

"Methodist and United Reformed Church News in Darwen"

Working together to learn, live, love and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

April and May 2021

CENTRAL

BRIGHT STREET

SPRING VALE

TRINITY

TOCKHOLES

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URC Churches – Central URC, Tockholes URC and Trinity URC/Methodist
For baptisms, marriages and funerals and other enquires please contact the appropriate church secretary.

Central Website: www.centralurcdarwen.org.uk

Methodist Website: www.wpmmethodist.co.uk

This magazine is in a different format to our usual magazine, for email and printing purposes. If anyone does not receive a copy or knows of someone who hasn't received a copy, please contact Liz Rutherford 01254 774715 or email lizrutherford@live.co.uk

Deadline date for June and July magazine – Sunday 23rd May 2021

Minister's letter

*"Now the green blade rises, from the buried grain, Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been: Love is come again like wheat that springs up green."*

The words of one of my favourite Easter hymns, by John Macleod Campbell Crum, unusual as I am known for preferring "modern" hymns but actually it is relatively modern compared to John Wesley, at least it was written in the early part of the 20th century and only came into common use towards the end.

Happy Easter,

Though I write this at the beginning of March and we are only just beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel, the Corona Virus pandemic is still with us and safety precautions will be with us for some time. I know that by Easter the daffodils will be out if not over, and Spring will be with us. The green shoots will be emerging.

And we as a people can also begin to surface from our self-imposed isolation and come blinking out into the sunlight. I know that by then the Methodist churches will have re-opened their buildings, though we have sustained worship, on zoom, over the winter and intend to keep a zoom service going for anyone still unable to get out. Many of us will be very glad to join together for worship not separated by a screen, even if still behind a mask.

As we emerge from this winter, we have the opportunity to take stock of what is around us. We can look at many of the things we were doing that abruptly halted when the pandemic struck and ask ourselves critical questions. What did we miss? Do we need to start this again? Is this needed? We can look into our communities and ask what is needed now? It is a wonderful opportunity to start afresh. Things we sustained for the sake of it can be let go without any feeling of guilt.

*"Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain, Jesus who for three days in the grave had lain;
Quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen: Love is come again like wheat that springs up green."*

We are an Easter people; death and resurrection is part of our faith; too often though we cling to something long after all hope of life is extinguished. We say we place our trust in God but too often our trust is in ourselves. One thing I learned about Darwin is that the motto 'Absque Labore Nihil', which translates as "Nothing without labour" is engraved so deeply on the hearts of some people they genuinely only trust themselves to do the work, and when they are no longer able, they cling on rather than trust in God. It is one of the things as a minister I had to learn to let go right from the start. Methodist ministers are itinerant which means we move on; it's deliberate and stops anyone thinking that a church depends on one person.

For me this Easter comes with mixed feelings, as it will be my last in Darwin. It's hard to believe that my 5 years in the West Pennine Moors is nearly up. My final service will be in July and I will be moving at the beginning of August onto the Fylde Coast, to the South Fylde Circuit serving the churches of The Drive, and Church Road in St. Anne's and Freckleton. In September, the Revd. Elizabeth Kirova will be arriving to take up the post I leave. When I arrived here I was fresh out of college and this was my first appointment. Consequently it was a steep learning curve. I have loved my time here but inexperience means I made mistakes and some people have been far from forgiving. Elizabeth may be younger than me but she is an experienced minister. I hope and trust you will welcome her. Like me, she will serve Darwin but also, like me, her ministry will be spread across Haslingden and Feniscowles.

I have learned a lot in my time here, made some good friends and some wonderful memories. I leave behind the green shoots of some incredible mission; our scripture often uses the analogy of one person planting the seed, another watering, but only God makes it grow. Hold on to that thought; whether you are a planter, waterer or harvester, we are all part of God's plan, but we do need to trust and get on board with God's plan, not our own.

*"When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain, then your touch can call us back to life again,
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been: Love is come again like wheat that springs up green."*

God bless you this Easter, now, and always

Louise

Central Church News

At a recent Elders' Meeting, on guidance from a letter from Synod, it was decided not to open for worship until Pentecost on Sunday 23rd May. This was decided in the best interests of the congregation and their safety. It was a very difficult decision to make, taken only after a great deal of debate.

