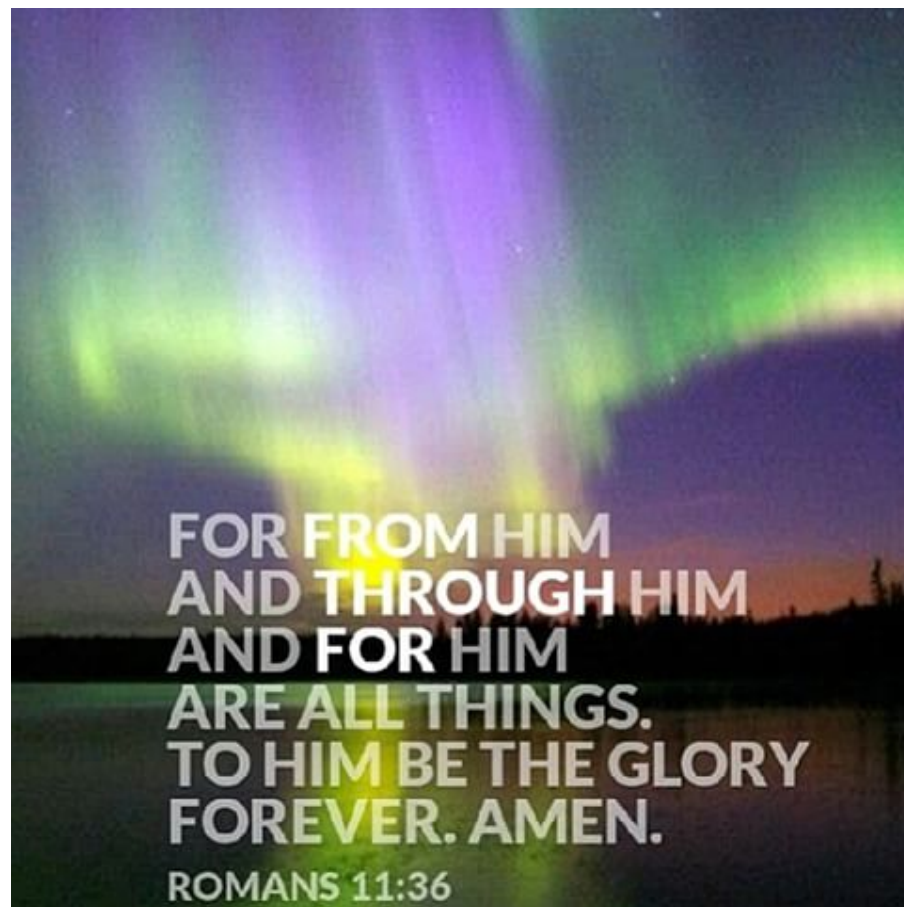


Penge Congregational Church



February 2018 Newsletter

LENT GROUPS 2018



The Bible Through Art

5 Tuesdays in Lent:

20th February

27th February

6th March

13th March

20th March

We will meet in the Vestry from 7.30pm.

There will be about 20 minutes worship,
then Chris McShane will help us explore the
Bible through Art from 8pm until 9pm when
we will end in prayer together.

Please ring the bell at the Kenilworth Road side door!

From the Minister

Being a Christian should be an exciting thing; and one of the excitements I find again and again of our team ministry is the way in which the Holy Spirit works through those who lead our worship services so that we see the mind of Christ and what he wants us to be thinking about as a church fellowship.

I led worship on the Sunday after Christmas, and, as this was also New Year's Eve, I chose to give a New Year message to our church family. I suggested we should focus more on the wonderful fact that Christ is always with each one of us, remembering that Matthew began and ended his Gospel with that. In Matthew 1, when the angel came to Joseph, he told him that the coming Christ child would be named Emmanuel, "Which means 'God is with us' ". Right at the very end of his Gospel, Matthew recounts the Great Commission, with which Jesus tasked his disciples (including us!); the very last words Matthew records are "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age". And, because of that constant presence in our hearts, we should find it easier to reflect it onto others in witness, in a way that invites them to embrace the hope and peace that can be theirs too if they open their hearts to Christ.

