



# New Life News

## EXTRA

*Mark Whiting introduces the current preaching series.*

### Unusual Times: The Major Prophets

Just a few days ago Gordon Brown was explaining that he was the best leader for the UK in these *Unusual Times* in which we live. By the time you read these words it might be that it's clear who will lead the country in these times and indeed for the next few years. It's also possible that as you read this we might have clarity as a church on the community centre project. The challenge of establishing and taking on this project will give rise to *Unusual Times* for our church!

One of the reasons we are hearing from Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel on Sunday mornings is that they were very much God's spokesmen for *Unusual Times*. The exciting and yet demanding picture they paint of God, humankind and the future, strikes a cord with us as God's people here in Guildford as we discern God's heart for our future. Ezekiel contains a passage which was part of the inspiration for our church's logo. Over the past 12 years or so Isaiah in particular has played a key role in how God has spoke to us in terms of both encouragement and real promise.

A particular text of God's promise for us is Isaiah 54 which speaks of "enlarging the place of your tent". Fred Elgar (former Elder at Millmead our parent church) prophesied that this text held promise for us here in North Guildford. It might well be that we are on the verge of stepping into the tangible answer to this word.

Having decided that the 'Major Prophets' had the sort of encouragement and promise for the current time we were highly selective in choosing the passages for Sunday services. The age of preaching week-after-week through an entire book like Isaiah is something from the distant past!

We hope, however, that some of us will fill in the large gaps between the passages and see the broader picture of the message of these three biblical giants. Because we have been selective the sermons will not build on each other in any straightforward way, but I would still encourage you to catch up with any sermon you miss. This can be done in two ways – the leisurely way to do this is to get hold of an audio copy (most weeks the sermon is recorded) or to make use of the new summary you will find in the bulletin each week. We're aiming to summarise or highlight something from the previous week's sermon. Please let us know if you find this useful.

At the bottom of this section of NEW LIFE NEWS you'll find a list of what is coming up. This will be helpful if you want to try and supplement what happens on a Sunday with some reading or study of your own. Given that Jeremiah is only making one appearance you might want to focus on either Isaiah or Ezekiel. If you need any help in finding supporting material do speak to me and I can recommend or lend something to you. Isaiah will be the subject for the Tuesday *Knowing the Word* on 18<sup>th</sup> May. If you don't normally come along please speak to me as you'd be most welcome to join in. We're also trying a fun way to get some hopefully memorable insight into the Prophets – all will become clear on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

May God's blessing be with us all in these *Unusual Times*!

Mark Whiting

#### The Major Prophets Schedule:

April 11	Isaiah 6	Isaiah's Commission
April 18	Isaiah 11	The Root of Jesse
May 2	Isaiah 40	Comfort for God's People
May 9	Isaiah 54	Enlarge the Place of Your Tent
May 16	Isaiah 55	An Invitation to the Thirsty
May 30	Jeremiah 28	True and False Prophecy
June 6	Ezekiel 2	Ezekiel's Call
June 13	Ezekiel 36	The Gathering of God's People
June 20	Ezekiel 37	Dem Bones . . .
June 27	Ezekiel 47	The River from the Temple