



KINGSDOWN MESSENGER



February - March 2021



Kingsdown Methodist Church



Sunday services online on Zoom at 11.00 am.

With an 'east side' service for Acton Hill, Ealing Green, Kingsdown and Pitshanger congregations.

For the Zoom links to the services, please contact Rev Rachel Bending, Rev Sue Male or the Circuit Office.

Most online services up to now have been pre-recorded video services and we will continue to add devotional videos on an ongoing basis.

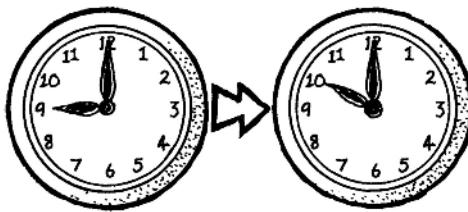
The link is <https://www.dancinginthedesert.org/worship-resources>

You can also find video links for the services on:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ealing+trinity+worship

Virtual Circuit Bible Studies on Zoom see p6 for more details..

28 March Clocks Go Forward



The KINGSDOWN MESSENGER
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Hello!



Have you noticed just how much people have struggled with how to greet one another in this New Year? Somehow the simple "Happy New Year" has not seemed adequate even though that happiness – obviously – is our hope for one another.

Not only is it our hope, but certainly, even if things are very difficult, we will all still experience those times of happiness and joy that sustain us. Yet, of course I understand the difficulties with the New Year greeting and, of course, I have felt it myself!

Perhaps February takes away the awkwardness in trying to fulfil that need to Greet the New Year away? „, and perhaps in any case the most helpful greeting is, "keep in touch ... give me a call ... or I will give you one!"

So, instead, I look around for inspiration for the February magazine article:

- Could it be the friend who told me that the high point of his socialising this year had been three trips to the supermarket? Well, we can certainly relate to that, and it did make me smile.
- Could it be the slow trickle of people who HAVE had their first vaccination – including my Dad – some good news amidst all the seeming gloom? It is so good to witness people getting protection for themselves, and in that act also protecting others by reducing the capacity for the virus to transmit. Well done to all of those who have already received theirs and hoping many of us will follow you soon!
- Could it be the happenings in the USA – the uprising and then the inauguration of Jo Biden? Prayers for hope for a fresh start in that country? Certainly, the News has been busy.

All those things I could have written about but what has stayed with me is the verse of scripture which inspired Rachel Kamara to move on in her Christian journey when life was really difficult, and which she told us about on Sunday 24 th January when she gave us her testimony on the zoom worship.

"Since Christ suffered physically, you too must strengthen yourselves with the same way of thinking that he had, because whoever suffers

physically is no longer involved with sin. From now on, then, you must live the rest of your earthly lives controlled by God's will and not by human desires." 1 Peter 4:1-2

It's not an easy reading. Rachel has a clear and very strong faith. The correct response to suffering. Turning to God, submitting to his will, living life his way. In the Good News Translation this passage of the Bible is entitled "Changed Lives". It works on the basis of reminding us what Jesus suffered to do God's will – to bring salvation to us, and instructs us that the best way for us to live is with that same commitment to be prepared to suffer whatever it takes to do what God wants us to do. No matter how difficult it is. God is always with us.

It reminds me of the – probably apocryphal – story of the Jews in Auschwitz who put God on trial, the charge being that he had broken the Covenant in letting the atrocities which they were experiencing take place. They found him guilty, that was that, and then joined in prayer to end the day. The response – what else would they do?

I do not at all go with the idea – sometimes expressed - that God wants us to suffer, but I am completely convinced that in suffering he is the "person" to turn to, and that the strength we gain from our relationship with Him will take us through anything And of course, I acknowledge that personally I have never much suffered, but the testimony of others supports this way of thinking for me.

I mentioned – almost in passing – on Sun Jan 24th, when we were reading from Jonah at the zoom service, that being in a pandemic was a bit like Jonah being in the whale. We imagine ourselves in the whale .. each with our own current stories, some much more difficult than others, but all touched by suffering But we also know that in the end Jonah got out of the Whale – by God's will. Likewise, the pandemic will end. We too (though I am not sure Jonah did!) can trust in God!

Prayers for all of you. I will soon be in touch with details of what we will be doing during Lent. Much like at Christmas, we will be following a study course with a booklet that people can follow alone or in zoom groups. The course is "A Methodist Way of Life" and looks again (or for the first time) at specifically what it means to be a Methodist. It focuses on the "Religious order" aspect of being a Methodist, which was a big part of John Wesley's original plan. A plan that stays alive in Methodism through our "Order of Deacons" (The Diaconal Order) but has been lost

amongst the rest of us to a large extent – Presbyters and lay people alike. I am very excited by the idea of studying this myself, and therefore especially with you. Details will follow but I am leading a group on Monday mornings, Theresa is leading a group on Tuesday evenings, and Rachel is leading two groups on Thursday afternoons and evenings. See if one of those fits in your diary.

