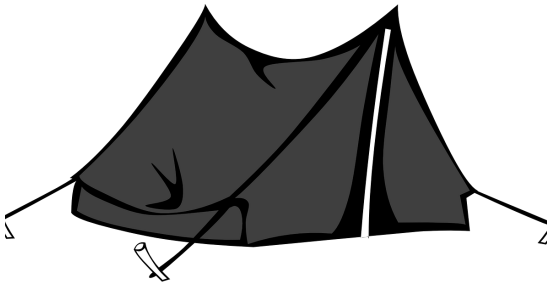


Penge Congregational Church



November 2023

From the Minister

Our major focus as ever in November is on Remembrance Sunday. In previous years, despite *the policy of Girlguiding not to take part in religious events*, we have continued to have a parade service with the **Beavers and Cubs** while the **Scouts take part in the community act of remembrance at the War Memorial**. This year however, they have decided to join the Scouts so we shall be holding our own service without the flags and young people. We shall still have the act of remembrance and still spend the service, yes paying our respects to those who have died and suffered in war, but also very much thinking about Peace.



Remembrance Sunday very much focuses on losses in past wars fought by this country. However, we can't ignore the fact that there are so many wars going on in other parts of our world. Nor should we: we are all part of the human family and the death and suffering of anyone should affect us all. Of course the war in Ukraine has been going on now for more than 18 months and we have recently been particularly shocked by the Russian precision missile attack on a village holding a wake for a dead soldier.

Even more recently has come the Hamas attack from Gaza on southern Israel. News has come through of hostages taken, babies deliberately slaughtered and the sealing of Gaza by the Israeli army trapping people in the area with no supplies allowed through. As I write, this is all too recent for us to really understand what is true and what isn't, but the scale of suffering and terror is undeniable. We struggle as we try to pray about all this because here we have two peoples who deny the right of each other to exist and it is so difficult to pray over a situation created by hatred on both sides.

In such a dilemma, I tend to fall back on the old, perhaps clichéd, question, "What would Jesus do?" Well, the Bible in general and Jesus in particular focus on Peace. Peter in his first letter echoes **Psalm 34** which exhorts us to "**Seek peace and pursue it.**" And **Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount says, "Blessed are the peacemakers."** This isn't peace as in Peace and Quiet; it isn't peace as in the absence of conflict. This is peace we have to work for. We are to seek peace, to pursue it; and Jesus blesses not those who live peacefully but those **who make peace.**

Of course not many people who are reading this are in a position to influence the outcome of a war or conflict. But we can in our own lives actively seek to live peacefully and promote peace in our families and our communities. If tolerance and kindness on a small scale become the norm, that does have an impact on attitudes more generally.

And of course we can and should pursue peace by praying for it. It is perhaps simpler to pray for the **Ukraine** situation because here we have a country that has suffered a completely unprovoked attack from a much larger power: we know who the bad guys are. **The Israel/Palestinian** situation is much more complicated and people across the world are polarised in whose cause to support. My solution to that is to look beyond the politics and the history and focus on the people who are suffering most. And that's the innocent ordinary people on both sides. The people who have been taken hostage; the people who have been bombed; the people whose access to food and water and power has been taken away. I don't believe God cares very much whether those people are Jewish or Palestinian: they are his children and they are suffering.

So our Remembrance service will focus on Peace - peace-making and seeking peace. And as we pray for peace for innocents suffering from the very opposite, we can remember the promise Jesus made to us all: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid." (John 14) From a position of spiritual personal peace as children of God, we pray for peace and reconciliation in the world around us. And that prayer is important work for those who follow Jesus to do.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God."

November service themes

November of course focuses on **Remembrance Sunday**; and this year with many wars going on in the world, but particularly in our prayers the situations in **Ukraine** and **Israel**, all our services are about peace.

5th November

Seek peace and pursue it. 1 Peter 3: 8-17.

12th November Remembrance Sunday

Swords into ploughshares. 1 Corinthians 15: 50-58

This year all our uniformed young people will be at the War Memorial. We shall observe the Act of Remembrance as a church family.

19th November

The new creation. Isaiah 65: 17-25

26th November

“My Kingdom is not of this world.” John 18: 28-38

3rd December Advent Sunday

“The Light from heaven.” Luke 1: 67-79

Church Meeting.

Our final Church Meeting of 2023 will take place on Sunday 26th. November after Morning Worship - at about midday.

Rev'd Pam Owen will chair her last Church Meeting before retirement.

