

CONTACT



Magazine of Erdington Methodist Church
Station Road - April 2024

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

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The Treasure of Easter!

It's amazing what treasure can be unearthed with metal detectors! In this season of Easter, let's rediscover the greatest unburied treasure of the Resurrection.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that God

'has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.' (1 Peter 1: 3,4).

What does he say about this treasure?

On the one hand, it is the reason for hope. Peter was writing to Christians in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who faced persecution under the Emperor Nero. In an uncertain world we know that Jesus suffered, but by His resurrection has secured eternal life for us. This inheritance not only guarantees life now, but also for eternity, as it *'is kept in heaven for you'* (4). Do we share this confidence?

D.L. Moody, the 19th Century American evangelist, spoke of the time when people would read his obituary:

*'Don't believe a word of it!
At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now'.*

On the other hand, this treasure is a source of joy. This unburied treasure fills us *'with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.'* (8,9).

We face all kinds of trials in our lives, but God uses them to refine our faith and character, *'These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.'* (7).

We reflect this treasure by developing the Jesus' character and becoming more holy, obedient and loving.

'Christmas is the promise, and Easter is the proof'!

by Canon Paul Hardingham - Parish Pump

Tuesday Club

On 9th April Gina Maddison will be giving a talk about growing up in working class Birmingham 1957-1968, entitled 'The Girl from Guildford Street'. Her family was among the last to live in back to back housing in Birmingham & she has written 3 books on the subject under a pen name.

All are welcome at 2.00 pm.

Common Cause 2024

Home Leone – Building new, sustainable villages and communities in Sierra Leone

Our fund raising has begun for this organisation and we currently have £42.25 through cake donations and the Quiz Sheet. Not a bad start! Your ideas for fund raising will be greatly appreciated and even better if you can initiate and coordinate an event yourself. Some ideas pinched from the home leone web site include car boot or table top sale, a sponsored event or organise a dinner party and invite friends around for a meal and charge entry or ask for a donation.

More about the organisation.....

Home Leone has a vision to close the slums of Sierra Leone in 25 years. In their place are vibrant new towns and villages. 'Sierra Leone is consistently one of the poorest countries on earth. Each year people die because they live in dangerous coastal and cliff hanging slums. Home Leone is founded and led by Christians with a passion to enable the poorest to make the most of fresh thinking and innovation. It is delivering a relocation strategy based on 17 years' experience of building low-cost homes in 6 developing nations. They draw on 7 years in-depth study of local slum-dwellers needs, developing partnerships and contextualising within the nation's opportunities and constraints. The impact is profound and visitors to our pilot "Destiny Village" say **"This is amazing."**



Home Leone is now relocating over 2,000 people to its initial 25-acre site, comprising 7 strategic pillars.

Low-cost affordable homes – 344 homes, designed by residents, deliver culturally appropriate living at affordable prices in a rent to buy scheme.

Business, employment, micro loans and skills – participants with jobs contribute to society in a sustainable dignified manner.

Education – community primary, secondary, and vocational training schools equip and empower the next generation. Adult education offers a second chance.

Healthcare – Understanding local facilities, demand and preferences leads to the development of a triage and pathway service.

Water and waste management - Drinkable water delivered to homes and the wider communities. Effective waste management and a waste-to-power incinerator.

Power – Aiming to connect to the local power grid, supplemented by solar mini-grids and generators.

Behavioural change – Scarcity mentality and unhelpful cultural pressures are challenged, leading to happier, more fulfilled and longer lives. Our programmes, social justice initiative and training, maximise the effective use of the new facilities.

More information can be seen at their website www.homeleone.org.

Look out for more updates in next months' Contact.

Christine Rankin

Seen in a West Country church

Whenever I see a little church,
I always pay a visit.
So when at last I'm carried in,
the Lord won't ask 'Who is it?'

From Bondage to Liberty

This is the title of the Autobiography written by Rev Peter Stanford (1858-1909), in which he describes his life up until 1889, when on the 18th May he was invited by the working class congregation of Highgate Church, formerly Hope St. Baptist, to become their preacher. The significance of this was he was the first black African American preacher to be invited to Birmingham.



