

Penge Congregational Church



July 2021

Cover photos from the 'Blog' of Peter Longley
taken in Kelsey Park

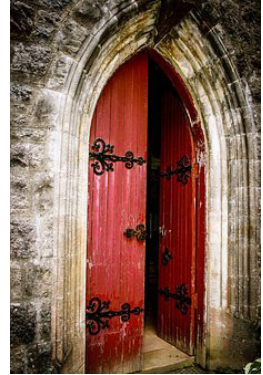
From the Minister...

In our June services, we have been thinking about what it means to be the family of God. Our key Scripture verse has been **John 1:12:**

“To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.”

As part of this series of services, I preached on the first chapter of the **Book of Ruth**.

If you know this beautiful little Old Testament book, set “in the days when the judges ruled”, you will no doubt remember it as being full of God’s love. A man of Bethlehem, Elimelech, his wife Naomi and their sons, Mahlon and Killion, were driven by famine to settle in the land of Moab. There the sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. In the next 10 years, the father and both sons died leaving Naomi alone at a time when a woman couldn’t survive without a man to support her. Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem and both her daughter-in-law decided to go with her. Naomi knew the economic and cultural difficulties they would face and eventually persuaded Orpah to remain in her own country. But Ruth was adamant: her love and loyalty was with Naomi and to remain with her she was prepared to leave her country, her blood family and indeed her religion, and cleave to Naomi, and to Naomi’s God.



Ruth swore a very solemn oath: “Where you go, I will go; where you live I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.” And Ruth swore this oath in the name, not of her own pagan gods, but in the name of the God of Israel!: “May Yahweh punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”

In the last of our series of services on family, Lynn will look at Matthew 12: 46-50, where Jesus tells his disciples that they are his family: “Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!”

It’s an incredible, literally, thing that Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, our Redeemer, our King, should consider every person who believes in him, each one of us, his brother or sister! And, of course, since God is his Father, that makes him our Father too. It’s why we pray to God as our Father in Heaven.

Now I have two children and I know that, although I love them both infinitely, my relationship with each of them, as their parent, is unique. I’m quite sure that, if there were ten of them instead of two, our relationships would still be unique. Because they are individuals with different characters. And so it is with God! And that’s the amazing thing about this God of ours who has sent his Holy Spirit to dwell within each believer and who loves us so much that he wants to have a personal, unique relationship with us!

In our Zoom discussion we have been talking about maturity as a Christian. As God's children, we grow up in our faith just as we do as children of our human parents. I tend to think that maturity is acquiring the spiritual understanding to grasp the full significance of the gifts God gives each one of us.



Our knowledge of God is personal, not intellectual, and because we have that personal experience of his love, we are prompted to live out that love and use it to put our faith into action, to make a difference to those we meet and to act on the teachings that Jesus has left us. To bring us back to Ruth, she did just that: out of love, she devoted herself to doing what she could for Naomi and, in doing so with her whole heart, she redeemed Naomi from an empty, bitter life. And the writer of Ruth ends by revealing that Ruth was the great grandmother of Kind David! Her personal actions, done from love, had a profound effect on the subsequent history of Israel and in due time gave us Jesus, Son of David and our Saviour!

May our own personal relationships with Jesus prompt us to the life of discipleship he has commissioned us to lead!

July 2021 worship themes

From 11th July to 1st August we are going to look at the Gospel of Mark. As the original Apostles became older, it was no longer enough for them to pass on their knowledge of Jesus' life and teachings orally. One day they would no longer be here to do that and the personal witness would be lost. And so oral testimony became written testimony. The four Gospels we have now aren't the only ones that were written but they are the canonical ones, the ones the early church fathers discerned as being the ones God wanted us to use.

Each Gospel is written with a different purpose, and Mark's is stated in his opening verse: "This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." We will start from that point in our first service and then look at some of the themes Mark, which, it is generally agreed, was the first Gospel to be written, brings us.

Sunday 11th July: Mark 1: 1-8; 14-15. "Jesus the Messiah."

Sunday 18th July: Mark 7: 1-23. Inner purity.

Sunday 25th July: Mark 8: 31-9:1. Jesus teaches about discipleship.

Sunday 1st August: Mark 14: 1-11. Mark: "passion narrative with an extended introduction."

[William L. Lane]

A Letter from Pat Clarke

14th June 2021

Dear Penge C. C.,

Just to let you know I am missing you all.

