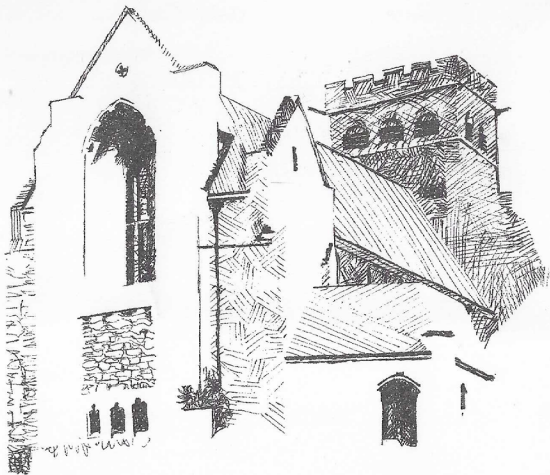


Penge Congregational Church



Church Logo designed by Mr Chris McShane

September 2023

Cover photo from the Centenary Service
Saturday, 14th June 2008

Reminiscing

by Jean Sumner



On Pentecost Sunday we were thinking about the Birth of the Church.

That led us on to think about the age of our own Penge Congregational Church, which is now 115 years old.

My thoughts then turned to the celebration we had on our hundredth birthday.

We held it on **Saturday 14th June 2008.**

We had a lovely service with about 100 people attending. It was led by the Reverend John Taylor and the sermon was given by the Congregational Federation President, the Reverend Wayne Hawkins BD.

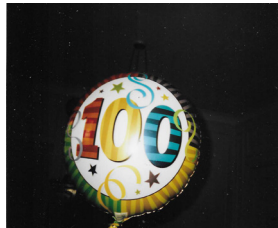
The Choir sang the anthem, 'The Cornerstone' composed by Chris McShane, who also designed the logo on the back of the Order of Service, which is on our cover..

We had two readings; the first read by the Reverend Pam Owen (Genesis 11:27 - 12:9). The second was read by Mr Martin Sweet, Director of the Spinnaker Trust, (St Matthew 9:9 - 13).

Mrs Marilyn Nicholson, our Organist, played music from Elgar's Vesper Voluntaries at the beginning of the service, and 'Jesus now be Praised' by J.S. Bach at the end.

The decorations on the church pillars were made by **Miss Joyce Perry**, and the **Junior Church** made a beautiful mosaic.

And I remember too the Centenary Service Tea held in the Kenilworth Church Hall, which was brightly decorated with banners and balloons.



A very tasty buffet tea was enjoyed by us all.

Norma had made a beautiful cake in the shape of 100. And there were other birthday cakes. Unfortunately, I cannot give credit to the people who made them as I don't remember who they are!



Altogether it was a wonderful day with lots of happy memories.

From the Minister

My Grandson is nearly two and a half now, and he is becoming capable of empathy. As I'm sure you know, the brains of very young children don't develop a capacity to consider the feelings of others until they are 2-3 years old. So it is quite a recent development with Teddy.



All the signs are that he is growing to be a kind child who cares quite a lot about the welfare of his family and other people, as well as his toys, inanimate objects and even characters on TV!

A recent scene I observed went something like this:

Teddy, addressing a soft toy, "Big dinosaur is thirsty. Are you thirsty, Big dinosaur?"

[Does special voice] 'Yes I am.'

"Here's some water for you. Is the water nice?"

[Dino voice]: 'Yes it is.'

"Now Mummy is thirsty. Do you want some water, Mummy?"

Obviously it is pleasing, especially for a doting Grandma, to see this early evidence of kindness. And, of course, kindness is absolutely necessary for a Christian: it is one of the **fruits of the Spirit**.

But who should we be kind to? The obvious answer of course is ‘everyone.’ But humans are inclined to be governed by something academics call ‘homophily’ which is simply defined as the tendency to prefer people like us. It influences who we tend to choose as our friends and our partner in life. It influences us when we are deciding who we want to associate with and who we don’t feel are our sort of people. At its most pernicious, it becomes destructive because it is what can lead to prejudices along racial, political, social lines. It is what leads to a lot of the alarmist headlines in tabloid newspapers. It leads to that awful attitude we so often hear expressed of “we should look after our own first.”

It's something we really need to be vigilant about in our lives as individual Christians and as a church. Living in a multicultural area of the country, I have heard so many times from Windrush generation Black people, the sad story of coming to this country and turning up at a local church on Sunday, only to be told, “We don’t think you would fit in here.” Or, occasionally, the more honest “We don’t want your sort in our church.”

In the first century, Jews stuck with Jews, Gentiles with Gentiles, and rich and poor never mingled. And yet in Romans 16: 1-16, Paul could describe the church at Rome as including Priscilla and Aquila (Jewish), Epenetus (Greek, ie Gentile), Phoebe (a benefactor ie rich) and Philologus (a slave name.) What had brought these people together was Jesus. Jesus in whom “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female.”

