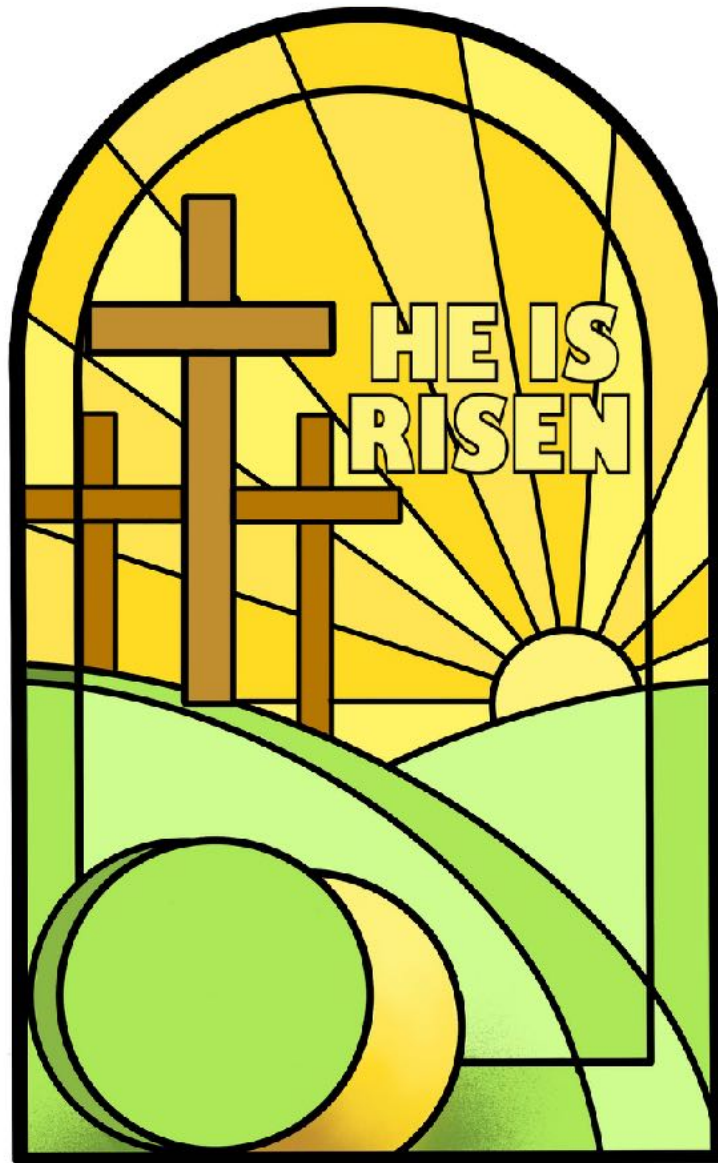


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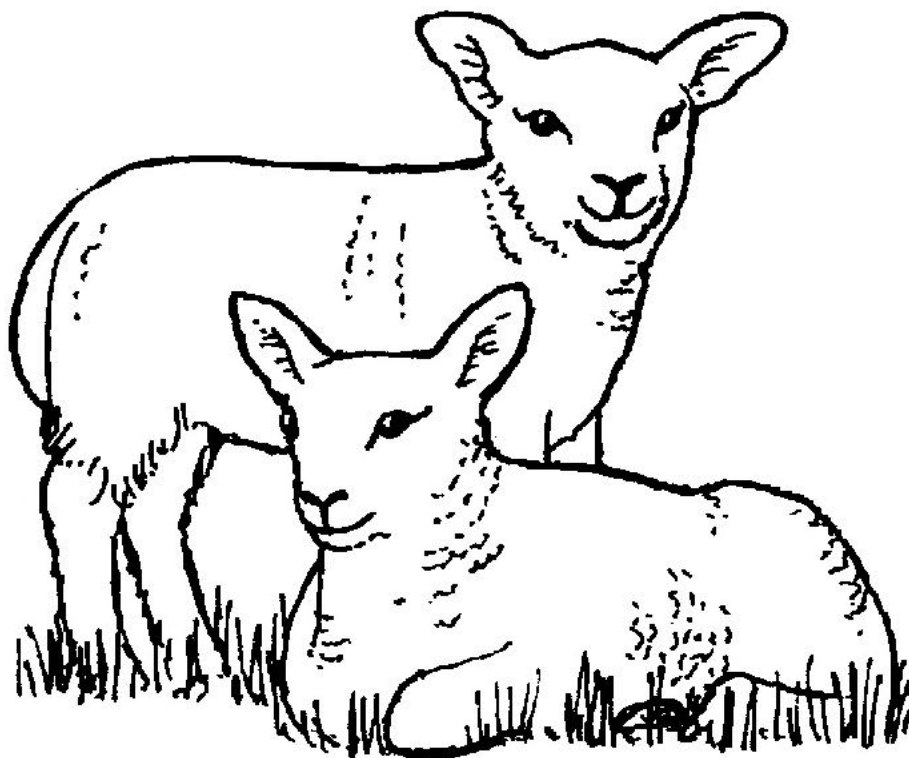


