



St Margaret's Church

Together we aim to: Worship God, Proclaim Jesus, Grow in the Spirit and Serve the World

In Contact

13th September 2026

Genesis 21. 1-21



Hagar and Sarah

Galatians 4. 21-31

When watching a film or telly programme, or reading a book, do you stop and think of one of characters: "They have not come out of that well!"?

From the story of Hagar and Sarah, who does not come out well? Before we get to Genesis 21, Abraham has been promised that he will become the father of many (see Genesis 12. 1-3 & 17. 5-7). Yet he and his wife Sarah are getting old and they still have not had children. So they come up with a plan - Abraham sleeps with Sarah's Egyptian-born slave, Hagar. When Hagar gets pregnant, Sarah mistreats her and she runs away. God tells her to go back and gives Hagar the name Ishmael for her son, which means 'God hears' (Genesis 16). Messengers are sent from God to Abraham (who is now almost 100 years old) and tell him that he will have a son with Sarah. She overhears this and laughs (Genesis 18). Who is coming off badly so far?

Now we come to our passage - Genesis 21. Sarah has her child 'Isaac' which means 'laughter' because Sarah laughed when overhearing the angels' message, and because others will now laugh in delight with her that in her and Abraham's old age, she has borne him a son.

All is well for a while but when Isaac is weaned, Sarah's former jealousy of Hagar re-emerges. She tells her husband to cast out Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham is distressed by this. He seems very weak, not standing up to Sarah, and it is certainly not a good nor honourable thing to consider driving out Hagar and Ishmael. God allows Abraham to send Hagar off with the boy, having given them meagre provisions. They wander in the desert and with their water running out, Hagar sits away from her child not able to bear to see him die. But God sees. This what Hagar had discovered before when she had been driven out by Sarah previously. He is 'El-Roi' - 'The God who sees' (Genesis 16.13), and seeing her need he provides first water and then protection for them both.

So who comes out well here? Sarah would certainly be cast as the 'baddie' – but maybe we do not appreciate the shame she felt in being childless or that she even understood the promise of God was for Isaac, not Ishmael. Abraham is weak and fails to provide properly for Hagar and his son, Ishmael. Hagar comes out very much as the innocent down-trodden slave. But was she entirely innocent? Did she provoke Sarah? Did she rub it in her face that she could have children easily and Sarah was barren? Did she still hold that her son was the first-born and should inherit from Abraham?

Only God comes out of this story well. He gives freedom for people to make their choices, whether for good or bad. He sees and hears all that is going on. And He steps in to provide for those in need. Through these unfolding events, God remains true to His plan for all of humanity through Abraham.



Bible Verse for 2026: Isaiah 43.19, Philippians 3.14

I am about to do a new thing... Press on towards the goal!

This week- Sunday 13th September 2026:

Morning Worship Service at 10.30am: Matt will be speaking about Hagar and Sarah from Genesis 21. 8-21.

Exhibition: On Saturday 19th September (10am-4pm) and Sundays 13th and 20th September (1-5pm), Church will be open for the Heritage Open Days exhibition: 'Please invite friends and neighbours and sign up to help for a couple of hours to help serve teas and coffees if you are free.'

Next Week 20th September 2026:

All together celebration Service at 10.30am: Steph will be speaking.

Prayer for growth service at 7pm.

September 13th – 19th – Please Pray for:

- People living in Asquith Road, Baldwin Road & Chorleywood Avenue.
- Message Global Vision Night on Wednesday where stories of Jesus at work shared.
- Meeting of FoodBank trustees on Wednesday – Matt as chair, Jane F present.
- Steph as she prepares to leave next Sunday (20th).
- Good thanksgiving & commissioning service for Steph next Sunday (20th).
- Youth Club activities & for new leaders nearer their age.
- Completion of translation of New Testament into 5 local languages by IEM.
- More people to help with Sunday provision for children.

Looking Ahead:

Steph's Last Sunday 20th September– we will have a bring and share lunch after our morning worship. Please sign up saying what you are going to bring.

Answers to prayer: We want to celebrate what God is doing amongst us, however smaller a thing it seems. Please send to revmattburnage@gmail.com or M19stmargarets@gmail.com.

Have you seen something in the building that needs fixing?: Andrew Foulkes is the first point of contact for issues with the buildings, so if you notice a light bulb that needs replacing or a door that's sticking tell him, or call on 07846 089035, email at andrewfoulkes39@gmail.com or in the parish centre there is a little book hanging on the wall near the First Aid box/Defibrillator. Thanks

This Time Tomorrow: Would you be interested in being interviewed? If so, see Helen Hardy or Matt.

Nativity costumes: Matt wants to do a pop up nativity in December. If you have any suitable clothing or props, please see Matt.

If you are visiting St Margaret's for the first time we hope you will enjoy worshipping with us today.

For more information please visit our website: www.stmargaretsburnage.org.uk

Come and join us for tea or coffee after the service.