

MARCH 2018



SOUTHDOWN



Holy Week

March 26 – 30
Easter Sunday
1 April

Harpenden Ministry Team

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Open Wednesday 10am – 2pm

Newsletter

Please provide copy by
E-mail by 10th of previous month

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Weekday Activities

Pre-school - Julia Prince 07908121891	
Weekdays (except Wednesday) 9.10am – 12.10pm in halls	
Study Group Vivienne Kendall 629930	
Lent Study in lounge On Wednesday at 7.45pm	
Brownies and Guides	
Tuesday	
17 th Rainbows	5pm
14 th Brownies	6.15pm
Wednesday	
9 th Brownies	6.15pm
3 rd Guides	7.30pm
Thursday	
17 th Brownies	6.15pm
17 th Guides	7.30pm
Hall Bookings	
01582 769871	



Your intercessions are asked this month for our weekday activities on p. 4 of the church directory.

Mission Statement

The aim of Southdown Newsletter is to help develop the Christian faith through reporting about worship, people and activities of Southdown Methodist Church.

Unacknowledged articles written by the editor

From Manger to Wilderness

Dear friends,

It seems hard to comprehend how in a month and twenty days we have moved from the baby Jesus born in a manger, adored by shepherds and worshipped by kings from the East, to him being transported by the Holy Spirit straight after his baptism to the wilderness to face forty days of testing and tempting by Satan or the 'evil one'.



Now, depending which of the synoptic Gospels you read, you would find in Matthew nearly four chapters about Jesus and his family in exile in Egypt and their return to Nazareth. Also readings about John the Baptist's ministry preparing for Jesus' own ministry which is launched at his baptism. The period of Jesus' testing commences.

Similarly in Luke's gospel we are taken in three chapters to the baptism and then to the temptations in chapter four. Mark on the other hand, skips the birth and launches into John's ministry announcing the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Then, in twelve verses, Jesus is transported to the wilderness.

Our scriptures miss out the details of Jesus as he grows up, except for the time he goes missing during the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem at the age of twelve, and is found in the Temple after a three-day search.

What we glean from Luke (chapter 4) however, is that in the forty days in the desert, Jesus did not eat and it was only after the forty days, when he was hungry, that the devil began to test Jesus' resolve.

First the devil appealed to Jesus' need for food, then offered him power and finally he tested Jesus' identity – *“if you are the son of God, throw yourself down from here for it is written...”*.

These three temptations have, overtime, proven to be what many people desire most; enough food to never feel hungry; power and authority, especially over others; and recognition and to be known. Jesus was tempted but did not give in to temptation.

Lent is the time which we align ourselves with Christ's suffering by giving up something for forty days until Easter Day, for example, chocolates, sweets, coffee, etc. This has to be something that matters to us, something that will make the experience count and lead us to a deepened dependence on God to see us through the journey.

Not many of us are ever fully able to go for a length of time without any food, or those modern comforts we are so used to. So, this Lent instead of giving up, how about taking on doing something good and kind for another person? If we all were to undertake an act of kindness a day for forty days, what a difference we would make to our communities. Check out <https://40acts.org.uk> for guidance.

May God send his angels to care and minister to you as you go through this time of denying self and taking on Christ.

Lent Blessings

Mmasape

A Prayer from *Stages on the Way* (Wild Goose Worship Group)

Lord Jesus Christ, you refused to turn stones into bread.

Save us from using our power, however little, to satisfy the demands of selfishness in the face of the needs of others.

Lord Jesus Christ, you refused to leap from the temple.

Save us from displaying our skills, however modest, to win instant popularity in the face of nobler calls on our abilities.

Lord Jesus Christ, you refused to bend the knee to a false god.

Save us from offering our devotion, however weak, to cheap or easy religion in the face of the harder path on which you bid us to follow you.

Saviour of the World, you saw Satan masquerading as an angel of light and shunned him.

Give us wisdom to discern behind each subtle temptation the ploy of the prince of darkness; and in the face of all that is hellishly attractive, help us to choose the will of God. Amen



With Easter Sunday falling on 1st April most Easter events will be in March. Over the Easter period we often try to worship ecumenically and during Holy Week there is a chance to join with St Johns for several of our services.

Lent soup lunches are also being held at St Johns on Thursday lunchtimes during Lent from 12 noon.