Magazine of Erdington Methodist Church
Station Road - April 2023

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

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A Cross Attitude

In this Easter season, how does Philippians 2 help us to understand more about the cross?

Paul explains what Jesus did in this way: *'He did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage... And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!'*

Jesus' example (v6-8)

Paul reminds us that Jesus, although He was fully God from eternity, entered our world as a man to take on a life of service. *'He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.'* He completely surrendered Himself, by identifying with all the weakness, problems, and frailties of human life. This took Him to the cross, where He rescued us from the power of sin and death, so that we might know God's eternal life.

Our Response (v3-5)

Paul says that our relationships should reflect the same attitude as Jesus: *'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.'* We should look out for the needs of others before our own. This will transform our relationships at home and church. How practically can we develop a cross attitude?

God's Purpose (v9-11)

The Resurrection demonstrates how God has exalted Jesus in triumph: *'Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name'* (v9). Our willingness to serve, like Jesus, will be rewarded by God, especially when we feel used or exploited.

This is our God,
The Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering,
Of worship to The Servant King.

(Graham Kendrick)

Canon Paul Hardingham from the Parish Pump Website

Tuesday Club

Tuesday Club will next meet on 11th April 2023 at 2.00 pm. We will be holding a silent auction so please bring any unwanted items that someone else might like to buy. All proceeds to go to the Brittle Bones Society which is our charity of the year.

John and Charles Wesley

Founders of Methodism back in the 18th Century did John (1703 - 1791) and / or his brother Charles (1707-1788) ever preach on common land off Chester Road, Erdington (between the present day Orphanage Road and Grange Road)?

There is strong evidence that this is the case.

Chester Road in those far off days was much different from the road we see today. Not a dual carriageway but a single much wider road. Before the coming of the railways, in the mid 1800's, welsh black cattle were herded along the road, from North Wales to Birmingham and London.

Chester Road was the main road from Holyhead to London. The cattle drives would be approximately one mile in length and there may be as many as three drives a week! Making the road a very busy one.

The land between Orphanage Road and Grange Road on Chester Road was common land. The Inclosure Act of 1804, which use an archaic spelling of the word usually spelt 'enclosure' of open fields and common land in England and Wales, creating legal property rights to land previously held in common by all members of the village. At this time the road became much narrower.

John Wesley, in his lifetime, is reputed to have travelled over 250,000 miles !!!???

He was a keen abolitionist and was a mentor to William Wilberforce (1759-1833), a leading anti-slavery campaigner. Six days before Wesley died, he wrote his last ever letter and this was to William Wilberforce. William was 32 years old when John Wesley died and had already entered the world of politics.

William married Barbara Ann(e) Spooner (1771-1847). She was born at Birches Green House (now called Rookery House) Erdington and baptised on 17th February 1772 at the parish church of Aston-juxta-Birmingham.

Abraham Spooner (1690-1788), Barbara's grandfather, built the house in the 1720's. William and Barbara married at Bath in 1797 after a whirlwind romance. Barbara's parents had a house in the Royal Crescent at this time. They were Issac Spooner (1735-1816) and another Barbara Spooner (formerly Calthorpe-Gough 1745-1826). The Calthorpe-Gough family lived at Edgbaston Hall.

