

CONTACT



Magazine of Erdington Methodist Church
Station Road - March 2024

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

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Looking for Resurrection

An old couple are driving down the motorway when the wife gets a call from their daughter. 'Mum, there's a car driving the wrong way down the motorway!' The wife warns her husband that there is a lunatic on the motorway. Her husband, clutching the wheel in terror, replies: 'One lunatic? There are dozens of them, all headed straight for us!'

What we see is determined by our perspective on life.

In the Nicene Creed we say:

'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'

In the gospel accounts of the Resurrection, there is a lot of looking and seeing. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome went early to the tomb. They saw the stone rolled aside and inside the tomb a young man dressed in white said to them:

'Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him...He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him' (Mark 16: 6,7).

Like the women we would probably have been left 'trembling and bewildered' by what we saw that morning. Had the body been taken? Was the young man an angel or deceiver? Was Jesus raised to life again, or was this an elaborate hoax?

Easter gives us a choice. We can approach life looking for disappointment, fear and despair. Or we can look for resurrection and find not just an empty tomb, but encounter the living Christ.

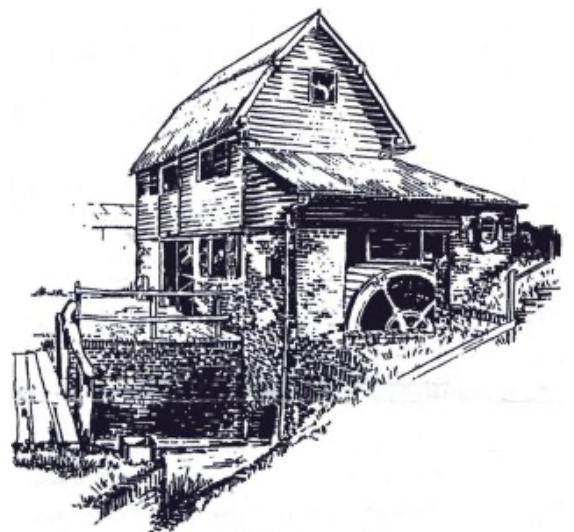
He continues to meet us in our daily lives bringing new hope, forgiveness of sin, healing and wholeness and the assurance of His presence through the darkest of times. God invites us to see our lives differently and look for Christ's resurrection life at work in our lives and the people around us.

by Canon Paul Hardingham - Parish Pump

March Tuesday Club

All are welcome at Tuesday Club on 12th March at 2.00pm in the Foyer.

Chris Jukes will be giving a talk on Water Mills.



Common Cause 2024

At the Church Council Meeting in February, it was agreed that we would support, 'Home Leone' during 2024 as our Common Cause.

In a nutshell, the vision of Home Leone is to upgrade or relocate the thousands of people currently living in abhorrent conditions within the slum areas of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Some of the poorest, who currently live in dangerous situations can move from devastating conditions to a new way of life. The pilot, 'Destiny Village' is delivering 300 quality 1 – 4 bed homes and each home contributes to a vibrant, sustainable and healthy community and the charity is already radically improving lives and opportunity in a nation facing so many challenges.

The project is being delivered by corporate teams who work alongside local people, developing and teaching skills which promote long term sustainable change. It builds the infrastructure to sustain the communities including, schools, health care, power and sanitation, all delivered in partnership with the local communities.

From this....



To this.....



There is such a lot more information on the internet; too much to repeat here and so I urge you to take a look at this to gain greater insight into this amazing project at www.homeleone.org.

I would like to think that we here at Erdington can make a small difference and through organising fund-raising events throughout the year can contribute in some small but direct way. In the past we have had quiz nights, afternoon tea events, coffee mornings, auctions, cake stalls etc. We will be looking at what we can do throughout this coming year but would welcome your suggestions and offers to instigate and run an event; speak to one of the Stewards about this.

Thank you

Christine

'In and around Brum' cryptically!!

To get the fund raising started I have a quiz sheet with cryptic clues for places in and around Brum. It is £1 per sheet and will be available from me from Sunday 3rd March throughout the month.

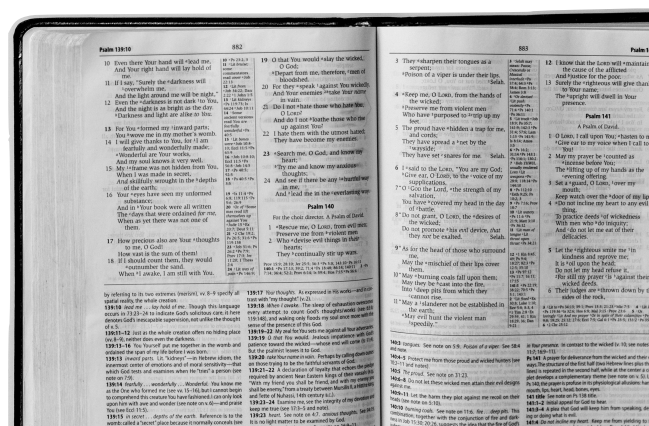
All entries need to be with me by Sunday 24th March. There will be a small prize for the person with the most correct answers. If there is more than 1 person with the same highest score then there will be a draw to select the overall winner.

