

St Clement's Monthly News

October 2026

I am amazed by the way the Scriptures always have something new to say, and that as we study them (either on our own or with others) new insights emerge. At the end of October many churches celebrate Bible Sunday where the Church specifically gives thanks for the Scriptures. I love the collect for that Sunday:

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ...

Countless numbers of people have come to faith in Jesus as they have read the scriptures. Perhaps one of the most well-known figures was St Augustine of Hippo. He tells of the events leading up to his conversion in his *Confessions*. He had spent much of his youth and young adulthood searching for meaning. At the same time he felt bound by sinful habits which made him feel miserable and trapped. All of this came to a head one day in a garden in Milan as he wept in deep agony. He writes in *Confessions*: 'As this deep meditation [on his sinful past] dredged all my wretchedness up from the secret profundity of my being and heaped it all together before the eyes of my heart, a huge storm blew up within me and brought on a heavy rain of tears...I went on...weeping in the intense bitterness of my broken heart. Suddenly I heard a voice from a house nearby—perhaps a voice of some boy or girl, I do not know—singing over and over again, "Pick it up and read, pick it up and read." My expression immediately altered and I began to think hard whether children ordinarily repeated a ditty like this in any sort of game, but I could not recall ever having heard it anywhere else. I stemmed the flood of tears and rose to my feet, believing that this could be nothing other than a divine command to open the Book and read the first passage I chanced upon; for I had heard the story of how Antony had been instructed by a gospel text.

I snatched it [the Bible] up, opened it and read in silence the passage on which my eyes first lighted: 'Not in dissipation and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and lewdness, nor in arguing and jealousy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh or the gratification of your desires'. I had no wish to read further, nor was there need. No sooner had I reached the end of the verse than the light of certainty flooded my heart and all dark shades of doubt fled away...My face was peaceful now.'

In fact, Augustine's friend, Alypius (who was with him in the house where he was staying) was converted at the same time; another part of St. Paul's letter to the Romans spoke to his heart. They were both baptised by St. Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, at the Easter Vigil 387CE.

God communicates to our hearts, minds and spirits through the Scriptures. They are like a window through which the light of God continues to shine as we hear them, and as we read, mark, learn and inwardly digest their life-giving words.

Our Bible Study course this Autumn begins on Thursday 1st October, all details over the page. Last year's course was well received, and it was great that our two parishes came together to learn and be mutually encouraged as we studied the Bible together. I am sure that this year's study will be equally enriching.

Diary for October

Sat 3rd 10.00am Working Party at Church. The planned Auction has been cancelled.

Sun 4th
 10.30am **Eucharist at the Parish Church**
 10.30am **Morning Worship at Branch Church**
Followed by Auction of Produce
Sun 11th, 18th, 25th 10.30am **Eucharist at the Parish Church**
 Mondays 9.30am Walking for Health Group
 4.00pm Handbell Ringing
 Tuesdays 9.30am Morning Prayer
 Wednesdays 10.15am Holy Communion
 11.00am Welcome Coffee Morning
 Wednesday 21st 7.00pm Men's Group
 Thursdays 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd 7.00pm Bible Study (See panel below)
 followed by Compline
 Thursday 15th October 2.00pm Mothers' Union
 Fridays 7.00pm Choir Practice

THE BRANCH CHURCH HUMPHREY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE

SUNDAY OCTOBER 4TH
10.30am Morning Worship
followed at 12 o'clock by
AUCTION of HARVEST PRODUCE
Proceeds to the Booth Centre

Brownies 6.00pm Every Tuesday
 Term Time only
 Meeting in the Parish Hall
 Contact Samantha
5urmstonbrownies@gmail.com

BIBLE STUDY

Autumn Bible Study Series - The Vision of Ephesians

This coming autumn, starting on Thursday 1st October at 7pm at **St. Clement** there is an opportunity to explore St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians together. The course is based on a book called 'The Vision of Ephesians' by Tom Wright. 'The Vision of Ephesians will deepen and broaden your understanding of one of the most profound texts in the New Testament, while prompting a deeper awareness of your role within the new humanity that God is creating in Jesus'.

Here is the running order for the sessions:

Session 1 – Thursday 1st October

Introduction; A shout of praise (Ephesians 1.3-14); A messianic prayer (Ephesians 1.15-23)

Session 2 – Thursday 8th October

God's peaceful Temple (Ephesians 2); God's secret plan (Ephesians 3)

Session 3 – Thursday 15th October

The unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4.1-24); Life in the Spirit (Ephesians 4.25-5.20)

Session 4 – Thursday 22nd October

The power of self-giving love (Ephesians 5.21-6.9); Ready for battle! (Ephesians 6.10-20)

Each session will conclude with Night Prayer at 8.30pm. Please read the passages in advance of the sessions.