

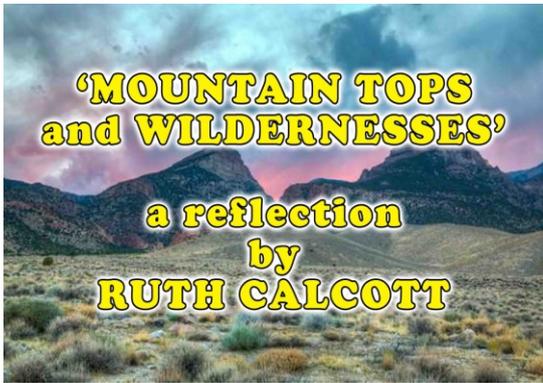
MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH MESSENGER March 2021



**Pause,
Pray,
Remember.**



**THE CHURCH
IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE VILLAGE!**



Mountain Tops and Wildernesses.

45 years ago my husband and I were working at a mission hospital in Nigeria. We came home during that winter as our daughter was getting married. For me it was a very special occasion as it was my stepdaughter's wedding and I had never thought I would be able to be 'Mother of the Bride' at a wedding. It was a wonderful experience going to the wedding in central London and to the reception in Knightsbridge. It was a highlight in my life.

A month later we found ourselves in a very different situation. We were returning to Nigeria but this time not by air but over land. A Land Rover ambulance had been donated to the mission and needed to be taken to Nigeria. We drove through France, took a long ferry across the Mediterranean to Algeria, and then across the Sahara desert. We reached the Nigerian border only to discover that there had been a coup and the border was closed. For 18 days we had to camp in the sand in no man's land between Niger and Nigeria. From being at the mountaintop experience of the wedding we were now in the wilderness - nothing but sand and rock, and certainly none of the luxurious shops of Knightsbridge. This is just like the experience of Jesus in Mark 1 verses 9-15, the baptism and temptation of Jesus. Jesus had been baptised by John in the river Jordan and the Holy Spirit had come down like a dove and he had heard a voice saying 'You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased'. That was a mountain top experience for Jesus as he then began his ministry here on earth which would culminate in His death, resurrection and ascension. It would ultimately lead to the founding of the Christian church. But almost immediately he found himself in the wilderness facing challenges.

So often in life we find this to be true. Things seem to be going very well and then suddenly without warning we find ourselves going through a very difficult situation. Only 12 months ago we were

living our normal lives and then suddenly we found ourselves in the first lockdown facing the trauma of the Covid virus. 12 months later we have been in an even tougher lockdown. Even though there is promise of better days ahead, the future feels frightening, the path ahead is still unknown, many are lonely and isolated. Many are facing employment and financial problems or facing mental health issues because of their situations. Almost everyone I see or hear of seems to be suffering in one way or another at the moment, at least some of the time. We need strength beyond ourselves to be able to cope from day to day.

When my husband and I were stuck in the desert, the main reading material we had was our Bibles and we found comfort and assurance as we read together. When Jesus was challenged in the wilderness, He quoted words from Scripture to rebuff what he was hearing from the devil. This is the season of Lent, and many people find a series of Bible readings or reflections to follow during this period. God's word is part of the Christian's armour to face tough times - the sword of the Spirit. The more we know it, the more we can use it.

Time in the wilderness is a testing time. God allows these times and they can become a period of spiritual growth for us. St Mark tells us that the angels ministered to Jesus. You may be aware of people who you might describe as angels who are helping you in practical ways. Or you may be aware of the still small voice of God whispering in your heart. Or something may speak to you as you read God's word. We may also find that we are strengthened by our experiences along the way. God is with us today and every day whether we are on the mountain top or in the wilderness. We can get stronger knowing that Jesus is victorious and He is with us.



Churches together in Mottingham is on Facebook;

<https://www.facebook.com/Churches-Together-in-Mottingham-104482874785693>



WHEN WILL OUR CHURCH BE OPEN AGAIN FOR WORSHIP? ...MAYBE SOON!

There will be a Church Council Meeting on Zoom in Mid-March to discuss the opening of the church for worship. Council members will be notified of the date.

Allocated Church Service Preachers pending the church opening:

Sunday March 7th Chris Price, March 14th Joan Mayes, March 21st Holy Communion - Terry Wright, March 28th Maureen Spinks.

