

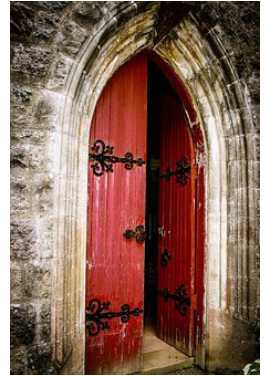
# Penge Congregational Church



**January 2021**

# The open door

Come inside - be still  
and know that He is within  
this place of worship.



Look around, it is  
a house which stands tall and strong -  
upkeep arduous!

Pews in the throes of  
disposal, chairs replacing -  
No more a full house!



And yet within there  
dwells the Spirit of hope and  
peace, enfolding us

See the simple cross  
and above, the small stained  
windows, drawing us close

A basic table  
replaces pulpit - a symbol  
of the ordinaire

Now step outside - look  
and listen, see the trees and  
hear the birds calling.

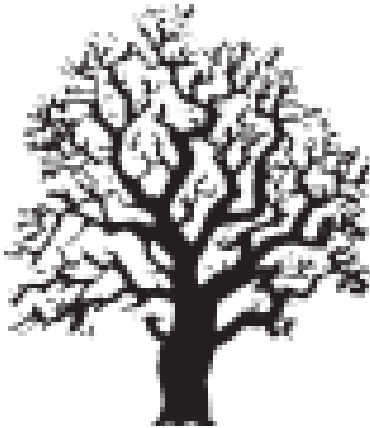


In this sacred space,  
Inside and out one hears the  
music of the soul!



Doors will be closed again  
but you will be there forever  
near to us!

Anne



## The Minister writes...

**A**t Christmas we couldn't have our usual Nativity Service. So Lynn wrote something that we could do while being Covid compliant. Then Lynn and Chris got Covid (they have both recovered well) so the rest of us had to do our best based on what Lynn had prepared. It was actually extremely valuable because it made us think about our role as a church.

Lynn invited us to think about what it might have been like for Mary and Joseph had Jesus been born today. They might be asylum seekers. We imagined them flying into Gatwick, perhaps separated from others in the same situation because of doubt over whether Mary could safely fly. We imagined them getting the train to Croydon then the 75 bus to Penge.

We imagined Mary going into labour and Joseph knocking on doors in Chesham Road trying to get help. But no-one would open the door because it was after dark. Eventually, they find themselves on the Lower Chesham allotments and Mary gives birth in Chris Parker's shed.

This made me think of the story of Ruth. Ruth followed her mother in law from her own country where she had family to Naomi's country, near Bethlehem. She was able to find them food because a man called Boaz followed the Law of God: the law we read in Leviticus 23 that, when Jewish people harvested their fields, they were to leave a strip of uncut crop round the edge and they were to leave what the harvesters dropped.

And this was for the benefit of the strangers who lived among them.

This should make us think about our role as a church in our community. For most of 2020, we have lost much of our rental income but there is so much need around us. We have literally about a dozen leaks in the church roof, and we were relieved to claim a good lump of Gift Aid money because it would help us pay a builder. But there is so much need around us. So we have tithed the Gift Aid money to give to Living Well, St Christopher's Hospice, the Greater London Fund for the Blind and some local families who had missed out on Christmas gifts from another source. As followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, how could we do less?

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote that faith without deeds is dead. In one of our 2020 Zoom Bible studies we decided that we need both. It is the fundamental purpose of our church to make disciples of all peoples, to worship and witness to God, to offer prayer and pastoral care to those around us. But, as disciples, we must offer practical care also. Had a modern Mary and Joseph knocked at our door, offering them prayer wouldn't have been enough.

I would ask that we all reflect on this as we look forward to a new year, when, please God, we can fully resume our work as a church.

Let's all pray together in spirit for a much better, much safer 2021. God bless us and our community as we look forward in faith and hope.

*Pam (full text of Lynn's talk is on pages 18 - 21)*

## Historic Penge - A Good Place to Live

It is hard to visualise that the busy thoroughfare of Penge, as we know it today, was once a small hamlet where only twelve families lived on the edge of a forest of oak trees. It was a little community of farming people concerned with the growing of their crops and looking after the pigs that roamed the woods eating the acorns. Penge belonged to the parish of Battersea, seven miles away, and was in the county of Surrey. One of the first references to be found is in an old parchment deed of the Saxon period in AD. 57 when King Eadwig granted PENCEAT, as Penge was then known, to one of his Thanes, Lyfing, in an endeavour to keep his support.

