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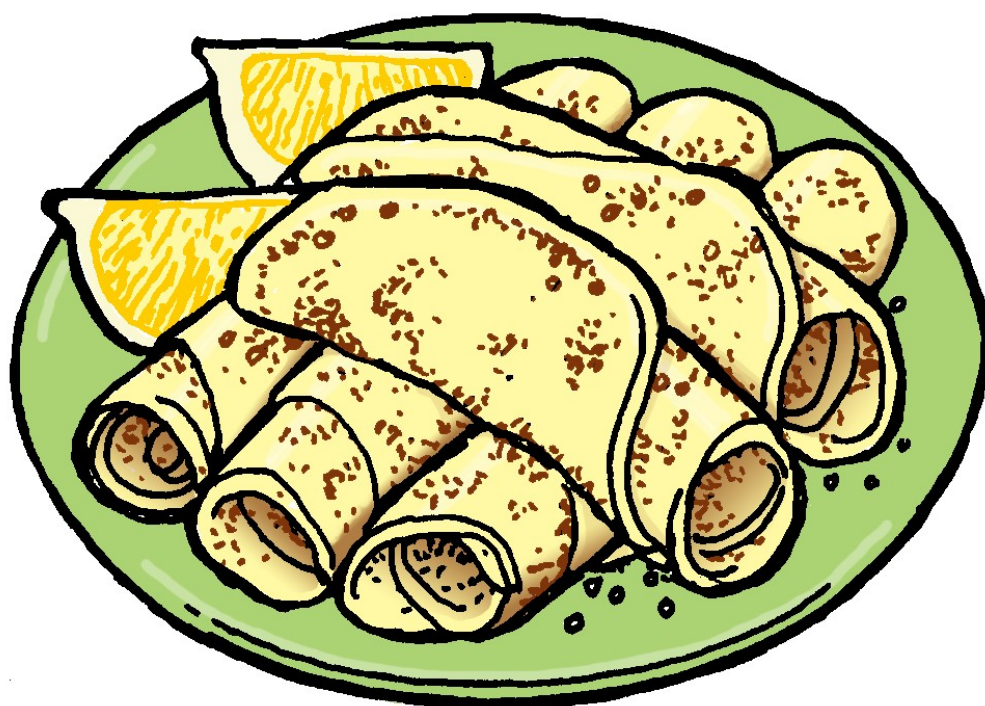
**LENT
2024**

Magazine of Erdington Methodist Church
Station Road - February 2024

GROWING GOD'S KINGDOM IN ERDINGTON, THROUGH WORSHIP,
PRAYER, ACTION AND FRIENDSHIP

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Lenten Valentines

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires.

Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him.

Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God's love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14th February.

Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in

secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was His meaning.'

by Canon Paul Hardingham - Parish Pump

Tuesday Club

Tuesday Club is on 13th February at 2.00 pm in the foyer. We shall be enjoying Shrove Tuesday pancakes & talking about traditions.

More information on church notice boards.

Please come along, everyone is welcome.

Knit & Natter

Every Wednesday from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

Includes tea and coffee and laughter. This is a happy group that would love some new members.

Everyone Welcome.

How much do you know about?

EXODUS

Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament. Its name means departure, reminding us that Israel's flight out of slavery in Egypt is the major focus of the book.

Exodus is a book of two halves! The first part (chapters 1-19 & 32-34) is the story of an oppressed people who are delivered from slavery into a life of freedom. The second half (chapters 20-31 & 35-40) consists of detailed instructions about the life and worship of God's people. The book introduces us to their salvation or deliverance, as story. God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled as the people journey to the Promised Land. He also renews His covenant with them at Sinai, expressed in the Ten Commandments (20: 1-17).

At the heart of Exodus is the person of God Himself. In chapter 3 God reveals His name as YHWH or 'I am who I am' (3:14) to Moses. This is the name by which God is known throughout the Old Testament, expressed in the title 'the LORD'. To know God's name is to know Him, as well as His character ie His justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness and holiness. He is the God who controls history, delivering the people out of Egypt, while the death of the Passover lamb points us to Jesus' death on the cross (1 Corinthians 5:7).

God's promises of help remain true for us today: 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today' Exodus 14:13.