Some of us have been able to join the Partnership zoom services either on zoom or via the phone, but unfortunately this has not been the case for quite a number of people. Zoom has opened up church in the wider sense of being able to join services and meet people from across the East Lancs Partnership and to be able to keep in touch with people who have left our church and moved on, but still allowing us to feel connected.

Happy Birthday to Margaret Burns and to anyone who has had a birthday recently.

Congratulations to Margaret and John who have recently celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

Congratulations to Lesley Barker on completing The Stepwise Course (the discipleship development programme organised by the URC) and attaining her stepwise certificate. This has required many hours of study and dedication.

Central Church Hall

The hall, vestry, toilets, kitchen and corridor have all been decorated and new carpets laid where necessary. Thank you to everyone on the Property Committee who have put a lot of hard work into planning and co-ordinating this and to everyone who has given their time to help out in any way.



URC member Debora Kayembe, a human rights lawyer who fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has lived in Scotland since 2011, has been named as Rector of Edinburgh University. Debora will be the first person of colour and third woman to take the prestigious job since its creation in 1858.

Debora was a former asylum seeker and refugee who lived in Darwen 16 years ago. She was originally from the DCR and fled the country after she was persecuted over human rights. She was supported by DARE. It just goes to prove anything is possible with love, care, encouragement and a community that welcomes the Stranger.

Congratulations to Debora and her family.

John East

NEWS FROM TOCKHOLES URC

So today is Sunday 21st March, and we've been locked in our houses for most of the past year. We certainly haven't been into our lovely Chapel. I pondered on what to write for this newsletter; it sounded very similar to my last update "we had a zoom call, we couldn't be together, etc. etc."

Then I thought back to last Sunday and our Mothering Sunday service. I really, really enjoyed it. But why?

1. I relaxed on the sofa with my lovely children and puppy, I wasn't in a cold Chapel on a hard pew!
2. I drank a brew during the service!
3. My Dad was on the call with my Mum! He's more likely to be watching golf on a Sunday!
4. There was no travelling time! I could spend more precious weekend hours with my lovely family.
5. The Zoom call was full! So many more people than would have attended Chapel.
6. We had a fantastic breakout session at the end when I chatted to people I had never met before. I'm often rushing home at 3pm on Sunday to prepare the Roast Dinner, so little time to chat.

Thank you Rev. Terry Young for a lovely service that made me think....even when the world is back to normal could we still Zoom (not every week). Particularly on those cold winter Sundays when the Tockholes roads are icy and it's getting dark at 3pm. Perhaps lockdown has given us new opportunities that we didn't ever foresee. Some food for thought!

Emma

TRINITY FELLOWSHIP NEWS

As I write this, signs of spring are starting to appear – the trees are starting to bud and the blossom is coming out. And there are signs of hope for us too with the success of the vaccination programme and the gradual easing of lockdown measures. Hopefully it won't be too much longer before we are able to meet together at church again.

It has been a busy time for birthdays at Trinity, with those celebrating including Judith, George, Colin, Sylvia, John, Helen and Lauren, who has turned 16. Helen and Jack have also celebrated their wedding anniversary.

There have been a number of new babies among our fellowship. At the end of January, Mary became a great-grandma to Emilia Rose, daughter of Rebecca and her husband Jack. In February, John and Judith's niece Philippa and her husband Lee celebrated the birth of a baby boy, Hugo William, and George's nephew Sam and partner Kari had a baby boy, Freddie. Freddie had to spend some time in hospital following his birth, but we are pleased to report that he was able to go home just in time for Mother's Day.

In our prayers we have remembered Helen's sister Sue and her husband Steve. Sue is recovering after being in hospital for further treatment. Helen has had a cataract operation, which seems to have been successful. We have also prayed for the family of George's cousin Philip, who died unexpectedly. And we pray for Catherine as she goes into hospital for an operation this week.

Judith

NEWS FROM SPRING VALE METHODIST CHURCH

Firstly from all at Spring Vale we hope you are all well.

Our news on this occasion, has to be about looking to the future, being that our Church, along with many others, has been closed since January. We have like many other places of worship missed being able to come together, but now turn our thoughts to planning ahead for better times.

As I write this we have just received confirmation that our Church will reopen next Sunday 28th March, which will be the Palm Sunday Service. What a joy it will be to return to worship, and particularly at this special time of the year in our Church Calendar. Louise will be leading our Service and we will be welcoming our friends from Bright Street for a joint service.

