

Penge Congregational Church



April 2017 Newsletter

From the Minister

As I write this on 22nd March, I have recently had two conversations about the fact that, last year, this was Holy Week. The second person I was speaking to wondered why Easter falls differently each year. And the answer of course is that Jesus went to the cross around the time of the Jewish Passover, which is celebrated on the first full moon following the vernal equinox. So Christians celebrate Easter when Jews celebrate Passover. This isn't a coincidence: Jesus was sent to earth by God for the purpose of bringing humankind back to the relationship with him that he had always intended. The first Passover was the meal the Jews ate before God liberated them from slavery in Egypt. Jesus was sent to liberate humankind from slavery to sin, to redeem us in the same way as a slave is redeemed from captivity; and so it was entirely appropriate that the time he chose to go to Jerusalem and provoke the authorities into dealing with him was the time of Passover which the Jews saw as their freedom festival.

So Jesus himself chose Passover as the moment to do what he had to do, and the first Christians looked back to Passover as the focus for understanding his death. If you think of the first Passover, you see the Jews then following the presence of God, in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, into the desert. In the desert, under God's very precise instruction, they built the tent of meeting, the tabernacle, to house God's presence, which would meet the people, according to Exodus 25, on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. When the people were settled in the land God had promised them, Solomon built the first Temple in Jerusalem, and we read, in 2 Chronicles, of the dedication of the Temple: when Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and the glory of the Lord filled the house. So God dwelt in the midst of his people until the Jews were driven into exile in Babylon and the Temple was destroyed. When they were allowed back, they built a new Temple and later Herod made it very much grander; but we never read again of the glory of God coming back to fill the Temple. Right down to Jesus' day, the hope was alive that the glory of God would return, but no-one knew when it would happen or what it would look like.

And then God sent Jesus: the Gospel of John says, "the Word became flesh and lived among us. We gazed on his glory, glory like that of the Father's only son, full of grace and truth": the Greek word John uses for "lived" is *eskenosen*, which means "tabernacled", "pitched his tent". John is telling us that in Jesus the new tabernacle, the new Temple, has been

built, and the divine glory has returned at last. Jesus went to the cross to redeem his people, and to lead them into a new transformed relationship with God, where God dwells in the Temple, but the Temple is no longer a building at the centre of the Promised Land, it is a person, his Son, Jesus Christ; *and* it is also each one of the people who have given their lives to him.

Jesus the man went willingly to the cross and was executed; in doing so, he made it possible for the kingdom of God to come to us, for us to gain entry to it by giving our lives to Jesus. The resurrection, three days after the crucifixion, was the symbol of this transformation, this new life in the kingdom. Jesus had promised the first disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to live in each Christian heart so that he would be with us always.

The book of Revelation talks of the “new heaven and new earth” that is God’s kingdom after Jesus transformed it. It is a truly awesome thought that we who follow the Christian “Way” all live in that kingdom, brought to earth when Jesus died on the cross to redeem us from the slavery of sin. It is a truly awesome thought that God’s presence dwells in that kingdom, not in a building made of wood and stone, but in the hearts of each Christian soul. Jesus willingly fulfilled God’s purpose for him at Passover, and because of that, we too celebrate Easter as our freedom festival.

May we, this Holy Week and Easter, try hard to understand exactly what God did for us when he sent Jesus to give us entry into his kingdom of justice and joy. May we give him the honour and glory and praise that is his due, and may we give him back just a tiny part of the love he showed us and continues to show us every moment of our lives. **Pam**



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Easter Services 2017



Maundy Thursday, 13th April:

6.30pm: Commemoration of the Last Supper.

Good Friday, 14th April:

10.00am: Good Friday Reflection, in the Church.

**11.00am: Walk of Witness from St Edmund's Village Way,
Beckenham.**

11.30am: Open Air Service on Beckenham Green.

6.30pm: Good Friday Music, in the Church.

Easter Day, 16th April:

10.30am: Easter Family Service, and the Lord's Supper

6.30pm: Easter Praise.

Spring Bulbs in the Memorial garden and Church garden.

