

THE MESSENGER

The magazine of Petts Wood Methodist Church



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The Church in Queensway

Minister: Revd. Duncan MacBean

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www.pwmc.org.uk | www.orpchiscircuit.org.uk | www.orpchiscircuit.org.uk

THE MESSENGER

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Quote

Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present.

Nicholas Thomas Wright

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OUR MINISTER'S LETTER:

by Revd. Duncan MacBean

Good News?



We're quite used to hearing the phrase 'Good News' in the church (or we should be!). It is at the heart of the message of Jesus, best summed up in John 3: 16 & 17: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Yet, somehow, this good news is not met with universal acceptance. There are many sceptics who simply choose not to believe this simple message. It comes down, in my opinion, not just to how the message is expressed, but to the existence of a strong counter-message.

I am not surprised at all that the potential good news of the vaccine is being met with scepticism by many people. Part of the answer lies in the nature of our media. There is currently as much work done in disinformation as there is in supplying information. To quote Winston Churchill: "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on." Media is driven by money in the form of advertising. Whether it is square inches of column space, pages of advertising, or virtual clicks on a website or article, this is the nature of our media.

Before you ask why someone would spread disinformation, ask yourself who has something to gain. As someone who grew up surrounded by a very successful state propaganda machine, I recognise the danger signs in this country. In a 2019 report produced by Media Reform Coalition, "just three companies dominate 83% of the national newspaper market (up from 71% in 2015). When online readers are included, just five companies dominate nearly 80% of the market, slightly up from our last report. In the area of local news, just five companies account for 80% of titles (back in 2015, six companies had the same share). Two companies have 46% of all commercial local analogue radio stations and two-thirds of all commercial digital stations. The digital landscape is hardly less concentrated. Google dominates search while popular apps like Instagram and WhatsApp are owned by Facebook, itself the most popular social media site. New, digital-only news sites have emerged

as a significant force since our last report but these are overshadowed by the continuing grip of legacy news and, especially, national newspaper titles.”¹

Under the guise of ‘truth’, many articles have emerged about vaccines containing human foetal cells, poisons, or even micro-chips for tracking people. All of these claims have been refuted by independent scientists, yet the theories persist.

This is a very long way around to say that, although the Church (the international and historical Church) has done many things to mess up the message of Jesus, the truth is still there. At the heart of the message, it is a call to wholeness of being, generosity of spirit, maturity in relationship and the consistent expression of love. This is the possibility inherent in the earthly Kingdom of God, leading, finally, to an eternal expression of love.

In Jesus we see this persistent calling out of truth and love, only to be met by selfishness and hatred. All we can do to counter the scepticism is to be consistent in our love, our faith and our hope. Truth will eventually shine through in the form of real love. Our work as followers of Jesus is to both consistently live out and to challenge people (using words if necessary) to live a generous life in body, mind and spirit. Then people will know the good news of Jesus.

Shalom,

Duncan



¹ <https://www.mediareform.org.uk/media-ownership/who-owns-the-uk-media>

WE GATHER TO OFFER WORSHIP TO THE GLORY & PRAISE OF GOD

We are happy to announce that Sunday Worship in Church will recommence from Sunday 21st March. It will be good to be able to be together again and hope you will feel able to join us. As numbers will at present still be limited, could you please phone Ann Lockwood on 01689 600215 to book your place.

For the moment we will still have to observe the regulations regarding social distancing, mask wearing and will provide hand sanitiser. However, this all worked very safely and successfully last time and will continue to do so

Please join our congregation again. We look forward to seeing everybody and worshipping together again.

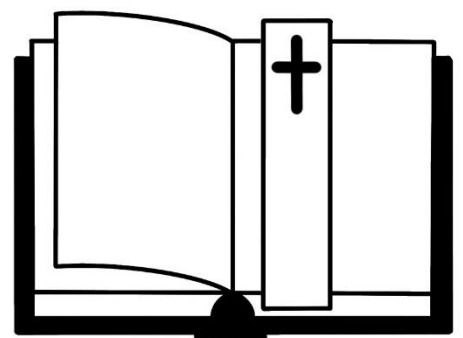
The Church Stewards

Video links and printable order of service

Video links (via Vimeo) for Sunday services are available on the PWMC website:
<http://www.pwmc.org.uk/home-service-videos/>

Please contact Joanne if in the office to be added to the distribution list for printable order of services.