'This Exodus story continues to be a major means that God uses to draw men and women in trouble out of the mess of history into the kingdom of salvation.' (Eugene Peterson).

So how much do you know about Exodus? - here's a short quiz.

1. Who rescued Moses from the basket in the bulrushes.
 - A. Pharaoh's daughter
 - B. Pharaoh's maid
 - C. Pharaoh's wife

2. How many plagues did God send on Egypt?
 - A. 5
 - B. 10
 - C. 15

3. What was the second plague?
 - A. frogs
 - B. water turned to blood
 - C. locusts

4. What is the name of the sea the Israelites crossed to escape the Egyptians?
 - A. Dead Sea
 - B. Black Sea
 - C. Red Sea

5. At what place did the Israelites arrive to find the water was too bitter to drink and God made it sweet?

- A. Marah
- B. Elim
- C. Horeb

6. Which bird did God provide for meat in the wilderness?

- A. pigeon
- B. quail
- C. turtledove

7. What guided the Israelites through the wilderness?

- A. a star in the sky
- B. Moses had visions telling him where to lead the people
- C. a pillar of cloud and of fire

8. When there was no water to drink, how did Moses provide it?

- A. from earthen jars
- B. from his rod
- C. from a rock

9. On which mountain were the Israelites given the Ten Commandments

- A. Mt. Sinai
- B. Mt. Nebo
- C. Mt. of Olives

10. What Is the seventh commandment?

- A. Thou shalt not covet
- B. Thou shalt not commit adultery
- C. Thou shalt not bear false witness

11. What was on top of the Ark of the Covenant?

- A. two cherubim
- B. candlestick
- C. Aaron's rod

12. What compelled the Israelites to form and worship the golden calf

- A. they wanted to make a statue to the Lord.
- B. they made it as a symbol of their freedom from slavery
- C. they didn't know what had happened to Moses

13. What was the name of a man who was given the Spirit of God, to enable him to become a good craftsman, and assist with the building of the tabernacle?

- A. Caleb
- B. Bezaleel
- C. Buz

14. Who was Moses' successor?

Joshua

Caleb

Aaron

15. For how many years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness?

20 years

30 years

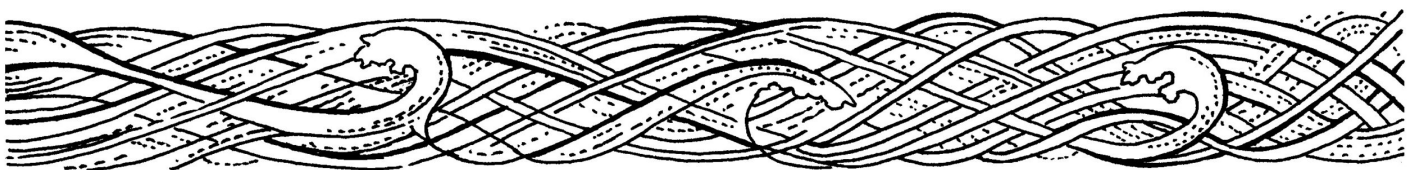
40 years

Answers on Page 19

Weekly Lent Reflection Groups

The Circuit is preparing weekly reflections for Lent on Youtube and a weekly Lent Reflection on Zoom (starting on 18th February at 8.00 pm) - details to follow in the circuit bulletin.

If you don't receive the circuit bulletin then please speak to one of the stewards for more information.





A Thank you from Christian Aid via Norma

Dear Norma

Happy New Year! As we enter 2024, we've been reflecting on what a wonderful Christian Aid Week we had in 2023, and how grateful we are to all of our incredible supporters who made it happen.

Thanks to you, the total raised so far is currently at £4.6 million! That's £4.6 million to fund real, lasting change for people living in poverty across the globe.

During Christian Aid Week 2023, we shared the stories of Jen and Esther, two farmers in Malawi who work with our in-country partners to build better futures for their families by securing fairer prices for the crops they plant. Joining the pigeon pea programmes

run by our partners, and starting to sell as part of a cooperative, enables farmers to earn more for their crops.

We're absolutely delighted to share that both Jen and Esther achieved their highest prices ever in the market season which has just ended! Through your generosity in sharing your time, skills and donations, you have helped farmers like Jen and Esther transform their own lives.