She will then hand over to Deacons, who will lead the ongoing discussion about life at PCC post-Pam.

Editor: The Rev'd Pam refers in her letter on page 1 to "the policy of Girlguiding not to take part in religious events".

Can anyone tell me about this policy, please?

When I was a guide (many a year ago), we made our promises 'to God and the Queen'.

One of the few things that I loved about being a guide was Church Parade - and presenting the Colours to the Minister at the beginning of the service - and receiving them back at the end.

And as a Minister myself in Lancashire, Church Parade every month was a joy, as it was to the girls and boys and their parents. The Church is being pushed out of any expression in society. Christianity is being persecuted in several countries and Christians seem not to notice that it is happening here!

Christmas Services

Sunday Morning Services in December continue, as every month, but with additions as below:

Sunday 17th December at 4.30pm:

Carols by Candlelight.

Our traditional re-telling of the Christmas story in music and Scripture.

With **Alan Langridge on the organ**, and the **Penge Chamber Choir**.

Tea and mince pies afterwards.



Sunday 24th December at 11.30pm

Midnight Communion by Candlelight.

We welcome the Coming of **our Lord Jesus Christ** as the Baby of Bethlehem.

Monday 25th December at 10.00am

Christmas Day Family Service

Sunday 31st December at 10.30am

We say Farewell to 2023, and also to Rev'd. Pam Owen, as she retires.

PENGE MUSIC PRESENTS
OPEN MONDAYS

18TH SEPTEMBER

16TH OCTOBER

20TH NOVEMBER

11TH DECEMBER

£5 tickets for audience and performers

Under 16s go free

Doors 7pm Starts 7.30pm

Performers please register by

Friday before at

pengeopenmondays@gmail.com

Relaxed and informal atmosphere

BYOB...

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172 High Street Penge, SE20 7QS

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358, 227, 194, N3

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nearby multistorey carpark

Reflections on Lighting a Candle in Church

***I strike the match,
I light the wick,
A flame arises.
I pray my words,
The candle gutters,
Its light grows dim
And fades away...
I hold my breath.
Too late already
For that person on my mind?***



***But, no, the light gains strength;
Hope is restored
And prayers renewed.
I focus on that flickering flame
Then walk away,
Its imprint still dancing
Behind my eyes.***



Jenny Froude

Dorothea's memories were conjured up by the Fruit Quiz



On my father's property outside Brisbane, holding a bunch of bananas grown on the trees behind.

Usually I don't even try quizzes because I am so hopeless at them, but I gave myself 8 1/2 out of 10 for the fruit one in the October issue of this Newsletter. (I lost one mark because I did not know that avocado has the highest proportion of fat. I knew that loganberry is a cross between raspberry and blackberry, and I have memories of their very pleasant taste, but can't remember whether that was in Australia or UK; so gave myself 1/2 mark for that.) I did not know, however, the parentage of the boysenberry.

My only knowledge of the word being from an old **Jimmy Durante song**, describing a beautiful evening, where the “boysenberries are making eyes at the goilsanberries”.

I knew about Cavendish bananas because when I was a small child and being sent to the corner shop, my mother always impressed on me that I must be careful to get **Cavendish bananas**, not Ladies Fingers. The Ladies Finger bananas were shorter, more curved, and with a sharper taste. I haven’t heard of them for years. Maybe died out long ago.

Some years ago I read that the Cavendish family (is that the Duke of Devonshire?) had something to do with breeding bananas.



The Art Festival

by Chris McShane



A funny thing happened to me on the way to Durham...

Why is it (the walrus said) that some churches do not like art? That is sad (said the carpenter and shed a bitter tear).

As the two were lamenting this sad affair, someone rose from his train seat and gave the walrus a badge whereupon was written,

"Blessd are the art makers".

The walrus accepted this gift with grace, and since he wasn't an art maker planned to pass it on to his friend, the oyster, since it would encourage him.



Fortunately our church is not one of those that doesn't like art.

Recently the hall and the church were festooned, if not to the rafters, then at

least half way up the pillars with works of art in a great variety of styles and often in media that one would not expect.

Someone had **knitted** their pictures, and there was a **Harley Davidson** made in parts out of **string**.

There were several **digital** pieces (digital means they were drawn in a computer) and there were the usual culprits: watercolours, oils and even a spectacular **quilt**.

On the opening night, the church was fairly heaving with art lovers: some with loads of money and some who were just there to 'live the art'.

