

# Penge Congregational Church



(World Day of Prayer 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020, devised by the Christian Women of Zimbabwe)

## February 2020 Newsletter

An initiative of Hope Together

We are asked to pray where we are, that God will give us opportunities to witness to Christ, at 8pm (20.00 hours) on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, for 20 minutes.



*Pray ... that God will give many opportunities to speak about Christ.*

**Colossians 4:3**



### **From the Minister**

In his letter to the Ephesian church, Paul says this, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." In other words, believing in Jesus, giving your heart to him, brings you a free gift from God out of his boundless grace: the gift of salvation.

There is another New Testament verse, from the letter of James, which might seem to contradict Paul. It says, "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead". The New Living Translation perhaps makes that easier to understand, "Faith that doesn't show itself in good deeds is no faith at all."

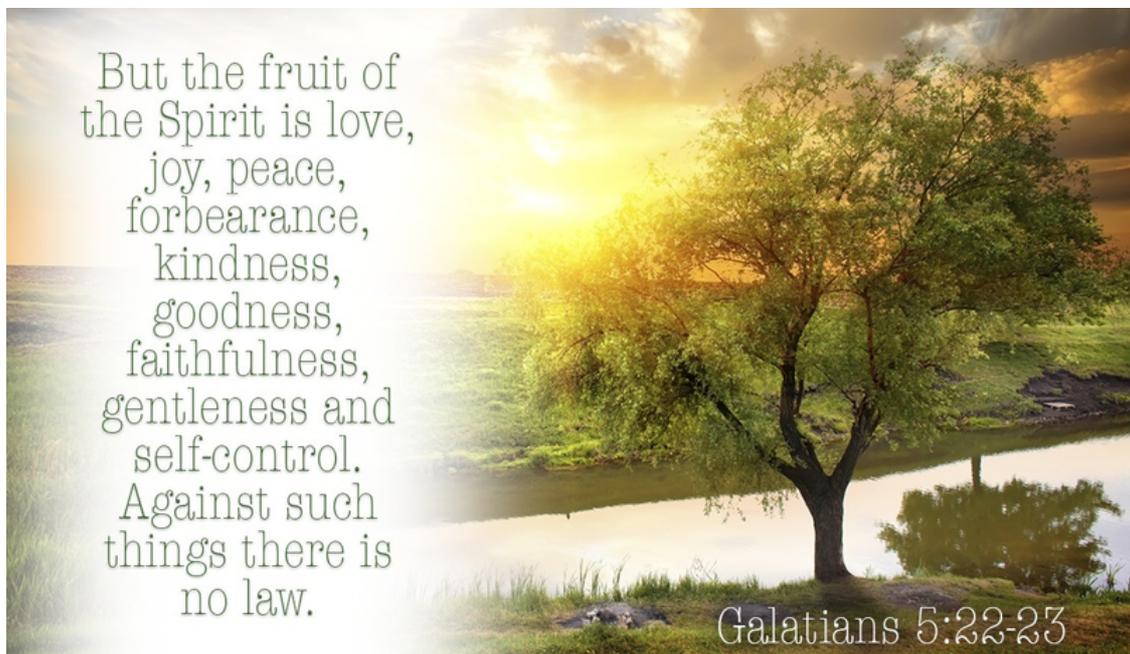
Our Victorian predecessors were great ones for this verse. They took it to mean that, to be sure of your place in heaven, you needed to get God's attention, by assiduous attendance at church, by keeping the Sabbath, by giving to the poor. This was the equivalent of the Pharisee praying ostentatiously on street corners, cited by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. It is worth noting Jesus' judgement on him- his reward would come from the admiration of passers-by, not in heaven- indeed Jesus calls him a hypocrite.

I actually find it quite sad that the Victorians, and indeed some people today, so misunderstood the gift of salvation in Christ that they believed you have to grab God's attention via the admiration and prayers of others in order to obtain the gift of eternal life. How did they miss the Gospel message that salvation can't be bought with good deeds, but is a gift from God to all believers? James didn't mean us to substitute good deeds for faith; he says our faith should express itself in the need to help others.

We can grow and mature our faith and understanding by reading the Gospel, and by prayer. In that way we will love others better, and we will learn to trust God's love for us.

Christ's life, death and resurrection take care of our future with God, and our belief in that sets us free to serve others with joy.

