

# Penge Congregational Church



## March 2017 Newsletter



## **From the Minister**

Ash Wednesday falls this year on 1<sup>st</sup> March so the whole of March is within the season of Lent. In these secular times, we often reduce Lent to a time when we give something up- chocolate or alcohol perhaps- or, more constructively, do something extra in terms of focussing our faith in preparation for Easter, the most significant point in the year for Christians. This year, Churches Together in Beckenham are trying something ambitious in the form of a united 5 week Lent Course. Each Tuesday during March and the first Tuesday of April, we will come together at St John's Eden Park to take part in one of five courses along with people from other churches. The choice is a good one: singing "Messiah" choruses; exploring the Bible through art (led by our own Chris McShane); Franciscan spirituality; The Lord's Prayer; and "Decisions, decisions". This is an exciting event, which aims to help us, by sharing fellowship with folk from different churches, hear and understand different viewpoints and experience worship and fellowship together.

It is important for our activity during Lent, whether the sharing of fellowship, or the giving up of chocolate, to focus our minds and hearts on what this season is actually about. The 40 days of Lent reflects the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert right at the beginning of his ministry. At the end of Lent we mark the Last Supper, the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus ("the Passion of Christ"), and the resurrection. Between these two stages of Jesus' life on earth came his whole ministry. But we put them together because the 40 days in the desert, during which Jesus ate nothing, was his first time of trial during which Sin came to him, in the form of the devil, and tempted him to abandon God's purpose for him. The devil tempted him to turn stones into bread; he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, claimed authority over them and offered them to Jesus if he would worship evil instead of good; and lastly he took Jesus up to a high point and tempted him to throw himself off to test whether God would save him. Jesus rejected all these tests. But it is important for us to realise the connection between these temptations and what happened on Good Friday.

God sent Jesus to redeem his people from Sin, so that they could be freed to fulfil the purpose he had for them from the beginning: not so that they could go to heaven, but so that God's kingdom- the "new heaven and earth"- could exist on earth, and his people could be the "royal priesthood" as he had always intended. Sin, in the form of the devil, claimed in the desert that the sovereignty of the kingdoms of the earth

belonged to him. After the crucifixion and resurrection, just before he ascended to heaven, Jesus told his disciples that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me". Something, in between the temptation and the ascension had happened to dethrone Sin and enthrone Jesus in its place. That something was the crucifixion, and the first sign of it was the resurrection.

This is the journey we take through Lent; this is why we journey from the temptation in the desert through the solemnity of Good Friday to the joy of Easter Day.

May God bless us during this period of Lent, and help us to deepen our faith and our understanding of his power, glory and love.

**Pam**

PS: If you want to join the 75 people who have signed up for the Lent Courses, the first session is on 7<sup>th</sup> March, so contact Pam to join in!



## **Visit to a Pantomime by the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides**

On Sunday afternoon 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017 the Rainbows, Brownies and the Guides from PCC went to see a Pantomime at St George's Church Hall, in Beckenham. We were also joined at the performance by the Rainbows who meet at the United Reformed Church in Beckenham, their Leader Martine and adult helpers. Some of you may remember Martine helped us with the Brownies at PCC many years ago.

This year I reserved the whole performance for the four units who attended. That meant we had 100 seats! The Pantomime was Dick Whittington, who of course had his black cat with him. We also had some parents and other family members who joined us for the performance.

The performers are all amateurs who love Pantomime and singing. They produce and perform a Pantomime in January and a summer musical evening with fish and chip supper usually in May or June. The tickets are always reasonably priced and St Mark's Players were supporting two charities this year: St Christopher's Hospice and the Demelza Children's Hospice.

As you can imagine, it was not a very quiet afternoon with so many children and adults. Have you heard that number of children and adults hiss and boo at King Rat who wanted to attack Dick Whittington? The usual banter of "behind you", "oh no he's not" and "oh yes he is", was enjoyed by both children and adults who joined in as well! Most of the jokes went over the top of the children's heads as the saying goes, but one sticks in my mind. "*Have you heard that ten miles from London there is a park called Selhurst Park where the Eagles fly?*" Our Rainbows really thought that Eagles fly round at Selhurst Park! For those of you not football fans, Selhurst Park is where Crystal Palace Football team have their football ground and their emblem has an Eagle on it, so they are called 'Eagles.' The children also loved Dick's black cat, the cow who not only produced milk, but butter and cheese, straight from the cow! No need to go to the supermarket, this was indeed a special cow.