It was very encouraging to see how many works were sold, but even better was the large number of people who talked about what they saw, wanting to know the 'why' and the 'how' of every piece that they encountered.

It was amazing, in fact, how busy the exhibition was on the Saturday and the Sunday. The lucky people of Penge Congregational Church had a free peek on Sunday after the service.

The church was filled with **colour** and **light** and **joy** for two whole days which is why we say:

"Blessed are the Art Makers"

Chris McShane.



A report from Chris Parker

Due to Pam stepping down as Minister at the end of the year I was invited to take her place as the Chair and representative of the church of the Scout groups which meet regularly on the premises. I thought it would be beneficial for us to know more of what they get up to so I have summarised their reports given at the meeting

1st Penge and Beckenham North Scouts GEC Report - September 2023

Since the last GEC report, we've had 1 Scout move up to Explorers, and another Scout leave due to moving countries. 2 Cubs have moved up to Scouts, and 3 new Scouts have joined from the waiting list bringing our troop number to 23.

Over the summer term, the Scouts worked on a number of activity badges and completed parts of several challenge badges.

Firstly, their Environmental Conservation badge where they learnt about environmental issues globally, nationally, and locally. They wrote letters as part of the **Great Big Green Week campaign** about what they would like their future to look like. Many of the Scouts wrote very passionately about how they wanted things to change and one Scout even wrote theirs as a poem. They also took part in litter picking over at least 5 weeks of the term.

They also worked on their Geocaching badge.

Geocaching is a worldwide outdoor treasure hunt where anyone can use GPS to locate caches. The Scouts learnt about how GPS works, how it benefits the world and its accuracy. They then used GPS in a race to find a number of locations around Penge. Now familiar with GPS the Scouts went to Crystal Palace Park to search for Geocaches using a map and route that they had put together. Finally, they created their own geocaches which they hid around Cator Park and each patrol had to find the other's caches.

The troop finished out the summer term with the Athletics badge which involved a combination of running, jumping, and throwing events over a couple of weeks.

In the last GEC* report, the expedition team were preparing to complete their Expedition Challenge. The expedition all went as planned at the end of April and all 5 of our scouts did very well and completed both day's hikes at a faster pace than expected and had great weather throughout. They then did a presentation to the rest of the troop a couple of weeks later.

We then had Group Camp in May which had 17 Scouts attend. All the scouts had a great time and took part in a range of activities with the Cubs and Beavers including tunnels, abseiling, crate stacking, and zipwire.

Finally, we had our joint Summer Camp with the 1st Beckenham Scouts. We had 12 Scouts from our troop

and 13 from 1st Beckenham. We were at Tolmers Activity Centre in Hertfordshire for 6 days.

The Scouts all travelled by train from Penge to the camp carrying their kit with them. They cooked all their meals in their camp patrols and the camp was filled with activities including archery, aeroball, tunnels, air rifles, dash and grab, rock climbing, a quoits competition, and a survival night where they made and slept in their own shelters made of tarps and sisal.

The Scouts also had the opportunity to prepare and cook pigeon, which most Scouts took part in and liked trying pigeon for the first time. Although the weather wasn't on our side for a lot of the camp, none of the Scouts complained and they all just got on with enjoying their time away.

Cubs and Scouts has certainly changed a bit since I was that age, although some of the **traditional activities are still standing the test of time.**

Chris PARKER



G.E.C*

The **G**roup **E**xecutive **C**ommittee plays a vital role in the running of a Scout Group. Executive Committees make decisions and carry out administrative tasks to ensure that the best quality Scouting can be delivered to young people in the Group.

Harvest Thanksgiving

Giving to Living Well



Church Harvest Gift of £111 and lots of food from our uniformed organizations.



Minister wanted

Job Description below!

Church Meeting on 17th September 2023 was a lively event. We were thinking about the plan for our next minister and we learnt a lot in the process about what we stand for as a church.

For some of us this was a revelation: to find that Penge Congregational Church is an independent church.

There is no one who will be appointing a new minister for us, and it is up to us to call the person that will be able to lead us spiritually into the future. We are affiliated to the Congregational Federation and adhere to congregational principles. This means that as a church we are liberal in outlook. We don't have anyone above us except God. We don't have any higher body giving us money or telling us what to do. All members are equal. We make a promise to each other to love God and love each other and to seek the mind of Christ in all we do.

We came up with ideas about what we would like in a future minister or ministry team which are in the boxes on the following page. Pam has been dedicated to developing a team ministry and this is something we want to continue.