**The church is open for private prayer on Saturdays from 10-12 noon.
Please enter through the front glass doors.**



FAMILY NEWS:

- **Farewell from Edward and Angela**

By the time you read this we will hopefully be mostly unpacked in our bungalow in Oakham, Rutland. As the deadline for contributions for this edition is the day we actually move we can't say if it went smoothly or not but hopefully it did. We shall miss you all, especially as we can't join another congregation at the moment, but we will hopefully be able to make the journey down one Sunday morning, especially if the Social Committee organise a Church Lunch.

We were very moved and thrilled to see so many of our friends on our farewell Zoom which Liz so thoughtfully organised a few days before we left.

We will be thinking of you all when you are back worshipping together and we thank you all for all the years of love and friendship which we and Leslie and Alison experienced in Petts Wood and we wish the Church all the very best as, with God's guidance, you begin a new chapter in the Church's life.

Edward and Angela Wilks
86 Braunston Road
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6LE
Telephone: 01572 368256

- **Condolences to the Lazenbys**

My Mother Phyllis Lazenby, widow of Rev Leslie Lazenby DFM died on the 9th of December 2020, aged 100, at Bradbury Grange Methodist Care Home in Whistable, Kent.

After my Father had attended Hartley Victoria Theological College in Manchester during the mid-1950's he and my Mother served in the Ministry in Tebay, Cumbria. St-Leonard's-on-Sea, East Sussex. Bromley and Gravesend in Kent. (Due to ill health in the mid-1970's they retired to Reigate, Surrey).

Once Father felt well enough they restarted his Ministry in St Stephen/St Austell, Cornwall and Shaw in Lancashire before ill-health again saw them retiring to Goddington House in Orpington, Kent where they lived very happily with Father still taking on preaching appointments, he was also one of the Honorary Chaplains at

RAF Biggin Hill.

After he passed away in 2002 Mother stayed in Orpington moving eventually to Sycamore Lodge before moving to Whitstable after a very nasty fall. I know that there will be some people in your Circuits who will still remember them.

Leslie and Phyllis will be very sadly missed by myself Ruth and my children Libbie, Bo and Ted and granddaughter Isabella and my brother Russell his wife Anne-Lise and son Luke. Also the Lazenby and Bootland families and many friends.

Thank you and with kind regards

Ruth Rose

THANK YOU:

Thanks to Edward and Angela Wilks

This month we are sadly saying goodbye to Angela and Edward who are moving to Oakham in Rutland to be nearer Alison, one of their daughters.

This is a great move for them but a great sadness for us as they have been members of Petts Wood Methodist Church for over sixty years. We have to thank them for all their service to the life of our Church of which they have been such a big part. There can be very few tasks they haven't been involved in. To name but a few : Church stewards, junior Church teacher, property and finance committee members , booking secretary, social committee, communion stewards, flower arranger and craft club. You will be able to add to the list, all this with having jobs and bringing up Leslie and Alison and done with energy and wonderful loving care for others.

Due to the current situation we have been unable to say farewell as we would have liked as a Church but we hope, later in the year, they will be able to visit and we can thank them properly. Meanwhile we owe them a great debt of gratitude for their service and friendship, so thank you Edward and Angela and may God bless you and give you happiness in your new home.

The Church Stewards

Heartfelt thanks from Fran and Greer

I simply cannot let time slip further without registering my heartfelt gratitude to the community of Petts Wood Methodist Church for the kindness and support that has been expressed over the last year.

Unfortunately, I fell and shattered my elbow last June. The damage required major surgery along with the insertion of steel rods etc. into both my lower and upper arm. I am indebted to the professionalism and skills of the senior Trauma Surgeon from Denmark Hill who, a month after the accident, travelled to Orpington, along with his team, to undertake the surgery.

That was nearly nine months ago and the kind words, cards, flowers and phone calls since have been simply amazing. Greer and I have felt incredibly supported by the Petts Wood congregation. I am especially grateful to those of you who phoned whilst I was hospitalised, - to check on how Greer was managing. Incidentally she has been a star!

Rehab has been a long slow process but I have now regained sufficient dexterity to use the computer keyboard again albeit in a somewhat limited fashion.

Greer and I want to express our thanks for the support, care and kindness shown to us over those months, - for the patience and dogged encouragement from so many of you.

