

Penge Congregational Church



June 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 8.20pm (20.20 hours) on the 20th of each month, for 20 minutes.

The Prayer for Saturday 20th June:

Read John 14: 6, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

And pray:

God of all generations, we thank you for every young person that has put their trust in you. We pray that they will be given confidence and boldness to share their story with friends. Give them support through family, friends and youth leaders to enable them to follow in your ways.



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

Colossians 4:3



From the Minister

The churches have been closed now since mid-March, and it seems that the earliest we can resume any form of public worship is after 4th July. Even then, it won't be a question of getting back to "normal". We are unlikely to be able to resume our usual services- almost certainly no singing, probably no communion, social distancing, probably covering our faces... But will that really be so bad? Surely the one vital thing about worshipping God is that it should come from the heart?

God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah to tell us of a new covenant with his people, which was sealed in the blood of Christ, "I will put my instructions deep within them and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people." Through the prophet Zephaniah, he talks of the time when Israel will be restored: "Be glad and rejoice with all your heart".

We don't express our love of God by being solemn, by coming to church and doing the same familiar things each week. Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, then the ability to skate over the surface and not become really engaged. I had a Zoom meeting during May with other local ministers, and we all agreed that one really good thing that has come out of lockdown is that we have been forced to find new ways of worshipping, new ways of staying in fellowship. One minister, someone who has been pastor of his church for over 20 years, went so far as to say that he didn't want things to revert to normal when it was all over because lockdown has revitalised our relationships with one another and with God.

Zephaniah talks of God delighting in us with gladness, rejoicing over us with joyful songs. Isn't that a wonderful image? God promises to be present forever with those who have been transformed by his mercy. But it doesn't stop there! He invites

us to be glad and rejoice with all our hearts, and he joins in with us when we do! And, through Isaiah, God says he will send out his word, and it will bear fruit and prosper. We, his people, will live in joy and peace, and the mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands! So, even if we can't sing, God will be singing to us. Because he has sent the Holy Spirit to live in the heart of every believer, that means he is singing into each one of us!

We think of David, whom God called a man after his own heart, bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, and being so filled with joy that he danced in front of it, leaping up into the air and skipping about. So many of the psalms refer to dance and music as a praise offering. In the parable of the prodigal son, when the son returns to his father's house, there is dancing and music. All these instances should show us that God welcomes exuberant expressions of joy and delight from those who welcome and praise him. Surely this is because such exuberance comes from the heart, the place where God said he would write his covenant.

When we can come together in due course to worship together, let us remember that, whatever the virus prevents us from doing, it can't keep us from the joy of praising our God. It can't stop us from celebrating his love for us. He delights in us. If we can't sing to him, he can sing to us. All we have to do is open our hearts and listen for him!

Pam

Giving at PCC

Lynn has had a couple of enquiries about giving during this time of lockdown. It is true that 3rd May was our Spring Gift Day, but Deacons felt that, with groups not meeting and collecting subs etc, and with so many people's income affected by the emergency, it was not right to ask for extra money for the church. However, if you would still like to give a gift, whether it is your usual weekly offering or for Gift Day, you could do this in one of two ways. Either you can send Lynn a cheque at the church address- post is being delivered as usual- or you could make an online transfer into the church bank account. Our account is with CAF Bank in the name of Penge Congregational Church. The sort code is 40-52-40. Account number 00015112. Please reference any payment either as Offering or Gift Day.

Christian Aid Week

Obviously, this only took place this year as an appeal for donations nationally but again, if you would like to give, the church will be sending its own donation and we will be only too happy to add yours. Please let us have your donation as above for church giving, marking any online payment Christian Aid.



Penge Congregational Church Report and Accounts 2019/20

We have not of course been able to have our Church Annual Meeting this year. However, Lynn has prepared the financial report so that we can at least fulfil our legal obligation. If you have any questions or comments, Lynn's contact details are on the back page. We would like to offer her our thanks for managing to get this done despite the difficulties of lockdown and the considerable demands of her job.