On Easter Sunday we will journey to Bright Street for a joint communion service in the afternoon. This will also mark the re-opening of the Church at Bright Street following the fire and we give thanks that our friends are finally able to return to worship in their building; blessings to you all.

As we look forward to the rest of the year with renewed hope; much work has been taking place in the Church, with cleaning taking place in readiness for our return. Many areas have been newly painted and thanks must go to Chris and Simon who have been repairing the floor in the Church Hall. Thank you to all concerned with the many tasks that have still been undertaken.

We have recently been discussing how we might celebrate our 150th Church Anniversary which was actually last year. As a Church we would like to share this with our local community and will hopefully hold a traditional Tea Party or the like on the Green at Garden Village during the summer. We are also looking to reach out again by holding coffee and chat events to engage with both new and old residents in our area. We hope to be able to report on these in the coming months.

Whilst we look to the future we must also be thankful for what we have still been able to do throughout the last few months. Many of us attend the Zoom Services, and our thanks go to all our Ministers and local Preachers who prepare these. It has been lovely to worship alongside so many people in our circuit. A number of us regularly meet on Zoom for our fellowship group and we are currently following a Lent Course, looking at the book of Mark, which we are really enjoying. Thank you to Pam who is our leader and inspiration.

As always, our thoughts and prayers are with our Church members whom we have not seen for some time, but we hope may be able to return to worship soon. Many of us have been trying to keep in regular contact with people, and they have much appreciated the letters and gifts from Louise.

From all at Spring Vale we wish you a Blessed Easter and hope that we can all look forward to a brighter future in God's love.

Irene

NEWS FROM DARWEN METHODIST CHURCH @ BRIGHT STREET

Well, it's good news at last! Work to reinstate our building after the fire at Bright Street is still on-going. However, the church area will be ready to resume worship on Easter Sunday. Hallelujah! Covid restrictions will still be in place of course and the service will be short, but we look forward to worshipping together in person, and welcoming our Spring Vale friends to worship with us. Circuit zoom services will continue for those unable to join us.

Our fellowship group continue to meet on Monday evenings, ably led by Pam Greenhalgh, and during Lent we have been studying a "Lent for Everyone" book on the gospel of Mark written by Tom Wright; an excellent course which involves daily reading at home, followed by much discussion when we meet up on Mondays.

You may remember in the last edition I wrote about the "Chicks for Chaplains" project, which involved knitted chicks to fill with chocolate eggs ready to be distributed to hospital staff in time for Easter. I think it's safe to say, the project was a roaring (or should I say 'chirping') success with over 1,000 chicks handed in. Well done to all the knitters.

On Mothering Sunday, even though we were unable to be in Church handing out flowers, we didn't want our ladies to be forgotten. So, armed with 40 bunches of daffodils beautifully tied up with coloured ribbon and a bearing a short message, we set off in the pouring rain on a whistle stop tour of Darwen to surprise our ladies. I sincerely hope we didn't miss anyone.

Sadly, since the last edition, we have lost two of our members. Dorothy Law, who had resided in a nursing home for a number of years, passed away on the 25th January. Norman Yates, who would have been known to many of you, passed away on February 15th. Please remember their families in your prayers.

I hope when I write for the next edition I am able to tell you that all the work on our building is complete and things are returning normal, little by little.

Until then, God's blessings to you all.

Karen

A message from Marion Haslam, Member of Darwen Methodist Church at Bright Street.

I have been advised from Action for Children that the North West Office is to close on 31st March and the part-time workers at the Warrington office will finish. This is sad news.

Like so many charities, changes have had to be made to manage the financial pressure, in part due to the pandemic, and the fact that donation amounts are dropping. These changes have been necessary to make essential savings so that children, young people and families can be helped now and in the future.

I hope we at Bright Street can continue to help fund-raise for this Methodist charity.

I remember visiting the National Children's Home in Edgworth, near Darwen, where there were several houses, each with a house mother to look after the children. Railway Road Methodist, Darwen were closely involved both in fund raising and giving support.

Later, children were eventually fostered or placed with near relatives, and the homes in Edgworth were used as a school for disabled children.

The charity name was changed to Action For Children

Today AFC continues to be financed from donations, and helps so many families in children's centres and in their own homes. So many children are carers to their parents and of course parents with disabled children need help, especially in one-parent households.