My youngest granddaughter Emily came on her first visit to the Pantomime and told one of the performers off because he said he wanted to cut off Dick Whittington's hands and feet. "That's naughty" Emily said in her loudest voice, "and not nice". I know now that you don't mess with three year old Emily or you will get told off! Wonder if she will be allowed to go next year?

This was an afternoon of good clean fun, watching the Pantomime and listening to the singing. The only casualty was that King Rat lost his tail

when Dick Whittington's cat chased him off stage by jumping on his back, to very loud claps and cheers by the audience. I recommend a visit to a Pantomime if you have never been, or just want to unwind and have a good laugh. You can be an adult and hiss and boo, plus join in the singing and clapping and no one thinks you are strange. Our Rainbows want to go back again and Emily wanted to go back the following week!

Diane Pask

Unit Rainbow Leader

On behalf of the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides at PCC.



## A Musical Feast

One of the audience at Saturday's SSLSO organ recital described it as "such a wonderful feast of rich and varied pieces". It was indeed a splendid afternoon of glorious music, with enjoyable conversation and biscuits at the end. In fact, it was so enjoyable that people were reluctant to leave, and thanks are due to Chris Doran for waiting to close up the doors and make everything secure when it was all over save the glow of pleasure at the warmth and generosity of the occasion.

*The music ranged over several centuries, from Buxtehude and Bruhns in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, played by Andrew Chadney and Michael Cooke (including his Zimbelstern), to a Suite on Sagina ("And Can it Be") by Christopher Tambling in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, played by Bridget West.*

Several of the performers are pupils of Marilyn Harper, who is the Chair of the Southwark and South London Society of Organists, and who teaches at the Royal College of Organists Academy. Several works by JS Bach were played: an especially vivid performance by James Ivackovic, one of three teenagers who took part in the programme, pupils of John Webber. Robert Bowles played a piece by CV Stanford on a theme of Orlando Gibbons (Song 34), in which the tune was in the pedal part. Martin Callingham and John Webber played two of Elgar's Vesper Voluntaries, which would have been familiar to Penge Congregational Church from hearing their own Organist play them (certain choir members are particularly fond of Elgar).

There was a dramatic rendition of the Finale from Widor's Symphonie 4, by Irene Wolstenholme; and James Carpenter's Sonata No 1 by Hindemith has a very big imposing Phantasie contrasted with a soft delicate pastoral section with what sounded like birdsong or rippling water. An audience member who knows the organ well, said she had heard sounds on Saturday that she'd never heard before (perhaps those bird-like trills). James's daughter Miriam, who practises once a week on our organ, also participated with a beautiful Bach Prelude.

Sarah Best and Tanya Farrell came from north London to join the programme, playing a Concerto by Prinz Johann von Ernst, arranged by JS Bach, and a Bach Prelude in G minor, respectively. Tanya, who is a lawyer, is one of Marilyn Harper's pupils. Charles Terry, one of the youngest pupils, played a haunting and mysterious Musette by Boëllman. Pieter Shaw played a 17<sup>th</sup> century Voluntary by a composer named

Thomas Weelkes about whom very little is known, but his music was delightful.

Nick Jones, the secretary of the Society, played an Easter Prelude by Bach; Samzu Agbaje played the First Movement of a Sonata by Johann Fasch, a piece which previously was believed to be by JS Bach; your own organist played one of her favourite Bach chorales; and the programme finished with Peter Smith playing his own composition.

For me, the most wonderful piece of the day was Andante in A, by Henry Smart, played by Dr Harry Bamma, who is the President of the SSLSO. Harry is a most delightful, warm, and knowledgeable man, formerly the Organist of Southwark Cathedral where he played a Lewis organ. So Harry played *our* Lewis organ with great sympathy and delicacy. He said, "I know what this organ is capable of." As always, the organ demonstrated that it is capable of many moods, many varieties of sound, and rich colours!

We had distinguished performers and several distinguished guests, but the *distinguishing* feature of all these superb musicians is their unassuming modesty. One of our audience said she had watched two of the most excellent organists leave the church together, and she said, "Just seeing them on the street, one would never realize that they had just stirred so many people with their musicianship."

The whole afternoon was an example of sharing and encouragement, and I am so honoured that these organists have come once again to enjoy playing our Lewis organ, and that so many people came to enjoy listening to it. What a privilege!

