

Penge Congregational Church



November 2019 Newsletter

From the Minister

Very quietly this year, the Royal British Legion has changed the wording of the "What is remembrance?" page of its website. Previously it said that the red poppy related to the armed forces community. Now it says it remembers the sacrifice of British and Commonwealth armed forces, pays tribute to families and emergency services, and acknowledges the innocent civilians who have lost their lives in conflict and acts of terrorism. The Legion's assistant director of remembrance says, "Remembrance paves the way for reconciliation, but it is up to each generation to find reconciliation for themselves and the Legion upholds its place in bringing people and communities together to have those important conversations". A poll for the Peace Pledge Union, which sells the white poppy, representing peace, found that 86% of people polled agreed that Remembrance Sunday should commemorate civilians, and people of all nationalities who have died in war.

This, I think, makes it easier for Christians to wear the poppy, red or white; it makes it easier to take part in a Remembrance service without having qualms about jingoism. Jesus said, "I have said this to you so that you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage, I have conquered the world!" The peace that Jesus came to bring was not the peace of appeasement, or the peace of compromise and conformity. It was a spiritual peace. The world doesn't give peace, for it doesn't have any peace to give. It fights for peace, it negotiates for peace, it manoeuvres for peace, but there is no ultimate peace in the world. But

Jesus gives peace to those who put their trust in Him.

The Hebrew Bible uses a familiar but significant word, *shalom*. In its purest sense, *shalom* means "peace." The connotation is positive. That is, when someone says, "Shalom," or, "Peace to you," it doesn't mean, "I hope you don't get into any trouble"; it means, "I hope you have all the highest good coming your way."

The Biblical concept of peace does not focus on the absence of trouble. Biblical peace is unrelated to circumstances; it is a goodness of life that is not touched by what happens on the outside. You may be in the midst of great trials and still have Biblical peace. Paul said he could be content in any circumstance; and he demonstrated that he had peace even in the jail at Philippi, where he sang and remained confident that God was being gracious to him. Then when the opportunity arose, he communicated God's goodness to the Philippian jailer, and brought him and his family to salvation. Likewise, James wrote, "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials"

When we receive Jesus into our lives, we make a truce with God. That's what Paul means in Ephesians 6:15, when he calls the good news of salvation "the preparation of the gospel of peace." The gospel makes someone who was at war with God be at peace with Him. This peace is objective—that is, it has nothing to do with how we feel or what we think. It is an accomplished fact. In John 14, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." *My* peace. The world's peace is temporary, and often shallow: the absence of war, of problems. It is only by accepting the peace of Christ, that we will have calm, untroubled hearts, regardless of

external circumstances.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid” **Pam**

Pam’s day off is Monday. Please don’t contact her on her day off unless you have a pastoral concern that is really urgent.

As ever, issues concerning the building- bookings or maintenance- should be notified to Bernie on pcclettings@outlook.com or pccmaintain@outlook.com. If it is an urgent matter, please phone Bernie on 07900 518537

Our way of being church

It is appropriate that, so near to our Church Day on 3rd November, when we spend special time together just enjoying our fellowship, the Congregational Federation has sent us a new leaflet explaining the basic Congregational principles which make our way of being church distinctive.

The three principles they pick out as fundamental are:

- A church where Christ is the head with no external hierarchy.
- A church based on a covenant relationship with God and with one another where seeking the mind of Christ is the basis of all that is done.
- A church where all members are considered equal before God and all skills and gifting are valued and recognised.

A covenant in its most general and historical sense, is a solemn promise to engage in or refrain from a specified action. Under historical English common law a covenant was distinguished from an ordinary contract by the presence of a seal. The point about sealing something was that you could only undo it by breaking the seal.

In the Bible, the covenants we read of are solemn eternal agreements between God and his chosen people: the most fundamental one, made through Moses on Mt Sinai, is "You shall be my people and I shall be your God". St Peter says that promise has been extended to the people of the New Covenant, followers of Christ: "You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession." And of course the New Covenant,

like those old English Law ones, is sealed, and the seal is the blood of Jesus Christ, shed to ransom us from slavery to sin and death.

It is this passage from 1 Peter, chapter 2, verses 4-9, that is the basis of our belief as Congregationalists. And that is why all Congregational churches have a Church covenant (you can see ours, from 1908, below); that is why becoming a church member is such a solemn and special thing. It isn't like joining a club or becoming a shareholder. It is to become a fundamental part of a fellowship, a member of a Body which works together as a whole. St Paul says, "God has put the body together in such a way that extra honour and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members so that all the members care for one another equally."

We are a gathered church and all church members are covenanted together with God and with one another. Seeking the mind of Christ together is the basis of everything we do, which is why the Church Meeting isn't just a business meeting, it is a solemn coming together of the Body of Christ to seek the mind of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church Meeting is, under God, the highest authority of the church simply because of that covenant relationship members have with God and one another.

But with great privilege comes great responsibility. Being covenanted in this way means we must have discipline in our church life. We bring every aspect of church life to Church Meeting, we discuss it together prayerfully, we all share what we feel the Spirit is saying to us- and, when a decision is reached, even if we didn't agree, we must accept that decision, because it was reached in the power

of the Holy Spirit. So it is the covenant we have entered into together that gives us our distinctiveness as a Congregational church, that gives us our wonderful unity with Christ. But, it is a grave responsibility also, and we must remember the words of our own Covenant: "Believing in God the Father... in Jesus Christ his son...and in the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and leads us into all truth, WE SOLEMNLY COVENANT WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER..."