Christine

Bible Fellowship

Covid brought an end to our long lived evening House Group but after Covid it emerged as the Bible Study group maintaining at the end of the meeting the long tradition of coffee, tea and home made cake! Prior to Covid our baker was the multi talented Peter Farley now basking on the south coast with Moya. TODAY we have excellent cakes baked for us by Rod Evans and we now meet at church twice a month at 2.30 pm on the second and fourth Thursdays. We are now called the Bible Fellowship Group which I hope accurately reflects the ethos of the Group.

For the past few months with the help of an excellent study guide we have been reading Luke's Gospel and this Month we take on Paul's epistle to the Romans. Our Study Guide again by Hope A Blanton and Christine B Gordon.



Our next meetings are on the 8th and 22nd of March and you are most welcome. Don't worry if you can't make each meeting. Come when you are able to; each session is complete in itself.

We look forward to discovering more of God's word to us through the Apostle Paul and the cake and fellowship are also too good to be missed.

David Hewitt

Truth

Just before Christmas I received an email from an old friend which opened up an email discussion between us, about honesty. The gist of the email had been about the comments Baroness Mone had made to the BBC admitting she had been lying to the media, but claiming at the same time that she had done nothing wrong.

This reminded me that many years, whilst I was still at Dudley Road Hospital, I undertook a Diploma in Medical Ethics at Keele, thinking that this would help with decisions at the hospital's Research Ethics Committee, which were sometimes quite tricky.

I am not at all sure that it ever helped with the committee's deliberations but it did contribute to my Lifelong Learning, as well as adding a line into my CV. The course was run jointly by Philosophy and Law, two disciplines about which I knew very little. I have very little memory of the course, except the stress of writing the final dissertation and strangely a fair memory of the first philosophy lecture.

The title for the lecture was approximately 'Is truth telling always a good thing'. The lecturer talked for over an hour without a note, so he had obviously given this particular lecture before. With hindsight this probably meant it was a standard lecture from the first-year undergraduate philosophy course. The presentation started from the standpoint that telling the truth is always a good thing. During the remainder of the time the lecturer slowly worked through family fibbing whose sole purpose is to keep 'aunt Maud happy' to the finale where the lecturer had quite logically taken the concept that truth was not always a good thing and deposited it in

the rubbish bin. I remember being amazed at this display of logical thought development – presumably philosophy at its best. Truth be told, it was probably a fair representation of what we all believe, that a fib only becomes a problematic lie when it is part of pattern of mistruths aimed at creating an alternative version of reality

But to return to Baroness Mone. She claimed that she lied to the Press to protect her family's privacy, but the Government was kept informed about the real situation. A claim almost instantly denied by a Government Minister. So, we then had a situation of 'she said, he said' and we need to await the outcome of any enquiry.

So, where-about's on the scale of seriousness of a fib / lie is Baroness Mone's claim to the press that I do not stand to gain from these transactions? Should the seriousness of the lie / fib be commuted by the suggestion that the press had been giving her family a hard time? If the sole aim of the lie / fib is the 'keep Aunt Maud happy' how does that equate to 'I am not letting you know that I might stand to gain significantly from these transactions because of what you might say about my family'. The one is a family affair, which affects no one outside the family the other is broadcast across the main news channels and is heard by large swathes of the population as being the word of a representative of the legislature of the country.

The logical endpoint of such a thought pattern could be interpreted as avoiding revealing to the world that maybe what I am doing is questionable and I really wouldn't want my involvement to be widely known.

When is a party not a party? When is a Sub postmaster / Sub postmistress really trying to hide embezzlement? If I am offering life improving medicines to haemophiliac patients how careful do I have to be that I am not at the same time causing a second life limiting condition?

As Christians I suspect we have that decision sorted –

“Though shalt not bear false witness”.

Jesus came to shine a light into dark corners telling us not to light a candle and put it under a basket but to put it on a lamp stand so that it shines light on everyone and everything.

The light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light because their actions were evil. Everyone who practices wickedness hates the light and does not come to the light, so that his actions may not be exposed. (John 3 v 19)

Peter Farley

Destination?

Lenora, 95-years-old and in excellent health, confided that she was terribly worried: “Every one of my friends has already died and gone on to heaven. I’m afraid they’re all wondering where I went!”