For those of you who would also like to study with people from other denominations, I will also be leading a group for “Christians Together in Central Ealing” on Tuesday mornings during Lent. This will be a course specifically aimed at ecumenical study, called “Receiving Christ”. Be in touch if you would like more information about that. It will again be on zoom.

Although we forgot to discuss this after the zoom service on Sunday, I think we can assume that worship will continue on zoom during February. And that we will all continue to “stay at home” where possible. We will review at the end of February to look at what we do in March. I am always interested in your views on this however, so please be in touch if you want to talk about it.



Please be in touch anyway.

With every blessing, and prayers for God to be with you wherever you are.

Sue

Family News

Received a call from a former member of Kingsdown Church, Dorothy Jones, saying that her husband, Arthur Jones, passed away on 30 December after a long and protracted illness.

Dorothy and Arthur were married at Kingsdown, by Rev. Jack Roberts over 30 yrs ago. She was a member of the flourishing choir and although Arthur was no singer he always supported her involvement in singing.

They moved to Cambridge a few years ago but always had a soft spot for Kingsdown and Ealing.

Janet Smith

David Lane sends his grateful thanks for your prayers and good wishes and has asked me to share the following update.

Janice remains seriously ill and has spent the past weeks in an induced sleep to allow her body a chance to recover.

She is generally stable but has had an occasional wobble and this is what is delaying them beginning the week-long waking process.

Your prayers are still very much necessary and appreciated, thank you.

God bless,

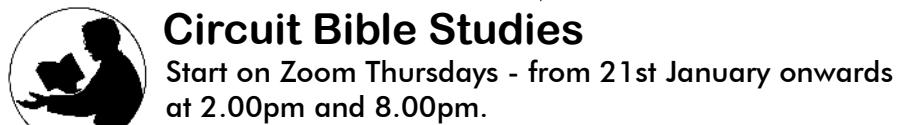
Tony Plews

Thank you everyone for the messages of sympathy, cards, letters, phone calls, flowers and plants, on the death of my son David in November. They have all been a great comfort and much appreciated by Andrew and myself.

Kath Jarrett.



Circuit Bible Studies



Start on Zoom Thursdays - from 21st January onwards
at 2.00pm and 8.00pm.

Between now and the start of Lent the focus will be on 'uppity' women in the Bible. There are many women who played a pivotal role in the story of God's people and we will be looking at some of them and how they can inspire us today.

All are welcome to join in – both women and men!

The link for the studies is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82320570313?pwd=S0J3UWFIS3JsSUxrZDkzS3VnVm1oQT09>

Meeting ID: 823 2057 0313 Passcode: 763073

One tap mobile

020 3481 5237,,82320570313#,,,*763073# United Kingdom

020 3481 5240,,82320570313#,,,*763073# United Kingdom

Boys' Brigade on Parade



The Liturgy and Worship Subcommittee offers this litany for use in online services during lockdown, and for post-lockdown services when we can congregate together again.

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.
Day followed night, every week had a Sunday
and that was the day for church.

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be.
We made our plans, held our meetings,
kept the roof on the church and the show on the road.

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We thought we knew how the world was meant to be. We would see colleagues, friends and loved ones again, and we would embrace, laugh and share stories as we always have.

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

And now, know something new.
We know that the world is not ours to control, and that our plans are confounded by the smallest microbe.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land

And now, we know something new.
We know that church is not committees, agendas and buildings,
it is us, in homes, streets, hospitals throughout the world.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land

And now, we know something new.
We only have today with those we love, today is the day to say "I love you", to mend an argument, to hold on tight.

God is teaching us a new song, for a new land

**Litany by Past President the Revd Michaela Youngson,
Chair of the London District Rainbow glass by the Revd
Rachel Parkinson, Chair of the Wolverhampton and
Shrewsbury District**



True Promises

*God has not promised
Skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways
All our life through;
God has not promised
Sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow,
Peace without pain.*

*But God has promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for the labour,
Light for the way;
Grace for the trial,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love. (Anon)*



A prayer for the pandemic

Dear Father God,

You promise to hear us when we come to you in prayer, thank you! We so need Your listening ear at this time – and your help, Lord. Winter always brings challenges, but this winter is exceptional as the effects of the pandemic continue. When we are afraid, or lonely, or grieving, or in despair, help us to trust You and to know that You are with us in the middle of it all, sustaining us. You are not social-distancing, You are very, very close, full of love and compassion.

