

# MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH MESSENGER JUNE 2019



## PENTECOST

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2 verses 1 to 4)



## PENTECOST: THE 'BIRTHDAY' OF THE CHURCH.

When the Spirit Came – Lester Amman

For Christmas we have the build-up of Advent, and Easter Day is preceded by Holy Week. But when it comes to Whit Sunday, it just suddenly arrives. Yet Pentecost is all about the birth of the Christian church and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Surely, that is something to get excited about!

For forty days following our Lord's resurrection, Jesus appeared to His followers and taught them about the Kingdom of God. Just before His ascension into Heaven, Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Spirit. Ten days after His ascension, it was the Feast of Pentecost and this was a significant festival for the Jews. It was an annual occasion for people to assemble in the Holy City. The day marked the time when the barley harvest officially ended. This feast day was characterised by religious ceremonies and the offering of sacrifices. No work was done. It was a day of thanksgiving. A time to remember deliverance from Egypt and God's mercy and reconciliation with His covenant people.

On the day of Pentecost, the followers of Jesus met together in

an upper room. Its location was probably on Mount Zion to the west of Jerusalem. The site can be visited although it's not *the* Upper Room. It's an ancient building dating from the 14th century and built on the site of a church destroyed by the Persians seven centuries earlier. But the first floor chamber is large with old paving stones, surrounded by stone pillars and arches. According to tradition, this is where Jesus ate the 'Last Supper' and His followers received the Holy Spirit.

On Whit Sunday we would do well to remember why the Holy Spirit was sent to us. We are given power to live God's way:

to lead us into the things God has prepared for us;

to worship and glorify Him;

to enable us to pray;

to lead us into truth;

to give us a desire to share the love of Christ with others and to help us trust God for all our needs.

This Pentecost may our prayer be for God's Spirit to transform us, for the gentleness of His Spirit to lead us, and for the gifts of His Spirit to equip us.

Amen



## THINKING ABOUT THE BEATITUDES

*Rev Paul Hardingham continues his series.*

### 2. 'Blessed are those who mourn'

The Beatitudes, at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 verses 1-12), present the values of the kingdom of God. In 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted' (Matthew 5 verse 4), Jesus appears to be saying 'Happy are the unhappy'!!

It's not wrong for Christians to be sad or grieve, as we can still experience God's blessing ('blessed'). Jesus promises God's comfort for our loss, mourning, pain and hurt. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He is described as the 'Comforter' (John 14 verse 16) ie 'the one who comes alongside us to help' (lit). He assures us of Jesus' presence to share our sadness, make us aware of His love and strengthen us in our sorrows. Jesus has been in this place Himself, when He shed at the tomb of His close friend Lazarus (John 11:35).

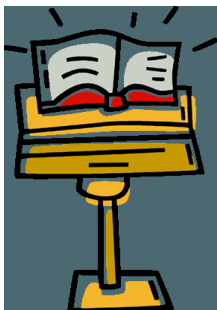
There is also a godly grief which the Spirit brings into our lives, as we reflect on our messy lives. Peter wept bitterly after denying that he knew Jesus (Matthew 26:75). He makes us aware of our spiritual poverty, including our failures and shortcomings when it comes to loving and serving God. The Holy Spirit is also alongside to assure us of God's forgiveness and cleansing as God's children (Romans 8:16).

The Spirit also helps us to share the Father's broken heart for our suffering world and for the communities of which we are part. Jesus Himself wept over Jerusalem, because its inhabitants failed to see what was happening in their midst (Luke 19:41).

We can live under God's blessing in sadness, as He is able to turn our tears to joy, even though our comfort will only truly be complete in heaven. 'God comforts the disturbed and disturbs the comfortable.'

## CIRCUIT SERVICES:

This year, on each occasion in a month where there are five Sundays there will be no individual church worship services but a **CIRCUIT SERVICE**. The first will be on 30 June at Orpington, and the second on 29 December at Chislehurst!



## DIARY OF CHURCH SERVICE PREACHERS JUNE 2019

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 10.30am - Messy Church**

Theme: Pentecost

Messy Church is preceded by breakfast

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am - Sue Cope**

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am - Holy Communion: Terry Wright**

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 10.30am - Deborah Spinks**

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am - **CIRCUIT SERVICE** at Orpington Methodist Church.**



## JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Messy Church:** Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 10.30am:

Theme - Pentecost

This is preceded by breakfast.

