

Penge Congregational Church



July 2020

An initiative of Hope Together

We are asked to pray where we are, that God will give us opportunities to witness to Christ, at 8.20pm (20.20 hours) on the 20th of each month, for 20 minutes.

The Prayer for Monday 20th July:

Read John 15:7: "If you stay joined to me and my words remain in you, you may ask anything you like and it will be granted."

And pray:

Gracious God, thank you for the Hope Spaces giving people who don't know Jesus a chance to experience his love and hope for themselves. We pray for all who visit, write prayers and engage, that they may discover the answer to their prayers in coming to know Jesus.



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

Colossians 4:3



From the Minister

The government has given the green light for churches to resume public worship, in a limited manner. At the same time, they have given permission for community centres to open, so that means we can begin to work out how to open the halls. Some of our organisations are waiting for permission from parent bodies such as the Guide Association. Some activities, such as dancing, are not yet permitted. All activities will have to be very carefully managed, and we will have our work cut out to get ourselves organised and Covid-secure by the 1st September. But it is so encouraging that we have got to this stage; and actually having to think about the way we do things together will be a positive process- churches tend to be conservative (small c) and are therefore rather prone to stagnate.

A witty clerical colleague of mine made me smile a few years ago by remarking that most churches have a member called Tina, which stands for There Is No Alternative. Obviously tradition isn't a bad thing but it isn't healthy to do things solely because they have always been done that way. A church is a living breathing dynamic entity, just as faith in Jesus Christ is a living, breathing, dynamic force. So, instead of sighing over risk assessments and hand sanitizer, and the sheer volume of work involved, we shall try to take the opportunity to make the new normal a better place.

I think we all understand that reopening for public worship isn't as simple as it sounds. We shan't be able to sing inside, and I think it will probably be a long time before we can serve refreshments at any event. There is also the point that members of the fellowship are in different situations: some are still safer not mixing with others; some will be nervous about coming out. So we have to try and make sure everyone is catered for in terms of being able to worship God. The Kingdom of God is for everyone and we can't leave anyone out.

So, in July, we shall still be doing all the things we have done throughout lockdown to bring the Word to everyone: the weekly podcast will continue (www.pccweb.co.uk); all the readings and some reflection points will go into the Newsletter which will be emailed out, with hard copies hand delivered locally to those not online; the Sunday mini-message will go forth via text; there will continue to be informal Zoom Bible studies and prayer (and it would be so lovely if anyone new wanted to join in). But, in addition, we shall begin from 5th July to open the church on a Sunday morning. Weather permitting, we shall sing outside from 10am, as a group of us have been doing according to lockdown regulations for the last couple of months. Then at 10.30, we shall possibly move inside but certainly have a time of prayer and some Scripture, and an opportunity to share our thoughts on that. We shall have to feel our way at first to see who comes and how best to worship within the rules. It will be an adventure, just as our whole journey with Jesus is an adventure.

Every Sunday is the Day of Resurrection. Let us adventure together in these unprecedented times; let us rejoice in what the Lord has made, and be glad of it!

Pam

A Message from Pat Clarke

Pat would like to thank everyone who sent her a card or a message of sympathy following the death of Bill on 20th April. This has been a very difficult time for everyone, and Pat is most grateful for the prayers and thoughts of others, which have sustained her and her family.

How can I keep from singing?!

At a fairly early stage, the McShane family began to sing in their front garden on a Sunday morning. The neighbours didn't throw things and indeed one or two said they liked it. As lockdown rules began to relax, more members came to join in, and we're now up to about 7 or 8. The first time I went (careful to ensure the Minister was seen to keep to the rules), I was immediately struck by how heartening it was. You can't really beat worshipping with others, and singing is an immense mood booster. So, when we start public worship on 5th July, as we can't sing inside, we shall do so outside from 10am (unless it's really wet!). The photo below was taken the first week 6 people were allowed to gather- we have since been joined by Jean Hurle.



Fun after school

What do you think about starting an after school club at the church? It could happen on a Wednesday evening. The target group would be young people age 6 to 12. This could be from 4 to 6pm every Wednesday from September.