Pam has been a part-time minister – how does she do everything she needs to in the time given?? Right now, we don't have the money for a full-time minister although God will provide what we need when we

need it. (This is your treasurer speaking: “God always provides.”)

We affirmed that we are here in Penge

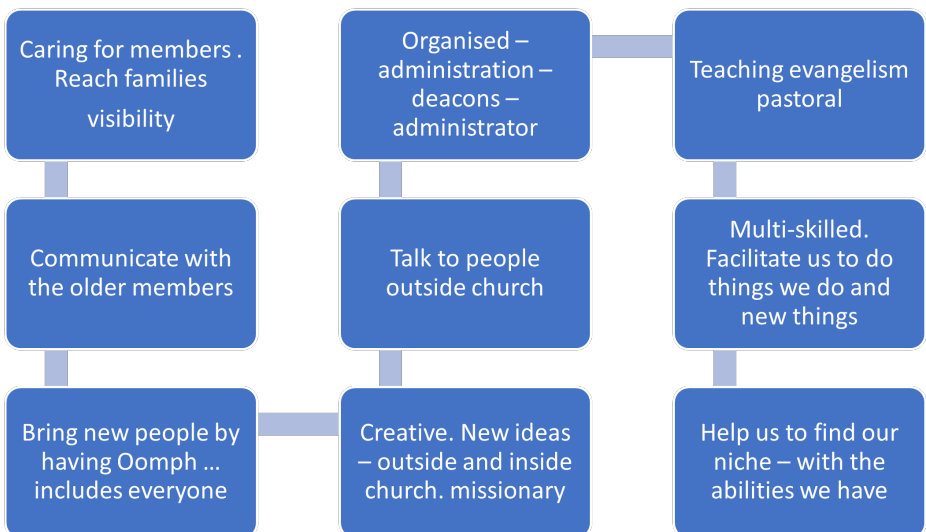
To worship God

To bring new people to Christ and help them to grow.

To help people to love God using any skills they have.

What are your thoughts? Do write back to us.

Lynn, on behalf of the PCC Deacons.



Lunchtime Concerts

Vicky Rockport began learning flute at the age of eight and from her first lesson knew that she wanted a career as a flautist.

She was awarded a scholarship in year 12 by **Bromley Youth Music Trust** to study with **Robin Chapman** (LPO).

Once gaining a place on a four-year specialist performers' course at **Trinity College of Music, London**, she studied with **Michael Cox** (BBC Symphony & LSO) and **John Bowler** (ROH) on piccolo.

Vicky is a freelance flautist for shows, recordings and functions and a regular member of the Orchard Trio. As part of the Trio Vicky has featured in Classical Music Magazine and appeared and performed live on Radio 4's Woman's Hour with Jenny Murray. In addition, Vicky also held the post of Managing Editor in the London office of the music publisher Edition Peters. In addition she teaches for the BYMT and Bexley Music Service as a specialist flute teacher and conductor and resides in Penge, London.

Dominique Wells began learning the piano at the age of seven. She received the **Sheila Mossman Prize** from the **Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music** for obtaining the highest mark in **Grade 8 piano**, and went on to read **Music at Christ Church, Oxford**, where she

was awarded the **Clifford Smith Prize for musical achievement.**

Dominique was awarded the **Mott Scholarship to study solo piano with Ilana Davids at Trinity College of Music**, and subsequently received the **Winifred Disney Award** to specialise in accompaniment at the **Royal Academy of Music with Malcolm Martineau.**

In 1998, she was sponsored by the British Council to give a concert in Mauritius at the Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand, and has given numerous

performances across the UK as an accompanist and chamber musician, including a performance of **Dvořák's Piano Quintet with the Allegri Quartet.** Dominique works regularly as an accompanist and teacher, and is based in Petts Wood where she lives with her cellist husband and four daughters.

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PENGE MUSIC PRESENTS
LUNCHTIME CONCERTS
VICKY ROCKPORT, FLUTE
with DOMINIQUE WELLS, PIANO
with works by JS Bach,
William Alwyn and Boehm
25TH NOVEMBER 2023
1PM
£5 entry on the door
cash and card taken
under 16s go free
tea, coffee and biscuits served on arrival
Penge Congregational Church
172 High Street Penge, SE20 7QS
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358, 227, 194, N3
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Website:

www.pccweb.co.uk



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

Pam Owen on:

pccprayer@outlook.com

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

pcclettings@outlook.com

Tel: 07999 296 686 (new number)

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

iona.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)

lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com