We pray for our National Health Service and ask for Your special strength and protection for all staff. Thank you for the skills You have given to scientists all over the world. Thank you for the hope which the vaccines bring. Most of all thank You for the hope which Jesus brings. This earthly life is a whisper in the light of eternity and Jesus is the key to that eternal life. Thank You, Father, for meeting all our needs in Jesus. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

**God doesn't just call people who are qualified;
He calls people who are willing and then
qualifies them.**



Celebrating the path to sustainable development

All We Can has worked with local organisations in Cameroon for 15 years. Now, as its local partners in the country graduate, a reflection on the impact that working together in partnership has had.

'All We Can is exceptional in their approach and way they work with partners; in their humility and valuing differences among different partners.'

'Without All We Can, I am not sure we would have lasted to today.'

These are the words from Francis, the director of a local organisation in Cameroon that All We Can shared partnership with for 15 years, when he was recently asked about the experience of graduating from All We Can's support. All We Can's partnership approach is committed to supporting local organisations long-term, which enables us to responsibly exit from them – leaving them in a stronger position than before, and equipped to continue well beyond All We Can's support. It is incumbent on us to ensure that the graduation process is discussed with our local partners right from the beginning of the partnership. This enables our partners to utilise All We Can's support over the course of the 10-15 year partnership, and develop a growth plan to ascertain what it will take for them to become sustainable within their specific context.

All We Can has been working alongside a number of local organisations in Cameroon for the last 15 years – and this year we are able to celebrate the fact that they have now all graduated from All We Can's support. The local organisation that Francis leads is located in the North West Province of Cameroon. It started as a small organisation – but over the course of our 15-year partnership, this local organisation has grown both the depth and scope of its work in supporting and advocating for the rights of elderly people, and other vulnerable communities. As a result of their work, there are now more than 300 elderly social groups established to combat loneliness among older people. They have also increased the visibility of their work with other national organisations in Cameroon, and like-minded international bodies. Incredibly, they

have indirectly benefited the lives of 27.7 million elderly people by playing an instrumental role in drafting the National Policy on Ageing in Cameroon.

'These are difficult times on our country; particularly with the ongoing civil strife since 2016. With All We Can's support we have remained resilient and are equipped for graduation. With the capacity that we have acquired over time, the experience, and the profile that we have built we are confident that we can continue our development work.'

This quote is from Vincent – Chief Executive of another local organisation in Cameroon that has graduated from All We Can's support this year. All We Can first partnered with this local organisation back in 2006. In the first few years of partnership, their mission to improve the socio-economic status of thousands of community members, particularly women and youth, was focused in the South West region of Cameroon. Since then they have been able to scale up their community assistance work to expand into other two additional regions as well.

'It has been a wonderful relationship with All We Can, it is never easy to say goodbye but we know that All We Can is always there to reach out to and tell them what we are doing' said Vincent. The relationships developed with every local organisation that All We Can partners with around the world does not end after the graduation process. All We Can remains in close contact with all of our partners and continues to monitor and encourage them, as the friendships built and lessons learned over the 15-year partnerships are an essential part of the All We Can movement.



Counting the cost 2020



A year of climate breakdown, has identified 15 of the most destructive climate disasters of the year.

Ten of those events cost \$1.5 billion or more, with nine of them causing damage worth at least \$5 billion. Most of these estimates are based only on insured losses, meaning the true financial costs are likely to be higher.

Among them is Storm Ciara which struck the UK, Ireland and other European countries in February costing, \$2.7 billion and killing 14. The UK's Environment Agency issued 251 flood warnings.

While the report focuses on financial costs, which are usually higher in richer countries because they have more valuable property, some extreme weather events in 2020 were devastating in poorer countries, even though the price tag was lower. South Sudan, for example, experienced one of its worst floods on record, which killed 138 people and destroyed the year's crops.

Some of the disasters hit fast, like Cyclone Amphan, which struck the Bay of Bengal in May and caused losses valued at \$13 billion in just a few days. Other events unfolded over months, like floods in China and India, which had an estimated cost of \$32 billion and \$10 billion respectively.

Six of the ten most costly events took place in Asia, five of them associated with an unusually rainy monsoon. And in Africa, huge locust swarms ravaged crops and vegetation across several countries, causing damages estimated at \$8.5 billion. The outbreak has been linked to wet conditions brought about by unusual rains fuelled by climate change.