**Prayer meeting:** Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm:

At the house of Eddie and Dallas Green.

**Good Companions:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am: Diminishing Whist

**All Sorts Craft Group:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am for one and a half hours.

**Community Lunch:** Every Wednesday at 12.30pm.

**Saturday Youth Club:** Every Saturday from 7-10pm for 9-14 year olds.

## IN AND AROUND MOTTINGHAM

### MOTTINGHAM LIBRARY IN JUNE

**Bromley and Greenwich Councillors' Surgeries:**

**Bromley:** 6.45-8.00pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

**Greenwich:** 7-8pm on the last Friday of the month.



### Coffee Morning

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June

10.30-12 noon

Audiologists from Regain Hearing (based in Eltham) will be joining us to talk about ear health and potential hearing loss



### Armchair Walk

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June

6.15-7.30

Join Chris for a stroll along the Strand from Charing Cross (meeting Kaspar the cat along the way)



### NEW ELTHAM METHODIST CHURCH INVITATION

**Hair Spray** - A 'SATURDAY FAMILY FILM'

Wednesday 12th June at 7.00 pm

435 Footscray Road, London SE9 3UL

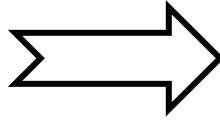
The film is free. Refreshments available for £1.



### MOTTINGHAM MEMORIAL HAS HAD A FACE LIFT!

Thank you to Bromley Council.





## **GOD AMONG THE RUINS**

*Tony Horsfall considers the fire at Notre Dame*

The tragic fire at Notre Dame Cathedral shocked the whole world. Seeing such a magnificent building engulfed in flames saddened all who saw the devastation unfold. It was a monumental blow to the nation of France. It will take years to rebuild this famous place of worship.

One striking image from the fire showed the interior of the church scorched and ruined, its art treasures lost, its contents still smouldering. But high up in the background, unbowed by the flames, stands a golden cross, brightly shining in the darkness of the surrounding debris.

Since the fire took place at Easter, it is hard not to see this picture as a parable. One Anglican vicar made this comment: 'Notice what is left inside, untouched, after the destruction of all sorts of 'priceless' works of arts at Norte Dame Cathedral? The Cross. What an image for Holy Week and what a picture to describe secular Western Europe.'

As I pondered the picture it spoke to me of the abiding value of the Cross. The words of a hymn came to mind:

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

The place of worship may be destroyed, but not the God we worship. The message of the Cross, at the centre of our faith, remains a timeless, undamaged truth.

The hymn continues:

When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me,  
Lo! It glows with peace and joy.

Even among the ruins of our own lives the Cross stands tall, reminding us of the presence of God and His grip on our lives.

## MONTHLY ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH

-  **1ST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10.30am:**  
Messy Church - This is preceded by breakfast
-  **1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7.30pm**  
Prayer Meeting at Eddie and Dallas's home
-  **2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10.30am**  
Good Companions
-  **4TH TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 10.30 - 12.00 MD**  
All sorts craft group
-  **EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 12.30pm**  
Community Lunch
-  **EVERY SATURDAY FROM 7 - 10pm**  
Saturday Youth Club - for 9 - 14 year olds



The next Church Council meeting will be on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June in the Church Hall at 7.30pm.



## THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN CHINA

Pray for the Christians as persecution soars as new laws kick in.

Release International, which supports Christians under pressure around the world, says persecution has been rising dramatically since tough new restrictions on religious freedom came into force across China.

According to Release partner Bob Fu, the persecution of Christians in China is now at the highest level since the Cultural Revolution. He told the *Washington Times* that in 2017: 'We documented persecution against 1,265 churches, and 223,000 people.'

According to Fu, of China Aid, persecution against Christians has increased further since the new religious regulations came into force: 'Thousands of churches have been banned.'

As well as closing churches, the authorities have destroyed them, torn down their crosses, arrested and imprisoned their pastors, and detained lawyers trying to represent them in the courts.

A US State Department report on religious freedom has described China as carrying out a 'far-reaching strategy to control, govern and manipulate all aspects of faith.' That includes torture, forced confessions and compelling Christians to renounce their faith.