At the time of the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror granted Battersea and Penge to the Abbot of Westminster, for the redemption of the regalia of Edward the Confessor, which had been deposited in the Abbey (presumably Westminster Abbey). Penceat and Batricisie are mentioned in the Charter.

In the Domesday Book (1085 - 1087) we can read that there belonged to the Manor of Battersea "a wood of 50 hogs of pannage" implying that a duty was paid to the Lord of the Manor for privilege of turning fifty pigs out into the woods for their food.

My wife had a book on the History of Penge by Doris E Pullen which is full of interesting facts about the one-time hamlet which become a London Suburb.

These facts include a list of prominent people who once lived (or lives) in Penge. To name some:

WALTER DE LA MARE - poet 1873 - 1956

CAMILLE PISARRO - French painter 1831 - 1903

ALAN PASCOE - athlete and schoolmaster

FRANK AND PEGGY SPENSER - ballroom dancers

LIONEL SAWKINS - musician, organist and choirmaster

BONAR LAW - politician

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE - writer and broadcaster

I first came across the name of Penge as the destination shown on the front of a tram. I cannot remember the number of the tram but I would see it quite often on my way to school whilst waiting for the number 12 bus which I caught at the stop outside the library in the Walworth Road: as the name suggests was in the district of Walworth where I lived for the first 24 years of my life. Little did I realise that one day I would become an inhabitant of Penge and attend Penge Congregational Church on a regular basis.

About this Church:

Situated on the corner of Kenilworth Road, it was opened on 24th October, 1912.

For most of the time that my wife and I were 'Regulars' in the nineteen seventies and beyond, the Church was led by the Rev. John Travel, whom I much admired and

to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for the help he gave me at a very difficult period of my life..

John wrote a brief newsletter each month and members of the congregation would deliver them to the front doors of the houses in their designated areas. My area included a very large block of flats in Avenue Road. I would take the lift to the top floor and descend by the stairs making my deliveries en route.

John retired after some years as the Minister and went to live in Shaftsbury, Dorset.

Before he left, he introduced us to the Rev. George Grierson. George had physical disabilities, which meant that he had to wear leg-irons and he was a little overweight but he was a most likeable person. My wife and I got on very well with him and invited him to Sunday lunch on occasions!

*Ronald Kirby*

We now come to what Ronald calls **‘the Laughter Corner’** and it continues on the next page... but firstly, this was spotted on a Church Notice Board:

The ‘Low Esteem’ Support Group will meet on Thursday  
at 7pm.

Please use the Back Door.

**Have you ever wondered...**

Have you ever wondered why the time of day with the slowest traffic is called The Rush Hour?

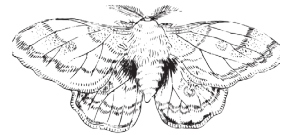
If flying is so safe why do they call the Airport building the Terminal?

Why sheep don't shrink when it rains?



And finally Ronald gives us an anecdote:

Mr Brown was a very worried man. He was on his way home from work one evening, when he decided to consult a doctor.



The doctor asked him what his problem was and Mr Brown said, "I am really worried. I think I am turning into a moth".

The doctor was nonplussed and said, Look, Mr Brown, I can't help you - you need to see a psychiatrist".

"I know", said Mr Brown, "but your light was on".

.....

That's all from Ronald (for the time being).

I know some of you could tell many interesting stories or anecdotes, memories of Penge or of the Church here, please, send them in....

Where to? Please see last page.



# Clive's Christmas Connections Quiz 2020

**D**esigned to be challenging and to be done in a group. Find what connects each group of words or phrases in each question. Some are straightforward and some are slightly cryptic. One mark for a generally good answer, two for anything better! Three for spot on.