He was born in Hampton, Virginia in 1860. Sold into slavery before he was born and was freed at the end of the American Civil War in 1865. He was captured by American Indians, believed to be the Pamunkey tribe, whom he lived with for a few years and then handed over to Mr & Mrs Stanford who were Quakers. They treated him as a slave until he ran away, jumped on a train to New York where he lived on the streets making a meagre living by collecting old clothes, cleaning shoes and selling matches.

Some of these street kids went to see the evangelists Moody and Sankey and being challenged by their message, Stanford became a Christian.

He then came to the attention of a group of influential Abolitionists who helped him to go to a Baptist College and he eventually became ordained in Hartford, Connecticut in 1878 and became a pastor serving the black community there.

In 1880 Stanford went to London, Ontario, where he became a pastor in the African Baptist Association.

Later, following many escaped and ex-slaves, he travelled to Britain, arriving in Liverpool in May 1883. After a few weeks he went to London, UK, but eventually settled in Birmingham in 1887.

On August 13th 1888 he married Beatrice Mabel Stickley, at Smethwick Baptist Chapel. They both became members of Victoria Street Baptist Church, Small Heath.

Whilst at Hope St, Ida B Wells spoke in Birmingham in the YMCA and Methodist Central Hall campaigning against hanging in the Southern US States. A few days later a public meeting was addressed by Stanford at the Wilberforce Memorial Church on the same subject'. The result was a successful petition to financially support Stanford to visit USA, enabling him to investigate and campaign on the issue.

He remained in the USA for the rest of his life except to a few visits to the UK, preaching, campaigning against slavery. He worked tirelessly to bring to notice the plight of slaves and ex-slaves, opening institutions for education and homes for black ex-enslaved women.

Ann Tomes

Heaven

Seen in a parish magazine: "We shall be meeting on Wednesday, when the subject will be 'Heaven – how do we get there?'"

Transport by bus is available at 6.45 pm opposite the King's Arms.

I'll make Music



10th Anniversary Year

Music by ***Bruckner, Karl Jenkins & Arlen,***
with modern arrangements of
popular classics too!

