

Penge Congregational Church



**June 2017
Newsletter**

From the Minister

This Newsletter will be published on 4th June, which this year is the Day of Pentecost. The day, 49 days after the resurrection, when we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming down on the disciples of Christ, gathered together in Jerusalem. Before he went to the cross, Jesus had promised his disciples that they would be strengthened after he had left them: the Father would send “the Advocate, the Holy Spirit ... to teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you”. So, when Jesus appeared to them for the last time before ascending into heaven, when he gave them that last commandment, “to make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, he wasn’t leaving them to fulfil the hugest commission ever given to anyone without further help.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples went together into Jerusalem and began to prepare for the first stage of their commission. Luke tells us, in Acts 1, that they gathered together, along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other women, “constantly devoting themselves to prayer”. They brought the number of Apostles up to twelve again, casting lots to find a successor to Judas. And so they held themselves in readiness.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Jewish feast of Shavuot, the Spring Harvest Festival, the Holy Spirit came down on each of the followers of Jesus. Luke tells us there was a sound like a violent wind; divided tongues of fire rested on the heads of each disciple and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The first way in which this manifested itself was that each disciple began to speak of God’s great deeds of power in another language. Those near them could hear all the languages of the known world. This takes us back to Jesus’ great commission: “Go and make disciples of all nations”.

Cast your minds back to the very first chapter of St John’s Gospel, that wonderful passage of Scripture we read every Christmas, telling us in the most cosmic terms of the coming of the Messiah into the world. It talks of Jesus as the light of the world, and of John the Baptist, the forerunner, coming first to “testify to that light, so that through him all might believe”. When John the Baptist came to tell people about Jesus, he did so by declaring his knowledge of Jesus. He *witnessed* to Jesus as the Son of God. And John the Gospel writer also testified to what he had seen: “we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth”. Later, 50 days after the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit came on the disciples, who had been commissioned by

Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations, and they went from there to establish the early church and take it throughout the known world. St Paul, also an Apostle because he saw the face of Jesus on the road to Damascus, elaborates on this idea of being a witness in his second letter to Timothy, foremost of the next generation of disciples: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others".

All Christians, right down to you and me, have been summoned before the courtroom of the world to be witnesses. A witness in a court case is more than just an onlooker or spectator. A witness is someone who takes an active part in determining the outcome of the case by giving their testimony. A witness to Jesus Christ is in exactly the same position as a witness in court. We are to testify to something of ultimate importance: the truth of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *All* witnesses, everyone who believes in Jesus and follows him, have the task of giving our testimony before the courtroom of the world. We cannot be mere spectators but active participants in the expansion of the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist testified in the wilderness; the members of the first church testified in many different languages on the Day of Pentecost: we must testify in our church, our neighbourhood, our workplace, and among family and friends. If we haven't the eloquence to testify in words, we must do so in our actions: we can show Jesus to other people even if we don't feel able to explain about him. Each and every one of us must be an active witness telling others about the reality of Jesus in our lives.

We thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who lives within the heart of every Christian, and we ask his blessing as we witness to him in all that we do and say.

Pam



CTiB Christian Aid service at St Mary's, Shortlands. 14th May 2017



It was good to mark the start of Christian Aid Week this year with a united service. The service was led by Richard Baker, Head of Youth and Campaigns at Christian Aid, with the participation of people from several different churches.

Christian Aid was set up 60 years ago to support work with refugees in Europe following the Second World War. Since then it has become the biggest single act of ecumenical Christian witness in Britain and Ireland. This year, we answer Christ's call to help people in need in the form of the largest humanitarian crisis the world has faced since WW2, with 65 million people displaced from their homes as a result of war and disaster.

During Christian Aid Week, Christians unite to act together to relieve suffering and work towards a world where everyone has a safe home. Because we can't begin to comprehend 65 million displaced people, it helps to think of individuals, and, at the service, we were told the story of Nejebar, her husband, Noor and their 5 children. They lived in Afghanistan where Noor was a teacher, but this put him in danger from the Taliban, who threaten to kill anyone who works for the government. So the family fled and made the incredibly perilous journey to Greece. They expected to have to live in a tent for a few days, but, at the time of

writing, they had been there for 6 months with no end in sight. They have no protection from wind and rain, and no schooling for their children. Sudai, the youngest child, is 5 but looks much younger. He is ill but the only doctor in the camp is Greek and the language barrier has prevented them from making him understand that Sudai is much older than he looks.