This has been a time when one appreciates that a church is not a building but a community - a complex system of love, support and encouragement.

Our Thanks and Best Wishes

God Bless

Fran and Greer Ward

Thanks from Gladys Handley and Family

Gladys Handley and family join in thanking you all for the letters, cards and flowers expressing love and sympathy in their loss of Gordon.

They are deeply appreciated, thanks for giving us much support and comfort during this time of sadness.

Thanks from Eileen

I was lost for words, unusually for me, when I received a lovely bag of goodies from “everyone at Petts Wood Methodist Church”.

It has been a difficult year or so for us all. How the time and trouble was found to enable this package to be put together and delivered escapes me.

I would like to say a very big thank you to everyone. The treats were very much enjoyed over the Christmas period.

Eileen Pickering

Easter Prayer

***This Easter I pray
That the love of God
Is resurrected
Reborn, renewed
Inside your heart***

God Bless You!



GUARDING OUR MOUTHS:

There is a well-known quote from the movie Bambi, where Thumper the rabbit says to the little deer, 'If you can't say something nice, don't say nothin' at all!' It's a phrase I used to say to children in school when I was teaching and wise advice!

Just as you can't get toothpaste back into a tube once it is squeezed out, when we have said something, either verbally or in writing, it is out there and it is impossible to take it back. We need to make sure that we think before we speak because what we say can cause untold damage to a person or their reputation.

Often, we may be more guarded in what we say to another person's face, but I have noticed that on social media platforms there seem to be no such filters on what people write, particularly to, or about, people they don't personally know. Nevertheless those written words can cause hurt and pain to others. I have noticed that even Christians sometimes write things on social media that are sarcastic, critical, nit picking, judgmental and unkind, often to or about people they don't even know. I sometimes wonder as they write if they consider the feelings of the person on the receiving end or if they would be so harsh if they were standing face to face with the person?

Jesus said that 'out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks' (Matthew 12:34b) and you can tell a lot about a person's character by the words they use. This is to me quite a challenging thought, and I wonder what overflows from your heart and mine in our speaking and writing? When people listen to us or read comments we have added on Facebook, Twitter or other platforms what do they see and hear?

Do we gossip and backbite or do we build others up? Do we grumble and complain or do we give thanks? Are our words encouraging or discouraging? Do we lie, exaggerate or flatter or are our words truthful and sincere? Do we boast and promote ourselves or do we seek to bring glory to God and lift others up? Do we prejudge someone's motives or seek to understand where they are coming from? Do we find fault or look for the good in others?

Wesley in his sermon on speech says, 'Evil speaking is speaking evil of an absent person or telling something evil they have done when he or she is not there to answer for himself.'

It is highly likely that all of us have fallen into this trap and are guilty of doing this, sometimes even in the guise of sharing concerns for prayer!

So why do we do it? Often it gratifies our pride to speak of someone's faults or to put someone down. We can feel a little bit smug about ourselves when we are putting someone else or their reputation down, forgetting that none of us are perfect and others could just as easily be finding accusations to level at us behind our backs.

We often forget that our words have great power – either to do good or harm. You will know this is true if someone has ever said something really hurtful to or about you – many people can quote a story about their childhood in which someone, maybe a parent or a teacher, told them something negative and those words have stuck in their minds all their lives and still have a sting in their tail. Conversely you may also remember something encouraging someone said to you that helped spur you on to do something you never thought you could do.

It is also easy for us to speak in a negative way about ourselves, saying things like ‘I was an accident’, ‘I’ll never clear my debt’, ‘I’m so stupid’ or ‘I could never do that.’ Our words, even about ourselves, are powerful and can affect the way we see ourselves, our self-confidence and our self-image.

Although Peter denied Jesus three times, after the resurrection he was given the opportunity three times to cancel out that negative speaking and declare his love for Jesus instead. That’s exactly what we need to do when we have got into the habit of speaking badly about ourselves.

I believe that we need to change the way we speak (and write) about ourselves and others. For every negative thing we have spoken we need to ask God’s forgiveness and pray that God will give us self-control over our tongues and our keyboards, remembering we don’t have to say everything that comes into our minds! The acronym THINK is a helpful one to consider – before we speak or write. Are my words,

Tue,
Helpful,
Inspiring
Necessary
Kind?