Then, two weeks later, Jannett was to lead a service, with free reign to choose her own theme; I was to preach and she gave me the theme of Encouragement, choosing Psalm 46, and the passage from John's first letter, the most well-known verse of which is "We know love by this, that he lay down his life for us- and we ought to lay down our lives for one another". Jannett asked us to think about the ways in which we know the presence of the Holy Spirit, and how that helps us in our lives. And I preached on the encouragement of knowing that, if we reflect God's love on to others, and put our faith, grounded in love, into action, we can know we are doing his will.

And, if you put together those themes- the constant presence of God in our hearts, and the encouragement of knowing all he expects is that we act always in love- then it follows that our hearts should be filled with thankfulness. As George Herbert, the 17th century poet, puts it, "Thou that hast given so much to me, give me one thing more: a grateful heart". And, as he recognises, the only thing we need in order to be grateful is an awareness of the blessings that God has so abundantly given us. I would pray that we may be encouraged to do that by making an effort to acknowledge the many small joys we experience each day. I am writing this on a day of beautiful winter sunshine after a stormy night.

A few days ago, we had a very gloomy day when everything was cold and murky, and I was blessed by coming across the busker outside Sainsbury's singing and whistling, "This little light of mine". Yesterday my daughter popped in and we had a cup of tea together, and a chance to catch up for a few minutes. Yesterday evening, I attended the Churches Together Clergy and Reps meeting, which sounds like a chore, but the fellowship of local Christians from many church traditions was such an encouragement.

As St Paul puts it in Romans 11: "For from him and through him, and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen"

What are the little everyday things- and perhaps even the bigger special things- that God has already given you? I pray that God will open our eyes to those blessings and help us to develop grateful hearts.

Pam

Extract from St Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Good Friday Walk of Witness will this year be a Pilgrimage!

Last year the Churches Together Clergy and Reps thought they had decided that, for 2018 only, there would be no Walk of Witness, only a service on Beckenham Green. This was because of the large scale improvement works in Beckenham High Street, which are scheduled to last until August: we thought 300 + people walking down the busy High Street when there is single file traffic, and possibly a traffic control in the middle, would disrupt traffic even further, enrage road users and also be unsafe for the people involved.

However, when we met in January, we found that God had been prompting us to rethink this, and not to lose this powerful statement of our faith and of what Good Friday means to us as the Body of Christ in this community, not even for just one year.

We can't quite revert to Plan A: the reasons for not walking through the High Street are still valid. However, the plan now is to have the usual short service at St Edmund's in Village Way at 11am, and then to walk to the Green via The Drive and Church Road. We are aware that there won't be much opportunity to witness on that route, as the shoppers will all be on the High Street (although there was a joking suggestion that we should all walk through Marks and Spencer!), so the Walk will be more an act of Pilgrimage for the participants.

When we arrive on the Green, we shall have an open air service, with the usual wet weather alternative of worshipping inside St George's.

Although there will only be two points at which we will need to interact with traffic- crossing from Village Way to The Drive and crossing at the St George's junction- we will need careful stewarding in order to get everyone across in safety and as quickly as possible. Churches Together are asking for volunteers from each church to arrive at St Edmund's by 10.45am and steward. If you feel you could do this, please let our reps, Chris and Lynn McShane, know, and we will give your names to Julia Johnson from St John's Eden Park, who is organising the stewarding once again.

Flower Rota for the next three months

February

4: Caroline Parker
11: Joyce Perry
18: Melanie Cogan
25: Friendship Club

March

4: Jean Sumner
11: Lionel Sawkins
18: Pat Clarke
25: Melanie Cogan

April:

1 (Easter): David Nye
8: In Memory of Heather (Jean S)
15: Melanie Cogan
22: Flower Fund
29: Pat Clarke

Christmas Giving

£150 for St Christopher's Hospice, from the Candlelight service.

£109 for the Greater London Fund for the Blind, from the Christmas Eve service.

The Christmas Post Box raised £40 in donations in lieu of postage saved. This money will be used to buy food for the Living Well Food Bank at Holy Trinity.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The Women's World Day of Prayer this year is Friday 2nd March. Sometimes described as a Mexican wave of prayer, starting in Samoa and ending 36 hours later in American Samoa, churches in 170 countries around the globe will follow the same order of service. In these islands alone, there will be over 6000 services!