Jottings from the History of the Leprosy Mission

In 1869 a young Irishman set sail for India in the hope of finding a career there. While there he sees the devastating effects of leprosy and is inspired to take action. There was no known cure and the disease wrought havoc on bodies. That young man was Wellesley Bailey who became the founder of The Leprosy Mission.

In 1874 Wellesley returns to Ireland with his wife, Alice and together they begin to tell people about the needs of people affected by leprosy. They established 'The Mission to Lepers' which we now call The Leprosy Mission. With Charlotte Pimm, they promised to raise £30 a year, in their first year they raised £600.

In 1880-90s the Mission gave grants to other missions, that they would also care for people affected by leprosy. The Mission opened its own homes and hospitals,

Wellesley visited Burma to open the 1st Mission home outside India. At this stage their income came from Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Wellesley travelled to USA and Canada to raise support there too.

In 1900-10s interest in the work grew and the Baileys travelled to China, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Japan, Korea and Singapore, visiting projects and raising awareness of leprosy and asking for support. By the time Wellesley retired the mission had 87 programmes in 12 countries with support offices in 8 countries. The annual income had risen from £5,000 to £40,000.

In 1940-50s doctors began experimenting with a new drug, dapson. It became the 1st effective cure and sent many patients home symptom free.

Now around 200,000 cases of leprosy are diagnosed each year, down from a peak of 1 million. The fight is to end the transmission of leprosy by 2035.

So now the aim is to take up the baton and run with confidence the final leg.

This year The Leprosy Mission celebrates its 150th anniversary.

(Taken from the Leprosy Mission prayer book 'Ask 2024'.)

AnnTomes

Palm Sunday visit

It was Palm Sunday, but because of a sore throat, five-year-old Bobby was kept home from church with his grannie. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm fronds and Bobby asked them what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as He walked by," his father explained.

Bobby was aghast. "I don't believe it! The one Sunday I don't go, and He shows up!"

When praying for peace is a real challenge!

Thousands of Russian Orthodox Christians have been urging Patriarch Kirill of Moscow to reinstate a very popular priest in the capital, the Revd Alexei Uminsky, who has refused to recite an official prayer for Russia's victory over Ukraine.



An open letter, which attracted more than 11,000 signatures, including the heads of local charities, says:

"The decree banning this priest from serving will deprive thousands of people of spiritual support – a great tragedy for many believers, for children's hospice patients, for hundreds of prisoners and thousands of homeless people."

Uminsky had repeatedly warned that he could not endorse the invasion of Ukraine.

Now Russia's online news agency, Gazeta.ru, says that Fr Uminsky was banned from ministering under a decree issued by the Moscow Patriarchate, for suggesting in a YouTube interview that Christians should "pray for peace, rather than victory".

The Russian news agency went on to say that Uminsky has long been seen as "a thorn in the Kremlin's side" for his anti-militarism. He was branded a 'criminal in a cassock' by the Russian Orthodox Church's own TV channel Spas, after calling for mercy for the opposition leader Alexei Navalny, during his prison hunger strike.

For the moment, Uminsky remains banned, and may face defrocking as a priest. More than 300 Russian Orthodox priests, who signed an appeal against the Ukraine invasion of 2022, have since been silenced, or forced to emigrate.

From the Parish Pump Website

Mothers and teenagers

A woman was confiding in her neighbour just how hard it was for her to get her teenagers out of bed in the morning. The neighbour replied that she never had any trouble at all with her son. "I just open the door and throw the cat on the bed," she explained. The woman was puzzled, and asked how that might help. "Easy. My son sleeps with the dog."

Lent Resources

Dear sisters and brothers of the Sutton Park Circuit,

As we continue our journey through this season of Lent, a reminder that each Wednesday through Lent the Reflection for that week will be made available to view.

Ash Wednesday 14th February 2024

<https://youtu.be/NF-w6LV5zbo>

21st February 2024

<https://youtu.be/zfE11sfIRN8>

28th February 2024

<https://youtu.be/uCs0jA-Ytro>

6th March 2024

<https://youtu.be/zj19bKcbXBk>

13th March 2024 - To Follow

20th March 2024

<https://youtu.be/xcaKWZu3xVg>

27th March 2024

<https://youtu.be/51Tqqnz1B6w>

Please feel free to share the links with any friends or family who you think might appreciate them.

You are also very welcome to join us for our Circuit Zoom Lent Reflection and Prayer that will take place at 8pm on each Sunday in Lent.

Join Circuit Zoom Reflection and Prayer Sunday Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82089404464?
pwd=Zk5GQkJOZEZHNHFnWFZQSUQyYnZYQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82089404464?pwd=Zk5GQkJOZEZHNHFnWFZQSUQyYnZYQT09)

Meeting ID: 820 89404464

Passcode: 354176

Dial by your location

020 3901 7895 UnitedKingdom

I very much hope and pray that this season of Lent brings opportunities for you to become more deeply aware of God's presence and love,

Rev Nick Jones



Hallelujah! Christ Arose!

