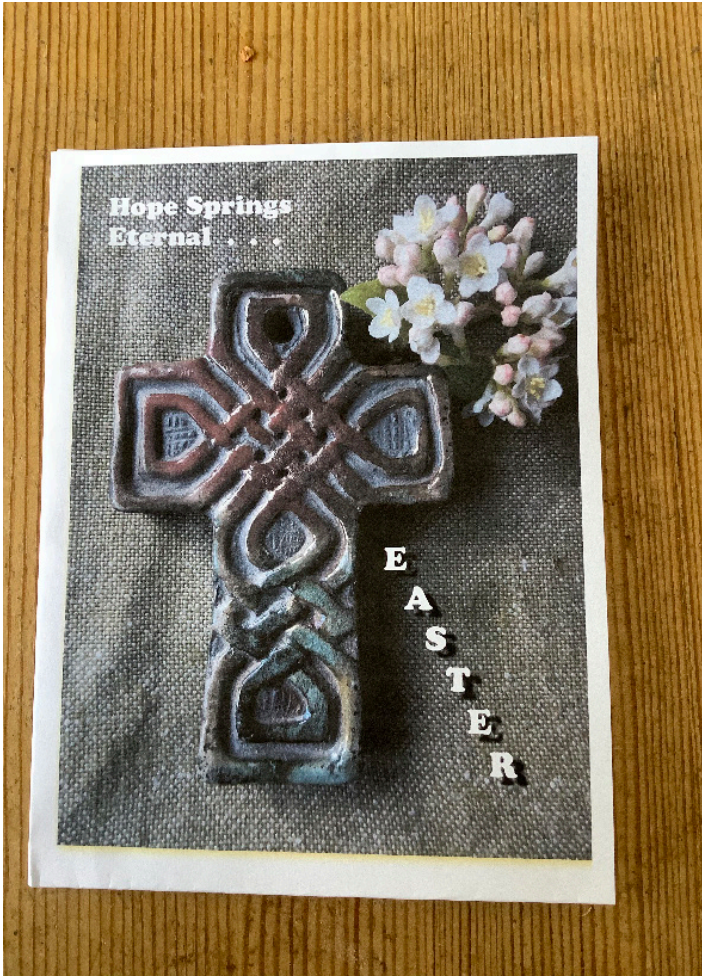



Penge Congregational Church



April 2022



Challenging poverty

Embracing justice

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

Isaiah 58 : v.6, 7

***cover picture: from Jenny Froude -
Easter 2020. Story on page 14***

Exciting discoveries!

Did you know that the **clothes bank** still runs from inside the church cellar? I've taken a photo of it - because most of you wouldn't want to venture down there. **Chris Doran** goes down regularly, with his torch, to read the metres. He also goes up many ladders to do the same. Makes me wonder why they put the metres in such an inaccessible place!!

The clothes from the clothes bank in our church cellar are distributed by **Living Well**.

Chris and I attended the AGM of Living Well last week. We went on Zoom, not in person, because Chris had COVID and we didn't want to spread it. **The Revd Dr Nick Read** is retiring this year from being the chair of the board of trustees. You can see him and the new chair **Andrew Cornish** in the photos (*over the page*).

We heard, from some of the guests of the project, who spoke of how Living Well has changed their lives - sometimes taking them from really low places, where they were unable to open their post, are homeless, or addicted to substances. These people found a welcome and something that they could be part of. But it was more than that, the advocacy service run by Living Well was mentioned many times. The advocates speak to people in positions of power, to argue for those who unjustly treated. To get a different answer for those affected by unjust rules and regulations, such as from the Department of Work and Pensions.

Living Well recognises that spiritual healing is needed. Healing ... it takes time for all of us. People found acceptance through this amazing project. They found others willing to talk to them about the unfairness of the situation. ***The name Living Well reminds us of the woman talking to Jesus at the well.***

Healing comes as they are once again able to see that God is acting in their lives, that he is not a judge, telling them what they've done wrong, but the source of *living water*, bringing them back to life.



Let us
thank God
for being
our rock
in times of
trouble and
always by
our side.
He is a
good God,
who hates
injustice
and evil.