The service each year is devised *by* the Christian women of a different country, but it is important to realise it is devised *for* everyone- men, women and children.

This year's service has been written by the Christian women of Suriname, a country, once known as Dutch Guinea, to be found at the top right corner of South America. The service is entitled, "All God's creation is very good!" It has a particularly topical theme: God's creation is so beautiful and yet we are spoiling it with pollution and careless disposal of waste, and especially of plastic waste. We are all invited to think of how we can be good stewards of God's world.

We have two local services on 2nd March, at different times to suit as many people as possible.

The afternoon service is at St George's, High Street Beckenham at 2pm.

The evening service, which is organised by Julie Taylor and in which people from PCC are taking part, is at St John's, High Street Penge, at 7.30pm. After the service, there will be an opportunity to enjoy fellowship with Christians from other participating churches over tea and coffee.

Table Tennis at Beckenham Baptist Church

BBC, Elm Road, Beckenham, has recently started a Table Tennis Club for people of all ages (8-80+!) which runs every Saturday from 4.30pm to 6.30pm. They currently have 4 tables and are hoping to get a fifth. This is open to all as players; but they are also looking for volunteers to help run it. Anyone who is interested in helping, on a rota, please contact Nigel Pilcher (n.pilcher@hotmail.co.uk) at BBC.

Lent Group at PCC

You may remember that last year Churches Together ran a very successful united Lent Activity over five weeks during Lent 2017 at St John's Eden Park. There were five groups to choose from with a very varied range of activities; our own Chris McShane ran one on the Bible through Art. About 160 people signed up for the five weeks and there was much positive feedback. However it was a fairly massive thing to organise and run, and the feeling is that those who did it last year need a year off in 2018. The good news is that they are already thinking about 2019, so, if anyone would like to run a group then, please let Pam know.

The plan for this year is that those churches which run their own Lent Groups this year will circulate all the churches so that people can attend whichever activity suits them best; and in this way, the sense of unity won't be lost.

Chris and Lynn are willing to run the Bible Through Art again, at PCC, as it was so well received last time round. The idea is to explore stories from the Bible and express what they say to us in art. You can see some of the pieces of art created last year at St John's because they are hung in our church. We might throw in a little music too!

The first session will take place in the Vestry from 7.30-9.00pm on Tuesday 20th February, and then each Tuesday until Tuesday 20th March. This is five sessions.

PLEASE TRY AND COME ALONG!

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it
shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it
shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it
shine

Let it shine, shine, shine

Let it shine!

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine

Let it shine, shine, shine

Let it shine!

All up in my house, I'm gonna let it

shine

All up in my house, I'm gonna let it
shine

All up in my house, I'm gonna let it
shine

Let it shine, shine, shine

Let it shine!

Out there in the dark I'm gonna let it
shine

Out there in the dark I'm gonna let it
shine

Out there in the dark I'm gonna let it
shine

Let it shine, shine, shine

Let it shine!

Church Diary February 2018

Saturday 3rd:

2.00pm: SSLSO Annual Organ Recital. Free entry. Tea and biscuits will be served afterwards.

Sunday 4th:

10.30am: Mission: Invitation to the Banquet, led by Chris Parker, the Minister to preach.

6.30pm: Lord's Supper, led by the Minister.

Tuesday 6th:

9.30am – 11am: Café Church.

Thursday 8th:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 11th:

10.30 am: Mission: the Widow's mite, led by Marilyn.

6.30pm: Bible Discussion, led by the Minister.

Wednesday 14th: ASH WEDNESDAY

10.30-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Sunday 18th:

10.30am: Mission: the Wheat and the Tares, including the Lord's Supper, led by the Minister.

6.30pm: Evening Service, led by Marilyn.

Sunday 25th: CHRISTMAS EVE

10.30am: Renewal: the church, led by Chris McShane. Baptism of Daniel Godfrey by the Minister.

6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn.

LENT MEETINGS: The Bible through Art, on Tuesdays 20th, 27th February and 6th, 13th, 20th March. The Vestry. 7.30-9.00pm.

Penge Congregational Church

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