The Bible says that we will one day have to give account for every careless word we have spoken and I pray that we will allow Jesus to transform our hearts so that what overflows will bring blessing, encouragement and joy to all those who hear or read them.

Carolyn Lawrence is Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, 2020-21

Source: www.methodist.org.uk

TRIBUTE: Memories of Spencer

Sam was born in East Grinstead, West Sussex. On leaving school he went to London to join the Metropolitan Police. When he and Dorothy married in 1967, they came live in Petts Wood, and were blessed with two daughters, Christine and Heather, and four grandchildren.

Sam was the Police Home Beat Officer for Petts Wood in the 1980's and early 1990's. This was a role he loved, getting to know the shopkeepers, many of whom still remember him. He sometimes visited St. James School to talk to the children. He was a familiar figure pedalling around the area on his bicycle.

He enjoyed a number of pastimes including marquetry, sea fishing and his favourite hobby of gardening. Although not a regular churchgoer, he attended Petts Wood Methodist Church services on special occasions with Dorothy and the family. He was often seen on the premises doing repair jobs or painting to help the property committee.

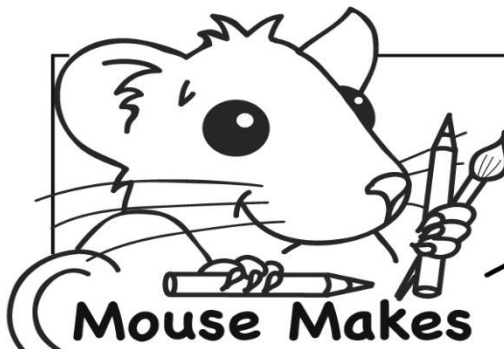
Sadly over the last year or two he became more and more unable to do the things he loved owing to the onset of Parkinson's disease and dementia. He passed away at the PRUH last September.

Rest in Peace Sam, we miss you.

Dorothy Weller and Family




FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART:




Mouse Makes

Can you find these names of **Jesus** in the word search?