At Southdown there will a Parade service on 18 March for our uniformed organisations when David Crew will be taking the service.

We were sad to hear of the death of **Doris Blomfield** in February. Many of you will remember Doris and Charlie. Doris has lived for many years at Oak Tree Manor. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time.

We continue to remember our other friends living in residential homes and accommodation , **Bess Martin, Betty Wise** at Willow Court and **Cliff and Margaret Woof** and **Aileen Hurst** at Elmside. I heard from Cliff recently and he and Margaret send their love and good wishes to all at Southdown and hope to come to join us from time to time as health and weather permit. We also think of **Sandra Ford** who is taking time to recover from her operation.

I do hope you will all want to take part in the Holy Week and Easter Services which are listed on the next page.

*'Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the 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'*

STF 306

Blessings at Easter

Jenny

HOLY WEEK

Stations of the Cross

Monday 26 March United service St John's 8pm

United Reflective Service

Tuesday 27 March United service Southdown 8pm

Tennebrae Communion Service

Maundy Thursday St John's 8pm

Good Friday

9am at Southdown 10am United Service on the Green

10.30am Walk of witness at 10.30am from Rothamsted Park.

Easter Sunday Service 10.30 and led by Linda Black.

The problems of Palm Sunday

It was the palm branches that made this day unique, and then again, it wasn't.

For centuries, the church has memorialized today, the first day of Holy Week, as Palm Sunday because of the palm branches and cloaks that the people spread out before Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.



The Gospel writers tell us a crowd gathered, gushing with excitement, and lined the road in front of Jesus as he slowly rode into the city. As he made his way, one step at a time by the beast of burden on which sat, a sort of carpet was being sewn together ahead of him. Fresh, green palm branches, presumably picked from nearby trees, and thick, worn clothing, likely from the



backs of the crowd, formed a tapestry of endearment toward Israel's long-awaited Messiah. And according to the Pharisees, this was a problem

But actually, it wasn't the palm branches that were the problem so much as what the people were saying.

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! (Luke 9:38).

The Pharisees' problem was this particular phrase – it wasn't just any phrase. It was the kind of welcome reserved for Israel's Saviour.

It was a phrase found in the Hebrew Scriptures, going back to Psalm 118, a psalm that rejoices in the Lord's triumph. By verse 22 of this psalm, the rejected stone has become the 'cornerstone' - a marvellous work of God which then launches the Day of Salvation.

This rambling crowd in Jerusalem, taking its cues from Psalm 118, is declaring Jesus to be the Messiah. That's why the Pharisees tell Jesus to stop the madness. *'Do you hear what they are saying? They think you're the Messiah come to save us. Tell them to shut up.'*

Jesus doesn't stop them, though. He says that if the people weren't saying it then the rocks themselves would cry out. Jesus *is* the Messiah. He has come to Jerusalem to save his people. But actually, it wasn't the salvation part that was the problem so much as *the way* Jesus would bring Salvation.

The problem was what the people *wanted* - Salvation and Success. For the crowd it meant a Messiah who would march into the city and do hard business with Rome. They wanted to be free from Gentile oppression, even if by force, even if by threats and plagues and a split sea, as they recounted so well in their history. They wanted another exodus, one that expelled the Romans.

Instead, what they got by Friday morning was a bloodied has-been, a man in Roman custody, rejected by their own leaders, standing next to an infamous criminal called Barabbas. They wanted an incomparable king, but they saw a beaten blasphemer. Or so they thought.



And as we feel the deep tragedy of their words, of their blindness, we shouldn't expect that we'd have been any different. The Pharisees and the people had their problems, and so do we. If we know our hearts apart from grace, if we could listen in on this crowd, we'd hear our shouts along with theirs. We'd hear our praise, hollow as it were, and then, by Friday, 'ashamed we'd hear our mocking voice call out among the scoffers.'

It is not the righteous, after all, who Jesus came to save, but sinners. Sinners like us

From a sermon by Pastor Jonathan Parnell (Minneapolis, Minnesota)



This year's theme, '*Seek peace and pursue it*' is based on Psalm 34:14 and reminds us that it is 100 years since the end of World War 1.