**Pam**



**The Women's World Day of Prayer is now officially just the World Day of Prayer- but still devised each year by women!**

Our Area WDP Rep is Julie Taylor and she has sent us through the following information:

**Rise, take your mat and walk**

**Women, men and children of all ages are called to Rise, take your mat and walk to join this day of prayer. Women of Zimbabwe have prepared this year's service and they encourage us all to reflect on the difficulties and unrest that have plagued their country over many years. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future. They encourage us to "Rise, take your mat and walk " with them as they continue their often turbulent journey towards full reconciliation.**

**World Day of Prayer is an international inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world, their hopes, concerns and prayers. The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 170 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world- through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas - before finishing in American Samoa more than 36 hours later.**

Please join in the united Day of Prayer service at our own church, Penge Congregational, on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 730pm.

[For those of you who prefer the day time service, there is one at St John's Eden Park at 11am]

## **Flower Rota**

### February

2: Caroline Parker  
9: Joyce Perry  
16: Melanie Cogan  
23: Friendship Club

### March

1: Jean Sumner  
8: In memory of Maureen Sawkins  
15: Pat Clarke  
22: Melanie Cogan  
29: In memory of Heather Cragg

### April:

5: David Nye  
12: Easter. Flower Fund  
19: Melanie Cogan  
26: Pat Clarke

## **Christmas Giving**

£200 for Living Well, from the Candlelight service.

£100 for the Greater London Fund for the Blind, from the Christmas Eve service.

**Pam's Christmas Eve Sermon, based on Matthew 1: 18-25.**

**(Reproduced by request)**

We are here tonight in the candlelight, and at the front of the church we have our Advent ring. The four red candles already lit symbolise the prophets, angels, shepherds and wise men. Or else they can mean Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We shall light the white candle after midnight- the candle that symbolises the Christ Child. And of course, we remember the beginning of St John's Gospel that talks of the light that is Jesus shining out into the darkness.

And I wonder how many of you here tonight were scared of the dark when you were children? Perhaps still are scared of the dark today? How many of us as children, or even as adults, have lain in bed at one time or another rigid with fear because we have convinced ourselves that the shadow cast by a pile of clothes on a chair is a monster waiting to pounce?

You can reason with a frightened child. You can leave the door ajar and promise to come up when called. You can give them a beloved toy to cuddle. But what that child is really afraid of is being alone. What he or she really needs is the reassuring presence of a trusted adult. The reassurance of knowing that, should any monster be foolish enough to intrude, mum or dad or granny will be there to see it off. The assurance of knowing that presence will be stronger than any monster. Ask anyone who is frightened, child or adult, and they will tell you that the best reassurance is the hand, voice, presence of a trusted loved one. This isn't just true of a frightened child or adult. It's precisely the way God meets us, his people, and hears us in the midst of our fears, our anxieties, our disasters and our times of trial.

When God acted to rescue us, to redeem, to salvage the world from the terrible mess human beings have made of things, he didn't offer philosophy; he didn't offer advice or counselling. Instead, he came to be with us, to be right there beside us, to bring himself close.

When Matthew's Gospel begins, unlike the beginning of John which offers us that beautiful picture of Jesus as the Word, there before the beginning of the universe, through whom everything was created; Jesus as the light of the world coming into the darkness and overcoming it; unlike John, Matthew begins with, of all things, a genealogy, a list of family after family, generation after generation. We read names we know- Abraham and Isaac, David- and those we might not have heard of- Perez, Amon, Shealtiel. But the point Matthew is making is that God, in Jesus, arrived right in the middle of human history, right in the thick of things.

In the passage from Matthew that we have read, Matthew tells us that Jesus' arrival fulfilled God's promise made through the prophet Isaiah. We heard it right at the beginning of the service- "The virgin will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel, which means God is with us".

From the very beginning, it was God's intention- always has been- to be present, right there with those he loves.

The Revelation to St John of the vision of the new heaven and the new earth shows us that: the voice from the throne says, "See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his people and God himself will be with them".

One of our greatest fears whether as a child left alone by a parent, or as an adult who has had an argument or worse with a partner or a family member, is of being abandoned. And we fear that too with God, that he might get so annoyed at our shortcomings, our failures, our misguided intentions, that he'll get fed up and give up on us.

But God has shown us that our fears are groundless. He had shown us that by sending us Jesus. Jesus is Immanuel, which means God is with us. God will never get fed up with us. He will never become bored by us. He will never leave us to our own devices.

And in Jesus, God became human. He didn't stop at sending Jesus as a human man, to teach us and show us how we should treat one another. He sent Jesus as a little baby, to be

brought up in an ordinary family and to experience all the joys and sorrows of growing from a baby to a child to a man. A boy who had to do chores, to learn a trade. A boy who had to take on the headship of the family after Joseph died, to protect his mother and look out for his younger siblings. We read that, when he was in agony on the cross, he remembered to entrust his mother's care to John.