SON OF GOD
Matthew 3:16-17

 **KING OF KINGS**
Revelation 17:14

PROPHET
Luke 24:19

 **PRIEST**
1 Timothy 2:5

ROCK
1 Corinthians 10:4


LORD
1 Corinthians 1:9

AMEN
Revelation 3:14


LIFE
John 11:25-27

MESSIAH
John 1:41

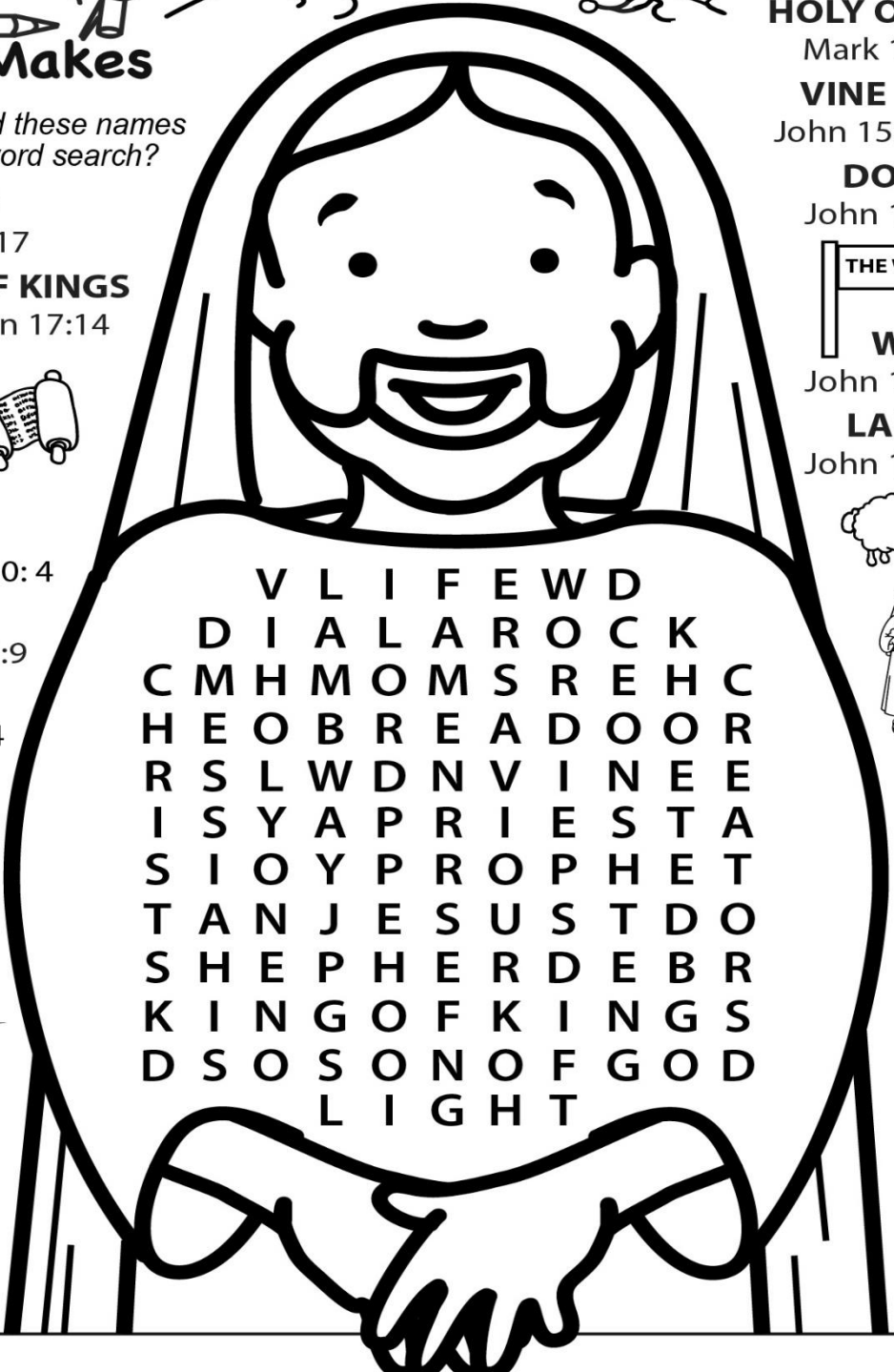
SHEPHERD
John 10:11

 **LIGHT**
John 8:12

WORD
John 1:1-50

 **BREAD**
John 6:35

CREATOR
1 John 1:3




V	L	I	F	E	W	D				
D	I	A	L	A	R	O	C	K		
C	M	H	M	O	M	S	R	E	H	C
H	E	O	B	R	E	A	D	O	O	R
R	S	L	W	D	N	V	I	N	E	E
I	S	Y	A	P	R	I	E	S	T	A
S	I	O	Y	P	R	O	P	H	E	T
T	A	N	J	E	S	U	S	T	D	O
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	E	B	R
K	I	N	G	O	F	K	I	N	G	S
D	S	O	S	O	N	O	F	G	O	D
L	I	G	H	T						


CHRIST
Matthew 16:16

SAVIOUR
John 3:16-17

HOLY ONE
Mark 1:24


VINE 
John 15:5


DOOR
John 10:9

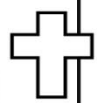
 **THE WAY**

WAY
John 14:6

LAMB
John 1:29







Easter Quiz:

1. At the Last Supper, what food did Jesus liken to his body?
2. What day precedes Ash Wednesday?
3. How was Jesus fastened to the cross?
4. Jesus prophesized that Peter would deny him how many times?
5. On the side of which hill was the garden of Gethsemane?
6. Which job did Zacchaeus hold in the bible?
7. What sweet objects are commonly 'hunted' by children at Easter time?
8. What name is given to the Sunday before Easter Sunday?
9. What was the name of the murderer released instead of Jesus by Pilate?
10. Which 'Friday' commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus?



Answers to Easter Quiz

1. Bread
2. Shrove Tuesday
3. With nails through his hands and feet
4. 3 (Three)
5. The Mount of Olives
6. A chief tax collector
7. Chocolate Eggs
8. Palm Sunday
9. Barabbas
10. Good Friday



When bad things happen to good people

Author: Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

Publisher: Anchor Books (Edition reviewed is a reprint published by Anchor Books)

ISBN: 1-4000-3472-8

This is a question many Christians ask themselves and even more non-Christians ask of Christians. So, we turn to Rabbi Harold S. Kushner to consider the issue, in his book with this title. His consideration of the issue transcends the divides between the 3 monotheistic faiths and finds its roots in the death of his son Aaron (1963-1977) who had a condition known as progeria (rapid aging).