Not the least successful part of the occasion was the MANY cups of tea provided by Pam, Margaret, Lynn, Rosemarie and Jean H- for which, many many thanks. I was told the M&S biscuits were popular...

## **Marilyn**





## Flower Rota 2017

### March

5: Jean Sumner  
12: Lionel Sawkins, in memory of Maureen.  
19: Pat Clarke  
26: Melanie Cogan

### April

2: David Nye, in memory of Rosie.  
9: Jean Sumner, in memory of Heather.  
16: Flower Fund  
23: Melanie Cogan  
30 Pat Clarke

### May

7: Joan Sole  
14: Kathleen Sewter  
21: Joyce Perry  
28: Diane Pask

*Monday is Pam's Day Off.*

***You are asked to respect this except in cases of emergency \*.***

\*A query has recently arisen over this. To clarify, I would always hope to respond to any request for urgent pastoral care. However, no-one can maintain their physical, mental or spiritual health without any "down time", so I do trust to the judgement, and consideration, of members of the church family. Pam

## **More Notes From the Lakes**

Well, it seems that you had some snow down south as well last month, so I can't make a big deal of the weather up here in the north-west; except for the fact that the rain, it doth continue to rain up here - a lot! About 5 miles away is one of our favourite walks in a valley up to Wet Sleddale, and it's so named because it allegedly the wettest place in England - allegedly. It must be getting warmer as the horses in the field opposite us are getting frisky & chasing each other all over the place today. With all this wild countryside around us it does make for different stories and examples that come out in our services. What Bible passage would you link with a 4am lambing, the floods we had a year ago, Scottish stories (they're just over the border here) or struggling up the fells in the snow?

The days may be getting warmer & longer but there's still a need for different ways to reach out to people who have something broken in their spirit. We've started having a Sunday evening healing service at Carver church. It is for spiritual healing in the tradition of the Iona Community & I'd say it also runs in tandem with our Blue Christmas service that we have on the longest night of the year in December - facing the struggle with darkness and the grief faced by those living with loss & honouring people who have lost loved ones in the year. They are practical, caring and link well with the family that we have here at the church. It's a church that's bonded together successfully as we've finally just got over the last legal hurdle to merge the URC & Methodist churches here. In practice that's been happening for the last few years but the legal framework has now caught up. That's why it's called a Uniting church, not "United", because with the area getting support from all sides to become more ecumenical, this is still an ever ongoing process. Our Thursday Bible fellowship is going well & it's great to see that no matter how many or how few people turn up it has a feeling that it's a safe space - safe to talk about hopes, fears, experiences, understanding of the passage & God's will for us and... our lack of understanding. What can I say about what we've looked at? It's certainly mixed! In the last year we've gone through Amos, Mark's Gospel, Colossians and a fair few Psalms. We're currently looking at the stories of various women in the Bible & it's going to be fun when we get onto Deborah in a couple of weeks!!

Just looking out of my window I see the horses have now been moved & the sheep are back opposite so I'd better go now. Hope to see you all soon whenever that will be later this year.

God bless, **Douglas**

## **Church Diary March 2017**

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Women's World Day of Prayer**

7.30pm: Service at Penge Baptist Church, Maple Road

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>:

10.30 am: Where are we going in Lent?, led by Chris McShane

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

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>:

9am – 11am: Café Church.

7.30pm: CTiB Lent course, 1<sup>st</sup> session: St John's Eden Park.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>;

10.30am-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> :

10.30 am: Discipleship, James 2, led by Jannett Ashley, the Minister to preach.

12.30pm: Church lunch

2.00pm: Church Meeting

6.30 pm: Bible discussion, led by Lynn McShane.

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>:

7.30pm: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lent session, St John's Eden Park

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>:

7.30pm: Prayer Group. 50 Chesham Road

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>:

10.30 am: Spring Parade Service, led by the Worship Team.

6.30 pm: Marilyn Nicholson.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>:

7.30pm: 3<sup>rd</sup> Lent session, St John's Eden Park

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>:

10.30am: Prayer: James 5; and the Lord's Supper, led by the Minister.

6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn.

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>:

7.30pm: 4<sup>th</sup> Lent session, St John's Eden Park

## **Penge Congregational Church**

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Church gathered May 1908

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### **Church Accountants (payroll etc)**

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