

Penge Congregational Church



July/August 2018 Newsletter

From the Minister

Matthew 11, 25-30, tells us of Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving to God:

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

If you ever watch athletics on TV, especially the longer distance races, you might notice that the elite runners, the ones with the best chance of winning, rarely sprint into the lead straight away. Instead they often have someone setting the pace for them; when that runner tires, the elite racer can then pick up the pace and finish ahead. Leading can be exhausting; following is much easier, as long as you then have the determination at the right moment to use the strength you have conserved to finish well in the end.

That's athletics, but you can apply this principle to Christian discipleship too. When you first accept Jesus into your life, you tend to feel you have to try really hard. You set yourself exhausting expectations of what being a Christian should be. And in doing that, you can so easily miss out on the joy that can be found in actually *following* Jesus. We weren't intended to direct our own lives and Jesus doesn't expect us to embark on a programme of self-improvement. Instead He promises that in deciding to follow him, we will find the rest we need: it's in knowing Jesus that we come to know God. And it's in seeking Him that we find our heavy burdens lifted and our lives transformed. Resting in His love we are free.

But "resting" doesn't mean doing nothing. It doesn't mean we can leave everything to those who we perceive as leaders, to those who are setting the pace. Remember, in a race, at some point the pace setter gets tired and those that are following need to pick up their pace and take the lead themselves. It's only by doing that, that they can finish the race strongly. It's only by doing that that they give the pace setters the chance to get the second wind which will allow them to keep going themselves.

We come to Christ and, if we surrender ourselves to Him, we find we can carry the load He asks of us, we can do the work He prompts us to do. But Christians were never intended to stand alone. They “rest” in Jesus, but they run the race together as a fellowship of followers of Christ.

We are the Body of Christ. We build His Kingdom by working together, listening to Him and praying together. We run the race as a team according to the race plan He gives us. Jesus promises us that the yoke will be light. But there is a yoke, and there is a burden. It is light because we bear it together. And because we take that yoke, and learn from Him who is always there to teach us.

May God bless us as we thank him that, as a church family, we can share His yoke among us.

Pam

I will be on leave from 26th to 30th July (apart from church business directly related to conducting my daughter’s wedding on the 28th!). During that time, urgent pastoral issues to Lynn please.

Pam’s day off is Monday. Please don’t contact her on her day off unless you have a pastoral concern that is really urgent. As ever, issues concerning the building- bookings or maintenance- should be notified to Bernie on pcclettings@outlook.com or pccmaintain@outlook.com. If it is an urgent matter, please phone Bernie on 07900 518537

A praying church?

What makes a church grow? What prevents a church from growing? I believe very firmly that a growing church is a praying church.

I'm not talking about praying in church on Sunday, which, for most of the congregation, consists of closing their eyes and bowing their head while someone at the front "says a prayer".

I'm also not talking about "arrow prayers", those little requests we send up when we feel in need of a little help, or when we see someone else in need of God's attention.

No, I'm talking about the sort of prayer we see so often when we read about the early church:

Acts 2: 42, "They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord 's Supper *and in prayer.*"

Acts 4, after Peter and John had been detained and threatened by the Temple authorities, "Then all the believers were united as they lifted their voices *in prayer...* After this prayer, the building where they were meeting shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they preached God's message with boldness."

I could go on through the Acts of the Apostles citing example after example, but you perhaps get the point. If we want to grow our church, if we want to preach God's message with boldness so that people around us will sense the calling of the Holy Spirit, we need to pray wholeheartedly and call on the power of the Spirit to fill us.

And I believe very strongly that we need to pray together as a fellowship. We are the Body of Christ and we cannot hope to discern His will for us unless we pray together. And, once again, I don't mean in church on a Sunday sitting with bowed heads listening to someone else praying.

Since I was called as Minister, I have tried to encourage us to be a praying church in various ways. I have arranged prayer groups at the church, and only a small handful of people have come. I have arranged prayer groups in my home, and only a small handful of people have come. We have tried prayer walking, and we still do that from time to time but, again, only a tiny group of people come. Mindful that not everyone feels able to come out in the evening, and not everyone is free during the day, I have tried ways of getting people praying together even

if they aren't physically together; I have no way of assessing the success of that because no-one has given me feedback.

I am assuming that we all want our church to grow and flourish, and for others to come after us and be the Body of Christ at PCC after we are gone. And I believe absolutely that won't happen unless we pray together, unless we lift our collective voices to God and pray to Him with boldness.

So I am asking you, as the church, as the Body of Christ, to reflect on two questions:

Do you have a vision of the future for this church, ten, twenty, fifty years ahead?

How can we pray together about our future, wholeheartedly and in the power of the Holy Spirit?