He considers the guilt people bring on themselves when they or others suffer, the power and rationale of prayer and the question "What Good, Then, Is Religion?". He considers Job with his "comforters" and how one might support a person who is suffering as well as how one can draw comfort and support when you or yours unfairly suffer.

Although published in 1981 it remains in print in several versions. A really recommended read for anyone Christian or not.

David Gloin

In your area

Thanks to so many of you, our Coronavirus Emergency Fund has helped thousands of children and families in crisis. Our frontline staff have worked tirelessly in your community to make sure vulnerable children are safe, warm and fed.

Between March and September last year, Action for Children key workers in London and the South East processed



234
applications
for emergency
support.

A total of

£46,468

worth of grants were distributed.

These grants supported more than

1,350

children, young
people and
families.



The money helped to cover the cost of
essentials like food, nappies, cleaning
products, gas and electricity.

Georgina's story

Georgina lives with her mum, Johanne. She goes to one of our disability short breaks services. Before coronavirus, Georgina's family were coping financially. But when the country went into the first national lockdown, there was a problem with their benefits, which left the family struggling. We stepped in to provide vouchers so that Johanne could buy essentials for her family.

More than 4 million children in the UK are locked in poverty. We're worried the pandemic will force even more into hardship. But it doesn't have to be like this. You can help be a vital lifeline for vulnerable children and families. Find out how:
actionforchildren.uk/donatenow

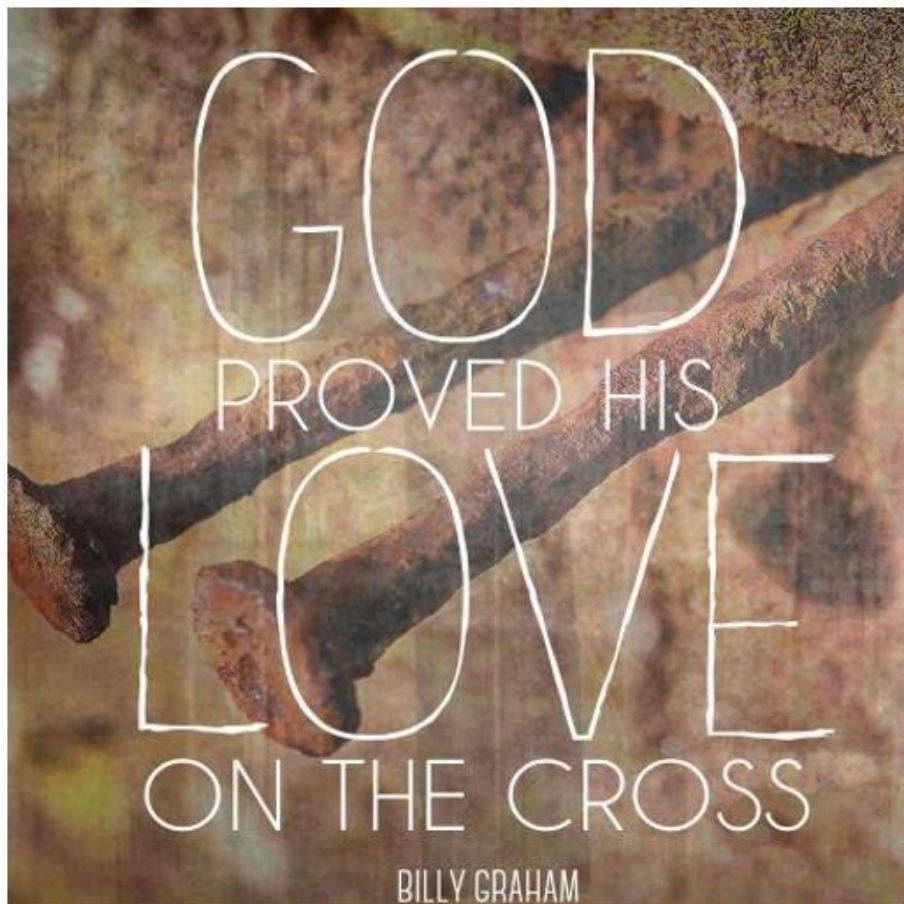


actionforchildren.org.uk

Reflection for Easter

God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, 'I love you.'

