

TODAY'S FACILITATORS

PRAYER: Yomi

OFFERING: Annie

WORD: Pastor

WELCOME

We warmly welcome you, if you are worshipping with us for the first time. We believe you've become a member of our church family by God's grace.

Please ensure you speak to the Pastor or one of today's facilitators before you leave.

May God bless you richly (Amen).

VERSE(S) OF THE DAY

Whatever were gains to me ... I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8

GROWTH & ADVANCEMENT

Would you like to suggest ways of advancing God's kingdom and the church? If so, please talk to the Pastor as soon as possible.

God bless.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know ... you could join most of our services online when you are unable to attend? Talk to the technical team or the Pastor to find out how.



Sunday 29 December 2019

WELCOME

Redeemed Christian Church of God

Bethel

WEEKLY SERVICES & MEETINGS

SUNDAY

Thanksgiving / Worship service
From 10am

FRIDAY

Prayer meeting / Bible study
From 7pm

RCCG Bethel Parish

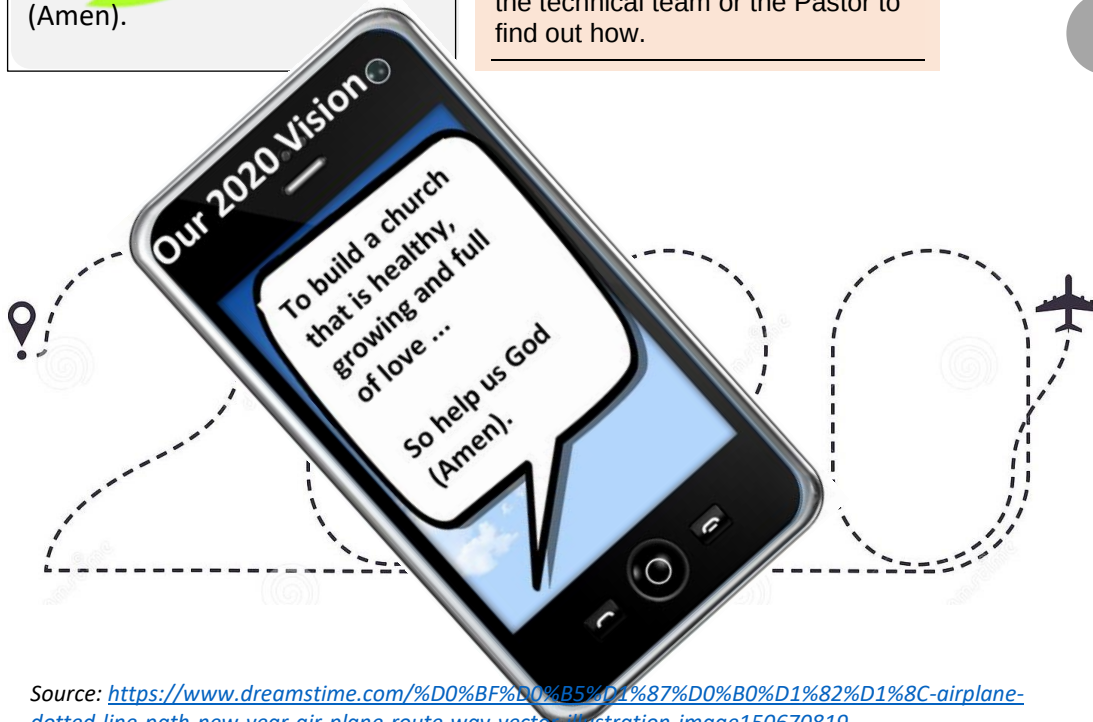
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Source: <https://www.dreamstime.com/%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%8C-airplane-dotted-line-path-new-year-air-plane-route-way-vector-illustration-image150670819>

Our 'must-visit' website



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WELCOME TO RCCG BETHEL PARISH

Our website is a treasure trove of information, and not only about our focus and mission. You could subscribe to our podcast or listen to past sermons too (<http://rccgbethel.church/sermons/>). This is particularly useful for when you are unable to attend services or for refreshing your recollection as an essential part of your private Bible study.

There's more! Details of events and outreach will almost certainly be available from relevant pages on our website and updated regularly, along with downloadable copies of our Sunday bulletins (<http://rccgbethel.church/category/bulletins/>).

So, why don't you set our homepage as one of your **startup page(s)** in your browser now? The following instructions for most of the common browsers may help.

Google Chrome

1. Open the browser and the **Settings** menu (or the **three vertical dots** to the right of the menu bar).
2. Scroll down and click on **Advanced Settings**.
3. Select **Open a specific page or set of pages** under **On Startup**.
4. Select **Set pages** and enter or add <http://rccgbethel.church/>.

Mozilla Firefox

1. Open Firefox. Press **Alt-T** on the keyboard and select **Options** from the drop-down menu or go to **Tools >> Options** from the main menu.
2. In the **Home** section, select **Homepage and new windows** and **Custom URLs...** from the field's drop down.
3. Enter or paste the URL: <http://rccgbethel.church/> or click **Use Current Page** if you are already on our website.

Microsoft Edge

1. Click the **three horizontal dots** to the right of the top menu bar.
2. Select **Settings** and select **A Specific Page or Pages** from the **Open Microsoft Edge With** section drop down options.
3. Enter <http://rccgbethel.church/>. (Click the Plus sign to add more pages if required).
4. Click the **three horizontal dots** to the right of the top menu bar again to close **Settings** menu.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

The parables of Jesus

Parables are stories used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. While they may be simple, they often convey deep messages to the discerning and are typically employed by Jesus to teach deep spiritual lessons or principles to his disciples and all willing to listen. Theologians count 37 unique parables in the Gospels, with some repeated more than once across the books: 18 in Luke, 11 in Matthew and 8 in Mark.

The parables of the hidden treasures and pearl in Matthew 13:44-46 are particularly interesting. In one, someone buried a treasure in a field. The finder, perhaps a farm labourer is unable to extract it unless he buys the field. In the second, a merchant located a pearl of great value. For both, such finds represented the "ultimate dream" for which no price was too high.

The parable of the sower is another popular one (Matthew 13:1-23). The disciples found the story confusing and Jesus had to explain the contrasts between seeds falling on the paths, rocky ground, among thorns and on a good soil; highlighting among other things, circumstances that could make evangelism difficult or impossible. At the end, Jesus made a statement that should be true for all Christians today: "Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Last week, we explored one about the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 and the story of the unforgiving debtor who was shown mercy, but showed none when his turn came (Matt 18:23-31). These were important lessons we'd do well to learn; especially given our standing with God depends on our ability to forgive (Matthew 6:15).

Which is your favourite parable?

Many of us may prefer one or more at one time or the other, perhaps for the lessons, how well they fit into a given narrative or other reasons. We may also want to consider exploring them as we conclude our reading through the 24 chapters of the book of Luke this month. In the remaining days, we could re-learn the lessons and principles taught by Jesus or simply enjoy / meditate on the stories again.

Bottom line

In line with our theme this year to walk with God, we were reminded a few weeks ago how important it is to study the word of God regularly and with "focused intention". The principles in the parable of the sower speaks to this too, reminding us of obstacles that could prevent us from hearing clearly from God. Is there anything in your life preventing you from fully committing to the things of God?

Likewise, the parable of the hidden treasure reveals the lengths some will go to in order to obtain something considered valuable. Both sold all they had, one to obtain a field containing the treasure he believed is buried there, and the other to obtain a valuable pearl. Paul told us what was important to him in Philippians 3:1-14. What are you willing to give up so that you could grow your faith?

RCCG Bethel Parish
The pillar of truth