1. Acton Bell; Ellis Bell; Currer Bell
2. Cock a leekie; tattì scones; cloutie dumplings; Cullen skink
3. Honshu; Hokkaido; Kyushu; Shikoku; Okinawa
4. Timothy; Yorkshire fog; marram; quaking; tussock?
5. Hushan near Liaoning and Jiayuguan Pass in Gansu
6. Octopus's Garden; Don't Pass Me By; With a little help from my friends; Yellow Submarine
7. Bossy (1); Naughty (2); Sunshine (4); Scatterbrain (12); Inventor (38)

8. Mandela 2007; Lloyd George 2007; Mahatma Gandhi 2015; Millicent Fawcett 2018

9. Heathrow Terminal 5 and Cockfosters

10. Headquarters of The US Department of Defence; the giant's causeway; a 50 pence piece; a US stop sign; Bahai House of Worship

11. Edward Jenner 1788; Louis Pasteur 1881; Calmette and Geurin 1905; Jonas Salk 1955

12. The King of rock'n'roll; jeans; dwells; worn by mourners

*Answers on pages 16 and 17*

*No peeking!*



## January Scripture Readings

**A**fter Epiphany Sunday, 3rd January, we shall be following a January theme of Sharing One Another's Burdens, perhaps subtitled Following the Prompting of the Holy Spirit. We shall look at the healing of Naaman, and the role played first of all by the servant girl in persuading Naaman to consult Elisha, and then the officers in helping him see that Elisha's advice wasn't an insult. Then we shall look at the story of the woman at the well, to whom Jesus revealed his identity. Lastly in January we shall look at what Peter has to say about the people of God being Living Stones building up into a spiritual temple. We invite you to read the Bible passage each week and reflect on it in the context of the theme. (Scripture from New Living Translation)

Sunday 3rd January. Epiphany. Matthew 2:1-12

2 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, 2  
“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.” 3  
King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. 4 He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?” 5  
“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

6 ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,

are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,  
for a ruler will come from you

who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.”

7 Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. 8 Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!” 9 After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! 11 They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

Sunday 10th January. 2 Kings 5: 1-6

5 The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the Lord had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy. 2 At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman’s wife as a maid. 3 One day the girl said to her mistress, “I wish my master would go

to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy.” 4 So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. 5 “Go and visit the prophet,” the king of Aram told him. “I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel.” So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. 6 The letter to the king of Israel said: “With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.”

Sunday 17th January. 2 Kings 5: 9-15

9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha’s house. 10 But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: “Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy.” 11 But Naaman became angry and stalked away. “I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!” he said. “I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the Lord his God and heal me! 12 Aren’t the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn’t I wash in them and be healed?” So Naaman turned and went away in a rage. 13 But his officers tried to reason with him and said, “Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn’t you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, ‘Go and wash and be cured!’” 14 So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed

him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!

Sunday 24th January. John 4: 1-26

4 Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptising and making more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself didn't baptise them—his disciples did). 3 So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" 10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." 11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give

will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

15 “Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.” 16 “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. 17 “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband — 18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!” 19 “Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. 20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?” 21 Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now — when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

25 The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!”

Sunday 31st January. 1 Peter 2: 4-9

4 You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honour. 5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. 6 As the Scriptures say,

"I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem,  
chosen for great honour,  
and anyone who trusts in him  
will never be disgraced."

7 Yes, you who trust him recognize the honour God has given him. But for those who reject him, "The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone."

8 And,

"He is the stone that makes people stumble,  
the rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they do not obey God's word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them.

9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

*Answers to quiz pages 8 and 9*  
*Two for spot on, one for close.*

1. Acton Bell; Ellis Bell; Currer Bell (Bronte sisters)
2. Cock a leekie; tattì scones; cloutie dumplings; cullen skink (Scottish delicacies)
3. Honshu; Hokkaido; Kyushu; Shikoku; Okinawa (Five main Japanese islands in order of size)
4. Timothy; Yorkshire fog; marram; quaking; tussock? (grasses)
5. Hushan near Liaoning and Jiayuguan Pass in Gansu (Great Wall of China)
6. Octopus's Garden; Don't Pass Me By; With a little help from my friends; Yellow Submarine (Beatles songs fronted by Ringo Starr).
7. Bossy (1); Naughty (2); Sunshine (4); Scatterbrain (12); Inventor (38) (Little Miss books and their book order)
8. Mandela 2007; Lloyd George 2007; Mahatma Gandhi 2015; Millicent Fawcett 2018 (post 2000 statues in Parliament Square)
9. Heathrow Terminal 5 and Cockfosters (The Piccadilly line)
10. US Department of Defence headquarters; the giant's causeway; a 50 pence piece; a US stop sign; Bahai House of Worship (Pentagon, Hexagon, heptagon, octagon, nonagon)

11. Edward Jenner 1788; Louis Pasteur 1881; Calmette and Geurin 1905; Jonas Salk 1955 (Inventors of vaccines)

12. The King of rock'n'roll; jeans; dwells; worn by mourners (anagrams of the word Elvis. So... Elvis, levis, lives, veils )

\*24 Have a star!!!