Today we have an urgent need to strive to seek peace and pursue it. The service material shares stories from some of the people called by God and sent to become part of local communities, using their gifts and talents to share God's love. They help remind us that God's one mission is both local and international

Hinako, a student at Kwassui Girls' High School, is a third-generation atomic bomb survivor through both sides of her family. Her paternal grandmother experienced the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945,

and has always been willing to talk in detail about her experiences. However, her maternal grandfather, who survived the bombing of Nagasaki three days later, never talked about what happened. When Hinako was in her final year of elementary school, her grandfather became seriously ill. She went to visit him in hospital and was shocked by how weak and thin he was. His mind was still clear, however, and he took her hand and made a last request of her: “Hinako, I’ve never talked to you about the atomic bombing. I’m sorry. I want you to go to secondary school in Nagasaki and learn about peace.”

The Nassar family is a Christian family from Bethlehem who, for a hundred years, have farmed a hilltop area near the village of Nahhalin. Around the farm on the hilltops surrounding it are Israeli settlements. Despite having all the appropriate land deeds for the farm, the family has been in court since 1991 when their land was declared state land. They went to the Supreme Court, which agreed that they owned it. The family was told to re-register the land, but though they have made every effort to do so, the authorities have resisted this in every way. As of spring 2017, they still face action in the courts threatening their land.

Daoud Nassar is one of the sons who runs the farm today. While being a producing farm, it has also become an international centre for peace and for non-violent resistance to the expansion of the settlements and the taking of Palestinian land. It is known as the Tent of Nations. The family extend an international invitation: ‘Come and see; go and tell’ – and many people do. Youth camps are held in the summer, at which Palestinian Muslim and Christian young people come together. The teaching centres around the need to remain friends.

Jesus our Lord gives us his peace.
Peace overflowing from heaven above.
Jesus our Lord gives us his joy,
shines in our dark world the light of his love.

These are the opening lines of a hymn written by *Hinako Ogawa*, expressing her wish that the world can know true peace.



Vivienne Kendall

Say it with flowers

Fairtrade Fortnight 26 February – 11 March

On 24 June 2017 the government announced that it will commit to protecting our current trading relationships with the world's poorest countries when we leave the EU, and 'explore options to expand on relationships' with other developing countries. This means that millions of farmers and workers in 48 countries can breathe a sigh of relief. They have reassurance that they will continue to benefit from tax and quota-free exports post-Brexit, and will not face a £1 billion import tax bill.



This huge commitment follows Fairtrade supporters sending over 5,000 emails to their MPs, along with 38,000 Fairtrade, Traidcraft and Global Citizen supporters asking Liam Fox to act fast on this issue.

The campaign's not over yet, though. There are many developing countries not included in the announcement, such as Ghana and Kenya, who need to know if they too can look forward to improved terms of trade with the UK. And there is still the chance that new trade deals with richer countries such as China, Australia and the US could damage market access for poorer ones.

We are all familiar with the various foods, drinks and other items available with the Fairtrade logo. Possibly, like me, you did not know much about the Fairtrade cut-flower market, particularly roses.

There are almost 50,000 flower workers working with Fairtrade to get a better deal. They grow, harvest, pack and care for the roses so we can enjoy them all year round.

Fairtrade flowers are traceable back to the original farm and if you shop at Sainsbury's you'll notice



the price labels say which farm the flowers have come from. Fairtrade certified farms must ensure safety and working conditions for their employees and a premium of 10% for every stem sold allows workers to invest in healthcare, education and other social benefits. Fairtrade works with flower workers in countries including Kenya, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Uganda and Tanzania.

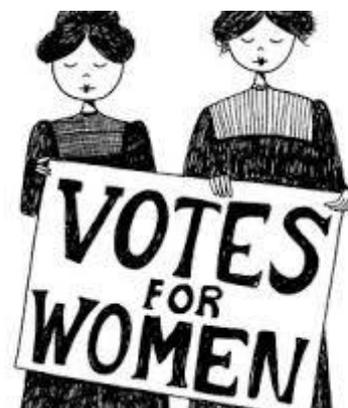
So - whatever the occasion, you can say it with Fairtrade flowers. With 69 shades of rose available across UK there is colour to suit everyone. And with Mothering Sunday coming up on 11 March now's **the** time to support the growers!

Celebrating Women in the Headlines

Mothering Sunday 11 March

In February we remembered the Suffragette Movement which began in 1903 and which was finally able to celebrate the enfranchisement of women in 1918 – albeit only for those women over 30 and only if they met minimum property qualifications or were married to a man who did!