Church Covenant

BELIEVING IN GOD THE FATHER,
Creator of all things, in JESUS CHRIST,
His Son, our Lord and Saviour, and in
the HOLY SPIRIT, who sanctifies us and leads us
into all truth, WE SOLEMNLY COVENANT
WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER, to
endeavour to the best of our ability and relying
upon Divine grace: to participate regularly in
public worship; to attend the Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper and the Church Fellowship
Meeting; to strengthen our spiritual life; to
support the ministry of the Church and the work
of the gospel at home and overseas; to love one
another in Christ; and, as far as in us lies, to
live at peace with all men.

We therefore commit ourselves to the God
and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is able
to do exceeding abundantly above all that we
can ask or think; to Him be glory for ever.

3rd November is Church Day and Autumn Gift Day

After our morning service, we shall be having a Church Lunch. Then we shall spend an hour or so together in the afternoon before having a short communion service, followed by a cup of tea before we all disperse. All are welcome to join in for some or all of the day.

As mentioned above, this is also our Autumn Gift Day. Keeping the building in reasonable condition does not get any cheaper, and we have considerable expense at the moment because the church floor under the carpet has been discovered to have rotted. A DIY solution is possible but will still be a significant expense.

In the summer, we managed quite a lot of maintenance, with the Disabled Toilet being re-decorated following it's redesign earlier in the year, quite a bit of painting elsewhere, the tea counter being installed in the church, a tidy up of the garden and various other small tasks accomplished. All this was done by volunteers who gave up their own time, in some cases taking annual leave from work to do so.

We also try when we can to spend our money on church life and worship, and not just on the building!

If you feel you can give the church a Gift Day donation, please put it in the plate during a worship service, put it (not cash please) in the Treasurer's pigeon hole outside the Kenilworth Hall corridor door, or hand it to any church member.

Thank you,

PCC

Our intrepid Melanie!



It looks terrifying enough while still on the ground! But
Melanie raised £7000 for the Chartwell Cancer Unit at the
PRUH, and we salute her courage!

Flower Rota for the next 2 months

November:

3: Joan Fairbrother

10: Friendship Club

17: Melanie Cogan

24: Joyce Perry

December:

1: in memory of Edna

8: Melanie Cogan

15: Penny Read

22: Monica Sinclair

29: Flower Fund

2020 Flower Rota

This is the proposed flower rota for next year. The next Newsletter will cover December and January so please let Pam or one of the Deacons know by mid-November if the rota needs adjusting. The final version will then be published in the next edition.

Flower Rota 2020

January

5: Pat Clarke

12: Jean Sumner

19: Melanie Cogan

26: Rosemarie Baker

February

2: Caroline Parker

9: Joyce Perry
16: Melanie Cogan
23: Friendship Club

March

1: Jean Sumner
9: Memory of Maureen Sawkins
16: Pat Clarke
23: Melanie Cogan

April:

5: Memory of Heather (Jean S)
12 (Easter): Flower Fund
19: Melanie Cogan,
26: Pat Clarke

May:

3: Memory of Joan Sole
10: Kathleen Sewter
17: Joyce Perry
24: Melanie Cogan
31: (currently available)

June:

7: Diane Pask
14: Jean/Rosemarie
21: Marilyn Nicholson
28: Pat Clarke

July:

5: Memory of Mollie Johnson
12: Jean Sumner
19: Friendship Club
27: (currently available)

August:

2: Melanie Cogan
9: Margaret Collins
16: (currently available)
23: Joyce Perry in memory of Rex
30: (currently available)

September:

6: Pam Owen
13: Joyce Perry
20: Flower Fund
27 (Harvest): Marilyn Nicholson

October:

4: Kathleen Sewter
11: Pat Clarke
18: Joyce Perry
25: Melanie Cogan

November:

1: Joan Fairbrother
8: Friendship Club
15: Melanie Cogan
22: Joyce Perry
29: (currently available)

December:

6: Memory of Edna East
13: Melanie Cogan
20: Penny Read
27: Monica Sinclair



Church Diary November 2020

Sunday 3rd:

10.30 am: Church Day worship, led by the Worship Team

12.30 pm: Church lunch

2 pm: Church Day afternoon

3.30pm: Communion Service

Followed by tea and cake before we all go home.

NO EVENING SERVICE.

Tuesday 5th:

9.30-11 am: Café Church

7-8.00pm: Prayer and Praise

Thursday 7th:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 10th:

10.30am: REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY Parade Service.

6.30pm: Bible Discussion, led by Marilyn.

Tuesday 12th:

7-8.00pm: Prayer and Praise

Wednesday 13th:

10.30-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Sunday 17th:

10.30am: The Lord's Supper, led by Jannett.

Followed by Church Meeting.

6.30pm: Evening worship, led by the Minister.

Tuesday 19th:

7-8.00pm: Prayer and Praise

Sunday 24th:

10.30am: Morning worship, led by Marilyn.

6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Callum.

Tuesday 26th:

7-8.00pm: Prayer and Praise

Penge Congregational Church

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Church gathered May
1908

Minister

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