Unfortunately, I am house-bound, due to being attached to an oxygen machine.

I have two portable cylinders, but wouldn't feel fit enough to use one to come down to Church at the moment. But who knows, things might improve.

It is good that the Church is open again and that things are gradually getting back to normal after such a dreadful time.

Wishing everybody a good summer!,

Pat (of Kingswood Road)

We pray that things do improve, Pat, and that we will see you again soon.



A Thought for the Day...

Think not, what we *could have* done, but what we *have done* and what we *could do*.

Who are your true friends?
Value them.



The quiet times of lockdown have enabled some to think more deeply.

Show your children the fields, the sea, the wheatfields and let them run freely in nature, and they will find their own books!



A single blade of grass is as beautiful as a sweet smelling flower!

Quotes...

1. Time is like a river. You cannot touch the same water twice because the flow that has passed will never pass again. Enjoy every moment of your life.

2. Reach up as high as you can today

And God will reach down the rest of the way.

Padre Pio

3. Don't look back - you are not going that way!

4. Let your smile change the world - don't let the world change your smile!

.... from Jean Bowden

Couple of light hearted jokes

from Christopher Parker:

Q. Why do Ruth and Joshua not get on?

A. because Joshua Judges Ruth.

(That is a good way to remember the order of these three books of the Bible, Chris.)

Q. Who was the first person to use computer technology?

A. Moses - as God gave him two tablets.



This is our deacon Douglas who is supporting us although living in Kendal.

He became Mayor of Kendal in May.

We see him very regularly on Zoom for Bible studies and Deacons meetings.

We have been worried about the beard but have been reliably informed that it will come off in aid of the Mayor's charities!

See photo opposite!

Douglas writes

Dear All,

I forget who asked for photos of the Mayor for the magazine. I have eventually got round to sending you these from just after I was elected at the beginning of May.

Never fear, as mentioned, the beard is coming off **for charity** on **Saturday, 25th June** despite how our beloved Prime Minister has decided/been forced by events into delaying the end of lock down!



PUBLIC BEARD SHAVING
FOR THE
MAYOR'S CHARITIES

Support the Mayor's 'Big Shave'

You can join us at The
Birdcage, Finkle Street, on
Friday at 1.30pm to see the
beard come off!

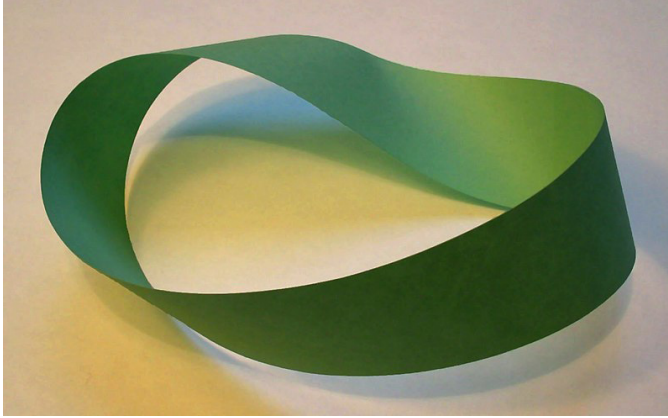


And from the
Mayor to the
Future Preacher?

Well, Teddy is in
the pulpit with his
mummy, Christine,
and he looks
as though he is
considering the
calling.... and with
Pam as Grand-
Mama... and Dan
as daddy...

(Teddy at 13 weeks
old!)

Eternity and God's faithfulness



How many sides does a piece of paper have? Generally paper has 2 sides. But this piece of paper is a Möbius strip. It is a loop of paper and it only has one side not two!!

If you don't believe me - now is your chance to try it out. Take a strip of paper. Hold it out in front of you. Now twist one end of the paper. Using a piece of celotape, stick the two ends of the paper together, keeping the twist in place, and making a loop. It should look like the ring above. To prove that this piece of paper has only one side use your pen and pretend it is an ant walking along carrying a paint brush. The ant stays on the one side of the paper all the time and just keeps walking down the middle of the paper. Keep going, and you will come back to where you started. You will see that you have drawn on "both" sides of the paper as it now only has ONE side!

I did this myself during a particularly stressful meeting. The meeting was online. No one could see what I was doing with my hands. As long as I kept my face looking interested and nodded from time to time, no one noticed.