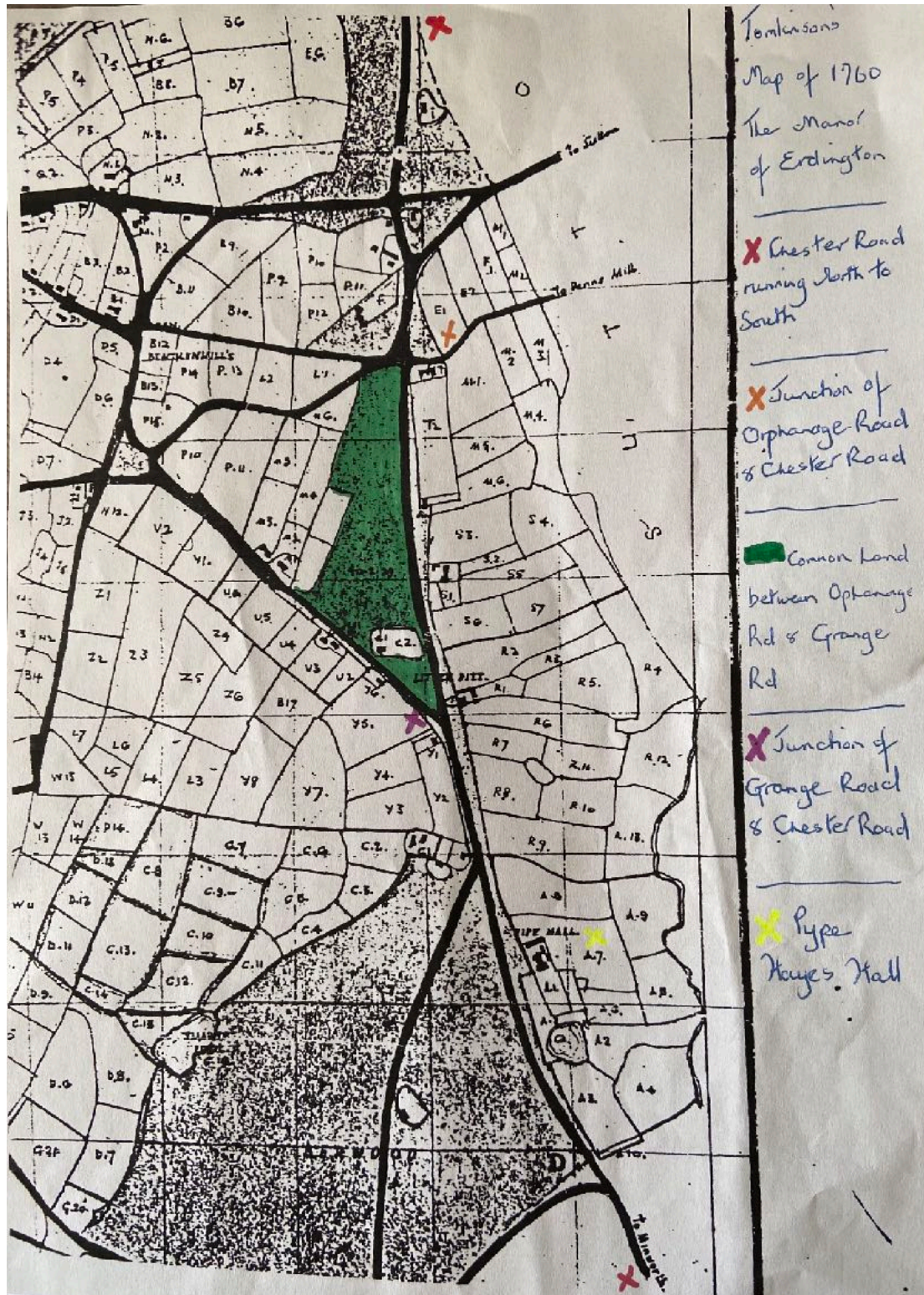
Methodism originated as a revival movement within the 18th century Church of England and became a separate denomination after Wesley's death.

My thoughts - I would like to think that John and Charles were 'entertained' at Birches Green by the Spooner family. Then the brothers would have made their short way to Chester Road via Spring Lane, Moor End Lane, Holly Lane and Grange Road to preach.

I dedicate the above to Jan and her daughter, without them and the coffee morning at Erdington Methodist Church I would not have researched this work.

Linda Barr

(A member of the Erdington Historical Society for over 35 years)



Rod's Ramblings

Islam

As I walked through the city centre I was engaged by a chap Maning a stall promoting Islam. I guess our eye contact was a few seconds longer than normal so a conversation ensued.

