it 2000 years ago and he's doing it today. In Huntingdon, in Belgium, all over the World! He hasn't left this world to go to ruin. He's rescuing it!

Now in a minute we're going to see *people* at work, but first of all, we just need to stop and realise that whatever work we have to do, it's in response to what God is doing, and we should thank him! His is the big part! God is at work in the church. And we should pray that he would continue to work in us and through us, so that like the early church, we would grow, as v47, God adds to the number those who are being saved. Now let's move onto our second point.

What does it look like when God is active? People are active!!

1) God is at work in the church 2) People are at work in the church!

We're going to have a bit of interaction now, and I'd like anyone, especially children, to call out and tell me from this bit of the Bible what people are doing in the church?

OK I jotted down 4 things. And 4 visual aids. And they are all things that marked the early church, and I believe they are to mark our church too. They are things that we can all do. We can't do God's work. He does the saving, and that's a relief! But we can do these things, though we need his help to do them.

1) LEARNING (visual aid- Bible)

The early church was a learning church. Look at v42. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching"*.



We met Matthias a few weeks back. He was one of the apostles, the official spokesmen for Jesus. And Jesus gave them their teaching, and that's what they shared with the early church, and it got written down in the Bible for us.

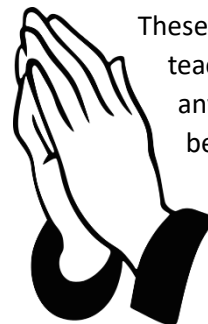
So the early church was learning all the time. So they didn't switch off their brains. The work of the Holy Spirit isn't

Now the wonderful thing about this is that it's not boring. I don't know if you ever find school boring. Wonderfully church isn't school, though we normally meet in a school. But learning from the Bible is so exciting, because it's learning about Jesus! And Jesus is the most wonderful person who's ever existed. Once you start to follow him you want to learn more about him.

When God is at work, the people are learning from the **Bible**. Let's pray that happens in our church too.

2) PRAYING (visual aid- praying hands)

"and to prayer". v42



These guys weren't just devoted to what we might call Bible teaching, they were devoted to prayer. They knew that if anything of any lasting value is going to happen, it's going to be through prayer.

God is at work working out his purposes.

That's why it's essential we pray! Let's be a church driven by prayer rather than programmes! CPM 2 weeks!

(perhaps we might miss this.... Perhaps we're better 1st two than 2nd two)

3) SHARING- (visual aid baby bottle)

"to fellowship to the breaking of bread"

The early church was sharing. They were sharing **friendship**, they were sharing **food** (that's probably informal like when we have meals (hope they can resume soon- just socially distanced cups of tea at the moment!) and also the Lord's Supper, when we remember Jesus' death. You might like to do that at home with your family.

They were also sharing belongings and money (funds!). v44,45. This baby bottle is used by a local Christian charity to support women in crisis pregnancies, and we can put our pennies and pounds in it to share money with them. It was a wonderful community that was sharing.



As we go into the next difficult days at church with people losing money and losing their jobs, there are already people who have spoken to the church council about wanting to help very practically with those in need. As we go through this coronavirus crisis, and the money worries that many people will have, maybe we can help each other out by sharing food, and stuff, and helping one another.

I love the fact that we have a whatsapp group where people share stuff they don't want. And sometimes share stuff they do want, but want others to have. Do let us

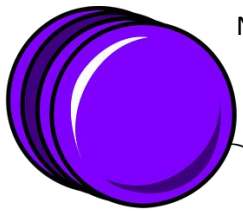
know if you want to join it! We needed to borrow some kids books (because Katie and Lucie had read all of theirs!), and people got in touch to lend us books to read.

Sharing friendship, sharing food, sharing funds, and they were also sharing their **faith**, because it's clear that the good news kept spreading, and more people kept joining the church. The growth wasn't a one hit wonder.

There's an interesting thing in verse 43. they were...

4) MARVELLING!

Easy to miss this. **Visual aid yoyo!** Striking and amazing father's day gift!



Now again, this is really something God does, but they were filled with awe.

Again- reminder- GOD at work.

But they were filled with awe! FEAR! Not terror.
But respect wonder!

There were a lot of miracles in J day and in early church== see one next week in chapter 3. Signs that testified to who Jesus is, and marked the apostles out as his helpers.

We may not experience so many miracles in our day, But God is still at work, and it would be good to pray that our church is marked by this note of reverence, worship, respect and awe for the Living God.

No-one particularly impressed by my Yoyo skills.

Let's pray for that now!

We're going to sing a song now. Newcomers going to sing. Feel free to sing along in chorus. [Brick after Brick](#)

Speaks about the miracle of the church. Some of the marks of the church.