Directed and conducted by ***Richard Jeffries***

Also featuring
Little Sutton Primary School Choir

**Four Oaks Methodist Church,
Lichfield Road B74 2UU
Sunday 21st April 2024 at 4pm**

Tickets: £5

Available from Nick Riley

1st April - Fooling Around

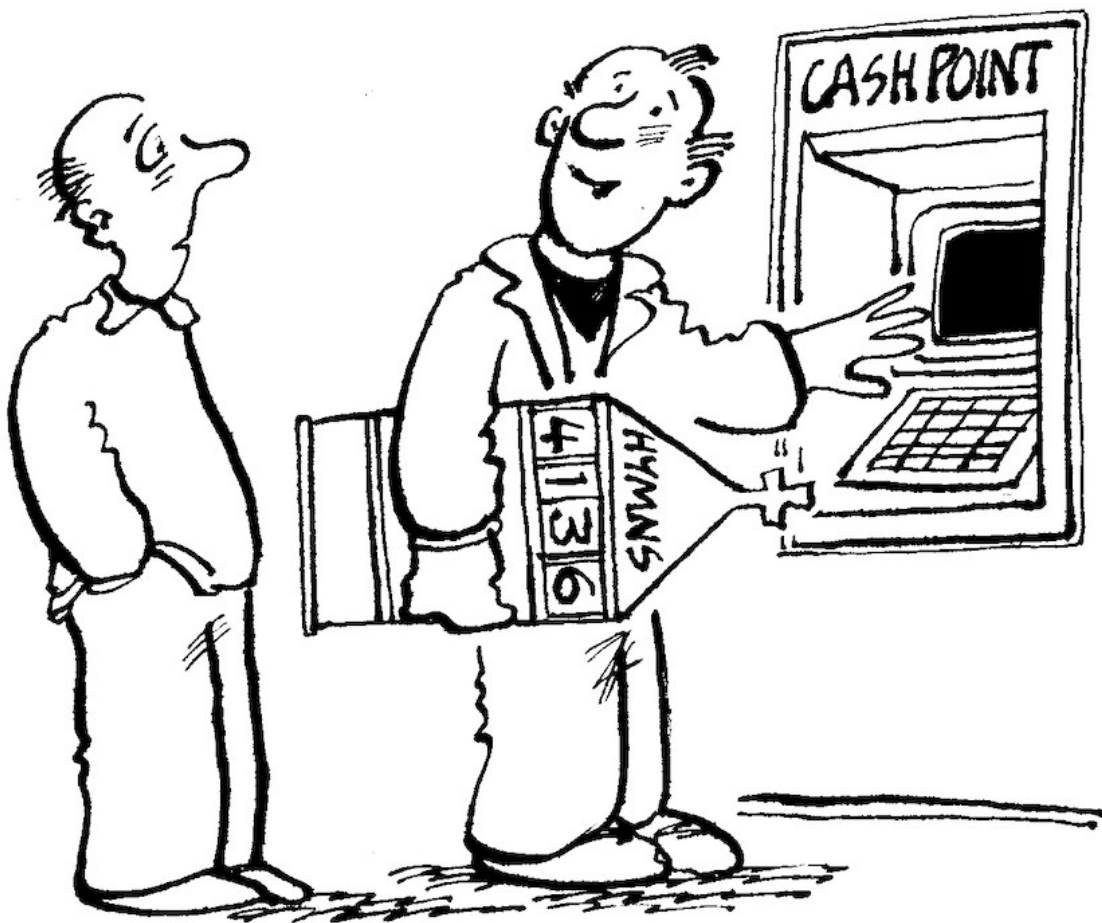
I was about six when I began to enjoy April Fool's Day. My older brother was very clever at appropriate hoaxes, not only deceiving me but also mum and dad. On the whole my childish efforts were encouraged. The day was full of laughs, even at school, where the teachers would try to trick us and all day long no one quite believed anything they were told. So it went on, year after year, though I think it all seems as a bit unsophisticated for the modern generation.

You couldn't say that, though, about probably the most famous April Fool's effort of all time. In the 1960's BBC TV broadcast a feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. Even those of us who bought our spaghetti in the supermarket from the pasta shelves began to wonder if we'd been wrong. Italian farmers explained their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants was carefully filmed, from planting to reaping. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Aunty playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from March 25th to January 1st. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the spring equinox, March 25th.

Either way a touch of hilarity at the end of Lent does not seem amiss. Go to Greece, where the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated with fireworks and parties to see how it might work.

Canon David Winter - Parish Pump



...between you and me, it's the only way I can remember my PIN number!

23rd April - St George, Hiccup and the Dragon

Have you seen the film *How to Train your Dragon*? It's set in a Viking village under attack from dragons, who steal livestock and burn down houses. Hiccup, the village Chief's son, invents a machine to capture dragons. However, when he catches one of the most dangerous dragons, he cannot kill it, when he sees that the dragon is just as frightened as he is. Through this friendship, the people and dragons eventually learn to live in harmony.

This month we celebrate St George, the patron saint of England. He is famous for slaying a dragon, a tradition which became popular in the Middle Ages. Whether he killed an actual dragon is open to question! However, we do know that the original George was a Roman soldier at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He refused to renounce his faith, as commanded by the Emperor, resulting in his death on 23 April 303 AD.

The contrast is clear: St George slayed the evil dragon, while Hiccup refused to kill one. However, they also have something important in common. Both acted according to their conscience, defying the popular understanding of those around them and not worrying about the personal cost to themselves. St George was martyred for standing up for his faith in Jesus before a pagan emperor, while Hiccup risked rejection by his father and village because of his compassion.

