

Penge Congregational Church



March 2022

Cover photo:

'Snowdrops'

by Peter Longley

From the Minister...

Recently I was talking to someone who had been going through a bit of a rough time. They commented that they believed God exists, but that belief doesn't play an active part in their life- they don't read the Bible, talk to God or go to church. I wasn't surprised when the question was posed: if there is a God, why does he let bad things happen?



It is, of course, a common question and one that is really hard to answer not least because we can't pretend to know God's ways. Isaiah 55: 8-9: "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord, "and my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine."

But answering the question becomes slightly more possible if we do read the Bible. Not just the Gospel or even the New Testament, but all of the Bible. If we are to grasp the sheer scale of what God intended and what he did when he sent us his Son, we need the context of the Old Testament.

God sent Jesus to seal a new covenant between God and his people, in his blood. There are several covenants in the Old Testament: reading about them helps us understand that God always kept his promises to his people, but that the promises were made in the

*form of covenants, which require action **on both sides**. **God's covenant through Moses was an agreement** that, if the children of Israel accepted him as their God, he would accept them as his people.*

Years later, after Moses had died, the people were led into the Promised Land by Joshua. If you read the first 9 verses of the book of Joshua, you will see that God made another covenant, with Joshua taking on the mantle of Moses. God promised never to fail or abandon Joshua but Joshua would need to be “strong and courageous.” And the people would need to obey all the instructions God had given them through Moses. If you read on through the Old Testament, you will see that the whole history of God's people alternates between them being faithful to God and therefore benefitting from his promises, and turning from God, therefore reaping the consequences of that.

Just as God fulfilled through Joshua the promise of land he had made to Abraham and Moses, he later fulfilled through Jesus the promise of an everlasting dynasty to David. God's fulfilment of his promises will continue into eternity. But we can only benefit if we not only acknowledge the existence of God but actively get to know him through reading the Scriptures and through building a relationship with him.

Of course this still doesn't make it easy to answer the question about God allowing bad things to happen. Telling a “seeker” that they aren't doing enough to respond to God smacks of victim-blaming. But it might

be wise to point anyone asking the question to Joshua 1: 7-8:

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions that Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study the book of instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”

Pam

We have restarted our Tuesday evening Prayer and Praise -
from 7.30 to 8.30pm.

All are welcome to come and sing!



March readings

With Easter late this year, **Lent begins on 2nd March**. So our March services will prepare our hearts and minds for celebrating the **Resurrection: Jesus has triumphed over sin and death**.

During March **our Sunday readings in Church** will be:

6th March: Luke 4: 1-13. Full of the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus triumphs over Satan.

13th March: 1 Kings 18: 1-2, 20-40. Elijah triumphs over the prophets of Baal and brings the people back to God.

20th March: Nehemiah 8: 5-10. Ezra reads the Law and the people return to God. INCLUDES HOLY COMMUNION.

27th March: Luke 23: 32-43.

All who recognise who Jesus is will be with him forever.



A new approach to Lent readings

Over the past few years, we have included in our newsletter a daily Lent reading plan, mostly following the Anglican lectionary - the table of readings around which the Church of England plans its services each week. However, I have been concerned for some time that, although we take great care each year, to tell the story of Christmas and what leads up to the Nativity, we don't take that care for Easter, the most important event in history! For those not familiar with the Bible, and nowadays, sadly, that is a significant proportion of our population, Easter is mostly about bunnies and eggs. Even to someone still young in their Christian journey, the sudden leap from the triumph of Palm Sunday to the events of Easter weekend must be deeply perplexing.

It is essential to our understanding of Easter that we realise the Cross was a triumph and not a tragedy. So we need to be able to see Easter as the culmination of God's plan. This year, therefore, I have gone "off piste" and chosen a Lent reading plan that will make the road to the Cross and beyond a little clearer. The bad news is that some of the readings are quite long. The good news is that, until Holy Week (when we can surely make a special effort), there are only two readings per week!