Meanwhile, worship is still available on line each week on <http://www.orpchiscircuit.org.uk/> (Videos), or access the printable Sunday worship service from the website:



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021 - FRIDAY 5TH MARCH

(Prepared by the Women of Vanuatu)

THEME: BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Time: 5pm on zoom

Meeting ID: 832 5002 5166

Passcode: 092751

One tap mobile:

+442039017895,,83250025166#,,,,*092751# United Kingdom

+441314601196,,83250025166#,,,,*092751# United Kingdom

Phone links:

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83250025166?pwd=THNYaFlWc0F3R2pDc3djOEJlTU2VuZz09>



THE PATH TO EASTER

The following opportunities are available to follow the path to Easter during Lent:

- **'WOVEN - A LENT COURSE'**

This course is designed by the London District of the Methodist Church to help participants share reflections on the Lectionary readings through Lent with Maureen & Deborah Spinks. Each session will be self sufficient where readings are concerned, but full copies of the course material can be downloaded from the website: <https://www.methodistlondon.org.uk/lentcourse2021>

Date and Time:

Thursday afternoons at 2.30pm and Monday evenings at 7.45pm
Phone 01689 821956 or E-mail mdospinks@gmail.com to obtain the Zoom links for the course.

- **'AFTER LIFE ... AFTER LIFE?' A LENT STUDY**

Churches Together in Mottingham Zoom Lent Study is based on a Lent Study book entitled 'After Life... After Life?', by Christian author, John Symons, who considers bereavement in the light and hope of the Resurrection. The book is published by Shephard-Walwyn Publishers, 2020, at £9.95 a copy - a very good investment. However, material will be made available prior to each session. The Study will be led by Ian Welch.

Date and Time

Each Wednesday in Lent at 8 pm,
Zoom ID 675-014-6024 and Password 859013.

There will be 5 sessions:

1. A Testimony; 2. Three Witnesses; 3. Heart and Mind; 4. Mind and Heart; 5. The 5 Clues



PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

We may not be open, but all the people who are part of our church, churches and community families are still out there. They will have various needs and problems and need our prayers. Below is guidance for our prayers based on our normal activities and links.

Sunday: Worship and Messy Church - pray for ourselves our members and visitors.

Monday: Pray for our ministers - Duncan, Terry and Maureen.

Tuesday: Pray for the Good Companions and All Sorts Craft Group

Wednesday: Pray for those who normally go to the Community Lunch

Thursday: Pray for Churches Together in Mottingham - St Andrews, St Albans, St Edwards and Our Lady Help of Christians

Friday: Pray for the shop owners, library, Councilors and neighbours.

Saturday: Pray for those who normally go to The Youth Club



IN AND AROUND MOTTINGHAM AND BROMLEY

It is likely the library will shortly be open for click collect and return books. Tel:020 8857 5406

You can continue to explore all that Bromley Libraries offer on:

<https://www.facebook.com/BromleyLibraries>

Join Chris's Bite-sized London explorations:

The talks remain on Bromley's Facebook page for some time, so you don't need to watch at the broadcast time if this is inconvenient.



MARCH WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

St Andrews and St Albans

Sunday worship on Zoom at 10.30 am each Sunday.
ID of 675-014-6024 and Password 859013

St Andrews:

Open for private prayer from 10am to 11am on Fridays

St Albans:

Open for private prayer from noon-1 pm on Thursdays

St Edwards:

Sunday Parish Communion at 10.30am, Wednesday night Prayer at 7pm Morning Prayer at 8am. All Welcome. All services continue to be live-streamed on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/stedsmottingham/

The church is open for private prayer from 10am to 1pm Monday to Saturday.

St Edward's Food Bank is open for donations on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday - 9.30am to 1pm & Wednesday 6-7pm.

NOTICES:



GERALD WOOD'S FUNERAL: SATURDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

The funeral of Gerald, who died on Saturday 6th February 2021, will be held at Hither Green Crematorium at 3.15pm on Tuesday 6th April .



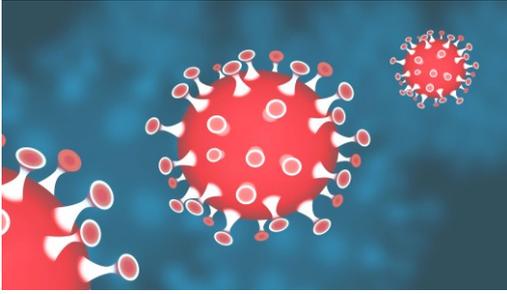
GOOD FRIDAY WALK OF WITNESS: FRIDAY 2ND APRIL

The Churches Together walk of witness on 2nd April will start at the front of St Edwards Church at 11.00am, and will end at St Andrews Church where there will be a short service. outside.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 9TH TO 15TH MAY 2021.

Further information about the programme will be available nearer the time.



CORONAVIRUS NEAR EASTER:

Still a good time to pause, pray and remember!

When the UK death toll for coronavirus recently reached 100,000, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a call to the nation. They asked everyone to pause and remember the victims of Covid-19. The victims and their families were 'known to God and cherished by God'.

Perhaps, as we approach Easter, we should consider stopping again and remembering again the terrible cost of the pandemic.

In their open letter, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell had insisted that death does not have "the last word", and the Christian faith promises that one day "every tear will be wiped away".

God, they wrote, knows grief and suffering and "shares in the weight of our sadness".

Turning to the wider impact of the pandemic, the loneliness, anxiety and economic hardship, they then invited people to "cast their fears on God".