These aren't rhetorical questions. This is a conversation we need, as a church, to be having. And we need everyone to be reflecting about it. Not just the Minister, not just the Deacons, but everyone. The Holy Spirit doesn't speak through the Minister, or through the Deacons; He speaks to the Body of Christ as a whole. And that is you! And you! And you!

Until you have reflected on this, until people have a view to express, we can't have the conversation we need to be having. Much less can we actually start praying together effectively, with boldness and filled with the Spirit!

Pam



Decorating Week 2018



This was Decorating Week 2017. Margaret had never raised a paintbrush before but she did a very good job freshening up the Memorial Room. Rosemarie, similarly a novice, painted radiators, helped varnish the Kenilworth Hall floor and applied Hammerite to the railings up to the church doors.

Decorating and Maintenance Week 2018 starts after the Bank Holiday on Tuesday 28th August. We need as many hands as possible, not just to make light work, but to do all that needs to be done before all the groups start back in September.

So this is an appeal, not just to members of the church but to all who use our building, to come and help us. Even if you can't give more than a few hours, your efforts will make a difference.

Please contact Chris Parker on 07903413070, or else email the bookings address, pcclettings@outlook.com, and Bernie will take your message.

Let's see how much we can achieve this year!

Franca Spooner's 90th birthday party

Franca's 90th birthday was on 28th May, and her family threw a party for her at St George's Hall on Sunday 27th. Jean Hurle, Jean Sumner, Rosemarie and I were invited to represent the church. The family had hit on the idea of asking every guest to wear a badge bearing their name and their connection with Franca, so we were able to see that there were people from many areas of her life. It was a very happy occasion with a lovely tea, balloons and of course CAKE! Franca sat in state at the front of the room receiving her guests in batches, so everyone got an opportunity for a hug, a chat and a photo. A guest book went round so we could all write messages for future perusal.

The church gave a small gift to Franca in the form of a 90th birthday bone china mug accompanied by a card.

Julie Spooner, Franca's daughter-in-law, very kindly emailed me a photo of Franca with us all, which she has given us permission to reproduce.

Pam



Summer Music in the Church

The rafters in our church have rung during June for delighted audiences at both an organ recital on June 5th and a piano recital on June 17th.

The Penge Festival Organ Recital has become an annual event, and several organists "raised the roof" in a programme of "light-hearted music for a summer evening": the performers interpreted this as an occasion for dancing animals. Andrew Chadney opened proceedings with "Penguins' Playtime" by Nigel Ogden, and John Mitchell included "The Tame Bear" by Elgar and "The Elephants' Tango" by Bernie Landes. Martin Ball gave us some jazz piano, including Fats Waller's "Alligator Crawl", and then retired to the organ to play "A Song of Sunshine" by Alfred Hollins.

Christian Stover intrigued us with a Toccata by Christopher Maxim based on "a bicycle built for two"; and we were delighted with an organ "built for two" when Jonathan and Sarah Holmes played a Petite Suite for four hands by the Canadian composer Denis Bédard. I provided a little Minuet by Samuel Ould. Jonathan Holmes concluded the recital with a Scherzetto by Percy Whitlock, and the Scherzo from Vierne's Deuxième Symphonie. Christopher Town provided a much-appreciated commentary on the music and the musicians.

The church was filled with families, babies, young children, parents and grandparents for the piano recital. Alvin Moisey and his family are raising money for the Alzheimer's Society, in memory of Alvin's mother, by performing and cycling. It was a great pleasure to hear Alvin play Chopin (Ballade no.1) and Debussy (Images, Book 1). His wife Hiroko, who is a violinist, played Massenet's Meditation, and then the young boys impressed us all with their command of the piano, each playing a dramatic piece by Bartok. They are advanced musicians at the ages of 7 and 9/10, and also charming young boys who grinned self-consciously as they paraded "Turn off your phone" signs before the recital began. Alvin concluded the recital with Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue.

It was a great privilege to provide the setting for their music, and we hope they will come to play in our church again soon. Their cycling journey from Land's End to John o' Groats will begin next week, and we wish them good weather, strong muscles, and the company of God.