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Member Church of the Congregational Federation
172 High Street Penge London SE20 7QS
Report and Accounts 2019/20

Penge Congregational Church is not registered with the Charities Commission because it is an exempt charity under the Baptist/Presbyterian/Congregational Church Act 1955 but it is registered as a charity with HM Revenue & Customs

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

Balance, brought forward, as at 31st March 2019

Represented by :	Current Account	£ 2211.83
	Gold Account	<u>£ 8807.70</u>
	TOTAL	£11 019.53

Receipts during the year £89,363.50

Payments out during the year £80,926.96

Receipts in excess of payments of £8436.60

Balance, brought forward, as at 31st March 2020

Represented by :	Current Account	£ 4633.51
	Gold Account	<u>£</u>
		<u>14822.56</u>
	TOTAL	£19456.07

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT, YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH
2020

RECEIPTS	2019/20		2018/19
Unallocated offerings			
Free-will offerings	13,183.71 (including gift day)		13,715.74
Loose cash offerings	7,664.11		5264.17
Other collections	1,618.62	<i>Note 1</i>	1323.14
Flat rental	9240		9240
Manse rental	13,278.31		12302.95
Hall lettings	37,185.50		27236.06
Office space	2400		2400
Bank interest	14.86		14.91
Gift aid	Not yet claimed		8174.36
Miscellaneous	640.00	Note 2	1984.75
Congregational Federation investment income	4138.39		3785.32
TOTAL RECEIPTS	89,363.50		85441.40

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT, YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

PAYMENTS	2019/20		2018/19
Salaries			
Minister Revd P Owen	12,639		12852
Church Cleaner	5623.49 (13 months)		4678.63 (11 months)
Church Administrator	9,880.71 (13 months)		8675.37 (11 months)
Gardening	1140.00 (13 months)		960 (11 months)
NIC and Tax	118.54		729.24
Mission and ministry			
Allocated/retiring offerings	1442.71	<i>Note 3</i>	1970.01
Organ maintenance	1579.60		1532.80
Organist	1275.00		1200
Minister's expenses	1889.01		657.07
Training	195.00		
General			
Photocopier	1225.44		1167.15
Water rates	1,456.95	<i>Note 4</i>	5509.62
Heat and lighting			

Gas	9829.17		10514.85
Electricity	3095.16	<i>Note 5</i>	2155.25
Insurance church	7970.90		7516.69
Manse	600.04		664.56
Maintenance church	£6,977.68	<i>Note 6</i>	21529.45
Manse repairs	£7630.79	<i>Note 7</i>	664.56
Stationery	77.23		0
Cleaning materials	699.12		747.29
Accountancy	312		312
Bank Fees	160		90
Copyright	315.67		304.36
Fire certificates and replacement extinguishers	708.64		
Charity support – Men in Sheds	2800		0
World Vision	585.60		559.60
Christian Aid collection	464.78		521.18
Miscellaneous	1296.00	<i>Note 8</i>	1,601.96 (included fire extinguishers)
TOTAL PAYMENTS	80,926.96		85,623.54

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT, YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Notes to the Accounts, Year ended 31 March 2020

Note 1 Other collections and donations relate to:

London Fund for the Blind Christmas Eve service £86.40

Carols by Candle light for Living Well £172.75

Combat Stress £124.55

Christmas post box for Living Well £33.00

Society of Organists 2 meetings £100.00

David Nicholson Memorial recital £511.00

Women's World Day of Prayer £205.92

Donations received with thanks

Uniformed organisations £810.00

Note 2 Miscellaneous income main items

Flower fund and newsletter £290.00

Weddings and funerals £250.00

Banking operation £100

Note 3 Allocated and retiring offerings forwarded during the year

London Fund for the Blind £328.5

8

Benevolent fund (assistance with rent) £250.0

0

Living Well £200.2

0

Combat Stress £124.55

Christmas post box for Living Well £33

Amnesty – Organ recital memory of David Nicholson	255.50
NASS - Organ recital memory of David Nicholson	255.50
Women’s World Day of Prayer (cheque has not been cashed in this financial year.)	0

Note 4. Many thanks to Chris Doran for contacting the water company. We were paying the wrong rates last year.

Note 5. We are in credit with the electricity company

Note 6 Church maintenance

Gas safety checks (church flat and manse) and water temperature control for nursery school.	£ 741.59
Chairs and tables for café church	£360.00
Boiler and radiators	£2989.20
Drains	662.22
PAT testing	250.00
Transporting chairs	892.80
Replaced floodlights	138.00
Wooden floors in church	305.96
Other	687.28

Note 7 Manse repairs:

New boiler	£355.20
Double glazing front of property	£5,944.5
Preparation of manse for new tenants May 2019	9 £1,037
Manse radiators	£294

Note 8. Miscellaneous expenses.