But the impact of extreme weather was felt all over the world. In Europe, two extra-tropical cyclones, Ciara and Alex, had a combined cost of almost \$6 billion. And the US suffered from both a record-breaking hurricane season and a record-breaking fire season adding up to more than \$60 billion in damages.

Some less populated places also suffered the consequences of a warming world. In Siberia, a heat wave during the first half of the year set a record in the city of Verkhoyansk, with temperatures reaching 38°C. A few months later, on the other side of the world, heat and drought

drove the fires in Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. While there were no human casualties reported from these events, the destruction of these areas has a great impact on biodiversity and the planet's capacity to respond to a warmer world.

Christian Aid says that: "These extreme events highlight the need for urgent climate action. The Paris Agreement, which set the goal of keeping temperature rise 'well below' 2°C, and ideally 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels, has just turned five years old. It is critical that countries commit to bold new targets ahead of the next climate conference, which will take place in Glasgow, in November 2021."



Oxymorons

Why is the third hand of a watch called a second hand?

Why do we "slow down" and "slow up" mean the same thing?

Why is it called "after dark" when its really "after light"?

How come "abbreviated" is such a long word?

Why do we call it a TV Set when you only have one?

Why are "wise man" and "wise guy" opposites?

Why do "overlook" and "oversee" mean opposite things?



Jobs Managing Calls on Track and Trace

As HMRC continue to support the delivery of the COVID schemes, Brook Street are undertaking a further recruitment campaign.

The links below provide links to the current job adverts. Please feel free to highlight these roles to any friends and family who might be interested in this opportunity.

CCG Customer Service Consultant role:

<https://www.brookstreet.co.uk/job/customer-service-consultants-13/>

CSG Customer Service Consultant role:

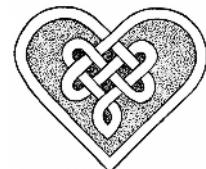
<https://www.brookstreet.co.uk/job/customer-service-consultants-14/>

Phil Male

Dates for Your Diary

14 February Valentines Day – a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home with their wives, instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

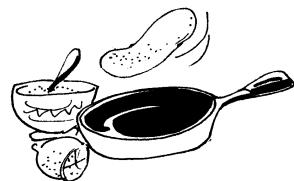


A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but who couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could – until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14th February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

So, the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

16 February Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day

Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.



So on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be 'shriven', or absolved from their sins, which gives us Shrove Tuesday.

At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today's pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she'd be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Flipping pancakes is also centuries old. A poem from Pasquil's Palin in 1619 runs: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne."

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life, while salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity.

Shrove Tuesday is always 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between 3rd February and 9th March.

17 February Ash Wednesday

– in Jerusalem by David Winter

Ash Wednesday introduces the Christian preparation for Easter, which normally coincides with Passover, the major Jewish celebration of the year. It's near Easter because Jesus was crucified at Passover, having just shared this very meal with His disciples.



Passover celebrates and recalls the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. Led by Moses they crossed the Red Sea and 40 days later entered the 'Promised Land'. They shared the Passover meal at their last night in Egypt and have kept it all for nearly the past three thousand years or so that have followed.

Many years ago, when I was in Jerusalem to produce a radio programme, I was invited to join a Jewish family for their Passover meal. It was a great occasion, very like our Christmas, a family event with deep religious significance for those who seek it.

At the meal in Jerusalem, we ate modest lentils and unleavened bread – Matzos as we now call it. We also drank plenty of wine but not from the cup at the end of the table. That is 'Elijah's cup', only to be drunk from when the prophet comes to announce the arrival of the Messiah. At the last supper Jesus instructed His disciples to drink from that cup after supper, which may have shocked them at the time. The Messiah had come!

14 March Mother's Day



There is an old Jewish saying: God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods – our human mothers – all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday' – as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

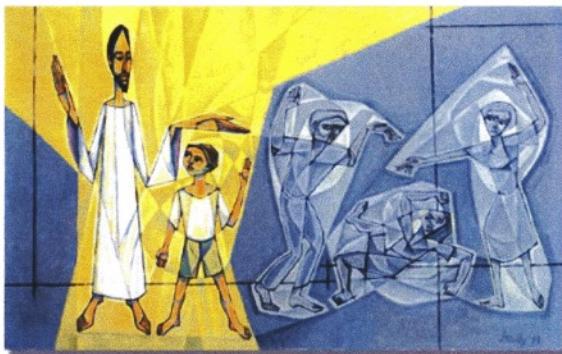
In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families – which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name.

This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.

In recent years the holiday has changed and in many ways now resembles the American Mother's Day, with families going out to Sunday lunch and generally making a fuss of their mother on the day.