Lynn



from The Minister....

As Minister, I spend quite a bit of time talking to other church leaders - to other Congregational churches and to local churches of various denominations. And a great deal of the talk is about where we are as we, hopefully, come out of the pandemic. What a shock it was, back in March 2020, to be told we had to shut our churches! Even in wartime that hadn't happened. We missed Easter 2020 completely, Christmas 2020 was spent under the shadow of tier restrictions and an imminent third lockdown, and at Easter 2021, we were just emerging from the third lockdown, with some churches staying closed and others following a restricted Easter programme of services. It wasn't until summer 2021 that we were allowed to sing again and even then we had to do it in masks. Then of course along came 'omicron' just in time to threaten our Christmas 2021 services.



As we have dared to hope, we are on the way out of the pandemic, it might have been expected that everyone would wish to get "back to normal." Yet this isn't on the whole what has happened. Every church leader I know says their church has used the time during pandemic restrictions to evaluate and to seek a new normal: to look at what they had been doing pre-pandemic simply and unthinkingly because they had "always" done it;

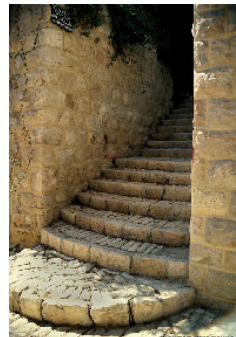
and to learn the lessons from being forced to try new things during the lockdowns and restrictions. And most of us have emerged with new ways of being inclusive and an altered concept of being church.

At PCC, one thing we have done is to look back at what we have “always” done at Easter and to make an honest appraisal of what worked and what didn’t. So you will find Easter Day as it always was: joyous worship and praise on the most holy day of the Christian year. But Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are a bit different: what we were doing before wasn’t really working. What we are doing instead may not work, but we are far less afraid of trying.

And surely that’s one of the most important things for us as individual Christians and as churches: God doesn’t want us to be afraid - “Be strong and courageous”, he told Joshua repeatedly. “Be strong in the Lord”, Paul told the Ephesian church. And he told Timothy, “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self control.”

One of the things that has struck me most as we have come through Covid is that the church fellowship has drawn closer together even as we were forced physically apart. We have realised what it means to love one another as Jesus loves us.

The prophet Zephaniah was prophesying to the corrupt people of Israel: for much of his book he declares



that God's judgement is coming not just on Israel but on all the nations of the earth. Yet Zephaniah prophesies something else (Chapter 3: v.9-13): out of that dark day of judgement will emerge a people who wholeheartedly love God. God will come to be among them and "with his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with singing."

We use many names for God, but how often do we think of him as a singer? How often do we think of him with a love song on his lips?

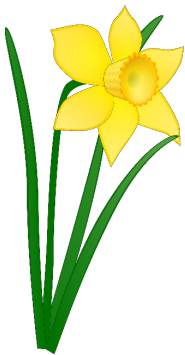
As we (hopefully) come out of Covid and look forward to being able to celebrate Easter properly, let us remember that God sent Jesus to teach us how to live in the kingdom of God; and that we are brought into that kingdom through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. And above all let us remember that God so loved the world that he gave his son so that those who believe in him may live. Let us remember that God's love has transformed our lives, has brought us into that kingdom of love, and that there, God rejoices over us with singing!

We ask God to bless our fellowship and our extended family this Easter: as we look forward to declaring on Easter Sunday that "Jesus is Risen, alleluia," let us rejoice that in the kingdom of God every day is the Day of Resurrection!

Pam

April readings

These are the themes we shall be following in our April services. We shall build on our March services which reflected on people turning back to God.



3rd April Luke 9: 28-36. The Transfiguration.

10th April **PALM SUNDAY** Luke 20: 28-40
The Triumphal Entry.