I hope Darwen Methodist Churches, and the West Pennine Moors circuit, can remember to pray for the charity and those it helps and continue to help raise funds.

I know some of us have League of Light saving boxes where we put in a couple of £1s each week and these are emptied twice a year. (On Action for Children Sunday, 2nd Sunday in July and at Christmas time).

Thank you to all who continue to support AFC. I will be pleased to give more information if required.

Marion

01254 773633 or 07506 279955

"In September our section of the circuit, Darwen, Haslingden & Feniscowles will be receiving a new minister, Rev Elizabeth Kirova, replacing Rev Louise Makin. The Rev Rick Ormrod whose churches are in the Accrington section of the circuit will be leaving to become Superintendent of the Burnley Circuit. He will be replaced by Rev Stephen Muoki Joshua from Nairobi, Kenya."

David Foster
Darwen Methodist Church @Spring Vale



Thank you to Kevin and Alison and Mal for all their hard work in making our Zoom Christian Aid Quiz a huge success, to everyone who took part in the quiz and for your donations.

Jean Yates/Liz Rutherford – Christian Aid Reps

Small electric lawnmower to give away.
Please contact David Yates 01254 702564

I was so excited about initiating him into the world of Net banking.

He asked "If I do that, I won't have to step out of the house?"

"Yes, yes"! I said. I told him how even groceries can be delivered at your door now and how Amazon delivers everything!

His answer left me tongue-tied.

He said "Since I entered this bank today, I have met four of my friends, I have chatted awhile with the staff who know me very well by now.

You know, I am alone...this is the company that I need. I like to get ready and come to the bank. I have enough time; it is the physical touch that I crave.

Two years back, I got sick. The store owner from whom I buy fruits, came to see me and sat by my bedside and cried.

When your Mum fell down a few days back while on her morning walk, our local grocer saw her and immediately got his car to rush her home as he knows where I live.

Would I have that 'human' touch if everything became on-line?

Why would I want everything delivered to me and force me to interact with just my computer?

I like to know the person that I'm dealing with and not just the 'seller'. It creates bonds of Relationships.

Does Amazon deliver all this as well?"

Technology isn't life.

Spend time with people. Not with devices.

Writer: Unknown

Sent in by Rev Lena Talbot

WORSHIP SERVICES and EVENTS ARRANGED BY MAL BREEZE
April – May 2021

Sunday 28 th March at 10.30am	Palm Sunday - Worship In The Wilderness 'A Surprising Journey' with Communion (An order from Jerusalem)
Thursday 1 st April at 8.00pm	Maundy Thursday 'Tenebrae - Service of the Shadows' (Details will follow)
Friday 2 nd April at 10.30am	Good Friday Stations of the Cross Service
Sunday 4 th April at 10.30am	Easter Sunday Service with Communion
Sunday 25 th April at 10.30am	A Communion Service
Sunday 9 th May at 10.30am	A Communion Service arranged by Lorraine and Mal
Sunday 23 rd May at 10.30am	Pentecost Service Including Communion
Sunday 30 th May at 10.30am	Trinity Sunday Service including Communion

MORNING PRAYERS: These take place every Tuesday Morning at 9.30 am

PRAYER BREAKFASTS: These take place on the third Saturday of each month at 10.30 am, 17th April and 15th May.