The Sacred in Healing



The Healing of
the Lunatic Boy
by John Reilly

from the
Methodist Art
Collection

17 March St Patrick's Day



St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you'd think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz.

It's all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds.

Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he "knew not the true God".

Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country. He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland.

After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted.

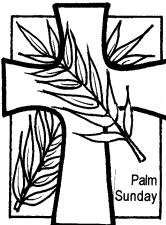
But by 435, well-educated or not, Patrick was badly needed. Palladius' mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh, and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ.

Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as, of course, is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.

28 March - Palm Sunday

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, when the Church remembers how Jesus arrived at the gates of Jerusalem just a few days before the Passover was due to be held. He was the Messiah come to his own people in their capital city, and yet he came in humility, riding on a young donkey, not in triumph, riding on a war-horse.



As Jesus entered the city, the crowds gave him a rapturous welcome, throwing palm fronds into his path. They knew his reputation as a healer, and welcomed him. But sadly the welcome was short-lived and shallow, for Jerusalem would soon reject her Messiah, and put him to death. On this day churches worldwide will distribute little crosses (if they can) made from palm fronds in memory of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem.

*Heavenly Father, we pray for Decision Makers.
Instil the seeds of love and care within
institutions, so they don't forget their essential
mandate towards the people who have appointed
them to lead.*

*Heavenly Father, we pray for Mutual Respect
and Understanding. We often forget the
importance of treating others as we would like to
be treated. We ask for your guidance and
support.*

from Christian Blind Mission

Kind words are the music of the world

Frederick Faber



Christianity has provided a blueprint for social improvement, according to the Labour Leader of the Opposition, Sir Keir Starmer.

Writing in a recent issue of Church Times, he said, "For all the loss and difficulty, we should not let this year be defined by pain. Throughout the pandemic, we have also seen the best of humanity."

Sir Keir said that during this past year "religious institutions and local communities have banded together for the common good, showing us the very best of Britain." And he went on to say that "the best of British values" that have surfaced during the pandemic "are also the best of Christian values."

Hymns for seasoned citizens



The Old Rugged Face

Precious Lord, Take My Hand, And Help Me Up

It is Well With My Soul, But My Knees Hurt

Nobody Knows the Trouble I Have Seeing

Amazing Grace, Considering My Age

Just a Slower Walk With Thee

Count Your Many Birthdays, Name Them One by One

Go Tell It On The Mountain, But Speak Up

Give Me That Old Timers' Religion

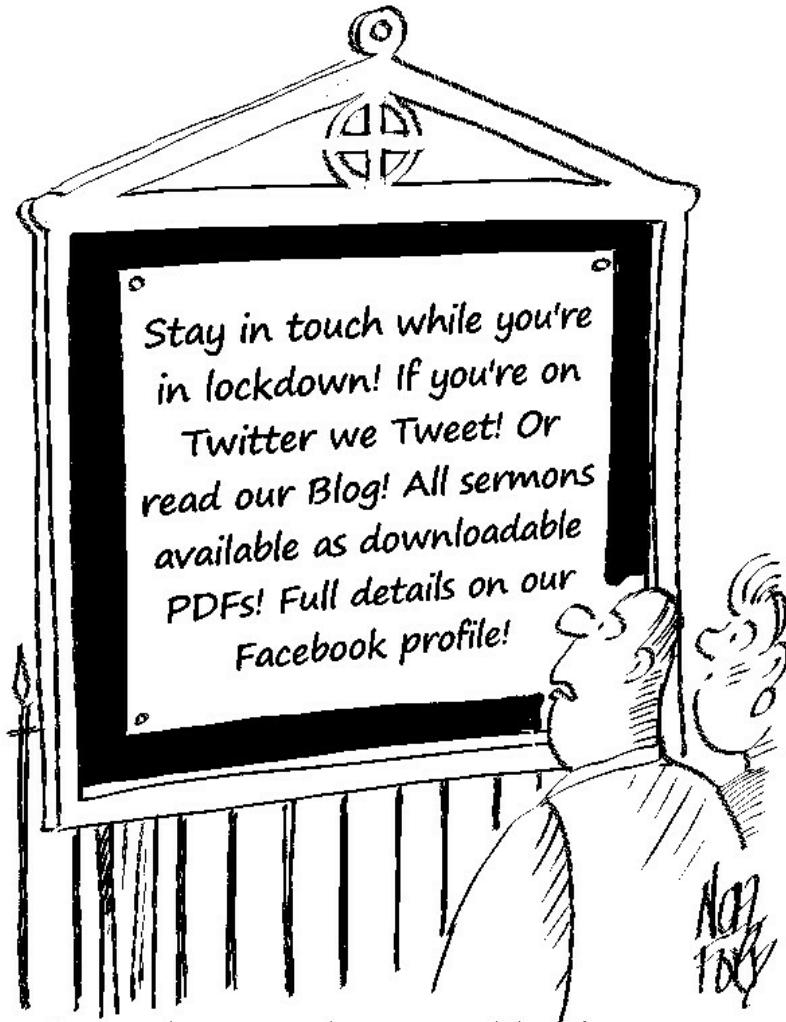
Blessed Insurance

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah, I've Forgotten Where I Parked



A Dentist and a Manicurist married.