Surprisingly he wanted to correct what he thought were my misconceptions about christianity as much as talk about Islam.

Anyway this looks like a challenge so watch this space . . .

Rod

You can do this at home!

Why not put a small cross in your front window as Lent draws to a close, and Easter Week approaches? You can use a Palm cross or a wooden one. A cross is a visible reminder of the death of Jesus, and the Christian meaning of Easter and Resurrection.

Observations on daily life!

Getting older is just one body part after another saying, 'Ha ha, you think that's bad? Watch this!'

Sir Christopher Wren

Whilst we were in Padstow, I happened to hear part of the BBC Morning Worship on the 19th of February which was a celebration of the 300th anniversary of the death of Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) the architect of St Paul's Cathedral. This is the only UK cathedral whose inspiration, design and construction were overseen by one person.

During the broadcast the art historian Neil MacGregor put the work of Sir Christopher Wren into an historical context. He suggested that Wren was not only rebuilding the cathedral but was also trying to create spaces for rebuilding communities after the divisions of the Civil War and London's destruction by the plague and the ensuing great fire of 1666. St Paul's and the other churches that he oversaw at around the same time were all designed with no side chapels, just a single space where everyone was able to see and hear everything that was going on so that they could each individually seek a relationship with God.

This change went hand in hand with the uptake of the Book of Common Prayer, which with the King James Bible contributed to an increase in literacy as people realised that they needed to learn to read so that they could access both of these special books for their own personal devotions. Together literacy and accessible spaces helped to build communities in ways which minimised the development of divisions which had been so destructive in the past: the ongoing conflict between Protestants and Catholics which culminated in the English Civil War, the execution of the King and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

The morning continued at Padstow Methodist Church, where I glanced through a copy of the latest issue of *The Connexion*. In this issue David Perry revealed that this would be his last as the editor. He reported that he had taken the role seven years ago on condition that the magazine concentrated on 'mission and evangelism' in the face of the all-pervading narrative of decline that overshadows the work of the Methodist Church. Over those seven years he noted that there had been a vibrant counter-narrative of faith, hope and love, transforming lives in ways that had to be told and some of which had been included in *The Connexion*. He went on to report that he thought divine sparks were flying everywhere waiting to ignite the fires of mission, evangelism and reformation.

The Methodist lectionary lists the 19th February, the Sunday before Lent as Transfiguration Sunday. During morning worship our minister introduced us to the poetry of Mary Oliver suggesting that some of her verses could be described as transfigurational and posed a question which Mary asked in one of her poems "are you breathing just a little and calling it a life?" Commenting that it is so easy to go through life just breathing shallow breaths and calling it a life. Sometimes to see life afresh there is the need to make an effort, climb a mountain and take some real deep breaths then we can face the future with lungs full of fresh air.

We now live in a time where there is division everywhere. In the church and in the wider society, not quite as bad as the divisions that led to the Civil War, but still widespread and divisive: despots who take the law into their own hand and threaten the lives of everyone on Earth, the breakdown in the rule of law which has

done so much to build the prosperity of our world and also the insidious power of social media to sap our personal confidence.

Somehow it seems to me that these are all intertwined. The church needs to continue its work to build communities everywhere, whether it is café church, messy church, lunch clubs, warm spaces or a memory café. Such spaces are needed to allow people to come together, often with food, in ways which allow communities to grow and prosper. In such spaces the divine sparks will be able to ignite the fires of mission, evangelism and reformation.

Then the people who are there will see life afresh, take some real deep breaths and face the future with lungs full of revitalising fresh air, realising that in the end all despots fail, those who challenge the rule of law can be confronted, there are alternatives to the click-bait on their phone and, heaven forfend, the marriage of same sex couples does not mean the end of theology as they know it.

Peter Farley

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!”

Hedgehogs need your help!

During the winter when hedgehogs hibernate, their heart rate drops from around 190 beats per minute to just about 20. They breathe only once every few minutes. So, to rouse themselves from that depth of torpor and get back into normal life takes a huge surge of energy.

Which is where you can come in. Hedgehogs are hungry in the Spring. Very hungry. Most of them will have slept until mid-March, and so will now be awake – but starving.