“For you are all one in Jesus Christ.”

(Galatians 3:28)

It's only natural to want to live and work, and go to church, with people like us. But everyone who loves Jesus is a person like us! Jesus pushes us beyond homophily. Jesus makes his followers into people who are being different together; who have something in common and that thing the most important thing of all.

“For you are all one in Jesus Christ.”



Sunday Readings for September

During September we shall be thinking about Prayer, and particularly what Jesus, Paul and the Writer to the Hebrews have to teach us. These services will lead us into our Harvest service on 1st October.

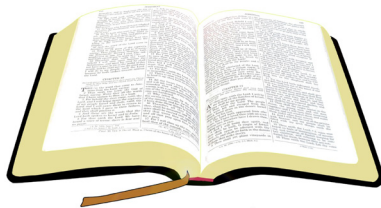
Sunday 3rd September: Hebrews 4: 9-16. Our Great High Priest

Sunday 10th September: Matthew 6: 5-18. Jesus' teaching about Prayer.

Sunday 17th September: 1 Thessalonians 5: 15-21. "Never stop praying."

Sunday 24th September: Ephesians 6: 10-18. "The whole armour of God."

Sunday 1st October: Harvest Thanksgiving: 2 Corinthians 9: 6-19. Planting generously.



Living Well

If you are able to, please bring donations of food and basic toiletries to the **Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 1st October.**

These will be donated to the **Living Well project at Holy Trinity.**

Particularly needed are:

UHT milk

Rice

Tinned vegetables/pulses/meat/fruit/soup/tomatoes*

Pasta

Biscuits

Cereal

Toilet rolls

Shower gel and shampoo

Sanitary towels

Dog and cat food.

*Tins with ring pulls are helpful for those without a tin opener.



SPEAKING OF BOOKS

A June afternoon found me queuing with a copy of **Getting Better** in one hand and **I Am Happy** in the other. **Author Michael Rosen**, beloved children's writer, poet and broadcaster signed both of them with a flourish, the first for me, the second for 3 year old **Alfie**, my youngest grandson.

The author had a smile for me and words and a photo opportunity for all the children who had just been given a wonderful afternoon's entertainment from the hands of this delightful man. With so many treasured volumes to be autographed following the Family Show, during the St. George's Festival for Beckenham, he must have been at risk of RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) by the time the last of the audience went home for tea!

From the minute he stepped on to the stage and, surveying the beautiful surroundings, commented on the appropriate setting in which to explain **the 40 days and 40 nights** he had spent asleep during Covid, the young and older audience alike were captivated!



Many of the adults were doubtless aware of the 50/50 chance mentioned to Michael of being saved by the vital ventilation he was offered in March 2020 and of the slow return to life thanks to the support of his wife, **Emma**, and family and the skills of the NHS team who not only saved him but also those nurses etc who wrote day by day accounts of the “life” he spent during his weeks in an induced coma. (So precious are they in their spiral-bound notebook that he entrusted it to **BBC TV’s The Repair Shop** to give it their skilled attention for preservation, something which when accomplished moved him to tears).

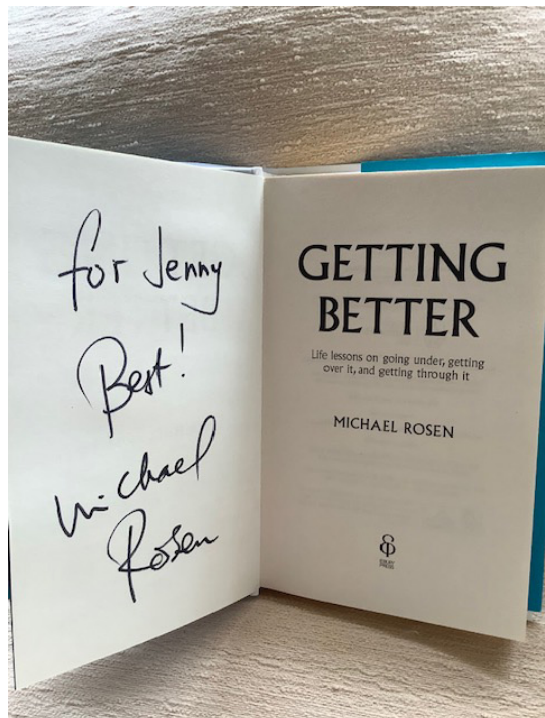
To witness now Michael’s energy and enthusiasm for poems, old and new, for jokes and quick-fire play on words was, to my mind, nothing short of a miracle after all he had been through. His body language and agility around the stage was that of a fit, slim teenager rather than a man in his Seventies with such recent medical history, and the children loved him! The sellout show over-ran such was the lively feedback from them and the Q & A’s were handled with sensitivity, as befits such a one time **Children’s Poet Laureate**.