They fought tooth and nail



"...and we used to grumble about not understanding archaic church language!"

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God will go with you wherever you go.

Deuteronomy 31:6

StayActive4Life -

We are currently delivering live classes on Zoom and are also able to send live recordings of the classes via e-mail and these have proven to be very successful. .



Strength & Balance Class (Mon - Fri 11:00-11:45)

Zumba Gold Class (Mon - Fri; 11:45-12:30 pm)

Stretch & Tone Class (Thu Only 10:00-11:00)

The cost is £40.00 for each 4 week period (This gives access to 44 live classes plus 44 videos per month - less than £1.00 per class).

-If you don't want to commit to attending for a period you can Pay As You Go for Each Class which costs £5.00.

If price is a barrier to participation, please let us know as we don't want price to be a barrier to people being able to participate in the classes so please do let us know if that is the case.

If you require any additional information or help to login to the classes.

Look at :

<https://www.careplace.org.uk/Services/14856>

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkduiurzgqHNMsxzJtDfuYfjylflRaNr0>

Mobile: 0771 517 0207 Landline: 01753 653 836



Seen on a birthday card

Forget about the past,
You can't change it.
Forget about the future,
You can't predict it.
Forget about the present,
I didn't buy you one.

The Bible Garden - The Humble Vegetable

While exotic fruits, fragrant herbs and wheat and barley are often mentioned in the Bible there is little in the way of the humble vegetable, although according to the book of Numbers 11:5 they were part of the common diet: '... remember the fish, which we ate in Egypt for nothing; the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic...'

No Bible garden will be complete without vegetables and now is a good time to prepare for next year's crop. In my Bible garden I have grown leeks, onions, garlic, ridge cucumbers — which are what Bible scholars think the book of Numbers is referring to — and broad beans. The latter are not mentioned by name in the Bible, but Bible scholars believe they were 'the pods' the prodigal son shared with the pigs (Luke 15:11-32). In Biblical times broad beans were considered to be food for the poor, but if you pick them when they are young and cook them fresh from the garden they are a very good early vegetable to enjoy.

This coming year I am planning to grow melons for the first time in my Bible Garden, and I may include ridge cucumbers again, but because they take up a huge amount of space I have not grown them for a few years.

Broad bean seeds can be sown in the autumn although I have found they are targeted by the local pigeons which destroy the entire crop, so I tend to sow them in early spring when the pigeons seem to have more important things on their mind! Also, as a member of my family suffers from ornithophobia - a fear of birds – this means I have to be extra careful about growing plants that attract them. If I sow them in the autumn I've found that the best protection is a plastic cloche which not only makes it difficult for the birds, but saves the young plants from frost damage.

Onion sets and garlic cloves can also be sown in late autumn but I have found in my part of the world spring sowings always do better. Leek seeds are also best sown in early spring and transplanted in late summer. When harvesting leeks, it is best to leave them until after the first winter frost as they always taste better then. If you don't like eating leeks and onions let them run to seed and you will have a spectacular display of flowers in your Bible garden!

The Bible Garden - Flowers

Consider some of the plants that bring the beauty of God's creation into our Bible garden – flowers. There are plenty to choose from that can be grown in our climate, and for example, here are some that I grow:

Anemone – or the 'Lily of the field' (Matthew 6:28-30)



Daisy (James 1: 9-10)

Doves Dung (2 Kings 6:25)

Hyacinth (Revelation 9:17)

Lavender (Song of Songs 4:14)

Lily (Hosea 14:5)



Mandrake (Song of Songs 7:13)

Poppy (1 Peter: 24-25)

Rose (Song of Songs 2:1)

Tulip (Song of Songs 2:12)

Water Lily (2 Chronicles 4:5)

Add to this list flowering shrubs and herbs such as Mallow, Broom, Hyssop and Rue, and you will be able to create a splendid display of flowers that blooms from early spring to autumn.