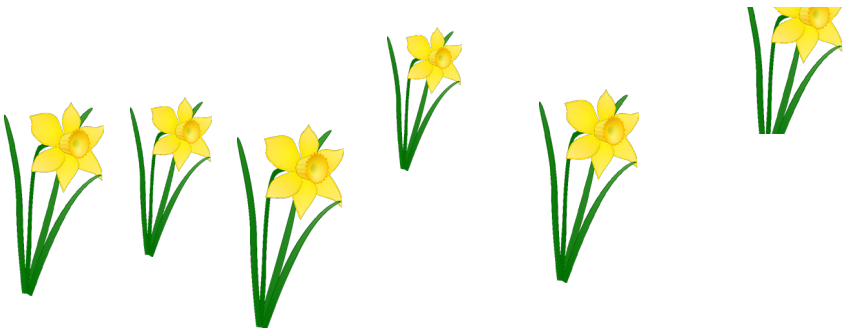
Thursday 14th April **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

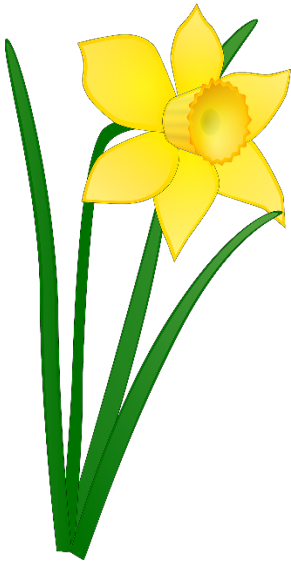
Friday 15th April **GOOD FRIDAY**

17th April **EASTER DAY** Luke 24: 1-12.

The Resurrection. Includes Holy Communion.

24th April Luke 24: 13-34 The Road to Emmaus.





Chris Parker's Robin

Easter Services

Maundy Thursday 14th April at 7pm:

Fellowship Supper (soup and bread)

Good Friday 15th April

11am: United Service on Beckenham Green

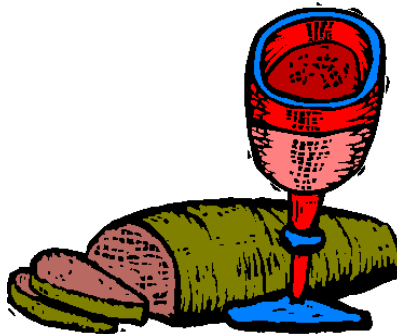
2pm: Good Friday Service at

Penge Congregational Church.

Easter Day 17th April at 10.30am:

Easter Service celebrating the Resurrection.

This service will include Holy Communion.



Rattling the bones

We have had two very different events in the last month. The first was the World Day of Prayer and the second was the AGM of Living Well which I've written about separately.

(See pages 1 - 3)



This year the **World Day of Prayer** was held at **st. John's Church of England in Penge**. You can see by the pictures that they did a beautiful job of preparing the church. We had tea, with cakes, special to the different parts of the United Kingdom, and Bara Brith was particularly wonderful.

The service this year was prepared by people in various parts of the country. **Jannette, Pam** and **I** read the stories of three characters in the service. They had all been helped in their lives by their involvement with people in the church, and blessed by the care. But I came away feeling very frustrated and disappointed. You may want to write to the editor about this issue yourself and what you think.

My disappointment was because too many Christians think kindness is enough. Why not talk about injustice? No mention of current issues of Black Lives Matter, the disaster of Universal Credit, closing borders to refugees, or turning back boats of desperate people in

the channel. All these things must have been happening when the committee were preparing the service.

But **no challenge or prayer was offered** about this.

Time to recognise that worshipping together *is not just for feeling peaceful and safe*, but to encourage each other to a sense of being in the **Kingdom of justice and Peace**.

Lynn



Lent and Holy Week readings for personal devotion in April.

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!

Here, again, are the readings for April and Holy Week.

Week beginning 3rd April:

Hosea 11: 1-11

Luke 9: 18-36



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

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

Tuesday 12th April: Luke 20: 20-47

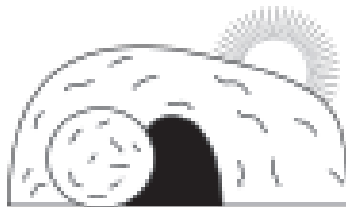
Wednesday 13th April: Luke 21: 1-38

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



Raku Cross

(on the Cover)

The pottery style is called **Raku** and the contestants on the lovely **Great Pottery Throw Down**.