It is interesting to reflect that it was in 2008 that Michael Rosen penned the iconic poem *These Are the Hands* to celebrate the **60th anniversary of the NHS**. In 2021 he wrote **Many Different Kinds of Love** in which he comes to terms, with the help of his wife Emma, with what he went through during Covid, followed by the massive mountain of rehabilitation

in all areas he had to climb to get back to the life he wanted to regain, despite at times despairing of “being able to stand in front of children to tell them poems and stories and hear them laugh”.

The fact that just that was exactly what we saw happen in Beckenham that afternoon says a lot about the man and the NHS. No greater tribute could be paid to either than to see this amazing man perform with such aplomb; it was a privilege to be there! (And I gather that the church social media relating to his visit has broken records with upwards of 10,000 hits).

Jenny Froude
(CTiB rep)



Maintenance and Evangelism week

Week beginning 7th August a band of helpers with different gifts and skills descended on PCC at about 0900 hours. Their mission, if they wished to accept it (sorry but I've not long seen the latest **Mission Impossible** movie) was to tackle a few jobs on the premises which required repairing, painting, moving, weeding or cleaning.



Jackie and **Iona** set about weeding and tidying the garden in Kenilworth Rd, **Lynn** and **Chris M** and I erected the scaffold tower under the chandelier and then replaced all the bulbs, finishing with a dust and clean.

Once this was done we divided up and cupboards were emptied and relocated, the window which had suffered

damage by an individual trying to gain entry out of hours was made good and **a rub down and oiling of the main front doors** has brought them back to life. **Siobhan**, **Pam** and **Bernie** all chipped in to add to the gang.

As good as the work was by this small band of enthusiastic crew, the highlight for me was the impact of



having our **church doors open each morning till noon.** I was engaged at the entrance to the church most of the week and spoke to several people just passing by. Then we had two people who came into the church, one wanting to pray and one who was in a dark place in his life wanting advice spiritually and needing prayer. It was a privilege

to be able to share God's love with him and although some of the issues causing him concern and anxiety were outside my comfort zone, I found myself speaking quite freely, which I can only put down to the Holy Spirit giving me the right words for the situation. It was a very emotional moment when we prayed for his problems. As he went on his way, I believe he was more at peace than when he came in.

We finished most mornings with a gathering for a bite of lunch, with bread, cheese, donuts or cookies, provided by **Anne.** It was good



to talk about day to day things and share fellowship together.

Finally my thanks to all who gave their time in different ways during the week. There are so many jobs which need doing in a complex this big and this old to keep it running. God bless you all.

Chris Parker.



Church Meeting 17th September

We will meet after Morning Worship at the back of the church, probably about 11.50am.

As well as our usual agenda items, Deacons will report back on their preparations for next year, after Pam's retirement on 31st December.

And the Deacons add...

Our next church meeting is on the 17th September after morning worship. We will be thinking about some next steps at the meeting because, as you should now know, our minister Pam retires on the last day of the year. We know God will continue to bless her in her journey ahead and we know that he has a good purpose for all of us too.

Please spend time in prayer for us as God's people in Penge.

Please pray earnestly by listening and talking to God as we look for our next minister.

Think about how God is a Father to all people, from any culture, poor and rich. Let's ask Him to change us, to be like him in all we do. We pray for a leader who can open us to this kind of love, so that we can open a way into the Kingdom of God for all people.

From the Deacons.



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PENGE MUSIC PRESENTS

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

SOPRANO MARIANNA SURI

with ECHO ZOU

a programme exploring themes of
unrequited love with works by Donizetti,
Wagner, Clarke and Weill

**23RD SEPTEMBER 2023
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



A versatile and exciting performer, Cypriot Soprano **Marianna Suri** has appeared with a number of opera companies and symphony orchestras across Europe and the United States.

Chenxuan Echo began studying piano at five years old. After graduating in China, she completed her MMus at Goldsmiths, University of London. She was awarded a place at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and she is currently continuing her studies at the Royal College of Music.



Sunday 20th August after Church

members of the congregation were invited to a
Barbecue by Chris Parker



Thank you, Chris, for
a lovely time, with
delicious food.

Good fellowship.





photos by Chris M



When you
go down to
the woods on
Sunday...



In the garden... if
not in the woods!





Chris P must spend a lot of time in his garden - as well as at his allotment.

The garden is beautiful: this bowl of splendid flowers, outside the French windows, is but a tiny part.



PENGE MUSIC PRESENTS
OPEN MONDAYS

18TH SEPTEMBER

16TH OCTOBER

20TH NOVEMBER

11TH DECEMBER

£5 tickets for audience and performers

Under 16s go free

Doors 7pm Starts 7.30pm

Performers please register by

Friday before at

pengeopenmondays@gmail.com

Relaxed and informal atmosphere

BYOB...

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Website:

www.pccweb.co.uk



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

Pam Owen on:

pccprayer@outlook.com

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

pcclettings@outlook.com

Tel: 07999 296 686 (new number)

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