Billy Graham



Seasonal Stocktaking, *by Josie Smith*

Another Monday, sandwiched between St. Valentine and the beginning of Lent. I still have the first Valentine card I ever received in my early teens. There was a boy of my own age in our little group, with whom I played cricket, picked blackberries in season, and once or twice went to 'the pictures' as we called it in those far-off days – but he was a boy and he was a friend, not a boy-friend. The card was actually the beginning of the end. We had never even held hands, let alone kissed, and we soon went our separate ways. Happily he went on to academic, professional and sporting success, is now a grandfather, and remains for me a warm memory.

St. Valentine is not only the patron saint of lovers, but it is on his day that birds are reputed to begin nest-building in preparation for finding a mate. Disney has a delightful scene in the film 'Bambi' where the little faun observes the birds going a bit mad, 'twitterpated' he calls it, and then the other small animals likewise, as he looks around him bemused, watching their antics. He is determined that it won't every happen to HIM, and then, inevitably, along comes a little female faun and he goes all 'twitterpated' too. In the Spring a young deer's fancy, etcetera!

So now let's feel the Spring in our own step, and look ahead.

Daylight is appreciably longer, the Spring bulbs are – well – springing, as they always do at this season, and nature is encouraging us to hope again. Whatever is happening outside your windows at this moment, the earth does go on turning, and it won't be long before all living things in creation are visibly responding to the strengthening sun. Last year I came across a lovely poem in Italian by Irene Vella, translated widely on social media, called *La primavera non lo sapeva*, which said that Spring didn't know about the pandemic, so just got on and sprung. This year is going to be the same. The earth is the Lord's, eternally, and no virus is going to change that.

Tomorrow, traditionally, is the day for eating pancakes (I like mine with a little sugar and lemon juice) before the start of the Lenten Fast beginning on Ash Wednesday. My father once unknowingly hurt one of his staff by pointing out gently that she had a smudge on her face. She was a devout Roman Catholic and had come to work straight from the ashing ceremony, and she burst into tears. My father didn't know what he had done. The church we attended as a family – a Methodist mission church in a big city – did not use many of the practices of other denominations. Indeed, my grandmother used to tell the story of a Spring wedding where the organ was not available for use, and it was explained that it was 'because it's LENT'. Someone among the guests asked in all seriousness 'Who's borrowed it?'

We have been living with the pandemic for over a year now, and with the Christian faith for a couple of millennia, and perhaps it's time for a review of the former in the light of the latter.

We have 'given up' a great deal in the last year since Covid-19 reached this country, notably the freedom to leave our homes, mix with our friends, hug those we love, attend our church, follow our pursuits, eat together, go on holiday. Lent is a penitential season. Not many people fast in these days (we have much to learn from Islam about that particular discipline) but there is still a residual practice of 'giving something up for Lent'.

Many people believe now that rather than *giving up* things for Lent we might *take on* things, give more to charity, do more for our neighbours, be more loving.

There have been all sorts of positives around the pandemic. We have seen self-denial among people who put their own safety, even lives, at risk to help others. We have seen people wrestling with unfamiliar technology to keep in touch on line with those they can't physically meet. We have seen people raising money in imaginative ways for good causes. Even simple things like shopping for infirm neighbours, making regular 'phone calls to housebound people, and supporting local food banks, have all brought out the sheer goodness of people in the face of adversity.

And after Lent will come the glorious eternal truth that is Easter!

Source: <https://theologyeverywhere.org>

TRIBUTE: Daphne Beauchamp 1926-2021

It is sad news to report that Daphne died at the end of January peacefully in her nursing home in Bristol.

She had refused to eat or drink for the last six days of her life and Denise (daughter) was allowed to sit with her during that time.

Daphne and David moved from Surrey to Petts Wood in 1950. They immediately joined Petts Wood Methodist Church and Daphne also joined what was then the Young Wives Club.

For many years she was at the helm of the Sunday morning crèche and also the flower distributing rota. She was also the "Box Office" for the Orpington Repertory Company for many years. Daphne was always a willing volunteer for cakes or serving tea and was a real support for David in all he did for us. They were both big supporters of The Guild and they will always be remembered by its members.

She and David were a huge part of our Church community for so many years and our thoughts are with Denise and Graham.