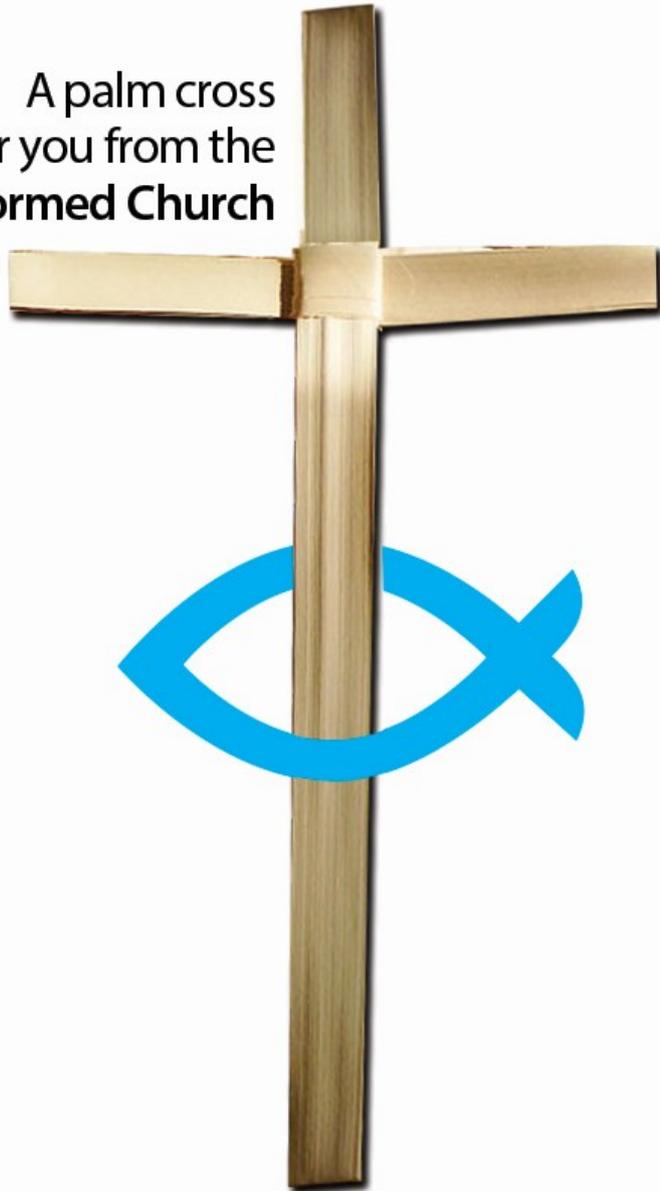
QUIZ NIGHTS: These take place every fortnight on Friday nights 7.30pm – 9.00pm –and 26th March: 2nd April a Good Friday special Easter quiz, 9th and 23rd and 7th and 21st May.

If you would or anyone you know would like to sign up for any of these activities please drop me an email as soon as you can at malbreeze@me.com so I can send out the appropriate details and order of services etc. **WE WILL ALSO NEED PEOPLE TO TAKE PART IN ALL OF THE ABOVE SERVICES and THEREFORE IF YOU COULD INDICATE IN YOUR RESPONSE IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO DO SO THAT WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL.**

Thank you and I hope to see you at some point over the next few weeks and months, all are welcome.

Zoom Services being led by Central URC Darwen as part of the East Lancs Partnership	
11 th April	Rev Geoff Tolley
18 th April	Barbara Duxbury
16 th May	Rev Daleen ten Cate
Tockholes URC will have one zoom service in April and May	
Zoom details will be sent out nearer the time.	

A palm cross
for you from the
United Reformed Church



May we reflect upon this cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for us

