

# *Penge Congregational Church*



*April 2025*

***cover photo from Jenny's garden***

# Hi from Durham

Siobhan writes...

Hello again everyone. It is finally getting a bit sunnier and warmer up here in the North. I'm still looking forward to coming back to London in a few weeks though.

I'm still involved in **Inclusive Christian Movement Durham**, and thanks if you have **been praying for us**: we are now starting to get new members and have had some great recent sessions about progressive, inclusive evangelism; disability theology; and the **14th century mystic Julian of Norwich**.



We are also part of the **Interfaith Network** in Durham. Last week I attended an **interfaith picnic**. We ate together and then played interfaith **Jenga**, which is Jenga, but each of the blocks had a question about faith for the group to answer. These ranged from 'what does forgiveness mean in your faith?' which started us off in the deep end, to 'what is your favourite food associated with your faith?'

One person there, from an **Indonesian Muslim** background, told us about a dish called **tumpeng**, which has a pile of rice in the centre that represents a

mountain reaching to God. It is eaten at **Eid at the end of Ramadan**. I just went ***for pancakes!***

The Catholic Society have an ecumenical pancake day coming up next week, which I will try

to go to. I hope you all have good pancake plans too.

*Siobhan*



# Services for April

**6th April** Matthew 26:36-46 Alone in the garden

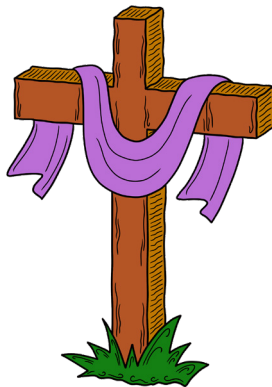
**13th April** Matthew 26:47-52 Arrest of Jesus

**Maundy Thursday 17th April** 6:30pm Communion Service

**Good Friday 18th April** Taize meditation service at 2pm

**20th April Easter** morning Joel 2:21-27 Life for the whole earth

**27th April** Cafe church



# Going GREEN

*"Go Green(er) for Lent"*

is the heading on an A ROCHA UK project leaflet I picked up in church.

**T**his second week in Lent, in which I write, suggests buying "pre-loved" items of clothing. This is preaching to the converted for, as a fashion and knitting editor on Woman's Weekly magazine over half a century ago I am a **self-confessed charity shopaholic**. Indeed I enjoy it so much that each year **I feel I should give it up for Lent!** Then I decide their takings would be drastically down if I did so, even though my conscience might be clear! Too late already, I fear, so I shall continue donating as usual and give in to temptation lurking on the rails and shelves as I deposit my bag and continue to "Go Green" in two ways.

**N**ow, after that confession comes a complaint! I recently read a letter in the popular press from an indignant reader appalled by what she considered the high cost of some of the clothes in charity shops which she felt should be really cheap as they had been freely donated.

I sometimes think people have the wrong idea about charity shops. They are not intended, surely, to distribute charity to most of us shoppers but rather to raise as much money as possible for the many good

causes that are so desperate for funding. Of course they are a godsend catering to those on a very limited budget but the occasional designer outfit deserves to sell at a realistic price.

Running costs mean valued volunteers are needed to give of their time and talents to help keep such shops open, while generous donors eschew the chance to reap the benefits of selling their good items on line and can, and should, expect them to be appropriately priced and not sold for a song. I am proud of my pre-loved wardrobe and would never quibble or query the cost in a charity shop and I dislike hearing others asking for a reduction.

Of course, we all love a bargain but, please, not to the detriment of a cancer patient, a deaf/blind child, a homeless person, a heartbreakingly underfunded hospice. Their needs are far greater than ours and such shops with their regular donors and Gift Aiders are much to be appreciated and respected.

*Jenny Froude*



# KELSEY BLOG - March 2025

By Peter Longley

Author of 'The Cedars of Beckenham' and 'When the Cows Come Home.'