Today, we are still called to stand for Christ against wrongs and injustice in daily life, whatever the personal cost. However, we also

need to be ready to look our enemies in the eye and meet their hostility with love and compassion. This is why we also remember this month that Jesus died and rose again, so that we might have God's power to do this in our lives.

From the Parish Pump Website

Future mission, ministry and finance

On Sunday 14th April at 4pm at Erdington Methodist Church, everyone is invited to come and share in a conversation about the future mission, ministry and finance of the Circuit.

Over the coming months, we have some important decisions to make about Ministry across the Circuit from September 2025 and the financial implications of those decisions, so we would very much welcome your thoughts on what lies ahead.

This will be followed by our Circuit Service at 6pm.

Please do your best to attend this meeting - the future of our Circuit and the way it is run - and ultimately the future of our church could depend on discussions had at this meeting

Nick Riley - with my Circuit Steward Hat on!

Emmaus

(Luke 24:13-32)

In the breaking of the bread
Our eyes were opened,
We knew Him then.
The Lord was with us In Emmaus,
There was no doubt.
He was alive and with us,
The scriptures made sense.
What a difference!

But thinking back
To that journey –
To the grief that overwhelmed us,
The discussions, disagreements
And debilitating disappointment –
A different opening of the eyes,
We never were alone.

Before the word and bread,
Because of the word and bread
He was there,
He is here,
Always,
Walking with us.

By Daphne Kitching

Worship - April 2024

All worship at 10.30 am unless indicated otherwise

7th - Local Arrangement

14th - Diana Bosman

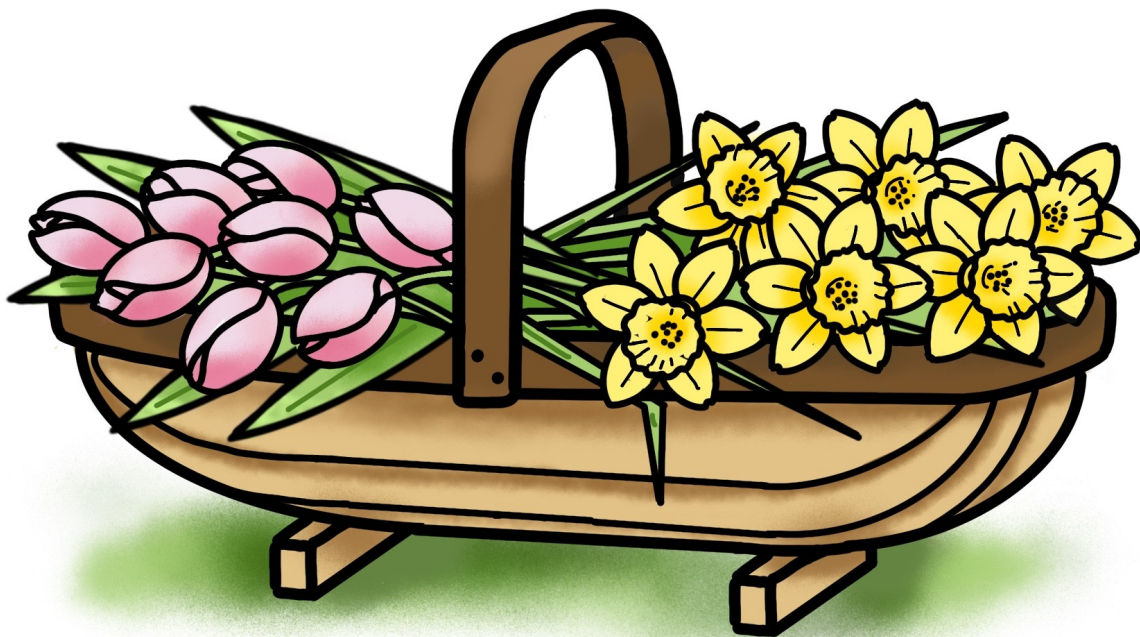
Circuit Future Discussion - 4.00 pm (see inside)

Circuit Service - 6.00 pm

21st - Local Arrangement

28th - HOLY COMMUNION - Rev Emily Young

followed by the Annual Church Meeting



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