Congregational Federation affiliation fees	£566.00
Affiliation to RSCM	£107.00
Publicity (SE20 magazine)	£100.00
Refunds on lettings	£358.00
Preachers and registered person	£165.00

Sleepover At Home for VE Day

Many of our Rainbows and their Leaders took part in the Sleepover At Home for VE Day. Rainbows slept outside in tents, made dens in their sitting rooms, slept on camp beds in their parents' room, or in another bedroom. Some even liked it so much they had their Sleepover on the 8th and 9th May! The Rainbow Leaders also took part, one sleeping in a tent in her garden and the other one on a sofa/den in her sitting room. As we were unable to go on our unit's Rainbow Sleepover from the 2nd - 3rd May 2020 this was the next best thing. Many thanks to our County of Greater London Kent who suggested the idea of a Sleepover to mark VE Day.

King's College Hospital Wellbeing Hampers

Girlguiding members in the London Borough of Bromley were asked by King's College Hospital Charity if members of Guiding could write notes to be included in the Staff Wellbeing Hampers they were making up. Younger girls were asked to send in pictures. Some of our Rainbows responded to the challenge of drawing pictures to be included in the King's College Hospital Wellbeing Hampers. We had a lovely mixture of pictures of rainbows, sun, clouds and even a great big '99' ice cream cone picture. Well done to all our Rainbows that took part. We also included written notes from the Rainbow leaders. We hope that all the staff members take comfort in the knowledge that we are so very grateful for all that they do for all their patients at this difficult time. We shall never forget what they have done.

It is lovely that our Rainbows could take part in these challenges while we cannot have our normal unit meetings.

Best wishes to you all, keep well everyone and stay safe.

Diane Pask

Unit Rainbow Leader

2nd Penge Rainbow Unit

Sunday service podcast www.pccweb.co.uk

We have put up a service on our website every Sunday since Palm Sunday. We owe great thanks to Callum who has edited the various strands together each week, and made it into one coherent service. Even when, as for 17th May, the bin men came down Pam's road when she was half way through recording her sermon, and she had to rerecord the second half as a separate file! Pam has "preached" three times in May, and Chris and Lynn, and Siobhan have done the other two services.

We are only too aware that some of our fellowship have no internet access so here is just one of the sermons that have been podcast. It's Pam's sermon on John 14: 15-21, The Promise of the Holy Spirit.

Last Tuesday, we had a look at this passage of Scripture during our Zoom meeting. After I had read it out, Lynn commented that it was very complicated. Yet, after we had discussed it for a while, we concluded that it was actually quite simple! Quite simple and quite mind-blowing!

Essentially Jesus is saying two things. He is explaining the relationship that will exist between himself, God and us after Jesus has returned to his father. And he is explaining what will bind that relationship together.

Regarding the first point, I have to say I was rather pleased with myself during the Zoom meeting because I found quite a good way of putting it. Jesus is explaining the constitution of the Kingdom of God in which all believes dwell, whether they are in heaven or on earth. Think of our own constitution. We are governed, technically speaking, by the Monarch in Parliament. Parliament has two parts, the Lords and the Commons, and the Commons is elected by a ballot of all adult citizens. So that is the constitutional relationship of the various elements of government.

If we go back to the last couple of verses that Chris and Lynn looked at last week, John 14: 10- "I am in the Father and the

Father is in me". In verse 20 of what we have read today, Jesus goes further: "When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you". So the constitution of the Kingdom of God is the Father and the Son and us! And , so that we can be in constant communication with the Father and the son, so that we can understand what they want us to do, Jesus promises that, when he has gone to the Father, he will ask God to send what he calls another Advocate who will never leave us.

At the time he was speaking to them, the disciples had Jesus as their Advocate. After he had left them, in bodily terms, he would be replaced by another Advocate who would take his place in their lives. The Greek word Jesus used is Parakletos, which literally translates as "called alongside". We translate it in different ways- Advocate is one, counsellor is another, Comforter. None is quite adequate. Advocate is someone who provides legal advice and speaks for you in court. Counsellor is someone who gives advice. Parakletos is a mixture of all three, but perhaps the best word is Encourager. The Holy Spirit would come to take Jesus' place to encourage, instruct and strengthen his followers. In fact the Spirit would sustain Jesus' presence among his disciples.

Of course, we have never known Jesus' immediate tangible presence with us. But the gift of the Holy Spirit is there with us just as it was with the original disciples. It continues the work of Jesus and it maintains his presence in the life of all believers. And we don't have to go to church or anywhere else special because that Advocate, the Holy Spirit, is within each one of us. When we pray, the Holy Spirit acts as a channel between us and God. When God speaks to us, whether to encourage or strengthen, or to guide or even to warn- we call that conscience but it is actually the Spirit- he does so through the medium of the spirit.