**W**hite and pink blossoms glisten against a blue sky. March has started with a week of beautiful spring weather at Kelsey Park in southeast England. Carpets of purple and white crocuses abound. Clumps of golden crocuses peek out of old autumn leaves. A host of golden daffodils climb down to the water's edge along our newly dredged upper lake. Yellow euphorbias bring spring colour to the herbaceous border where the debris of 2024 has been cleared to allow for new growth to start. Ornamental grasses with their waving plumes have been trimmed. Our whimsical Cheshire cat is now once again revealed in full, waiting for the new growth around him so he can perform his summer disappearing act. The open vistas of our lakes sparkling in the spring sun can be seen before those little green leaves obscure them. This is such a delightful time of the year...so full of hope and joy as day by day we see winter banished. We are approaching the spring equinox and soon our daylight will exceed our hours of darkness.

The dredging project continues in our lower lake, but the upper lake is now free again and the geese, swans, ducks, coots and moorhens have returned from their hiding places, along with the seagulls that are not quite ready to fly back to the seaside. They know when those



beach resorts open up after Easter and they can make a pest of themselves again, stealing fish and chips and ice cream from the seaside visitors.

I have been asked more than once when walking at the southwestern end of our park where the River Beck flows into the upper lake, now cleared of years of silt and mud, “What is that strange sculpture now revealed?” I am referring to our large mesh sculpture of the Kingfisher. Once painted in those iconic blue and yellow colours, he was placed there at a time when kingfishers were frequently seen flying in that area, so much so that we used to call the River Beck there, ‘Kingfisher Alley’. Kingfishers are now rather rare in the park and more likely to be found along the lower lake, but this quite large old sculpture is now a lot more visible than he was before the area was dredged. Perhaps he could now receive a new coat of paint in those bright kingfisher colours.

The work on the Rose Garden has been completed with all the beds now planted with both standard and bush roses. After several years of neglect, it will be nice to see this attractive circle a blaze of colour again when summer comes.

The Community Garden is awaiting experimental planting. 17 March is St Patrick’s Day. Going back to my days as an estate manager in Ireland that was the day for planting our potatoes. Perhaps some seed potatoes might get planted in this interesting experiment focused on education and instruction for children. Where does our food come from?

I am excited also to be able to announce at this time that my second novel in the Flavian Trilogy, 'Fishers of Men' will be published on 21st March. It is now available for pre-order at <https://www.austimacauley.com/book/fishers-of-men>

Both the first novel 'Star of Destiny' and this second in the series, 'Fishers of Men', are also now available for orders on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The third novel 'Along the Eagle's Way' will be published later this year. 'The Flavian Trilogy' is a sweeping Roman and Jewish saga set around the origins of Christianity in the tumultuous first-century AD.

*Peter Longley*

### PUBLICATION DAY is here!

The second book in Peter Longley's intriguing historical fiction FLAVIAN TRILOGY was published today, Friday, 21st March by Austin Macauley Publishers!

FISHERS OF MEN joins the first book STAR OF DESTINY - Both books are now available through bookshops everywhere and on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

or at <https://www.peterlongley.com>

The third novel, ALONG THE EAGLE'S WAY, will be published later this year.



“What is this strange sculpture now revealed?”  
people ask Peter

It is a large mesh sculpture of the Kingfisher.



Dorothea sent some  
primroses... she knows  
how I missed them when  
living in South Africa.



# The Trinity and the Birds

The Trinity danced on the hill in the cool of the day.

“Shall we bring birds to sing with us when we pray?

I’ll whistle,” said One. “I will invite them to come.”

In the blink of a prayer, suddenly birds were there.

A Robin said, “Look, this is me! How do you want me to be?”

“Be friendly and bold and sing when it’s cold,” said the Three.

A Songthrush came then, “Shall I sing it and sing it again?

We’ll say Amen and Amen”, said the Three.

A spherical Wren came next. “I can sing a very long text”

“Your song will be heard as the endless Word,” said the Three.

A Woodpecker swooped to the ground. “To You I offer my sound of drumming and laughter”, said he.

“We’ll laugh with you”, said the Three.

Starlings and sparrows touched down. “Sometimes you might need a clown - or a chorus?”

“Indeed”, said the Three.

A Skylark was there. “My long song will carry a long prayer high in the heavenly air.”

“Sing, sing for Us, sing,” said the Three.

