

# Letter from the Minister

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Dear Friends,

Firstly, thank you for your encouragement back in April during my period of study leave. It's an act of hope and faith but I am hoping that by the time you read this letter I will have finished my work and my MA studies. Thank you also for your messages of love and sympathy to Ali and to us as a family during the immediate time of bereavement after Ali's father's passing. Many of us will know the impact of dementia on us, our families and our community and continue to work for greater understanding and care for all those who are developing this life changing condition. These months have and will bring further change to our family life as Martha has now departed for her work as a performer in southern Spain and Jake is preparing to go to university in the autumn after his gap year.

I wonder how your name was chosen and whether you like it or not? Some people end up being called by a different name other than their birth or given name for all sorts of reasons. We recently had to wait a few days to hear what names had been given to the new royal prince, Louis Arthur Charles! Our church family took some time over a decade ago to choose the new name "Cornerstone" by which they wanted our fellowship to be known. It doesn't take long for a new name to stick!

I recently read an interesting article about names which pointed out that our name might end up being the only thing that we will possess throughout our entire lives. Our name is often the first thing we are asked and we can also find ourselves being defined by our names, titles and qualifications.

Names are particularly significant in the bible and are often bound up with identity, origin, birth circumstances, or even the 'divine purpose' of that person. In today's culture this might not be so common but as Christians we can consider what it means for God to 'summon us by name' (Isaiah 43:1) and that our eternal identity, destiny and name can be found in Christ.

In Ephesians chapter 3, Paul begins his prayer for the Ephesians with these powerful words: *'For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.'*

It is also true that names can cause damage and we must be careful not to label things or people negatively because often what we call them is what they can ultimately become! May I encourage you to seek and share the name of Jesus – that wonderful name to which every knee will one day bow (Philippians 2). I do hope that July and August will be a blessed time for you as you trust in His name.

Yours in Christ,

Eddie