To keep your Bible garden authentic, it is worth trying to find varieties and colours that are usually found in the Middle East. As a general rule, I have found that white and red is often the best choice, for example, white rose, lily, daisy and broom, and red poppy and tulip.

If you are puzzled by Dove's Dung in the list above, this is subject to interpretation, as Bible plants often are. Some experts suggest it is a type of chickpea, some suggest it really is 'dung' probably from doves or pigeons and was used as food – usually when a city was under siege and the inhabitants were starving! The interpretation that I prefer is that Dove's Dung is also the name of a beautiful small flowering plant known as the Star of Bethlehem. It has been suggested that the bulbous roots of this plant were sometimes eaten when food was in short supply. Personally, I think it is far better to grow them for the beautiful white

star like flowers and leave the bulbous roots in the ground for another wonderful display the next year.



If you are thinking about growing some Bible garden flowers, then now is an excellent time to do some research into their authenticity. Most of them will do well in pots. You will find lots of different views about the plant names, colours and species. I have found that you need to decide which of the experts you feel more comfortable with – and which will grow best in your garden. If it all gets too confusing you can always do as I do most years and fill in some empty ground with a packet of mixed wild meadow flowers to remind us of what Jesus said (Luke 12:27-28) about flowers: Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

by Bob Peters - Ace Forum

*Don't grow tired of being helpful
Don't get bored with being nice.
Don't lose heart with being hopeful
When you want to sulk - think twice.
Don't let little things upset you
Don't be easy to annoy
Don't be miserable for nothing
There is plenty to enjoy
Go on trying to be decent
Go on working to be kind.
Let the blessings of a lifetime
Take the worries off your mind.*

Anon



Shopping List

Savoury Biscuits & Crackers
Ready made custard - tins or cartons
Tomato Ketchup
Instant Drinking Chocolate
Cooking Oil - 1 litre maximum please
Vegetarian Chill & Curry
Size 5 & 6 Nappies
Toothpaste & Toothbrushes
Shaving Gear - foam & razors
Shower Gel & Hair Shampoo
Soap & Hand Wash / Sanitiser
Washing Up Liquid
Sanitary Towels - not tampons or panty liners

OR make a money donation on line:

<https://ealing.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>

Phone us: 07769 759756

Email us: info@ealing.foodbank.org.uk

Keep your burdens for the daytime

A young lady confidently walked around the room with a raised glass of water while leading a seminar on stress management. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, 'Half empty or half full?' She fooled them. 'How heavy is this glass of water?' she enquired with a smile. She replied, 'The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes'.

And that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, we won't be able to carry on. So, as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the evening and into the night. Pick them up again tomorrow if you must.

from ACE Forum

A Prayer for Light

*Fountain of light, source of light,
Hear our prayer.
Drive away from us the shadow of sin.
Seek us, kindly light.*

*You, who created us in holiness,
Who condemned our sin,
Who redeemed us from our sin,
Sustain us by your power.*

*Pour your gentle light into our dull minds,
Filling our heads with holy thoughts.*

*Pour your glorious light into our cold breasts,
Kindling holy love within our hearts.*

*From horror, lust and fear,
Guard us while we sleep.
And if we cannot sleep,
Let our eyes behold your heavenly host.*

by Alcuin of York, c. 735 – 804, was later abbot of Tours.



Where do we most like to walk?

A recent survey has found that two places in the Lake District are clear winners.

Top comes the gently accessible Buttermere Circuit, with its rippling silver water, mountain views, peace and quiet. Second is the demanding eight-hour climb up Helvellyn, which is not for the faint-hearted.

Then comes the Rhossili Headland walk in Gower, and the Solva to St David's route in Pembrokeshire, both in Wales.



The survey was done by the consumer champion group Which?

Hope for 2021: Celebrating the now and future creation

I find that watching buds swelling on trees and plants during the winter months gives me a tremendous sense of hope. We may all need some extra hope for 2021, after the events of 2020. By the time you read this a number of us may have been fortunate enough to receive a COVID vaccine, but all of us will probably still be under various kinds of restrictions. After creation's winter shut-down, the sight of tiny flowers poking out of brown earth may be more important than ever.

Getting outdoors during daylight hours, enjoying green spaces and getting some fresh air and exercise are great ways to keep ourselves healthy at any time of year. A psychologist colleague wrote, "Attending to the details of nature can also inspire awe, which has been linked to positive mood and increased life satisfaction." I expect it is this sense of awe that makes it easier for many of us to connect with God outdoors.

Helping ourselves and others to thrive is a good start to 2021, but it is also vital to have hope for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic was caused by an animal virus jumping into the human population. Diseases like this are not 'natural disasters', but are almost certainly caused by environmental destruction and poor farming practices – either from greed or the desperation born of poverty. Part of the answer to the current crisis is for us to care for all of Creation, both human and everything else, with God's help.