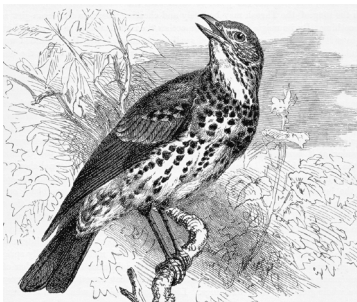
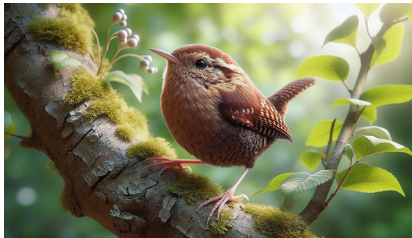
It was dusk now. The Nightingale sang, floating her notes on the night, in first light, as the day began.

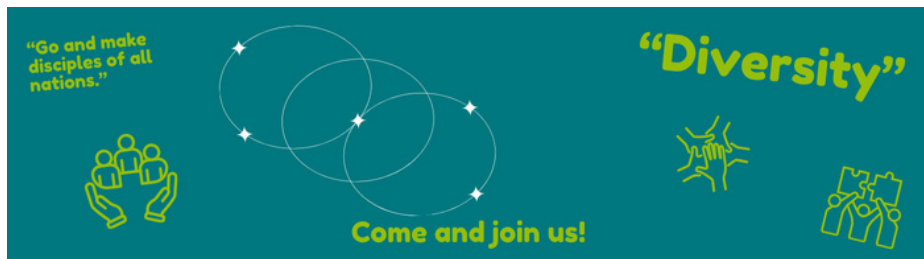
“Every note from each throat shall join in our jubilant song,” sang the Three.

*This beautiful poem is unsubscribed, so if you know the poet who wrote it, please let the editor know.*

*This is a poem exploring the Trinity and the birds, drawing inspiration from the Biblical text “Look at the birds of the air...”*

*St Luke 12:24 and following*





## National Assembly

Saturday 10th May 2025

Nottingham Trent University



## National Assembly 2025

**N**ottingham Trent University City Campus, Newton Building, Goldsmith Street, Nottingham.

**The National Assembly will be on Saturday  
10th May 2025.**

We would like to invite you to the 2025 National Assembly, to be hosted by the **East Midlands Area of the Congregational Federation in Nottingham.**

There will also be events held on the Friday afternoon and evening, on the Saturday evening and on the Sunday.

Please speak to **Lynn** if you would like to attend as a group of us will go together (travel funded by the church)

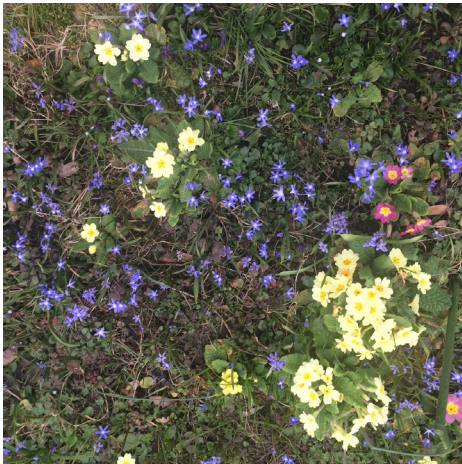


# National conference

Anyone who wants to see the full timetable for the National conference can go to the website.

**<https://www.congregational.org.uk/national-assembly/national-assembly-timetable>**

They have a weekend of events including sister churches to visit on the Sunday if you are interested.



...more lovely  
primroses from  
Dorothea's garden.



# World Day of Prayer

**T**he world day of prayer on 28th February was prepared by Christians in the Cook Islands . The photo shows a few of us who were present - from about 7 of our local churches. Julie's church (Anerley Methodist) had made the Kayak. This is the traditional method of travelling between the islands and the small boats can travel very far.

One of the most interesting part of the service was about the **Maori language**, and how it was despised as English became the important language.

A young girl gave her story of being made to feel stupid for using Maori words at school. **Maori links people to their roots and their particular identity.**

**Learning Maori has become more important now in the Cook Islands as people find that we are all the same but we are all different too.** And that is wonderful.