Marilyn Nicholson

Flower Rota for the next three months

July

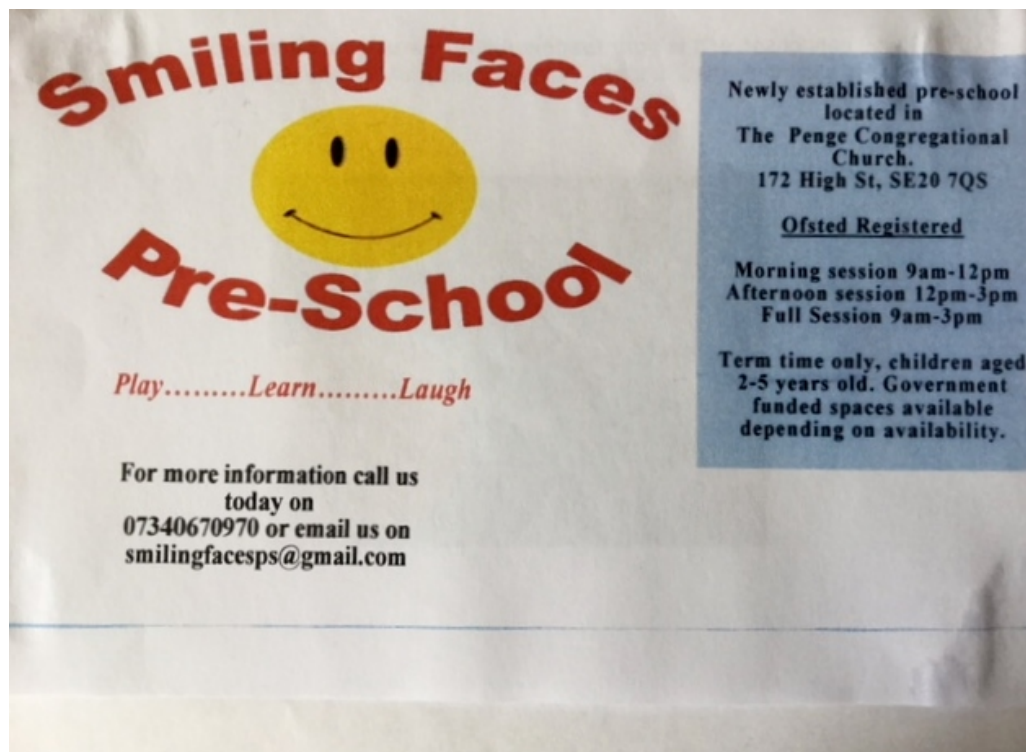
- 1: Pat Clarke
- 8: In memory of Mollie Johnson
- 15: Jean Sumner
- 22: Friendship Club
- 29: Pam Owen (Christina's wedding on the 28th)


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



Smiling Faces

Pre-School

Play.....Learn.....Laugh

For more information call us
today on
07340670970 or email us on
smilingfacesps@gmail.com

Newly established pre-school
located in
The Penge Congregational
Church.
172 High St, SE20 7QS

Ofsted Registered

Morning session 9am-12pm
Afternoon session 12pm-3pm
Full Session 9am-3pm

Term time only, children aged
2-5 years old. Government
funded spaces available
depending on availability.

Church Diary July-August 2018

Sunday 1st July:

10.30 am: David: a man after God's own heart, led by the Minister.
6.30pm: Lord's Supper, led by Marilyn.

Tuesday 3rd July:

9.30-11 am: Café Church
Smiling Faces Pre-School open Day.

Sunday 8th July:

10.30am: David and Goliath, led by Jannett, the Minister preaching.
6.30pm: Bible discussion, led by Chris and Lynn.

Wednesday 11th July:

10.30-noon: Friendship Club. The Vestry.

Thursday 12th July:

7.30pm: Deacons' Meeting. The Vestry.

Sunday 15th July:

10.30am: David and Uriah, including the Lord's Supper, led by Chris Parker, the Minister preaching.
6.30pm: Evening Service, led by the Minister.

Sunday 22nd July:

10.30am: David and his children, led by Lynn and Chris, the Minister preaching.
12 noon: Church Meeting, in the Snug.
6.30pm: Evening service, led by the Minister.

Saturday 28th July:

12 noon: Wedding of Daniel Brookes and Christina Owen.

Sunday 29th July:

10.30am: Morning Worship, led by Marilyn.
6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn.

Sunday 5th August:

10.30 am: Healing: Blind Bartimaeus, led by Chris McShane.
6.30pm: Lord's Supper, led by the Minister

Sunday 12th August:

10.30am: Healing: Zaccheus, led by Jannett
6.30pm: Bible discussion, led by Marilyn.

Sunday 19th August:

10.30am: Healing: the Bronze Serpent, led by Siobhan and friends.

6.30pm: Evening worship, led by Chris McShane.

Sunday 26th August:

10.30am: Healing: Jairus' Daughter, led by Marilyn.

6.30pm: Taizé service, led by Lynn.

Tuesday 28th August to Friday 31st August is Decorating Week. We need willing hands. Offers please to Chris Parker.



Penge Congregational Church

172 High Street
Penge
London
SE20 7QS

Church gathered May 1908

Minister

Reverend Pam Owen 020 8659 2010
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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