Despite their desperate situation, Nejebar and Noor have taken in two unaccompanied boy refugees, Faraidoon and Farzad, who don't know where their parents are, or even if they're alive.

Nejebar says, "We still have some hope that one day we will get out of here and we have hopes for our children's future. We want our children to have an education, to go to school. The most important thing is for our children."

Christian Aid is working with a partner organisation in Greece to provide a temporary school for the children of refugees to give them hope and equip them for life in a future where they have found somewhere to call home. At the time of writing, Nejebar's children weren't yet benefitting from this.

We also heard the story of Theodor, a 91 year old who had to flee his home in Serbia after WW2. He spent two and a half years in refugee camps, and says, "It was Christian Aid who sent us care packages. It was Christian Aid who fed us and I will never forget it. That is why I volunteer for Christian Aid. I feel I owe my life to the cause. To Christian Aid, I promised that I will do my best, as long as I live, and I am still doing it."

A Christian Aid Week prayer from 1958

O Christ our Lord, who came in homelessness that you might find a home in us and that everyone would find a home in you, we bring before you at this time, all who are homeless, in exile or suffering. Grant them the sense of being held fast in you, and enable all who love you to strive together for a world which shall be closer to your Kingdom in which all may live together as a family, each caring for all, and all caring for each, for the sake of peace. Amen

**2nd Penge Rainbow Unit
Sleepover 29th – 30th April 2017**

Our second Rainbow Sleepover was held at the end of April 2017 in the Radcliffe Centre, Croydon. 10 Rainbows attended, together with Rainbow Leaders Diane and Caroline, Shanice our Unit Helper at Rainbows, plus Julie Taylor, one of our Guide Leaders. The Rainbows are only allowed to be away from home for 24 hours and we packed in a full programme for them.

The Rainbows picked the theme of Finding Dory. They made a mobile octopus, under the sea world out of a shoe box which they decorated with fish, coloured blue paper for the sea and green sea plants and shells. They also had a fish quiz out of doors in the early evening and a wide game with challengers and made posters for their bedroom. The Rainbows made cornflake cakes in an ice cream cone for our party tea. We had a lovely camp fire and the Rainbows toasted marshmallows and sung camp fire songs. They also had free time playing with bats, balls and skipping ropes. The weather was lovely and dry this year and we enjoyed plenty of time outside. The Rainbows loved their bedroom with 24 beds in bunks and en-suite bathroom.

We are now thinking of a date for 2018 for the next Sleepover! My very grateful thanks to Caroline, Shanice and Julie for all their hard work and help to make our Sleepover so enjoyable for the Rainbows.

**Diane Pask
Rainbow Leader
2nd Penge Rainbow Unit**



Flower Rota 2017

June:

- 4: Flower Fund for Penge Festival service
- 11: Melanie Cogan
- 18: Jean/Rosemarie
- 25: Marilyn Nicholson

July

- 2: Pat Clarke
- 9: Johnson family, in memory of Mollie
- 16: Jean Sumner
- 23: Friendship Club
- 30: Melanie Cogan.

August

- 6: Available
- 13: Flower Fund
- 20: Lionel Sawkins, in memory of Maureen
- 27: Available



Church Diary June 2017

Sunday 4th : Pentecost

10.30 am: In the presence of the Mayor of Bromley and the Penge Festival Committee. Led by the Minister.

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

Tuesday 6th:

9.30am – 11am: Café Church.

7.30pm: Worship Team meeting. The Vestry.

Wednesday 7th:

7.30pm: Penge Festival Organ Recital.

Thursday 8th June is Polling Day: the Kenilworth Hall will be a Polling Station all day; please avoid that end of the building during this time.

Friday 9th-Sunday 11th:

Congregational Federation National Assembly. Brangwyn Hall, Swansea.

Sunday 11th: Trinity Sunday

10.30 am: Marilyn Nicholson

6.30pm: Bible discussion, led by Chris McShane.

Wednesday 14th;

10.30am-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Thursday 15th:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 18th:

10.30am: Bringing together Pentecost and Trinity, led by Chris McShane. Includes the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

6.30pm: The Minister.

Thursday 22nd:

12-2pm: CTiB Ministers' meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 25th:

10.30am: Revelation 5, led by the Minister.

6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn McShane.

Wednesday 28th:

7.30pm: Prayer Group (Prayer walking if weather allows)

Penge Congregational Church

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Church gathered May 1908

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