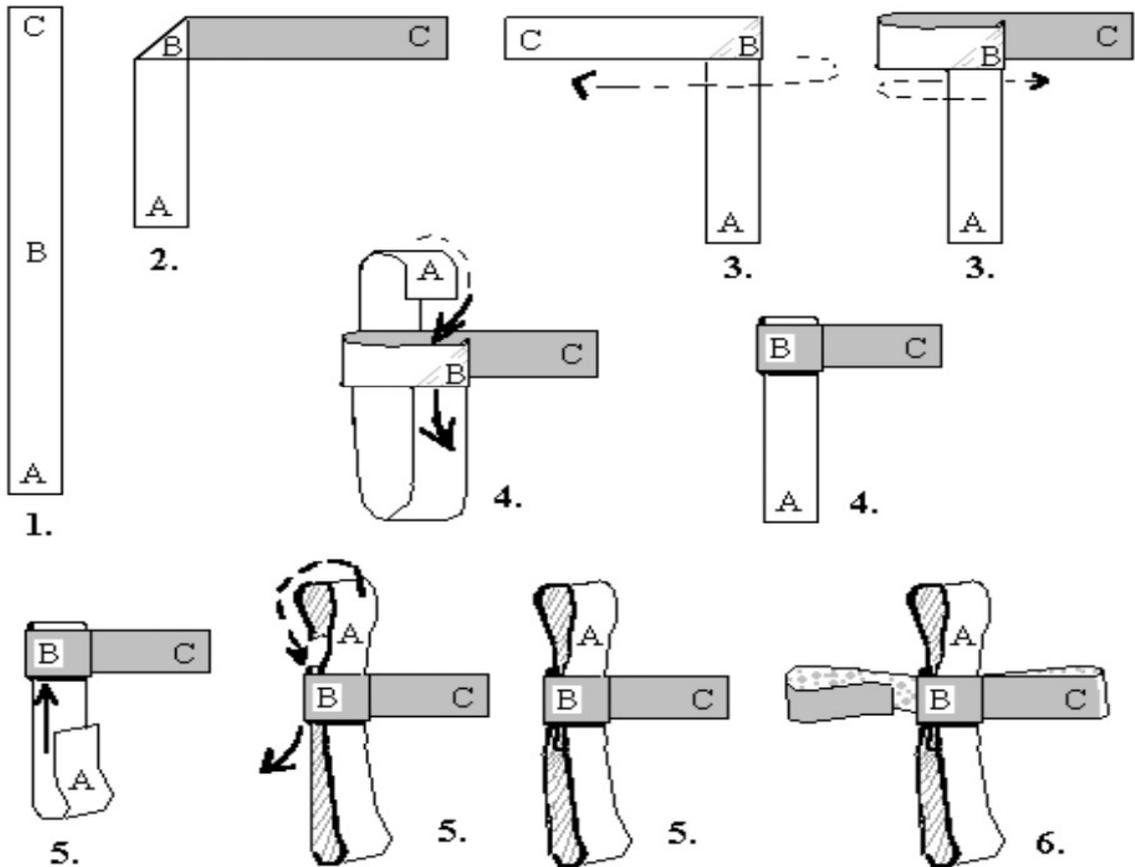
Holy Spirit, breathe through us,
so that we might speak out words of light and life
where we see only shadows and death.

Send us into this world of exile
with the promise of a world renewed
and the power of our risen saviour,
in whose name we pray, **Amen.**

Text © Sara and Sam Hargreaves, engage worship - used with permission

Palm Weaving; Cross (style no.1)

Basic instructions as told to Anita Visoky by Mike Melfi in April 2000. Mike learned to weave crosses at St.Rocco School in Cleveland, OH in the late 1920's or early 1930's.
Additional illustrations by Cindy Salvarola (Feb 2002).



Here are Mike and Anita's written instructions:

START with a long vertical strip of palm (or paper) as shown in the upper left drawing.

- Step 1: Make a diagonal fold near the middle of the strip so that the top part of the strip extends out to the right.
- Step 2: Fold C over B so that the top of the strip extends to the left.
- Step 3: Fold C end under B so that top of strip extends to the right again.
- Step 4: Fold A under B and through slot and pull tight (shape looks almost the same but B now has more slots).
- Step 5: Bring A end up and through bottom slot at B and pull half way through and tuck A into top slot at B.
- Step 6: Bring C end over and through right slot at B and pull half way through and tuck C into left slot at B.

From Mal Breeze

My 37th Thought for the Week during lockdown and again I'd like to begin with a prayer.

God, we may come to you dry, discouraged, feeling frail or powerless. But we come believing that you have the words of eternal life. Speak to our dry bones as in Ezekiel Chapter 37, may your Word and your Spirit give us life, and empower us to speak truth into this world you love. **Amen.**

Yesterday was the fifth Sunday of Lent and each week since Lent began the United Reformed Churches in the East Lancashire Missional Partnership which also includes a Methodist Church have been using 'Worship in the Wilderness' on Zoom a resource produced by Engage Worship as well as my thoughts for the week.

During the series 'worship in the wilderness' and my thoughts for the week we have seen that God can lead us into things like silence, fasting and solitude, alms giving and prayer. We have also thought about sorrow in the desert, the sacrifice Jesus has made to bear our suffering and the sacrifices we're called to make as a response not only as we approach Easter but every day of our lives.

All these things perhaps give each of us pictures of wilderness as a spiritual state in our hearts. We may also feel that the world, our communities and churches as well as individuals, is also something of a wilderness as a result of the Pandemic.

This year Lent ends on Saturday 3rd April and it has been particularly more of a challenge than usual to think about how we have been able to observe Lent and respond as God wants us to. Have any of us truly been able to do Lent justice? I know there have been times when I've struggled!

Next Sunday is Palm Sunday when we reflect on Jesus' journey through Jerusalem on a donkey when the crowds worshipped Him, singing Hosanna to the son of David! in the highest, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest heaven! and calling Him King; it was a very joyous occasion but as we know it soon turned to sorrow but more of that over the next two weeks.