Thank you so much for all your support for Christian Aid Week. In standing with our global neighbours, you are helping us get closer to a world where everyone can live full lives, free from poverty.

Wishing you a peaceful start to 2024.

With heartfelt thanks,

Your Christian Aid Week Team

Learning to drive

As a learner driver in London, I was taking the road test for my driver's license. When someone cut me off, I held my temper so I wouldn't look out of control. "You have a lot to learn," said the inspector.

Then at a red light, the car behind me tapped my bumper. I still remained calm, but the inspector shook his head. When the light turned, I accelerated, but the car behind me then sped up and cut me off. That did it! I hit the horn as hard as I could.

The inspector turned to me, smiled, and said, "Now you're getting the hang of it."

Carols

This may seem a little late but . . . apparently not according to this article from Peter Farley. - ed

I heard a piece on the radio before Christmas, I think at the end of the Today program, talking about the history of carols.

Via the search engine DuckDuckGo I then finished up at the English Heritage web page which I found strangely illuminating.

These are just a selection of the disparate facts which appealed to me.

Historically, worshipers were more likely to sing carols in January than in December. Carol is in fact derived from the French carole meaning a ring dance with a song. Originally whether a hymn was a carol or not depended upon its structure. To be a true carol it had to have a verse and a refrain. The choir would dance in a ring and sing the refrain and then a 'cantor' or singer would sing the verse whilst the choir of dancers caught their breath, before the dancing chorus was repeated.

These joyful songs would have been used as tools for evangelism, because they often used popular secular tunes, think While shepherds watched their flocks by night to the tune of On Ilkley Moor Baht'at.

King Wenceslas was murdered as part of a power struggle in Bohemia in 929 AD. Carols could be about almost anything from religious themes through purgatory and hunting to love and

courtship, even verging on the bawdy. They survived the Reformation change from Catholicism to Protestantism, when singing in church was frowned upon as popish because at the time they were often remembered and sung at home, away from the turmoil of church politics.

The Christmas nine lessons and carols which we all enjoy was initiated at Truro Cathedral, whilst it was being built in 1880, originally being performed in the church hall. The service started at 10.00 pm on Christmas Eve supposedly at the request of parishioners who wanted to sing the joyful songs about Christmas ie. carols in church. At that time carols were only generally sung by Wassailers in the homes of rich folk whose aim was raising some cash for Christmas. The Truro service predates Carols from King's College which only started as an act of remembrance in 1918 after the first war and is only so widely known about because it has been an annual fixture on BBC Radio since 1928. The service in Truro is now performed twice once with boy choristers and once with girl choristers.

And so, the history of carols goes on with lots of new music composed for annual carol services. But not forgetting Steeleye Span who had a number 14 hit with the carol 'Gaudate' in 1973. One of only two top 20 songs sung entirely in Latin, the other being Lloyd Webber's 'Pie Jesu'.

UNBOUNDED LOVE

God's love
doesn't stay
in the lines

40 daily email
deliveries of
love in Lent



Find out more here or by visiting
methodist.org.uk/UnboundedLove



Unbounded Love

God's love doesn't stay in the lines

Charles Wesley's famous hymn *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (Singing the Faith 503) talks about Jesus as 'unbounded love' – a kind of love that cannot be contained, that works in our lives and in our world to free us and heal us.

Unbounded Love is the theme of the Lent campaign of the Methodist Church in 2024 – holding together our commitments to be a justice-seeking church, and a people who experience and proclaim the good news of God's uncontainable love.

Sign up for our daily reflection emails during Lent

Throughout Lent we are sharing daily email reflections that explore the theme of Unbounded Love. Sign up to receive these each day, beginning on Wednesday 14 February and discover a rhythm of reflection over Lent. You'll also be signed up to future reflection series. Point your phone camera at the QR code in the poster image above to go to the sign up page.

What to expect?

A range of resources that connect the Gospel readings from the Sunday lectionary throughout Lent to weekly themes, each one a line lifted from "Love divine, all loves excelling". The themes are:

Week 1 - “Unbounded love”: Jesus’ baptism and wilderness experience – God’s love bursts the barriers of heaven, and then bursts into the realms of darkness.

Week 2 - “Visit us with thy salvation”: Losing our life (psyche) to find it – the ways we attempt to insulate ourselves from God’s love.