Raku is a Japanese style of pottery first made during the 1580s; the practice is characterised by the removal of a clay object from the kiln at the height of the firing and causing it to cool very rapidly.

Originally created for the tea ceremony, Raku ware is most commonly found in the form of tea bowls.

You can read all about it on the Internet!

Jenny bought the Raku Cross years ago, at a Charity Shop and made it into an Easter card at the height of the Covid pandemic.

Thanks, Jenny



Church Meeting

Our next Church Meeting will be on Sunday 3rd April immediately after Morning Worship (well, as soon as we've had a cup of tea!)

Anyone who would like to go to lunch afterwards in the Moon & Stars would be most welcome to join what is usually a somewhat lively meal.

Our Church Annual Meeting will take place on 12th June.

A couple of other significant dates:

The Service on 24th July will be a Christening service for Edward Dylan Joseph Brookes (known to his friends as Teddy). There will be a gathering afterwards in the Kenilworth Hall to which all members of the church family are cordially invited.



On Saturday 30th July we have a wedding at 3pm: the first one we will have had since 2019 with (we pray) no Covid restrictions.



Spring Service

This was a new event and celebration of the **New Life** that Spring reminds us of every year. **Marilyn's organ** is being regularly serviced and tuned and was played beautifully by **Alan Langridge**.

His final voluntary was Mendelssohn's Sonata No.3 in A, first movement and was much appreciated.

The Penge Chamber Choir sang three pieces, as well as raising the rafters with some rousing hymns. The acoustic is wonderful and I thought I was in heaven. They sang three pieces:

O Primavera by Schutz

All creatures now by Bennet

The Blue bird by Stanford

Anyone have any ideas for other events? A bouncy castle maybe?

THE SEED OF PEACE PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,
"We hold the Seed of Peace
in our hearts and visualise it
growing, with your loving care,
in the hearts and souls
of mothers, children and
families throughout the
universe.

We tend and nurture this
precious vision constantly, in
moments of quiet, that the
Seed of Peace will reap the
richest harvest ever known
and bring Love, Peace,
Harmony and Respect back to
mankind, one to another,
for ever and always,
AMEN.





A Prayer for people in need

Dear Lord, I pray today for.....

You know what they are going through, please look after them.

Give the strength and support that they need, and help me not to worry but to show my concern in helpful ways.

Remind me, and those for whom I have prayed, of your continuing love and care.

Thank you, Lord, for your great goodness. Amen

This prayer was submitted by Maggie White after she had visited one of England's Cathedral.

As we pray for the people of Ukraine and Russia and the surrounding countries, and for all who are living in fear; for refugees and asylum seekers; and for those individuals we known personally, we ask **Lord, have mercy**

Flowers in memory of Rosie Nye



***David sends money for
flowers in memory of his wife,
Rosie, every year.***

***Rosie used to sit next to
Joyce when they both sang in
our Choir.***



A Little light-hearted Nonsense

I have a little Satnav
It sits there in my car.
A Satnav is a driver's friend
It tells you where you are.

I have a little Satnav
I've had it all my life.
It's better than the normal ones,
My Satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions
Especially how I drive.
"It's 30 miles an hour", it says
"You're doing thirty-five."

It tells me when to stop and start
And when to use the brake,
And tells me that it's never ever
Safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red
And when it goes to green.
It seems to know instinctively
Just when to intervene.



I'm sure no other driver
Has so helpful a device,
For when we leave and lock the car
It still gives its advice.

It fills me up with counselling,
Each journey's pretty fraught.
So why don't I exchange it
And get a quieter sort?

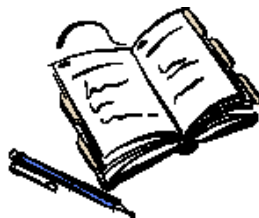
Ah well, you see, it cleans the house,
Makes sure I'm properly fed,
It washes all my shirts and things,
And keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages
And my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that now and then,
I could turn the bugger off.

Author unknown.
(Why am I not surprised? Ed.)

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)

lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com