17-23 Well done!!

11-16 Not bad!

6-10 Pretty Good

Below 6 - Thanks for turning up....



A scene in Kendal with.....

The Crib service began with

## A reading from Habakkuk 3:17 to 19

**W**hat do you think of when you think about a stable? Has anyone been in a stable?

Is the stable you think of warm and cosy, smelling sweetly of straw and animals, with the soft light of a lantern shining on rosy cheeked people and moonlight seen through the half closed door? Often our pictures of the stable are based on these kind of beautiful pictures from Christmas cards



and sometimes there are even bits of mistletoe hanging over the door. It seems purpose built for having a baby, mum and dad.

Was it really like this? Suppose Mary and Joseph came to Penge. Let's say they had arrived at Gatwick Airport. Maybe they are part of a resettlement programme and are coming from a refugee camp. They are part of an allocated number of people allowed to board the next flight to the UK. There might have been some discussion at the airport about whether Mary should fly right now as she is pregnant. However they are really not sure when the baby is due (she hadn't kept a close record of dates etc) and if they miss this flight, their

names may not come up again for some time. And so they have landed at Gatwick. Found their way through the passport control and their names were ticked off the list. They go down to the trains to get on the train to Croydon. They only have hand luggage. The platform is draughty but they do get a seat once the train arrives. From there they found themselves on the 75 bus to Penge. Clutched in their hand is an address maybe for the Travel Lodge on Croydon Road. Getting a bit lost they end up wandering down near the allotments and Mary knows that it is urgent that they get indoors as the baby is coming. No one answers the few door that they knock at in Chesham Road. Quite a few houses look dark and quiet. A few houses have the TV on but no one answers the door, which is not surprising as it is now after dark.

What can they do? Any ideas?

*SONG See him lying on a bed of straw?*

If Jesus was born in Penge, who would be the first visitors to see the baby?

I imagine that this would be those who are sleeping outside. People who could see the stars and would be the first to hear the voice of the angels. So who is sleeping outside?

Firstly there will be some people who have had a falling out with their partners and are sleeping in a car, sofa surfing and maybe couldn't get a friend to put them up for the night. Secondly, there will be some people who have been made intentionally homeless and have

lost their place in a hostel. Maybe they didn't get on with others in the hostel. Maybe they felt discriminated against or bullied. Maybe they had decided to stop paying rent to get the landlord to fix their leaking pipes and then had never been able to catch up again. Maybe they spent their money on the wrong thing hoping that they would hit the jackpot. So they are sleeping in doorways, sleeping under a tree, sleeping in a shed somewhere near the shed that Mary has found. These are the people sleeping outside or walking the streets in the night. Those who can't sleep because they have people to worry about.

What do they hear?

They hear the angels, they feel the pull to go to the shed where Mary and Joseph are. Maybe they hear



excited voices and come to see what it is all about. And when they get there they see a baby. Is the baby in a wheelbarrow? Is the baby in a cardboard box? Is the baby in his parent's arms?

But what excitement there was. What Joy. They have never seen a baby this small outside of the hospital. No doctors, no nurses, no ambulance workers.

Just a mother and father and small baby. How can a

baby give such excitement and such a feeling of hope for the future?



Question – How do you keep singing when things don't seem to look right?

Can you invite God to help your heart grow, to help your heart swell to double its size so that you can sing even when things look wrong?



*13th December 2020 Crib Service*



To arrange a marriage service, funeral, baptism or similar event, please contact the Minister: Pam Owen on:

[pamjowen@hotmail.com](mailto:pamjowen@hotmail.com)

To book any other events (concerts etc.), please contact Bernie Hall:

[pcclettings@outlook.com](mailto:pcclettings@outlook.com)

Tel: 07900 518 537

For enquiries related to this website please contact Callum McShane on:

[callum.mcshane@gmail.com](mailto:callum.mcshane@gmail.com)

To submit articles for the monthly newsletter:

[margaret@ecoharmony.org](mailto:margaret@ecoharmony.org)

Deacons at the moment are

Jannett Ashley

Douglas Rathbone

Chris Parker

Lynn McShane (treasurer)

[lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com)