

WELCOME TO



CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH NEWS

MINISTERS LETTER

From the Minister

We have been thinking a lot lately about what it means to be a welcoming church. One of the things we are aware of is that church doesn't just happen on Sunday morning between 10.30 and noon! However, there is the point that this is precisely the time when the church doors are always open, so we have to give a lot of thought to welcoming not just our regulars but also the stranger.

People come to church for all sorts of reasons. And all sorts of people come to church. So the basic requirement of a welcoming church is that we should welcome people as they are and whoever they are. That might seem obvious, but I suspect most human beings, Christian or not, start making assumptions and even judgements the minute they meet anyone new. We may not even know we are doing it.

The first assumption we should avoid at all costs is about why a visitor has come in. Just because someone has seen that the door is open and come through it, we should keep a completely open mind about their reasons. And we should certainly remember that, whilst it is up to us to be welcoming, it is God who understands the state of that person's heart, and it is up to God to make the next move.

David Roper tells a story about a lady he knows called Edith, who wasn't interested in religion. But one Sunday morning, in a state of more than usual discontent, she walked into a church near her home. The Scripture that day was Luke 15: 1-2, and it was

read in the King James Version. "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them'".

That's what was read, but this is what Edith heard, "This man receiveth sinners, and Edith with them". After a minute or two she realised her mistake, but the thought stayed with her that Jesus welcomes sinners, and that included Edith. The same afternoon, she began to read the Gospel, and soon she decided to put her faith in Jesus and follow him. The religious folk of Jesus' time were scandalised because he associated with sinful people. They believed that doing so tarred you with the same brush. Jesus paid no attention to such made up rules. He said more than once that he came, not to the righteous, but to save sinners. He loves each one of us but the greatest joy in heaven is reserved for the lost sheep who is found and brought safely home. It is the church door that is open on a Sunday, and at other times. There may come people who are seeking a spiritual door, people who are plucking up the courage to knock on that door and ask to go in. We can facilitate their seeking by welcoming them into our building of stone and wood. But Jesus is the one standing behind that door, just waiting for the knock, just waiting for the invitation into their heart. "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you".

Pam

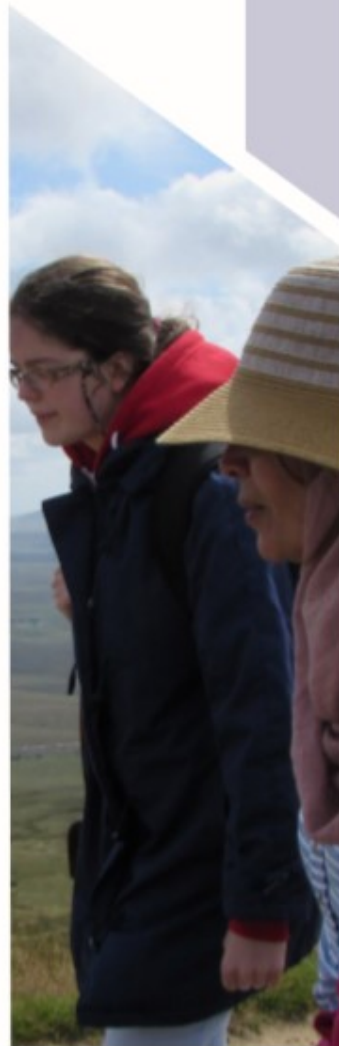
CWM: BEYOND MYSELF IN EXPLORING MIGRATION

Two PCC young people meet and befriend refugees in the wilds of Yorkshire.

From 27th July to the 30th August Siobhan and Ewan McShane took part in a trip run by CWM, the Council for World Mission, to meet refugees in Yorkshire. Siobhan reports on the experience.

I don't know exactly what I expected from this trip. Perhaps to meet people who had gone through the very worst experiences imaginable, hear some horrifying stories, and return with my heart broken for the plight of refugees.

In fact the trip was not horrifying in that way. Although we all came away inspired to do something to make our country more welcoming to refugees, this did not happen through the one-way emotion of pity. CWM uses a more complex model of mission than that, where mission is about sharing and being together, not a one way process in which one party needs help and the other offers their pity. I was inspired by how much fun I could have with the people I met on this trip, and by how much they were willing to help others in need.