God chose to be present at the very heart of human experience, in the thick of human sorrow, human joy, human confusion. So, in the Gospel, Jesus doesn't give us wisdom from afar, wisdom that is true but disengaged. In Jesus, God is with us. God welcomes us. God draws us close.

The apostle Paul tells us that, although Jesus never sinned himself, he willingly took on all the sin of humanity to save us. And when we pray, we know that God understands what we are going through because Jesus has been through it with us.

God in Jesus didn't wash his hands of us, didn't leave us mired in the mess we had made. He arrived, and still does arrive, in the very places we're most desperate to be loved and to be healed.

Jesus comes to us when we are in the dark and afraid, he comes ready to help us deal with the monsters we face. And he comes to draw us into the light.

"Look, the virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel which means "God is with us"". Amen.



**Lent readings 2020-Lent begins on 26 February.**

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
			Ash Weds 26/2 <b>Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21</b>	27/2 <b>Acts 7: 30-34</b>	28/2 <b>Acts 7: 35-42</b>	29/2 <b>John 12: 27-36</b>
1/3 <b>Luke 4: 1-13</b>	2/3 <b>1 John 2: 1-6</b>	3/3 <b>2 Peter 2: 4-21</b>	4/3 <b>Luke 21:34-22:6</b>	5/3 <b>Philippians 3:2-12</b>	6/3 <b>Philippians 3:17-20</b>	7/3 <b>Matthew 23:37-39</b>
8/3 <b>Luke 9: 28-36</b>	9/3 <b>Romans 4:1-12</b>	10/3 <b>1 Corinthians 10:1-13</b>	11/3 <b>Luke 13:22-31</b>	12/3 <b>Revelation 2:8-11</b>	13/3 <b>Revelation 3:1-6</b>	14/3 <b>Luke 6:43-45</b>
15/3 <b>Luke 13:1-9</b>	16/3 <b>Romans 2:1-11</b>	17/3 <b>Romans 2:1-16</b>	18/3 <b>Luke 13:18-21</b>	19/3 <b>2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5</b>	20/3 <b>2 Corinthians 5:6-15</b>	21/3 <b>Luke 15:1-10</b>
22/3 <b>Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32</b>	23/3 <b>Revelation 19:1-8</b>	24/3 <b>Revelation 19:9-10</b>	25/3 <b>Luke 9:10-17</b>	26/3 <b>Philippians 2:19-24</b>	27/3 <b>Philippians 2:25-3:1</b>	28/3 <b>John 11:45-57</b>
29/3 <b>John 12:1-8</b>	30/3 <b>Hebrews 10:19-25</b>	31/3 <b>1 John 2:18-28</b>	1/4 <b>Luke 18: 31-34</b>	2/4 <b>Hebrews 2: 1-9</b>	3/4 <b>Hebrews 2: 10-18</b>	4/4 <b>Luke 22:1-13</b>
Palm Sunday 5/4 <b>Luke 19:28-40</b>	Holy Week 6/4 <b>John 12: 1-11</b>	Holy Week 7/4 <b>John 12: 20-36</b>	Holy Week 8/4 <b>John 13: 21-32</b>	Maundy Thurs 9/4 <b>John 13: 1-17, 31b-35</b>	Good Friday 10/4 <b>John 18: 1-19: 42</b>	Holy Saturday 11/4 <b>Matthew 27: 57-66</b>

Daily readings from the Revised Common Lectionary.

## **Tenth Annual David Nicholson Memorial Recital**

In the words of one of David's friends, the recitals held in his memory "give a great deal of pleasure to a great many people". The generosity of several brilliant organists and the grand resources of the Lewis organ gave just such pleasure to those who attended the tenth annual memorial recital on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Robert Cooper, the much loved former organist of PCC, opened the recital in his inimitable fashion. Harry Bramma followed with a Bach *Fantasia*, and then Andrew Chadney played Schumann. Jonathan and Sarah Holmes gave us a duet by Charles Callahan based on English hymn tunes, and John Mitchell played his own arrangement for organ of Bach's *First Brandenburg Concerto*. John Webber played a trumpet minuet by Alfred Hollins; your own organist played John Ireland; and Jonathan Holmes concluded the recital with the dramatic Mendelssohn *Overture to St Paul*.

After the music, the audience gathered in the Kenilworth Hall for afternoon tea and conversation. The whole occasion was just what David used to enjoy about affairs at PCC: a beautiful and moving event in the church, followed by the warmth of meeting friends and fellow music lovers in the hall over sandwiches and reviving cups of tea!

We are remarkably fortunate to have such a glorious organ and so many willing and excellent musicians to play it! Audiences show their appreciation in generous giving to the Spondylitis Society and the local Amnesty International group.