Pam **the readings overleaf are for private devotion...**

Please take time to read and pray with these lessons during the weeks leading up to Easter:

Ash Wednesday. 2nd March: Luke 4: 1-13.

Week beginning Sunday, 6th March:

Isaiah 40: 1-11

Luke 3: 1-18

Week beginning Sunday, 13th March:

Jeremiah 23: 1-6

Luke 9: 10-17

Week beginning Sunday, 20th March:

Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Luke 22: 14-20

Week beginning Sunday, 27th March:

Joshua 24: 14-28

Luke 23: 32-43

Week beginning Sunday, 3rd April:

Hosea 11: 1-11

Luke 9: 18-36



...And into Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday 10th April: Luke 19: 28-40

Monday 11th April: Luke 19: 41-Luke 20: 8

Tuesday 12th April: Luke 20: 20-47

Wednesday 13th April: Luke 21: 1-38

Maundy Thursday 14th April: Luke 22: 7-53

Good Friday 15th April: Luke 23: 6-49

Saturday 16th April: Luke 23: 50-56

Easter Sunday 17th April: Luke 24: 1-12

God's Creation

As many of you know I like to get down on my allotment when I can. As we start to push out of the end of winter, the ground is again coming to life.

The inevitable weeds are starting to appear but the snowdrops have pushed through to give a pearl like sprinkle in amongst them. Daffodils are breaking through, telling us that Spring is on the doorstep and Easter is soon to be celebrated.

The different types, some with white faces inside the yellow petals, others with tinges of red as though dyed with blood. The birds hurry back and forth to nests.

Robins dropping down at my feet to snap up an uncovered worm. Its head twitching side to side to spot any danger. Again, its breast, reminding us of the blood spilt for our sins. I was reminded of an old song by Charles Austin MILES,

'I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses, and the Voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known!'

Enjoy God's creation.

Chris Parker.



Jean Bowden, known to all of us when she was CTiB representative, was pondering on the following article as she was busy painting the living room of her new home.



Pause for thought!

Having recently moved to Norfolk and had a chance to visit the sea, I am amazed, yet horrified, to see the extent of coastal erosion. And it got me thinking. What if your Church had to be relocated because the sea was continuing to advance towards it!

What would you insist on removing from your Church to install in a new location? Would it be your quality **Lewis** organ with its bright, vibrant tone ?

Or would you take your illuminated cross which can be seen at night by people on the train? Perhaps the beautiful window of St Cecilia, the patron saint of music, holding a Medieval hand organ, or the original choir stalls, pulpit, reading desk, pews and light fittings?

Sometimes it's the Minister and congregation which surpass the internal adornments!

Let the editor know your thoughts! It might make for an interesting conversation over coffee!

Jean Bowden

Jean's photos of the Norfolk coastline



Organ Concert - Southwark and South London Society of Organists

We had the first organ concert since lockdown. We had 11 excellent organists from the Southwark and South London Society of Organists.

Marilyn Harper: Toccata Festiva – Guy Scott Turner (b 1955)

Sarah Best: Scherzoso from Sonata No.8 in E minor – Josef Rheinberger

Bridget West: O Antiphon Sequence – Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951)

Nehara Fernando: Trio en Passacaille – André Raison; and two verses of the hymn tune “Dix”, composed by Conrad Kocher, adapted by W H Monk

Alan Langridge: Four variations on “Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr”, SwWV 299 – J P Sweelinck

Michael Cooke: Partita on the tune “Rheidol” in the style of Pachelbel – Cooke

Irene Wolstenholme: “An Wasserflussen Babylon” BWV 653 – J S Bach

Peter Smith: For The Fallen – Edward Elgar, arranged by Harvey Grace

Nicky Jones Fugue in C (Bux WV 174) – Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)



Andrew Chadney: Fugue in D minor – Alexander Shaversachvilli

Norman Harper: Choral Song and Fugue – S S Wesley

Music on a Sunday afternoon:

19th February, 2022

Many other organists were present in the audience.

The players, and audience alike, commented on the wonderful condition of our organ.