I wrote on the loop the following words ***“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases. His mercies never comes to an end. They are new every morning.”***

The words went around and around, and my thoughts followed the words. Most importantly I tried not to smile at the wrong time in the meeting – otherwise everyone would know that I wasn’t listening at all.

Lynn



A Cautionary Tale

Continued from the June issue of the Newsletter:



I remember the moon. it was a full moon and low down in the sky, so it filled more than half the frame of my window. I was almost euphoric since removing the

bear's eyes. I had enjoyed my tea for the first time in days; brushing my teeth was a refreshing experience; the twilight was calm and soothing, rather than gloomy. I left my curtains open to savour the glow of the rising moon. Slowly I drifted into sleep.

When I awoke sometime later, something seemed to be wrong. I looked around me slowly. I was still groggy from sleep. There was a silhouette next to me. It was the night light, which I didn't use anymore.

I had a lovely old-fashioned bed with a small carving of a gnome at the foot. I could make out the shape of the gnome's pointy hat. My eye went to the window. The moon wasn't there anymore. I thought Ma had drawn the curtains, but the curtains were still open. I stopped breathing. There was a huge black shadow between the window and my bed. Someone, something was sitting at the foot of my bed.

I tried to cry out. I formed the word “Ma” with my lips. The sound strangled in my throat. There was a low growl and a soft rustle. The shadow moved and a silhouette resolved itself against the moonlight. It looked like a teddy bear! I knew the shape so well. It was the big teddy bear from the shelf. It had grown several times. It wasn’t a toy anymore; it was a monster. And it was sitting almost on top of me. I willed myself to get up and run, but my body was like dough. I couldn’t feel myself breathing. My skin felt cold.

“Do you know what you have done?”

A voice seemed to come from within me. I heard it, but not with my ears. It sounded like the storm, but the words formed themselves into a message. It was the bear. The bear was somehow inside me. The bear was speaking to me.

“The bear cannot see! The bear is blind! Do you know what that means?”

I can remember thinking, what bear? I couldn’t remember any bears. Perhaps the ones at the zoo? But they weren’t blind as far as I knew.

“The spirit of the stars is in the bear. You have moved the stars from their place. The stars are wandering. There will be chaos. You and your people will die. Even now the Sun is moving too close to you. A searing heat is coming and a deadly rain.”

I tried to say, “But what have I done? I can’t move the stars; I’m just a boy.” I tried to speak, but the words stayed in my throat.

Slowly it came to me. I had cut two glass beads from a stuffed toy. The little bear! That’s what he meant. When I cut the eyes



from the teddy bear, I had somehow disturbed the universe. It was preposterous. I didn’t want to harm anyone; how could the actions of a frightened child affect the movement of the stars?

“I am the Great Bear. I live light years from you in the constellation of Ursa Major. The little bear is not a toy. He is the avatar of Ursa Minor. within him is the power of the stars. He is not to be tampered with. You must return his eyes, or the universe will return to the blind chaos preceding the Creation. Hurry, the time is short!”

I woke up immediately. The sun was high in the sky. It was a beautiful summer’s day. I looked at the tree outside my window, over the road in front of the Scout Hall. It was bare of leaves. Bright sunshine and bare trees? I looked at the calendar. The day was the 16th of November. Something was wrong.

“Time to get up, sleepy bunny. My, isn’t it warm – and in the middle of winter!” The words were hardly out of Ma’s mouth when I remembered what the bear had

said; searing heat and poisonous rain. The sun was coming too close.

I leapt out of bed. There was no time to lose. The beads were in the bin in the kitchen. I ran past the bears and into the kitchen. I leapt on the bin, almost climbing into it and fell back in shock. It was empty!

“Ma!” I was nearly screaming, “did you throw out the rubbish?”

“Yes of course I did! there’s no need to shout.”

I almost choked, “But you don’t understand. Where are the beads?”

Ma was maddeningly calm, “What beads, Baby?”

“The eyes!” I was weeping now, “The eyes of the bear.”

She opened her hand and there they were, safe on her palm. “Is this what you mean?”

I nearly snatched them, but I made a huge effort to be rational. “We need to put them back.”

“I can do that while you’re at school.”

“No! Now!” this time I did scream.