Our ultimate hope is in God's promise that He will bring about a new heavens and new earth. We can look forward to the day when Creation will be fully redeemed and liberated from evil. The Greek word used to describe the new creation is the same as that used to describe someone who becomes a Christian, whose humanity is restored and renewed. There will be continuity between the old and new earth as it is cleansed and purified, surpassing and perfecting what has gone before. There will also be some discontinuity, as there will be no more suffering or death.

So, one source of hope for 2021 is that we can enjoy both caring for and meeting God in Creation. But the parts of Creation that we find

most beautiful, giving us a sense of awe and helping us to worship, are also a reminder that there is something much better to come.

By Ruth Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge

Hidden among the Specs!



A breath of spring to brighten the dark days - from a collection of paintings that Joy Hynes makes into greetings cards.

The cards are then sold in aid of the Guide Dogs. So far she has raised £1125.

Next time you go for an eye check look out for them.

Hynes Optometrists,
120 Northfield Avenue



It has been a terrible year for farmers and workers in the global south.

**FAIR TRADE
AND YOU**

In 2020, on top of the pandemic, they had to deal with the growing impact of climate change: more droughts and crop disease, locusts, floods, fires, and heatwaves. No wonder their harvests were shrinking.

Yet with the help of Fairtrade, many of these producers of food, drinks and cottons can be equipped to meet more everyday needs, and to deal with the challenges facing them.

So this month, why not visit www.fairtrade.org.uk and see how you can send some support.



Ryan was delighted with the cloak, but
not so sure about the face mask



Reset the Debt campaign continues as personal debt engulfs millions



The Reset the Debt campaign, launched in October 2020, continues to gather momentum this year. Large numbers of people have already engaged with it by writing to their MP. They are calling for a 'jubilee' to help reduce the growing gap between people who have lost their jobs and are struggling to pay for essentials, such as food and rent, and those who have managed to save and pay off debts during the pandemic.

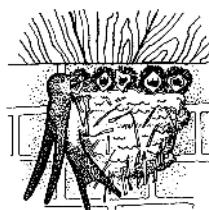
The campaign is supported by the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, the Church of Scotland, the Baptist Union, Church Action on Poverty and others working in communities that are most affected by debt.

More than half of Westminster's MPs have now been contacted about this campaign. A round table to consider the major social, political and economic issues arising from debt takes place this month.

Find out more about the campaign and how you can support it at
<https://resetthedebt.uk>

Nesting Hole Shortage

Our birds are short of nesting holes, and no wonder: gardens, parks and woodland are much neater than they used to be, and modern homes offer few crannies for nest building.



National Nestbox Week, which is celebrated from 14th February each year, aims to encourage us to put up more nestboxes, and to consider planting shrubs or trees with fruit that birds eat. These can make all the difference to birds struggling to survive, especially blue tits, great tits, house sparrows, robins and starlings.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) offers a variety of ideas for building and placing nestboxes.

Go to: <https://www.nestboxweek.com>

“I can resist everything but temptation” (Oscar Wilde).

During Lent we remember Jesus’ experience in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), when ‘He was led by the Spirit.. to be tempted by the devil.’ (1). Temptation is a test of obedience, whether we do things our way or God’s way. After 40 days of fasting Jesus was tired, hungry and vulnerable. Like Him, the Devil will attack us at our most vulnerable moments, especially during this pandemic.

The first temptation was to turn stones into bread: Jesus’ ministry was not about meeting His own needs, but being nourished by God’s Word. ‘We do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’ (Deuteronomy 8:3). Like Jesus, we are called to make God our priority and trust Him completely.

The second temptation was to put God to the test: Jumping off the Temple pinnacle would have been a dramatic way for Jesus to gain popularity, but this is not God’s way! ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ (Deuteronomy 6:16). We too need to learn this lesson!

The third temptation was to worship Satan: Finally, the devil took Jesus to a mountain to offer Him worldly power. In contrast, His calling as Messiah was marked by suffering and honouring God. ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only’ (Deuteronomy 6:13). This is often our experience in living for God.

Jesus stands with us in our temptations. As we claim the promises of Scripture, we will find strength in the power of the Spirit and the victory of the Cross.

‘If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within, you’ll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you’ll be at rest!’

Corrie Ten Boom.

*Lord your word says that you will never leave nor forsake us.
For anyone who is feeling far from you we pray that they
would be reminded again of your faithfulness to us.*

from Christian Blind Mission