I spoke of the constitution of the Kingdom as Father, son and us. Of course that isn't to say that it is an equal relationship. Jesus says it is necessary for those who are his followers, those who receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, to obey his commands. In other words to follow his teachings and to live according to the values of his Kingdom. Just as we who are citizens of this

country have to obey the law, we who are also citizens of God's Kingdom must live by its values.

And of course this is why Jesus says that the world can't receive the Holy Spirit- it isn't looking for him and it doesn't recognise him. The world lives by the values of the world, not by the values of the Kingdom of God.

And we, who do follow Kingdom values, don't follow Jesus because anyone forces us to, we do it of our own free will because we love him. "Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them". That isn't a sort of threat or a condition- it isn't saying "If you love me, you'll do what I say". It's actually an explanation of what holds the whole thing, the whole relationship, the whole Kingdom of God together. And that glue, if you like, is love.

Last week I had the sad duty of conducting the funeral service of Bill Clarke. Bill was being buried with his late son, Clive, and because of the current restrictions, the whole service had to be conducted at the graveside. So a couple of days earlier I did a recce in the cemetery to make sure I knew where we would be on the day. I was struck, as I walked through the cemetery, by the number of families out tending the graves of their loved ones. Still connected to those loved ones, by love. When someone passes away, you don't stop loving them, and that love is there connecting them to you forever.

Put it another way. Last week we had the anniversary of VE Day, and the Queen spoke to the nation in the evening. She said that, although we had to mark the anniversary indoors or from our doorsteps, the streets weren't empty. They were filled with the love and care we had shown for each other during the lockdown.

Love is something solid. It's the most powerful emotion there is. And Jesus says it's what binds us together in our relationship with him, with his Father and with one another. A little further on in John, in chapter 15, Jesus speaks about this some more. I do urge you to read it. He says, "This is my commandment: Love one another in the same way I have loved you. This is my command: Love one another".

But here, where he is promising the Holy Spirit, he says, if you love me, you will obey my commandments. If you love me, you will obey my teachings and live as I have asked you to live. The Holy Spirit will help you do that.

And the relationship we will enjoy with him is defined by love. We follow Jesus because we love him. Because we love him, God will love us. And Jesus will love us, and he will reveal himself to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So far in his relationship with his disciples, he had been a physical presence to them. After the resurrection, he would inaugurate a spiritual union with them through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that union would be parallel to the one he has with his Father. And the glue that binds it all together is love.

The only condition in all of this is that first phrase in verse 15: "If you love me". So, you see, it really is quite simple after all! If we love Jesus, all the rest will follow. But, goodness me, it's mind blowing as well. If we love him, we will follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. If we love him, God will love us. And Jesus will love us, and he will reveal himself to each one of us. Because we each have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, Jesus is a constant presence with us. Every step of the way, every second of our lives, he is there, loving us and guiding us, strengthening and encouraging us.

Alleluia, what a Saviour! Amen

June readings and reflection points

We are unable to hold services at the moment because of the Coronavirus regulations. The government advice is very conditional but it seems we won't be able to hold services until the first Sunday in July at the earliest, and even then we don't know what restrictions we will have to observe. So here are the readings we had planned for each Sunday in June, and a couple of things for you to think about after reading each one.

The service theme for June was to have been Revival, based on the mission of the prophet Elijah. Elijah lived some 850 years before Christ. He was called by God to demonstrate to the people of Israel, who, led often by their kings, were being more and more seduced by the pagan gods of the Canaanites, that the Lord is the one true God who was calling them back to him. Through Elijah, God demonstrated great power and yet the wicked king Ahab and his evil queen, Jezebel, continued to lead Israel astray. They persecuted Elijah, and he was only able to continue his ministry with God's support and encouragement. He was so single minded in his devotion to God's work that, at the end of his earthly existence, he didn't die. Instead God swept him up to heaven in a chariot of fire, leaving his successor Elisha to continue his mission. Elijah's life demonstrates God's care and the effectiveness of prayer.

Sunday 7th June

1 Kings 18: 20-39 New Living Translation

²⁰ So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel. ²¹ Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.

²² Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only prophet of the Lord who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. ²³ Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they

wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God!" And all the people agreed.

²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls, and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood."

²⁶ So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning until noontime, shouting, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no reply of any kind. Then they danced, hobbling around the altar they had made. ²⁷ About noontime Elijah began mocking them. "You'll have to shout louder," he scoffed, "for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming, or is relieving himself.^[a] Or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!" ²⁸ So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. ²⁹ They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no sound, no reply, no response.