Instead of listening to sob stories I found myself having an uproariously fun time with a group of people from countries across the world. I learnt their national dances and taught them British and Dutch games. Rather than having my heart broken I found it revitalised and filled with hope as I laughed and danced alongside one young man, trafficked as a child, who hadn't had this much fun in more than half of his short life. I found myself inspired by another man, at daily risk of being deported, who volunteers his time to help the poorest of our country, although they probably haven't suffered as much as he did in his journey to the UK.

At the conclusion of the trip I wrote a poem to share what I had learnt. It was inspired by the work we did together to conserve the beauty and heritage of Yorkshire. As part of this we spent a morning repairing a dry-stone wall, restoring the heritage of a land which may ultimately reject these people.



POEM PAGE

Language barrier

A poem inspired by dry-stone walling with refugees

*Grass field rolls out.
Ice formed. Filled with old
Lives. Stone wall bound.
Changeless.*

Open your eyes.

*A man built for heat.
A man built for ice.
A man forged in other
hills.
New here; unknown
before.*

Look again.

*Old stone wall falls:
Tradition doomed by
destruction.
But new man crouches
Filling in the breach.*

Look again.

*Strange hands tear
Down history. Then
Rework solid stone.
New and old rise together.*

Look again.

*Two stone skins lean
Together; reach to touch
Each other; settle closer;
Hold against the storm.*

Open your eyes.

*We are strong
Together, old and new,
When we touch
Each other, near and far,
We hold against the storm.*

By Siobhan McShane



HARVEST!

Sunday 30th

Food donations from our harvest service this year will be going to Living Well Foodbank, which is based at Holy Trinity Church in Penge and uses our church building as a storehouse. Living Well is slightly different to other foodbanks in that it does not operate a referral or voucher system and simply offers help to whoever needs it. They also run a community meal every Friday, and a practical drop in for help with issues from dealing with debt to art therapy sessions. The following items are particularly required at the moment so please bring something from this list to the harvest service:



Tins of meat/fish/baked
beans/soup/veg/fruit

Biscuits

Instant mash, pasta, rice

Tea, coffee, sugar

UHT milk

Men's deodorant

Shower gel, shampoo

Cereal

Toilet rolls



DAN AND CHRISTINA'S WEDDING

We enjoyed celebrating
the wedding of Pam's
daughter Christina.
Congratulations to both
Christina and Dan!



GRADUATIONS

Congratulations to Sherelle and Siobhan who graduated this summer!



FLOWER ROTA FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

August

5: Melanie Cogan
12: Margaret Collins
19: Lionel Sawkins in memory
of Maureen
26: Joyce Perry in memory of
Rex

September

2: Melanie Cogan
9: Flower fund
16: Joyce Perry
23: Pam Owen
30 (Harvest): Marilyn
Nicholson

October

7: Kathleen Sewter
14: Pat Clarke
21: Joyce Perry
28: Melanie Cogan



Church Diary September 2018

Saturday 1st:

10am-4pm: Natural Church Development Course, Caterham Community Church.

Sunday 2nd:

10.30 am: Elisha and the Shunnamite woman, led by Chris Parker.

6.30pm: Lord's Supper, led by Chris McShane.

Tuesday 4th:

9.30-11 am: Café Church

Thursday 6th:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 9th:

10.30am: The Woman at the Well, led by Jannett, the Minister preaching.

6.30pm: Bible discussion, led by the Minister.

Wednesday 12th:

10.30-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Sunday 16th:

10.30am: Joseph forgives his brothers, including the Lord's Supper, led by Chris McShane.

6.30pm: Evening Service, led by Marilyn.

Sunday 23rd:

10.30am: Healing: Revelation 22, led by the Minister.

12.30: Church lunch

2pm: Church Meeting, in the Snug.

6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn.

Sunday 30th: HARVEST FESTIVAL

10.30am: Parade Service. Gifts of tinned and packet foods, and basic toiletries for Living Well at Holy Trinity Church.

6.30pm: Harvest Praise, led by Marilyn.

PENGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Church gathered May 1908

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