When we are back to normal we would like to talk to everyone about this and hear what you think of the idea. You could volunteer to help and we could find volunteers from the wider community. The key leaders would need to have some safeguarding training and DBS checks.

Apart from the key leaders there would be lots of other ways that you could get involved. A very powerful way of helping would be to pray - for the group, for the children, their families, and the leaders.

The aim of the sessions would be to have fun in a safe environment. There could be opportunities for homework support. There could be different crafts or skills that we could share with the children depending on what volunteers have to offer. We would add in a fun 10 minutes Bible slot to share our joy of knowing God.

If you want to email me your thoughts and questions then my email is lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com.

Lynn

2nd Penge Rainbow Unit Annual Report May 2019 to April 2020

In May 2019 the Rainbows and their Leaders had a 'Beach themed' Sleepover at the Radcliffe Centre a Girlguiding property in Croydon. The Rainbows undertook activities relating to this theme indoors and outdoors. The hall at the Radcliffe Centre was decorated with bunting and beach pictures and looked lovely. The Rainbows really enjoyed their Sleepover and picked this theme. My thanks to Caroline, Julie, Celine, Wendy and Martine who helped me run the Sleepover, giving up their weekend to give our Rainbows a chance to enjoy a Sleepover with their Rainbow friends and Leaders.

The remainder of the summer term was spent completing Unit Meeting Activities (UMA's) and Skills Builders working towards the six Theme Awards: Know Myself, Express Myself, Have Adventures, Be Well, Take Action and Skills for My Future. We also encouraged the Rainbows to undertake Interest Badges. When they had completed one UMA, one Skill Builder which has five challenges to complete, plus the relevant Interest Badge they were awarded a Theme Award badge.

Some of the things the Rainbows took part in from May 2019 – April 2020 included, a Sleepover, Food tasting, planting bulbs in the church garden, singing, playing games, making cards for Easter, Mothering Sunday and Father's Day, GLK 50th Anniversary Challenge Badge, making pancakes, making Christmas decorations, making Chinese lanterns, decorated biscuits, learning to dance and many more.

We took the Rainbows to Kelsey Park in June where they had a picnic, played in the adventure playground and then fed the ducks. On the 27th June we went by coach to a school in Biggin Hall to celebrate our County's 50th birthday. It was the hottest day of the year, but the Rainbows loved going on fairground rides, taking part in circus skills, playing drums and instruments in a large marquee which was fantastic, meeting animals etc to name just some of the activities on offer. It was a lovely day one that the Rainbows and Leaders will never

forget, but such a relief to get home for a nice cool shower when you have been out in the heat for most of the day, apart from eating a picnic lunch in the shade it was about 30c all day!

In September some of our older Rainbows joined Brownies and we welcomed 6 new girls to Rainbows. Our Rainbows collected food for the Harvest Service. During October and November our Rainbows were taught a dance by Caroline. They performed this dance at our November Open Evening. We held a raffle and had some fundraising stalls to raise money for our unit funds. My thanks to Margaret Collins from PCC and members of Beckenham Trefoil Guild who came to help us serve on our stalls, serve refreshments and sell our cakes at our Open Evening. The Rainbows completed their term in December with a Christmas party playing all the usual games of pass the parcel, musical chairs and musical statues, plus of course the party food. Then later in December we went as a unit to the Odeon cinema in Beckenham for a special performance of Frozen 2 which was put on for Girlguiding members on a Saturday morning at 9.30 am. This was the last unit activity for 2019.

In January 2020 the Rainbows went to see a Pantomime Beauty and The Beast performed by St Marks Players at St Georges Church Hall in Beckenham. They also made Chinese lanterns with night lights in at a unit meeting.

In March 2020 our Rainbow Unit celebrated their fifth birthday since the unit was open. We had lots of activities planned for the spring and summer term but the Coronavirus meant that we had to stop our weekly meetings on Tuesday 17th March 2020 and as I write this report I still do not know when our usual meetings will resume. I have done my best to keep in contact with our Rainbows and their parents by sending the Rainbows small activities to do at homes, set a 5th birthday challenge for the Rainbows to undertake small jobs at home, to raise money for a charity to mark our units 5th birthday. Caroline and I have really missed seeing the Rainbows on a weekly basis. It is with regret that we have had to cancel our planned Sleepover for the Rainbows in May 2020 and an outing

to Drusillas Park near Eastbourne in June 2020 all due to the Coronavirus. We hope to hold both these events in 2021. I have only had to cancel Rainbow or Brownie meetings (when I ran the Brownies) due to snow or lack of Leaders because of illness, but this has been an unprecedented time with the Coronavirus and we hope and pray things will get back to 'normal' for us to commence our meetings in September 2020.