St Mark's Players

Players' Postponed Pantomime

We've missed you!!

But the fun returns to St. George's Hall with our re-scheduled performances in March 2022 when St. Mark's Players cannot wait to perform their version (!!) of 'Sleeping Beauty' and bring the fun and laughter back where it belongs.

Will Tik & Tok, the evil Queen's hilarious sidekicks carry out her wicked wishes - or for ever 'dance'??

Will the good Fairies cast the correct spell - or be for ever confused??

Will Beauty be awoken by the Prince - or stay for ever sleeping on that stage?? Only one way to find out - head straight to our Box Office and get those seats booked.

You need the crazy joy of traditional family panto back in your lives!

Oh yes you do!!



St. Mark's
Players



Supporting Charities
Since 1959

St Mark's Players'
2022 Family Pantomime



Sleeping Beauty



Rescheduled from January



5th to 19th March

Saturdays

2.30pm & 7.30pm

Sundays

2.30pm

Adults £11 Children £9 (Group Discounts)

St George's Hall
Albemarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HZ

Supporting



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BOOK NOW



www.sm-players.co.uk

07737 538794



We have not forgotten about
Lent - amidst all this hilarity!

And the World Day of Prayer Service

Time: 4th March, 2022 07:30 pm London

those who don't feel able to attend in person can attend via Zoom (just by pressing on the link below - if you are receiving this newsletter on line).

Link to join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89012586219?pwd=NkFPeFU3b2lLUUQ5VitlSHQ1WGNQdz09>

For those who are able to attend in person, the **Venue** is

St. John's Church,
St John's Road,
Penge
SE20 7EQ

All are welcome!

Part of **Clive's** Christmas Quiz which arrived too late for the December edition, so appeared as the Candlemass Quiz:



What **CONNECTS** the following?

1. (this one is for those who are knowledgeable about Biology!)

Sea horse; Emperor Penguin; Rhea; Marmoset; Pouched Frog.

2. (those who are acquainted with literature will know this one)

Ellis (1); Acton (2); Curren (4)

3. (music and grammar?)

Half note; female sheep; midday; Inuit canoe

4. (If you come from the North?)

Ginnel; Snicket; twitten; wynd

5. (Geography obviously!)

California; Arizona; New Mexico; Texas

The answers to the Quiz which appeared in February (and I have repeated above) are on the **next page**. If you didn't have a go then - now's your chance (before you turn over!)



Prizes for those who have a bash!



1. For those who are interested in animals:

These lovely creatures are all looked after by their dads at some point!

2. For the well-read among you:

these are the pseudonyms and number of books published by the Bronte sisters

3. For any who listened to their English teachers at school:

Minim, ewe, noon, kayak are all **palindromes**

5. For any who love maps:
California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas are the U.S. states that border Mexico

4. For those who have stayed in Lancashire and Yorkshire (most friendly places in the world!!)

They are all dialect names for pathways or alleyways

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A NEW LIFE BEGINS

Service of song and readings
about New Life

Sunday 20th March
2022 at 4:30pm

Featuring the Penge Chamber Choir
Organist Alan Langridge



Penge Congregational Church 172 High Street Penge, SE20 7QS



Jean's new garden



I am sure we are all feeling devastated by what is happening in Europe at the moment.

Ordinary people are bearing the brunt of this and our hearts go out to those who have children; young people whose dreams have vanished overnight; and the worries of the sick and disabled, let alone those who are fighting for their homes and families.

No doubt we are all praying and taking time to consider what is happening. Like most conflicts, it is not easy fully to understand why this is happening.



Website:

www.pccweb.co.uk



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

Pam Owen on:

pamjowen@hotmail.com

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

pcclettings@outlook.com

Tel: 07900 518 537

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

callum.mcshane@gmail.com

To submit articles for the monthly newsletter:

margaret@ecoharmony.org

Deacons at the moment are

Jannett Ashley

Douglas Rathbone

Chris Parker

Lynn McShane (treasurer)

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