In Isaiah Ch53 Vs 7-8: he writes;

"He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished."

Whatever wilderness we struggle with, not only during Lent but at any time in our lives, it's reassuring to know that Jesus has born the pain of that, on His shoulders on the cross. He has become our scapegoat, carrying our sin, our struggles, our sorrows. He went out into the wilderness of judgement all alone, so that ultimately we may all be healed, restored and made whole. He is with us each step of our journey and He never lets us down, He keeps His promises.

Our buildings may be closed but our churches are still alive and sharing the message of the Gospel in various ways. May God give each one of us the grace to share that message with those we meet as we journey through the wilderness to the Cross, the ultimate sacrifice for each one of us.

Let us pray,

Lord, there is so much on our hearts that we wish to share with you, so much we would wish to bring before you. Concerns of health, bereavement, economic struggles and social tensions. We live in a world of greed, of selfishness, a world of exploitation, repression, extremes of wealth and poverty. So many facing injustice, cruelty, exclusion. A world being destroyed by the emissions we create. Nations struggling to live in peace with one another. May they all feel your presence in their times of need, and Lord, show us what we can do to sow the seeds of your love in these places. **Amen.**

This week, find a quiet spot and reflect on those things which have been positive for you during the pandemic rather than focus on the negatives which is far easier to do.

Keep safe and keep well. Shalom my friends, Shalom.

Mal

Wordsearch – Pentecost



Amazed, Anointed, Baptized, Believers, Bewildered, Bread, Brethren, Crowd, Determined, Devotion, Endowed, Faithful, Filled, Fire, Galileans, Healing, Jerusalem, Language, Miracles, Multitude, Perplexed, Power, Preaching, Prophecy, Salvation, Sermon, Signs, Sins, Teachings, Thousands, Together, Upper Room, Witness.

Try to find the mystery answer: after you have found all the words, sort the left-over letters into the correct order to form the mystery answer.

Answer to last Wordsearch - Philadelphia

BIBLE READINGS

APRIL 2021

MAY 2021

1 Luke 23.1-25
2 John 19.17-37
3 John 19.38-end
4 John 20.1-18
5 1 Corinthians 15.1-11
6 1 Corinthians 15.12-19
7 1 Corinthians 15.20-28
8 1 Corinthians 15.29-34
9 1 Corinthians 15.35-50
10 1 Corinthians 15.51-end
11 Acts 4.32-25
12 John 20.1-10
13 John 20.11-18
14 John 20.19-end
15 John 21.1-14
16 John 21.15-19
17 John 21.20-end
18 Acts 3.12-19
19 Ephesians 1.1-14
20 Ephesians 1.15-end
21 Ephesians 2.1-10
22 Ephesians 2.11-end
23 Ephesians 3.1-13
24 Ephesians 3.14-end
25 John 10.11-18
26 Ephesians 4.1-16
27 Ephesians 4.17-end
28 Ephesians 5.1-14
29 Ephesians 5.15-end
30 Ephesians 6.1-9

1 James 1.1-12
2 Acts 8.26-end
3 1 Peter 1.1-12
4 1 Peter 1.13-end
5 1 Peter 2.1-10
6 1 Peter 2.11-end
7 1 Peter 3.1-12
8 1 Peter 3.13-end
9 Acts 10.44-end
10 1 Peter 4.1-11
11 1 Peter 4.12-end
12 1 Peter 5
13 Acts 1.1-14
14 Acts 1.15-end
15 Acts 18.22-end
16 1 John 5.9-13
17 John 16.29-end
18 John 17.1-10
19 John 17.11-19
20 John 17.20-end
21 John 21.15-19
22. John 21.20-end
23 John 15.26-27;16.4b-15
24 Joshua 1
25 Joshua.2
26 Joshua 3
27 Joshua 4-5.1
28 Joshua 5.2-end
29 Joshua 6.1-11
30 John 3.1-17
31 Joshua 6.12-20

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FORMAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Spring Vale: Guides, Brownies, Rainbows;
Methodist at Bright Street: Brownies, Rainbows

PARENT AND TODDLER GROUPS

Weekday Groups at Central, Spring Vale, Trinity and New Church

ENQUIRIES:

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