This Easter marks the 150th birthday of this much-loved hymn, sung each year by millions of Christians worldwide. It all began on a little pump organ in the living room of a college professor in Pennsylvania, back in 1874.

Robert Lowry was professor of literature at Bucknell University, and pastor of a nearby church. He had a passion for poetry and music, and explained his 'muse' this way: "I watch my moods and when anything strikes me, whether words or music, no matter where I am, at home, on the street, I jot it down. My brain is a sort of spinning machine, for there is music running through it all the time. Sometimes the words come, and the music follows."

Easter 1874 was approaching, and on this particular day Robert Lowry had been meditating on the gospel narratives of the Passion and Resurrection. The angel's words at the empty tomb, 'He is not here, but is risen' kept running through his mind. There was something there... Lowry moved to the little pump organ in his living room and gave himself up to the moment. Soon the words and the music for this joyous Easter hymn just fell into place.

Christ Arose

Low in the grave He lay
Jesus my Saviour!
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus my Lord!

*Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign,
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus my Saviour!
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus my Lord!

Death cannot keep his prey,
Jesus my Saviour!
He tore the bars away,
Jesus my Lord!

By Robert Lowry (1826-1899)

A reflection on The Lord's Prayer

(Matthew 6:1-18)

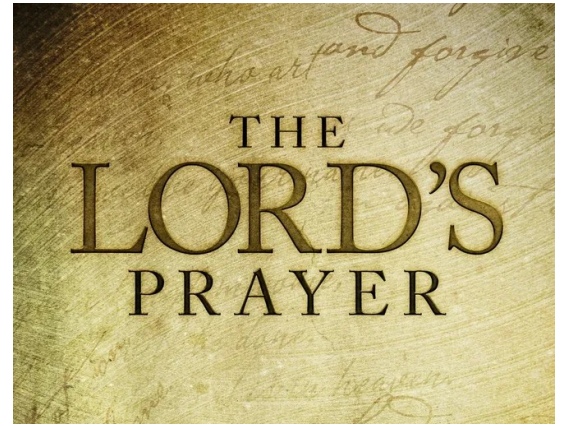
Our Father in heaven, please help us.
We, Your children, learn slowly.

So often we say nothing when Your name is mis-used.

Often our lives do not reflect Your ways,

Mostly we do what we want on earth,
And this can make heaven
unimaginable.

We expect so much more than we
actually need each day.



Sometimes we think we don't need
forgiveness,
Sometimes we think we are unforgivable,

And we forget that other people make these same errors of
thinking.

When it comes to temptation, we find our own ways,

We are confused about what is and is not evil,
We are confused about deliverance,
We are confused.....

And here is the wonder, the grace and the mystery,
That You know us completely,
Our failings, our secrets,
And love us forever and ever,

Amen.

by Daphne Kitching

Worship – March 2024

All worship at 10.30 am unless indicated otherwise

3rd - Local Arrangement

10th - Bill Topping

17th - Local Arrangement

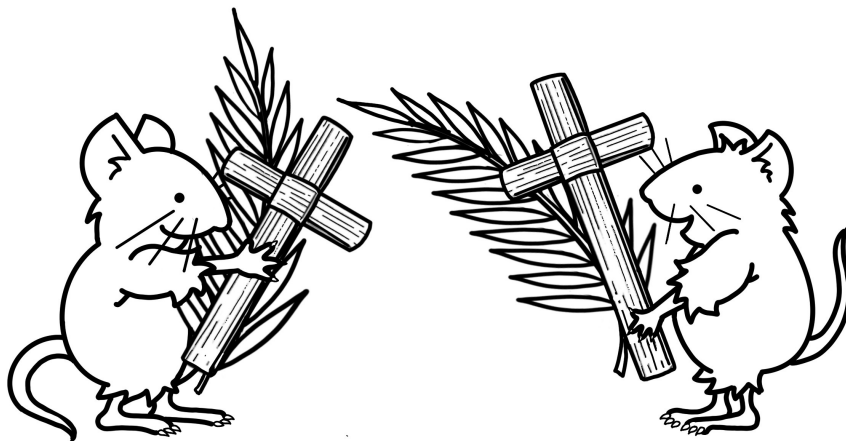
24th - HOLY COMMUNION - Rev Emily Young

27th - MAUNDY THURSDAY - including soup & Roll - 7.30 pm

28th - Churches Together Walk of Witness - 10.30 am
(meeting outside Co-op and walking to St Barnabas)

31st - EASTER COMMUNION - Rev Emily Young - 9.00 am
followed by Easter Breakfast

EASTER MORNING WORSHIP - Glyn Constantine



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