The Spondylitis Society have asked my permission to do a brief report, with photo, to go into their next quarterly magazine.

**Marilyn Nicholson**

## **Church Diary February 2020**

Sunday 2nd:

10.30 am: Peter and the Angel of the Lord, led by Chris P.

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

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>:

9.30-11 am: Café Church

7-8pm: Prayer and Praise

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>:

7.30 pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>:

10.30 am: Balaam's Donkey, led by Chris M.

6.30 pm: Bible discussion, led by Marilyn.

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>:

7-8pm: Prayer and Praise.

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>:

10.30-Midday: Friendship Club: The Vestry.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>:

10.30 am: Zechariah and the Angel. Including the Lord's Supper. Led by the Minister.

6.30 pm: Evening Worship, led by Lynn.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>:

7-8pm: Prayer and Praise.

Sunday 23rd:

10.30 am: The 7 Angels in Revelation, led by Marilyn.

6.30 pm: Taizé service, led by Callum.

Tuesday 25th:  
7-8pm: Prayer and Praise.

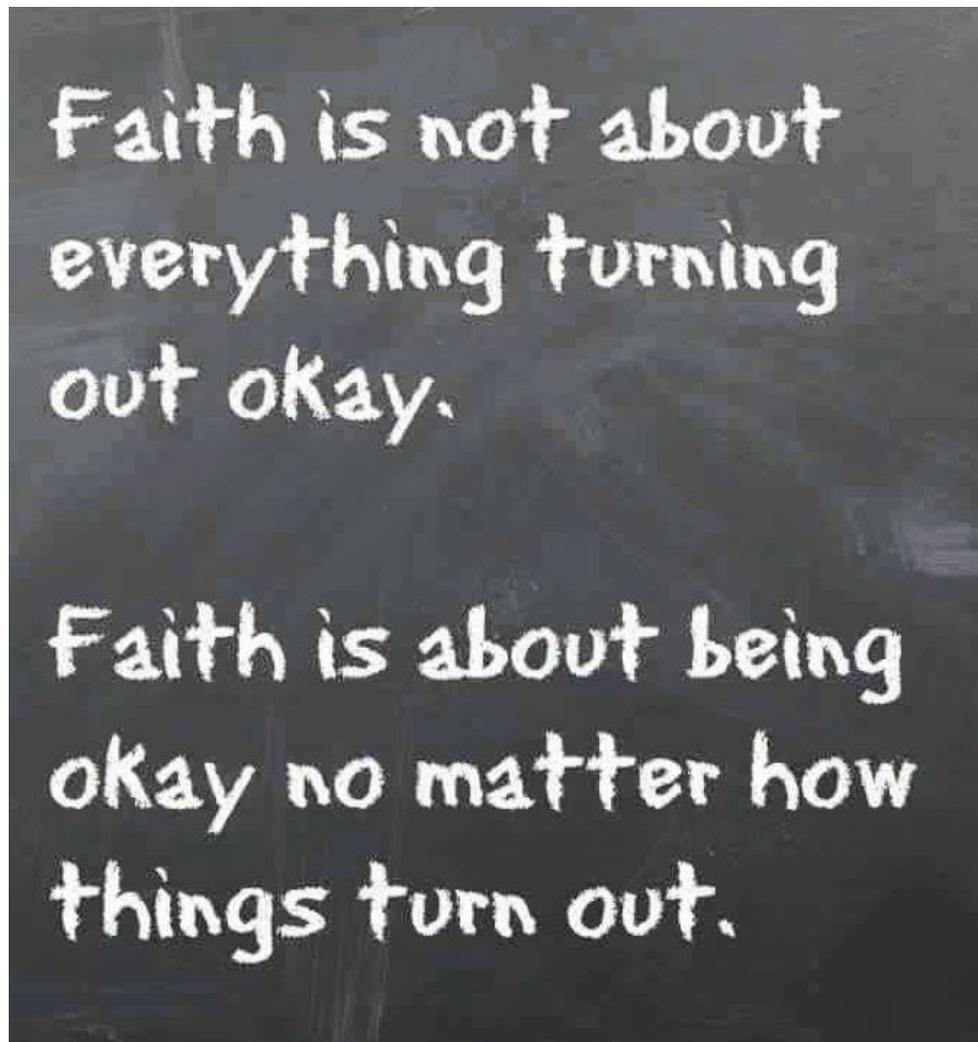
Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>:  
3 pm: SSLSO Organ Recital: The Church.

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March**

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER.**

11am: Service at St John's Eden Park.

**7.30pm: Service at PCC.**



# PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Church gathered May 1908

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### Church Accountants (payroll etc)

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