Since the new regulations came into force, churches in Luoning County in Henan Province have had their windows smashed and property confiscated. Preachers have been prevented from giving sermons. Officials have removed crosses, cut power to a church and arrested its pastors.

All churches in Xinyu County have been ordered to display the



national flag as well as a picture of President Xi Jinping and posters extolling socialist values.

In Jiangxi Province, more than 40 churches have been made to hang up notices banning non-locals from preaching and underage people from attending services. The government has also threatened to cancel the welfare of low-income residents should they attend church.



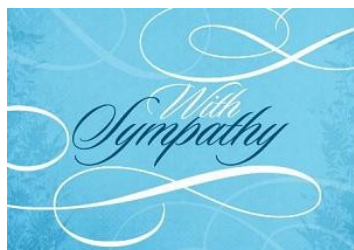
## FAITHFUL DISOBEDIENCE

Recently, over 100 members of a Christian Church in Chengdu, China, were arrested. Among those taken away were Pastor Wang Yi, senior pastor, and his wife, Jiang Rong. Foreseeing this, Pastor Wang Yi wrote a letter to be published by his church should he be detained for more than 48 hours. In it he explained the meaning and necessity of faithful disobedience, how it is distinct from political activism or civil disobedience, and how Christians should carry it out. This is a short extract from his astonishing letter.

'The mission of the church is only to be the church and not to become a part of any secular institution. From a negative perspective, the church must separate itself from the world and keep itself from being institutionalized by the world. From a positive perspective, all acts of the church are attempts to prove to the world the real existence of another world. The Bible teaches us that, in all matters relating to the gospel and human conscience, we must obey God and not men. For this reason, spiritual disobedience and bodily suffering are both ways we testify to another eternal world and to another glorious King. This is why I am not interested in changing any political or legal institutions in China. I'm not even interested in the question of when the Communist regime's policies persecuting the church will change. Regardless of which regime I

live under now or in the future, as long as the secular government continues to persecute the church, violating human consciences that belong to God alone, I will continue my faithful disobedience. For the entire commission God has given me is to let more Chinese people know through my actions that the hope of humanity and society is only in the redemption of Christ, in the supernatural, gracious sovereignty of God.

**I**f God decides to use the persecution of this Communist regime against the church to help more Chinese people to despair of their futures, to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them know Jesus, and if through this he continues disciplining and building up his church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for his plans are always benevolent and good.'



We have been saddened to hear of the death of Michael Wyborn and, as a church, offer our sincere sympathy to Mary, his wife, and their family.



## **11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019: CHRISTIAN AID BIG BREKKIE**

Thank you to all those who helped and those who came to the Big Brekkie in our hall and for the generous donations. Over £400 was raised to which will be added Gift Aid agreements.

## **MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY**

*Churches together in Mottingham will continue bible studies on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 8.00pm.*

Venue: St Andrews Manse 223 Court Road, SE9 4TQ



ONCE A MONTH CONGREGATION  
CALLED MESSY CHURCH  
MAY 2019  
THEME; LOVE IN PICTURES



Cakes



Bracelets and cards



Small Poster

## PRAYER REQUESTS

There is a note book at the rear of the Church for your use if you or someone you know would like to be remembered in prayer by the Church whether anonymously or by name.

If it's easier to leave a note please do leave it in an envelope in the Church.

## WE PRAY FOR

Maureen and her partner, Roy and the family

James

Janet

The Community Lunch

The Children's Saturday Club

Messy Church

Good companions and the Craft Group

## MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

### CONTACTS:

**The Minister:** Rev Duncan MacBean. Tel: 07432 093353

Please Note: The minister's normal day off is a Friday

**The Deacon:** Maureen Spinks. Tel: 01689 821956

Please note: The deacon's normal day off is Tuesday

**The Senior Steward:** Dallas Green. Tel: 020 8617 0076

**ADDRESS:** 62 Mottingham Road, Mottingham, SE9 4QR

### THE CHURCH WEB SITE:

Church information is available on the WEB site

Log in to: <http://www.mottinghammethodistchurch.org.uk>.

### THE CHURCH AND CHURCH HALL FOR HIRE

Mobile Contact: 07757 717399



We are members of Parish Pump and The Association of Church Editors, two groups which provide material for Church magazines.