

ST DENYS
STANFORD IN THE VALE



Friday Fellowship News No 41, 12 February 2021

HAPPY VALENTINES DAY !

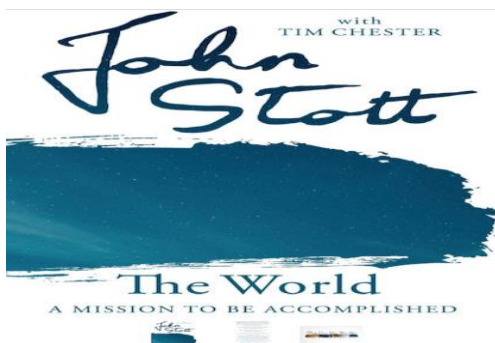
A VERY Happy Valentine's Day to you all for Sunday!

Whether you will be sharing the day with a loved one in person, remembering the precious years you spent with your husband/wife of years gone by, or simply remembering the many people who have shown you love and in return, you have loved, may your day be very special.

Like many of these 'anniversary days' or 'The International Day of the One-legged, Blue Toenailed, left-handed Turtle', these days can lose their original meaning. But at their best they do give us time to stop, and to reflect, and to give thanks in a world that is all too frenzied without the punctuation such days bring to us.

So I pray that as you share the day with loved ones, or think of ones since past, you might also reflect on God's incredible, unfailing, steadfast love for you now – and if you are a follower of Jesus and have committed your life to Him – for all eternity.

BOOK OF THE WEEK



THE Church has a God-given responsibility to infiltrate the world, not only to listen to its challenges but also to bring its own challenge by sharing the good news.

Here, in one of John Stott's classic books, updated with questions for personal reflection by Tim Chester, we see the uniqueness of Jesus, which is the basis of mission, the gospel in both word and deed, and a clear, fresh and compelling vision of Christ.

This booklet, produced by IVP in its new format, is part of a series of latest publications of John Stott's work to commemorate what would have been his 100th birthday in April this year.

If you've never read anything by John Stott, may I encourage you to? He has that unique ability of making complex concepts simple and expounding things we you first thought simple and easy to be full of majestic and profoundly truth. In short he is regarded as one of the best Christian communicators since CS Lewis.

At only £3.10, this book is a gem. Why not buy a copy as an Easter Gift for a neighbour?

PRAYER TOPICS

Saturday – scientists working on vaccines

Sunday – thanksgiving for Sue Penman, our treasurer, celebrating a special birthday today!

Monday – for justice and civil peace in Myanmar

Tuesday – for the lonely and isolated

Wednesday – those awaiting tests and operations

Thursday – children and young people and their mental health

Friday – thank God for the good things of this week!

MORNING PRAYER READINGS

THE MP daily Bible readings, sent out at the end of last month INCLUDE the readings for **LENT**, which starts on **Wednesday 17th**. Each day during Lent, I shall email you a Reflection based on the main Bible reading with the hope that whilst we are still dispersed, through studying the Word of God together, we might still be linked by the Spirit of God who will continue to speak to the Church afresh in these challenging days.

This year, like in 2020, we each enter Lent in a different way – each of us going through our own wilderness experiences. However, as Christians, we are an **Easter People**, and we know that for all the 40 days in the wilderness, tempted by Satan, for all the misunderstandings, rejections and ultimately death, our Lord was **not defeated**. He rose from the dead, and is alive and reigns and wants to live each day in your heart

and mine, and in your neighbour's heart and in those of all your family and friends.

So I pray that as I offer these short daily Reflections, the Spirit of God may encourage and stir your heart afresh, reminding us of his great love and of His Great Commission,

SUNDAY READINGS & SERMON

The Bible readings for Sunday are below. Nigel Knights Johnson's sermon is attached, with suggested personal/group questions at the end.

Psalm 50: 1-6

¹ The LORD, the Mighty One, is God, and he has spoken; he has summoned all humanity from where the sun rises to where it sets.

² From Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines in glorious radiance.

³ Our God approaches, and he is not silent. Fire devours everything in his way, and a great storm rages around him.

⁴ He calls on the heavens above and earth below to witness the judgment of his people. ⁵ "Bring my faithful people to me— those who made a covenant with me by giving sacrifices." ⁶ Then let the heavens proclaim his justice, for God himself will be the judge.

Exodus 19: 9-19

⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will come to you in a thick cloud, Moses, so the people themselves can hear me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you."

Moses told the LORD what the people had said. ¹⁰ Then the LORD told Moses, "Go down and prepare the people for my arrival. Consecrate them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothing. ¹¹ Be sure they are ready on the third day, for on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch. ¹² Mark off a boundary all around the mountain. Warn the people, 'Be careful! Do not go up on the mountain or even touch its boundaries. Anyone who touches the mountain will certainly be put to death. ¹³ No hand may touch the person or animal that crosses the boundary; instead, stone them or shoot them with arrows. They must be put to death.'

However, when the ram's horn sounds a long blast, then the people may go up on the mountain.^[a]"

¹⁴ So Moses went down to the people. He consecrated them for worship, and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵ He told them, "Get ready for the third day, and until then abstain from having sexual intercourse."

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day, thunder roared and lightning flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain. There was a long, loud blast from a ram's horn, and all the people trembled. ¹⁷ Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ All of Mount Sinai was covered

with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently. ¹⁹ As the blast of the ram's horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God thundered his reply.

Mark 9: 2-13

² Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them. ⁴ Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus.

⁵ Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials^[a]—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He said this because he didn't really know what else to say, for they were all terrified.

⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him." ⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus with them.

⁹ As they went back down the mountain, he told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man^[b] had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept it to themselves, but they often asked each other what he meant by "rising from the dead."

¹¹ Then they asked him, "Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?^[c]" ¹² Jesus responded, "Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready. Yet why do the Scriptures say that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be treated with utter contempt? ¹³ But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they chose to abuse him, just as the Scriptures predicted."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY?

EACH week, I'd love to add in Friday Fellowship News birthdays of church members, or wedding anniversaries, or any news you might like to share with the wider church family – just email details to vicar@stdenys.org

In that vein, Friday this week, the **18 February**, is a special day for us as an Eddy family, as it will see the **8th anniversary** of me being your vicar.

I have no idea how those 8 years have flown by, but what I do know is this: there has been an awful lot of sowing in those 8 years. There have been an awful lot of conversations with villagers at key transition points in their lives. And I believe with all my heart that as we come out of Covid season, we will start to see new spiritual shoots starting to appear. We shall need to be open and sensitive to what God is doing, and to join in.

But I am more convinced than ever that this village is ripe for spiritual, and I look forward to working with you as together, we seek to bring in the Harvest God has provided. **Revd Paul Eddy, Vicar. T: 710267.**