Last September the 2nd Penge Rainbows planted some spring bulbs in the church memorial garden and borders of the garden. As you can see many of the daffodils are now in bloom and they look lovely, and tulips are still to come out. This is just a small way of us brightening up the borders in the church garden and making the memorial garden one of colour even in spring, before the roses bloom in the summer. We hope you like them.

The Rainbows and Leaders.



In Memory

The church offers its deepest sympathy and prayers to the families and friends of:

Charles Smith
Jean Seymour
Margaret Barham

who all passed away between the end of January and the beginning of March.

May they all rest in peace, free now from all pain and suffering.

Spring Parade Service, 19th March



We had a really lovely Parade service on 19th March, to celebrate Spring and new life, and to look forward to Easter. There was a good turnout, especially from the Rainbows and Beavers. Lucy Lovick's Dance School had been asked to take part, and Lucy kindly choreographed a special dance; all dancers were volunteers and we were touched by the size of the group that was there. Many of the younger dancers came in after they had changed, and took part in the craft activities which everyone enjoyed very much. Egg shapes were painted; and chicks decorated with feathers to tuck into nests- you can see them in Lynn's photo, above. In addition, Chris McShane gave a xylophone lesson to a select group of adults and children, who then helped accompany the singing of "Who put the colours in the rainbow?" Parents came along to take part with their children, and many families stayed afterwards for tea, juice, biscuits and cake. It was a most happy occasion, and we very much hope to see everyone back with us soon.

Flower Rota 2017

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

June:

4: Pat Clarke
11: Melanie Cogan
18: Jean/Rosemarie
25: Marilyn Nicholson

Monday is Pam's Day Off.

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

From 18th-21st April, Pam will be on a Prayer Retreat, and will not be using her phone or email.

Church Diary April 2017

Sunday 2nd:

10.30 am: The Passion, led by Chris McShane
6.30 pm: The Lord's Supper, led by the Minister.

Tuesday 4th:

9am – 11am: Café Church.
7.30pm: CTiB Lent course, Final session: St John's Eden Park.

Thursday 6th:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 9th :

10.30 am: Palm Sunday. Led by Jannett Ashley and Lynn McShane.
6.30 pm: Bible discussion, led by Chris McShane.

Wednesday 12th;

10.30am-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Thursday 13th: Maundy Thursday

6.30pm: Commemoration of the last Supper, led by Marilyn Nicholson.

Friday 14th: Good Friday

10.00am: Good Friday Reflection, in the church.
11.00am: Walk of Witness, leaving from St Edmund's, Village Way, Beckenham.
.11.30am: Open Air Worship on Beckenham Green.
6.30pm: Good Friday music, led by Marilyn Nicholson.

Sunday 16th: Easter Day

10.30 am: Easter Service and the Lord's Supper, led by the Minister.
6.30 pm: Easter Praise, led by Marilyn Nicholson.

Sunday 23rd:

10.30am: The raising of Lazarus, led by Lynn and Chris McShane..
6.30pm: The Minister.

Wednesday 26th:

7.30pm: Prayer Group. 50 Chesham Road.

Sunday 30th:

10.30am: Steve Palmer, Spinnaker Trust. Service led by Chris Parker.
6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn McShane.

Penge Congregational Church

172 High Street
Penge
London
SE20 7QS

Church gathered May 1908

Minister

Reverend Pam Owen 020 8659 2010
Email pamjowen@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Mrs Lynn McShane 07817 862158
Email lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com

Room Bookings

Admin Manager: Mrs Bernie Hall 020 8249 7711
pcclettings@outlook.com

Maintenance for hall users

pccmaintain@outlook.com

Organist

Mrs Marilyn Nicholson 020 8778 5064

Archives

Mr Chris Doran
Email pengecong@chrisjdoran.plus.com

Webmaster

Callum McShane
Email callum.mcshane@googlemail.com

Website

www.pengegate.co.uk

Deacons

Reverend Pam Owen
Mr Chris Parker
Mrs Lynn McShane
Mr Douglas Rathbone
Ms Jannett Ashley

Church Accountants (payroll etc)

Edwards Chartered Accountants,
275B Croydon Road, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 3PS