We have made two donations to PCC for the use of the Kenilworth Hall for our meetings during the year and are very grateful for the support of the church to enable us to run our Rainbow Unit for the benefit of the young girls aged 5 – 7 years old in our community.

Diane wishes to record her personal thanks to Caroline who helps to plan and run the Rainbow meetings each week and to Anna and Rianna who joined us as External Volunteers undertaking their bronze DOE award and Ruby our Guide helper. A lot of time and effort goes into trying to provide a good balanced programme for the Rainbows and making sure it is fun for them throughout the year by the Leaders.

Diane Pask
Rainbow Leader
2nd Penge Rainbow Unit

Update on work in the church.

As you may remember, in the weeks leading up to lockdown, we had the floorboards up at the front of the church, and Men in Sheds were working to adapt the pews we have gifted to the Mar Tomas church in New Eltham. Unfortunately, the Shedders haven't been able to work during lockdown so we are still where we were with a mixture of pews and chairs. However, now Wickes has reopened, Chris D and Chris P have been able to make progress with the floor, after a bit of aggressive Click and Collecting. Apparently floor boards and damp course paint have been in great demand. Who knew? Many thanks to the Chrises for their hard work.

July readings and reflection points

July is going to be a bit of a funny month in that, although we are going to open the church, we probably won't be having "normal" services. Many people may very well not be ready to come back; and we can't sing, handle Bibles, sit next to each other etc. So we shall sing outside, weather permitting then have a time of prayer, read the Scripture passage and perhaps share some thoughts about it. It may very well be that some people will still be relying on this newsletter, so here are the July readings (and the 2nd August). They have been chosen by Chris McShane and are based on anointing, the point not being the oil of anointing but the anointing by the Holy Spirit.

Sunday 5th July: Exodus 40: 1-16 (NLT)

Then the Lord said to Moses, ² "Set up the Tabernacle^[a] on the first day of the new year. ³ Place the Ark of the Covenant inside, and install the inner curtain to enclose the Ark within the Most Holy Place. ⁴ Then bring in the table, and arrange the utensils on it. And bring in the lampstand, and set up the lamps. ⁵ "Place the gold incense altar in front of the Ark of the Covenant. Then hang the curtain at the entrance of the Tabernacle. ⁶ Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the Tabernacle entrance. ⁷ Set the washbasin between the Tabernacle and the altar, and fill it with water. ⁸ Then set up the courtyard around the outside of the tent, and hang the curtain for the courtyard entrance. ⁹ "Take the anointing oil and anoint the Tabernacle and all its furnishings to consecrate them and make them holy. ¹⁰ Anoint the altar of burnt offering and its utensils to consecrate them. Then the altar will become absolutely holy. ¹¹ Next anoint the washbasin and its stand to consecrate them. ¹² "Present Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and wash them with water. ¹³ Dress Aaron with the sacred garments and anoint him, consecrating him to serve me as a priest. ¹⁴ Then present his sons and dress them in their tunics. ¹⁵ Anoint them as you

did their father, so they may also serve me as priests. With their anointing, Aaron's descendants are set apart for the priesthood forever, from generation to generation." ¹⁶ Moses proceeded to do everything just as the Lord had commanded him.

Reflect: Under the covenant with Moses, the tabernacle was the place where God came to dwell in the midst of his people, so it was anointed to make it "absolutely holy". The new covenant, through the blood of Jesus, was made in the hearts of God's people. We don't need oil or holy water or burnt offerings because the Holy Spirit purifies our hearts.