The archbishops said: "We write to you in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering Himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness."

"Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in His resurrection. Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.

It is expected that the Churches will hold services of remembrance for those who have died and thanksgiving for all those who have cared for them when it is possible to do so. Please join us."



It was just over a year ago that the WHO discussed the coronavirus that was starting to spread around the world. None of us could have foreseen the devastating effect on our world, with over 80 million people infected and nearly two million deaths. How has the pandemic challenged our faith, as we look back over the last year?

Firstly, it has forced us to face up to the *reality of our situation*. We cannot underestimate the health, social and economic effects of the virus on our lives, churches and communities. We have learned how to do church online, but the future shape of church life is uncertain!

As the apostle Paul writes: *'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus'* (2 Corinthians 4 verses 8-10).

The pandemic has challenged so much of what we take for granted, but also demonstrated that God is alongside to help us.

Secondly, alongside the fear and uncertainty of this year, we have also learned to find *new faith and hope in Jesus*. The experience of Jesus' death and His resurrection provides a pattern for us in facing the future: *'so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.'* (2 Cor 4 verses 10-12).

During the season of Lent, as we anticipate the events at Easter, it's good to focus on the promise of sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider our present struggles, are we ready to surrender them to Jesus? May the hope of Easter Day take us forward into the coming year!

Paul Hardingham



PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

The top 6 Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List of Persecution of Christians

1. North Korea

Being discovered as a Christian is a death sentence in North Korea. If you aren't killed instantly, you will be taken to a labour camp as a political criminal.

2. Afghanistan

ISIS and the Taliban continue to have a strong, violent presence in Afghanistan, with the Taliban controlling large regions.

3. Somalia

Islam is considered a crucial part of Somali identity, and if any Somali is suspected of having converted to Christianity they are in great danger. Members of their family, clan or community will harass, intimidate or even kill them. Women may be raped and forcibly married.

4. Libya

There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion and very limited possibility of public church life in Libya. Although there are around 34,500 Christians in the country, only a tiny number (approximately 150) are Libyan - the majority are expatriates and migrant workers.

5. Pakistan

Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws are used to target Christians, and Islamic extremist groups vehemently "defend" these laws, including attacking or killing those believed to have contravened them.

6. Eritrea

Government security forces monitor phone calls, scrutinise activity and conduct countless raids which target Christians, seize Christian materials and damage house churches. Christians can be arrested and imprisoned without trial.



THE REAL EASTER EGG

Despite being dropped by supermarkets, the Meaningful Chocolate Company has launched its 2021 Fairtrade Real Easter Egg range. All Real Easter Eggs come with an Easter story in the box. It features a rainbow design to remind us of the importance of working together, in amazing and inspiring ways, for the common good. It costs £4.50 and is delivered in multiples of six or as singles.

The stories range from simple guides to a 24-page activity book version with a prize competition worth £200. They provide an opportunity to share the joy of Easter with friends and family.

Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter eggs sold each year in the UK, The Real Easter Egg is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate Easter egg to share the Easter story.

The Real Easter Egg has been on sale since 2010 and involves thousands of churches, schools and groups. It crosses all denominations and offers individuals a simple way to share the Easter Story while supporting Fairtrade and charitable projects. The Real Easter Egg continues to be the UK's top mail order Egg in terms of volume.

To date more than a million eggs have been sold and more than £300,000 has been donated to charitable causes.



'KEEP CONNECTED!

Serving the community'

This publication prepared by Bob Lawrie broadly cover aspects of life in Mottingham.

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STAY TRIMMED AND BALANCED

Take soundings' on your life

'Do not let this Book ...depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night ... be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be ... successful.' (Joshua 1 verse 8)

Any flying instructor will tell you that aeroplanes need to be 'trimmed' or 'balanced in flight' on a regular basis. After flying through storms and hitting air pockets, they get knocked out of line. That's true of our path through life. The bad storms of sickness, redundancy, divorce and disappointment can knock us off our balance, too.

In other words, our attitude needs to be constantly checked and adjusted. Have you checked yours lately? What are you encountering at the moment that is putting pressure on you to veer off course? So long as we live, we will always need to look to God, to stay 'trimmed and balanced'. Lent is an excellent time to do this.

The best way to stay balanced is to read God's Word. It gives us a true map of the world around us, and it shows us where we are on that map. Here's an idea you can try for Lent: every week, for the next few weeks, choose a Bible verse and write it down on a small card. Carry it with you wherever you go and memorise it. In one year, you'll know 52 new scriptures, and more importantly, your attitudes will be more naturally in line with God's Word, your faith will be strengthened, and your life will be moving in the right direction.



An auction, is due to be held on Saturday 20th March, at 3 pm. Monies raised will be in favour of the Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice. Let Ian Walsh know if you want further information or have items for Auction.

standrewsmottingham@tiscali.co.uk or by phone: 07709 827355