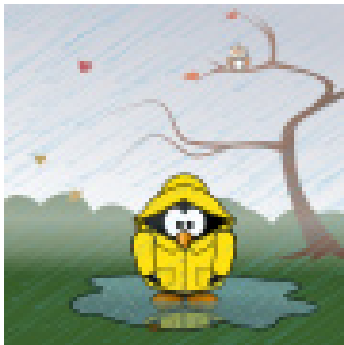
I could hear the exaggeratedly calm tone of Ma’s voice as she said, “Alright, let’s get my sewing kit and while I do that, could you get the bear down off the shelf for me. Could you do that, please? And then we’ll put his eyes back.”

While she worked, she kept up a calm flow of words. I hardly heard her. My eyes were riveted on her hands, steadily stitching the eyes back onto the little bear. With every stitch I breathed a little easier. She put the little bear back on the shelf and turned to me. She wondered if I should spend the day at home.

As she spoke, I heard thunder. Not long after that, drops of water started spattering against the window. The poisonous rain! In a fever, I rushed to the kitchen and fetched a cup. I opened the window, in spite of my mother's protests, and pushed the cup into the rain. I drew it back and sipped the water gingerly, terrified I was drinking deadly poison. It tasted like water.

"Water!" I sang out and started to dance around the room. I gulped down the rest of the water in the cup and hugged Ma, "It's water, real water!"

After that, Ma decided to keep me home. I had never liked the rain before, but that day I changed my mind. Rain was good, rain made things grow, rain was ... normal.



Just in case you haven't heard enough about Covid!?
- the next thing is here already!

Virologists have identified **The Nile Virus - Type C**

It appears to target those who were born between 1930 and 1970

Symptoms:

1. Causes you to send the same message twice.
2. Causes you to send a blank message.
3. Causes you to send a message to the wrong person.
4. Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you.
5. Causes you to forget to attach the attachment.
6. Causes you to DELETE instead of SEND.
7. Causes you to SEND when you should DELETE.

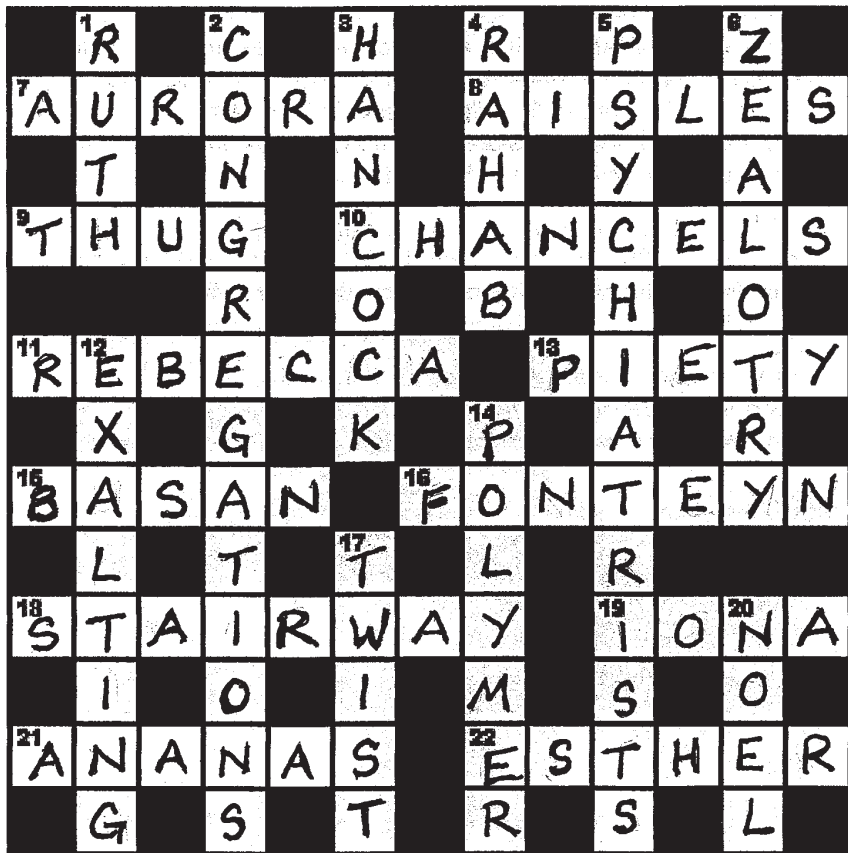
It is called the **C-NILE virus!**

And if you can't admit ever to have done the above,
you've obviously caught the mutated strain -

The D-Nile virus!

Solution to Clive's Crossword

(see June 2021)



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:

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To submit articles for the monthly newsletter:

margaret@ecoharmony.org

Deacons at the moment are

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