Week 3 - “Pure and spotless let us be”: Turning the tables in the Temple – corporate religious attempts to boundary God’s love.

Week 4 - “Finish then thy new creation”: God’s unbounded love for the cosmos.

Week 5 - “Changed from glory into glory”: Like a seed that has to die before it bears fruit, death is no barrier to God’s love.

Week 6 - “Till we cast our crowns before thee”: As Jesus entered Jerusalem the people responded by taking off their cloaks. What’s our equivalent?

Holy Week - “Lost in wonder, love, and praise!”: As Jesus becomes bound by his opponents, will God’s love stay bound?
What will be available?

For individuals

Forty daily discipleship prompts, delivered straight to your email inbox every day of Lent, excluding Sundays. Daily emails will include Bible studies, creative activities and challenges to take an action.

Dates for your diary

Mother's Day - Worship led by Bill Topping at 10.30 am

Palm Sunday Worship - 24th March 2024 - Rev Emily Young leads worship including communion at 10.30 am as usual.

Maundy Thursday - 28th March 2024 at 7.30 pm at Erdington. This will be a joint service with the North Birmingham Hub and will include soup and rolls.

Good Friday Walk of Witness - 10.30 am starting from the Co-op on Erdington High Street.

Easter Sunday - 9.00 am - Easter Holy Communion led by Rev Emily Young. Followed by 10.30 am service which will be a Local Arrangement.

Circuit Gathering to discuss future circuit staffing opportunities - 14th April 2024 at Erdington - followed by a Circuit Service at 6.00 pm.

Annual Church Meeting - following worship with Holy Communion - 28th April 2024

Xseed Services on 24th March and 28th April at 4.30 pm - at Erdington

Church Action on Poverty Sunday

This year Church Action on Poverty Sunday is on 11th February, when Christians around the country are urged to remember those in real need.

Perhaps one of the most serious impacts of poverty is the dire state of homelessness. The numbers are staggering. More than 300,000 people are homeless in the UK; 119 families in England are made homeless every single day; and 140,000 children are currently without a home. The figures are the highest on record.

Green Pastures is one organisation who is working to enable Christians to make a difference. It has been housing the homeless for 25 years, and it exists to help Christians do their bit to tackle the growing homelessness crisis.

Green Pastures has grown to now house more than 1500 formerly homeless people across the UK, in more than 100 towns and cities. To fund property purchases, Green Pastures has raised more than £47 million in funding, through everyday people who lend them some of their savings and receive interest in return. This model enables the organisation to buy property and work in partnership with local ministries to directly impact the lives of people in need.

With many more people in need waiting for help, this month is a great time to consider how the Church can make a significant impact. You can find out more about Green Pastures' work, and how you might get involved, at <https://www.greenpastures.co.uk>.

Answers to Exodus Quiz:

Question 1: a (Pharaoh's daughter)

Question 2: b (10)

Question 3: b (Water turned to blood)

Question 4: c (Red Sea)

Question 5: a (Marah)

Question 6: b (Quail)

Question 7: c (A pillar of cloud and of fire)

Question 8: c (From a rock)

Question 9: a (Mt. Sinai)

Question 10: b (Thou shalt not commit adultery)

Question 11: a (Two cherubim)

Question 12: c (They didn't know what had happened to Moses)

Question 13: b (Bezaleel)

Question 14: a (Joshua)

Question 15: c (40)

Off to the vet

In his younger days our golden retriever Catcher often ran away when he had the chance. The vet's surgery was about a mile down the road, and Catcher would usually go there. The nursing staff knew him and would call me to come pick him up. One day I called the vet to make an appointment for Catcher's yearly vaccine.

"Will you bring him," asked the receptionist, "or will he come down on his own?"

Worship - February 2024

All worship at 10.30 am unless indicated otherwise

4th - Bill Topping

11th - Godfrey Higgins

18th - Tom Watts

25th - HOLY COMMUNION - Rev Emily Young

XSEED at 4.30 pm



"Next Sunday I think I'll do a new take on the Parable of the Virgins and the Oil."

Please hand any items for the March CONTACT to me - Nick Riley by 21st February 2024 at the latest please, or alternatively email me: spligosh@icloud.com with the words 'CONTACT MAG' in the title.