The theme was

**"fearfully and wonderfully made"**

and was a celebration of life (Psalm 139).



to the right:  
Poster from  
Cook Island



to the left:  
Kayak made by the  
congregation of  
Anerley Methodist  
Church

## Good Friday 18th April

If you haven't been to a Taize style service before you may want to come along on **Good Friday at 2pm**. We will sing in various languages using the chants from Taize, a community in France. It will be a service of music and reflection.

## Church meeting

Please come along for a brief church meeting after the morning service on 6th April. This will include an update on church building plans and church members.



**PENGE MUSIC PRESENTS**

# **COFFEE CONCERTS**

**Penge Music & Friends**

**A Spring-themed programme curated and  
performed by the Penge Music Team & friends -  
including flute, piano, organ and voices**

**26TH APRIL 2025  
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  
Tramlink: Beckenham Road tram stop  
Nearby train stations: Kent House,  
Penge East, Penge West, Clock House  
Bus routes: 75, 176, 197, 356, 354,  
358, 227, 194, N3  
**FREE PARKING** at a  
nearby multistorey carpark

# Literary Quiz

1. What book/play rights are held by Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children?
2. Who said he had 'the finest house on the whole river'?
3. Who was Noddy's best friend?
4. What was the name of the Queen of the Fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream?
5. What is Emily Bronte's famous novel called?
6. Name two of the 'Famous Five' (Enid Blyton)
7. A novel by Tolstoy?
8. Who wrote the Barchester Chronicles?
9. Who was the Prince of Denmark? (Shakespeare)
10. What is the Christian name of Admiral Hornblower (C.S. Forrester)?
11. Who was the 'Bear-of-very-little-brain'?
12. What did Archie Kipps give to his sweetheart in 'Kipps' by H.G. Wells?
13. On what journey would you have met 'Yahoos' and 'Houyhnhnms'?
14. What is the pen name of Charles Luttwidge Dodgson?
15. Who wrote 'The Water Babies'?

16. What book was Charles Dickens writing when he died?

17. For whom did Sidney Carton sacrifice himself?

(A Tale of Two Cities)

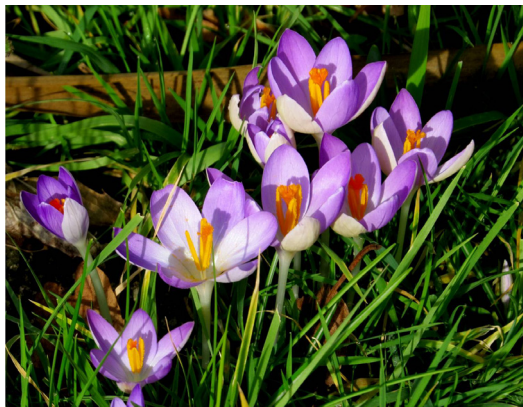
18. Who was the American Indian hero in the poem by Longfellow?

19. What Henry Fielding novel has the same name as a pop star?

20. What school does Harry Potter attend ?

\*\*\*\*\*

Answers: over the page...



## **Answers to the Literary Quiz (on previous page)**

1. Peter Pan
2. Mr Toad
3. Big Ears
4. Titania
5. Wuthering Heights
6. Any two of the following: Julian, Anne, Dick, George and the dog, Timmy.
7. Any of the following:  
War and Peace; Anna Karenina; Childhood;  
The Death of Ivan Ilyich; After the Ball; Resurrection.
8. Anthony Trollope
9. Hamlet
10. Horatio
11. Winnie the Pooh
12. Half a sixpence
13. Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift
14. Lewis Carroll
15. Charles Kingsley
16. Edwin Drood
17. Charles Darnay
18. Hiawatha
19. Tom Jones
20. Hogwarts



## **Website:**

[www.pccweb.co.uk](http://www.pccweb.co.uk)



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

Lynn 07817 862 158

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

[pcclettings@outlook.com](mailto:pcclettings@outlook.com)

Tel: 07999 296 686 (new number)

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

[iona.mcshane@gmail.com](mailto:iona.mcshane@gmail.com)

To submit articles for the monthly newsletter:

[margaret@ecoharmony.org](mailto:margaret@ecoharmony.org)

**Deacons** at the moment are

**Jannett Ashley**

**Douglas Rathbone**

**Chris Parker**

**Lynn McShane** (treasurer)

[lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.mcshane22@gmail.com)