MISCELLANEOUS:

- **Coffee Mornings**

At the moment we are not able to run the Church Saturday Coffee mornings, but I'm hopeful that if all goes according to plan, these may well start up in May/June time.

I haven't produced a rota for 2021 yet, and in due course I will be contacting people who have previously organised a morning. If anyone would like to be added to the rota to organise a Saturday morning, either for our Church or for a favourite charity, then please contact me so I can add you to the rota.

We use fair trade items for the coffee mornings and have a fair trade stall once a month. If you have been missing your fair trade items, then please contact me, as I have been doing orders through Mark Gill during the lockdowns.

Liz Sewell - lizsewell56@btinternet.com / 020 8467 2568 (answerphone)

Many thanks

Liz

- **A prayer for the PW 10 project**, Contributed by Roger May

Friends, I am very pleased to report that the effort to support the infant foodbank that the Salvation Army have set up in St Mary Cray is going really well.

As you know, the call at this stage is for funds rather than for gifts in kind and by the third day after launch, there is already just short of a thousand pounds on the Just Giving page aside from donations which have gone by other routes. Brilliant!

Even if you do not feel able to help financially I am sure you will wish to join in by using the Project prayer which Father Stephen Niechial of St. Francis has composed. Here it is. Thank you.

Lord when I am unthinking about the fact that I can afford to buy food any food I want, remind me of those who cannot.

Lord when I am able to enjoy nutritious food that will keep me healthy, remind me of those whose food does not.

Lord, when my life is made joyful by a myriad of delicious tastes, remind me of those who would be grateful for any variety.

Lord, when I eat not because I need to, but because it's my habit, remind me of those who do not know when the next meal will be.

Lord, when I am full and comfortable, remind me of those who cannot escape the gnawing in their stomachs.

Lord, remind me that you commanded me to feed the hungry.

Amen.

- **Psalm 23**, contributed by David Gloin

As a collector of versions of Psalm 23 from Old English (1155-60) to Gangsta Paradise Lyrics, I added to my collection this from the Bay Book of Psalms, the first book printed and published in North America:

The Lord to mee a shepheard is,
want therefore shall not I,

Hee in the folds of tender-grasse,
doth cause mee downe to lie:

To waters calme me gently leads
Restore my soule doth hee:
he doth in paths of righteousnes
for his names sake leade mee.

Yea though in valley of deaths shade
I walk, none ill I'le feare:
because thou art with mee, thy rod,
and staffe my comfort are.

For mee a table thou hast spread,
in presence of my foes:
thou dost annoynt my head with oyle,
my cup it over-flowes.

Goodnes & mercy surely shall
all my dayes follow mee:
and in the Lords house I shall dwell
so long as dayes shall be.

This is as printed save that the letters have been modernised

- **Methodist Church stands in solidarity with Myanmar**

The Methodist Church in Britain is standing in solidarity with its partners in Myanmar following the coup that occurred in the country at the start of February. Since the coup, there have been violent scenes in the country, with protesters being fired upon and a growing number of deaths.

The Myanmar Council of Churches has called for prayer and support in a statement of request that has been sent to churches around the world. The statement calls upon us to pray for justice and peace in Myanmar, requests the release of those detained by the military regime, action on the control of Covid-19 and an end to the use of force and discrimination.

The Revd Conrad Hicks, Director of Global Relationships at the Methodist Church in Britain, commented, “We stand in wholehearted solidarity and prayer with our partner, the Myanmar Council of Churches, and wish to reiterate their call for an end to the violence and discord within the country.”

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have released a prayer in response to the call for support:

Lord Jesus we stand together with the people of Myanmar at this time of turmoil and unrest.

We hold before you our sisters and brothers in the Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar.

We pray for peace and justice for all citizens and for an end to division and conflict. We pray for your church in Myanmar and pray for your people as they shine the light of Jesus which the darkness cannot overcome, showing your love and compassion for all people.

In solidarity with our partner, the Myanmar Council of Churches, we renounce the forces of destruction and despair and pray for your peace, hope, joy and unity to prevail.

Amen.

The Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference
Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

DIARY DATES SELECTION:

June

Thursday 3rd

Deadline for contributions for Jul-Aug Messenger

TAILPIECE

If Easter says anything to us today, it says this: You can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there. You can nail it to a cross, wrap it in winding sheets and shut it up in a tomb, but it will rise!

Clarence W. Hall

Happy Easter!