³⁰ Then Elijah called to the people, "Come over here!" They all crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. ³¹ He took twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes of Israel,^[b] ³² and he used the stones to rebuild the altar in the name of the Lord. Then he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about three gallons.^[c] ³³ He piled wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood. Then he said, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water over the offering and the wood." ³⁴ After they had done this, he said, "Do the same thing again!" And when they were finished, he said, "Now do it a

third time!" So they did as he said, ³⁵ and the water ran around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶ At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,^[e] prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. ³⁷ O Lord, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself." ³⁸ Immediately the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, "The Lord—he is God! Yes, the Lord is God!"

Reflect:

What might be our modern day equivalent of Baal?

Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal by praying a simple, powerful prayer, which God answered. Is praying for your needs your first resort- or your last?

Sunday 14th June:

1 Kings 19: 1-8 New Living Translation

19 When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ² So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." ³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. ⁴ Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said.

“Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.”

⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, “Get up and eat!” ⁶ He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, “Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai,^[a] the mountain of God.

Reflect:

Rather than a warm reception after a spectacular victory, Elijah faced a death threat, and became effectively a refugee. Jesus and his family became refugees when they fled to Egypt. How should this affect our own response to modern day refugees? God sent his angel to bring Elijah what he needed most at that moment. Do you trust God to give you what you need rather than what you might want?

Sunday 21st June

1 Kings 19:9b-18 New Living Translation

But the Lord said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ Elijah replied, “I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.” ¹¹ “Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but

the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He replied again, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." ¹⁵ Then the Lord told him, "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. ¹⁶ Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi^[a] to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet. ¹⁷ Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha! ¹⁸ Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!"

Reflect:

God asks Elijah the same question before and after he reveals himself to Elijah. Elijah's response indicates he fails to understand how God has been working through all that has happened. Do you sometimes not understand what on earth God is doing in your life?

In loving patience, God sends Elijah back to where he began to stray from the purpose of God's mission, so that he can move forward. And he reminds him he is not alone. Do you sometimes forget the constant presence of the Holy Spirit with you?

Sunday 28th June

2 Kings 2: 1-14 New Living Translation

2 When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were travelling from Gilgal. ² And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the Lord has told me to go to Bethel." But Elisha replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!" So they went down together to Bethel.

³ The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the Lord is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it." ⁴ Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the Lord has told me to go to Jericho."

But Elisha replied again, "As surely as the Lord lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together to Jericho. ⁵ Then the group of prophets from Jericho came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the Lord is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

⁶ Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the Lord has told me to go to the Jordan River." But again Elisha replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together.

⁷ Fifty men from the group of prophets also went and watched from a distance as Elijah and Elisha stopped beside the Jordan River. ⁸ Then Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it. The river divided, and the two of them went across on dry ground! ⁹ When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away." And Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor."

¹⁰ "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah replied. "If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won't."

¹¹ As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!" And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress. ¹³ Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, which had fallen when he was taken up. Then Elisha returned to the bank of the Jordan River. ¹⁴ He struck the water with Elijah's cloak and cried out, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" Then the river divided, and Elisha went across.

Reflect:

3 times Elijah urged Elisha to stay behind, but Elisha was determined to stay with Elijah until the end. Are we always determined to stick to something God wants us to do, that we know is going to be difficult?

Elisha asked that Elijah's God-given spiritual abilities might continue in him. The group of prophets recognise this has been granted, yet they insist on spending 3 days searching for Elijah in case he has somehow just got lost. Do we sometimes waste time denying what we know to be true?

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

172 High Street
Penge
London
SE20 7QS

Minister

Reverend Pam Owen 020 8659 2010
Email pamjowen@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Lynn McShane 07817 862158
Email lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com

Room Bookings

Admin Manager: Bernie Hall 07900 518537
pcclettings@outlook.com

Maintenance for Hall Users

pccmaintain@outlook.com

Organist

Marilyn Nicholson 020 8778 5064

Archives

Chris Doran
Email pengecong@chrisjdoran.plus.com

Webmaster

Callum McShane
Email callum.mcshane@googlemail.com

Website

www.pccweb.co.uk

Deacons

Reverend Pam Owen
Jannett Ashley
Lynn McShane
Chris Parker
Douglas Rathbone

Church Accountant (payroll etc)

Edwards Chartered Accountants
275B Croydon Road, Beckenham BR3 3PS