Sunday 12th July. 1 Samuel 10: 1-11 (NLT)

Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it over Saul's head. He kissed Saul and said, "I am doing this because the Lord has appointed you to be the ruler over Israel, his special possession. ² When you leave me today, you will see two men beside Rachel's tomb at Zelzah, on the border of Benjamin. They will tell you that the donkeys have been found and that your father has stopped worrying about them and is now worried about you. He is asking, 'Have you seen my son?' ³ "When you get to the oak of Tabor, you will see three men coming toward you who are on their way to worship God at Bethel. One will be bringing three young goats, another will have three loaves of bread, and the third will be carrying a wineskin full of wine. ⁴ They will greet you and offer you two of the loaves, which you are to accept. ⁵ "When you arrive at Gibeah of God, where the garrison of the Philistines is located, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the place of worship. They will be playing a harp, a tambourine, a flute, and a lyre, and they will be prophesying. ⁶ At that time the Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person. ⁷ After these signs take place, do what must be done, for God is with you. ⁸ Then go down to Gilgal ahead of me. I

will join you there to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings. You must wait for seven days until I arrive and give you further instructions.”⁹ As Saul turned and started to leave, God gave him a new heart, and all Samuel’s signs were fulfilled that day.¹⁰ When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, they saw a group of prophets coming toward them. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul, and he, too, began to prophesy.¹¹ When those who knew Saul heard about it, they exclaimed, “What? Is even Saul a prophet? How did the son of Kish become a prophet?”

Reflect: the people, with whom God had said he wanted a direct relationship, wanted to have a king like all the other nations. Samuel anointed Saul to be God’s chosen instrument. Even though he was anointed with oil and filled with the Spirit, Saul failed tremendously because he lacked confidence in himself but also, crucially, in God.

Sunday 19th July. 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

Now the Lord said to Samuel, “You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king.”² But Samuel asked, “How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” “Take a heifer with you,” the Lord replied, “and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the Lord.”³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me.”⁴ So Samuel did as the Lord instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. “What’s wrong?” they asked. “Do you come in peace?”⁵ “Yes,” Samuel replied. “I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too.⁶ When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, “Surely this is the Lord’s anointed!”⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or

height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the Lord has chosen." ⁹ Next Jesse summoned Shimea, but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the Lord has chosen." ¹⁰ In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." ¹¹ Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives." ¹² So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the Lord said, "This is the one; anoint him." ¹³ So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

Reflect: David wasn't the first son of a wealthy landowner, he wasn't tall and imposing like Saul: he was the youngest of 7 sons and a humble shepherd. But God looks at the heart, and David was the king he chose. David's reign was the high point of God's plans for Israel. He wasn't perfect and made many mistakes in his life, but, once God had sent his Spirit on him, David lived as a man after God's own heart.

Sunday 26th July. Mark 14:3-9 (NLT)

³ Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head. ⁴ Some of those at the table were indignant. "Why waste such expensive perfume?" they asked. ⁵ "It could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor!" So they scolded her harshly.

⁶ But Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? ⁷ You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. ⁹ I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed." *Reflect: the banquet at which the woman poured perfume, or oil, over Jesus' head, was the last event before the Last Supper. You may remember that, after his death on the cross, there wasn't time to anoint Jesus' body before the Sabbath began. So, as Jesus says, this was his anointing. More to the point, this was an act of great service and great love, the woman sacrificially ministering to her Lord.*

Sunday 2nd August. Acts 2:1-21 (NLT)

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. ⁵ At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. ⁷ They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, ⁸ and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! ⁹ Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" ¹² They stood there amazed

and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. ¹³ But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!" ¹⁴ Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that. ¹⁶ No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'In the last days,' God says,
 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

 Your young men will see visions,
 and your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ In those days I will pour out my Spirit
 even on my servants—men and women alike—
 and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will cause wonders in the heavens above
 and signs on the earth below—
 blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will become dark,
 and the moon will turn blood red
 before that great and glorious day of the Lord arrives.

²¹ But everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
 will be saved.'

Reflect: after Jesus had ascended into heaven, God sent his Holy Spirit- so that those who followed Jesus would be anointed not with oil or perfume but with the gift of the spirit in their hearts. In the last days, says Peter quoting Joel, God will pour out his Spirit. And all we have to do is receive it into our hearts. Everyone who calls one the name of the Lord will be saved.

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