So why not put out some shallow dishes of meaty cat or dog food or cat biscuits and water? You can even buy or make special hedgehog feeders.

Hedgehogs have always been popular, but they are now sadly classed as ‘vulnerable to extinction’. Numbers have been plummeting, and now there are less than one million left in the UK.

“With their coat of prickles and inquisitive nose, alongside a penchant for snuffling around our back gardens snaffling up slugs and earthworms, hedgehogs are a childhood memory of delight,” said one scientist. “Sadly, hedgehogs might be banished to memories alone and lost as a source of wonder for our children and grandchildren.”

From the Parish Pump Website

There's something for everyone, at

ERDINGTON

ART

FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 29 April 2023

10am-3pm

**Erdington High St
St Barnabas Church
Central Square
Oikos Cafe
Erdington Library
Erdington Methodist Church**

Come on down!



An Easter Meditation

In the New Testament the resurrection of Jesus is presented as a simple historical fact. He did rise from the grave on that first Easter morning.

The four evangelists, and Paul, carefully lay out the evidence. They record for us the details of the empty tomb, the names of those who visited it, the various appearances of the risen Jesus and how He was seen by more than five hundred witnesses. But the New Testament tells us more than that.

It tells us, not only of the power of God that raised Jesus from the grave (eg. Romans 1:4) but also of that same power being invested in the Church. Christians are new people! We are 'made alive' in our Risen Head (Ephesians 1:1). His victory has become our victory! As Jesus promised: 'Because I live, you will also live' (John 14:19).

Until our Lord returns again one day, Christians will die physically, but their victory over death is already guaranteed. As Paul demonstrates in 1 Corinthians 15, death is 'swallowed up in victory'! Death's sting is abolished! And so Paul proclaims our victory anthem. 'Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (vv.55-57)!

Down through 2,000 years Christ's people have lived in that glorious victory. One example was Donald Cargill (1619-1681). Cargill was a Presbyterian minister and a Covenanter in the years known in Scotland's history as 'the killing times.' The Covenanters opposed all attempts by the English parliament to impose

Episcopacy on Scotland. With other Covenanters, Cargill strongly denounced the immorality and irreligion of the court of King Charles II. Hundreds of Covenanters were imprisoned at this time, and many were executed, both men and women.

Cargill's fearless itinerant preaching made him a marked man. He moved from place to place, preaching in cottages, fields, and town squares, protected by loyal friends. Then in July 1681 he was arrested and imprisoned. The outcome of his trial was never in question. The government of the day was determined to silence this influential 'rebel.' He was sentenced for execution on July 27th of that year.

On the scaffold in Edinburgh, Cargill spoke to the large crowd that had come to support him. "I climb this ladder," he declared, "with less fear than ever I entered a pulpit to preach." Then, raising his eyes to a blue July sky over his beloved Scotland, he cried out: "I have gotten me Christ and Christ has gotten me the victory." The blade fell and the brave soul of Donald Cargill joined the martyrs who lived and died in the victory of the Risen Christ.

Thanks be to God indeed! That glorious victory is not only for all the brave martyrs, but for all of us who belong to Christ. Death is defeated. The grave is conquered. Christ lives for ever in the power of an endless life. And we live in Him! We can all say: **'I have gotten me Christ and Christ has gotten me the victory.'**

Dr Herbert McGonigle, formerly Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology & Church History, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester.

Worship & Easter Arrangements - April 2023

All worship at 10.30 am unless indicated otherwise

2nd - PALM SUNDAY - LOCAL ARRANGEMENT

7th - GOOD FRIDAY - Churches Together Walk of Witness (10.30)
Meet outside Erdington Co-op

9th - EASTER DAY - HOLY COMMUNION & BAPTISM
(please note that there is no 10.30 am service but we will meet together for a bring and share lunch at 12.30 pm and this will be followed by Easter Day Worship)

16th - LOCAL ARRANGEMENT - David Hewitt

23rd - Rev Sue Smith

XSeed Worship - 4.30 pm

30th - HOLY COMMUNION - Rev Emily Young
Includes Annual Church Meeting

Please hand any items for the May CONTACT to me - Nick Riley by 21st April 2022 at the latest please, or alternatively email me: nickriley@blueyonder.co.uk with the words 'CONTACT MAG' in the title.