Women could also vote as part of a university constituency if they were a university graduate.



During February, BBC Radio 4 ran a series of programmes asking selected female ‘notables’ to name the most influential British women in their particular fields during the past 100 years. Needless to say that Margaret Thatcher was among those named, along with Marie Stopes (contraceptives), Princess Diana and Rosalind Franklin (DNA studies).

We can all nominate women we think deserve this accolade because they **are** well-known and make headlines. But what about all those women just ‘getting on with it’ and making a difference in their everyday lives; or those women ‘just about coping’ in difficult situations; or those ‘barely surviving’ in war-torn areas? We rarely read about them as individuals.

We rarely see them as individuals, except possibly in TV shots – a face among thousands.

When asked the question, ‘Who is/was the greatest influence in your life?’ I’m pretty sure that most of us, would nominate ‘*My mum*’!

Come and celebrate your mum (or being a mum) at our Mothering Sunday Service on 11 March at 10,30am – mums are worth it!

God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers.

News from The Cedars

Margaret has received the following from the Cedars centre where our sponsored girl, Fatima, is currently attending.

Dear Mrs North

Thank you for the donation of £218 from Southdown Methodist Church.

Around 4,500 people with a variety of disabilities attend Al-Kafaat Foundation (Cedars Capabilities Centre) in Beirut. The name translates to ‘abilities’ and celebrates the foundation’s focus on each student’s abilities rather than their disabilities.



Nadeem Shwayri started Al-Kafaat 1957 as a catering school for girls. Since then, it has grown into a comprehensive rehabilitation complex, based across several centres, and is now under the leadership of Nadeem’s son, Raif Shwari.

The centres ensure disabled and disadvantaged people of all ages and beliefs to contribute to society, following Nadeem’s principle that everyone has great potential.

Children and young adults are welcomed at the centre where Christians, Muslims and Druze live and learn together peacefully. The centre gives dignity and opportunity to those who would otherwise not have the chance to gain any education or learn how to make a living. The students know

that they are safe under the dedicated care of the staff who make this work possible.

Thank you for embracing the work of our Christian partners, who are tireless in their mission to tackle poverty and injustice in the Middle East. Your regular support and prayers are very much appreciated and go a long way towards improving the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

S. Franklin (for Embrace the Middle East)

Against all expectation!

They were not expecting a resurrection. He was gone, crucified, dead and buried, and no one was hanging around in case they met the same fate.

The women went to the tomb early in the morning with oils and ointments but only to tend to a battered corpse.

Some of the men hid in fear behind locked doors and others had already headed out of the city back to the security of home and family.



Fishermen headed back to their boats, carpenters to their tools, prodigal sons and daughters to their dishonoured parents.

But back home things were not the same and could never be for they had been changed by their experiences.

What about the journey to Jerusalem? Had it been a mistake? In time they knew that it had been part of the plan all along to celebrate Passover together in the city and to proclaim the coming reign of God under the noses of the Roman forces of occupation and the compromised Jewish leaders.

Now the followers of Christ knew: **The old life was dead** - the life that had been lived in obedience to religious dogma and rituals of purification.

Every aspect of life governed by laws designed to guide, to order, to control. Laws designed to bring the

people closer to God but which for so many people because of the poverty and hardships of their circumstances in reality acted as a barrier to God.

But now in Christ they lived a new life.

Nothing created by God could be unclean and no one – not the poor, not the sick, not the persecuted – could be beyond God’s blessing and God’s love.

The old life was dead - the life lived in obedience to strict codes of behaviour marking the boundaries of gender, tribe and race with harsh penalties for those who brought dishonour on their families.

But now in Christ they lived a new life.

In Christ there was neither Jew nor gentile, male nor female, slave nor free.

The old life was dead -the life lived in obedience to the powers of this world who rule by use of force or through the privileges of wealth or political cunning. Power exercised by the few regardless of the consequences for the many. Advantage maintained by power, power sustained by any means possible.

But now in Christ they lived a new life.

A life characterised by integrity and justice, by compassion and forgiveness, by turning the other cheek and going the extra mile.

This was the way of Jesus and the Way to God.

The way of dying and rising to new life.

Dying to enslavement, rising to the new life of freedom.

Dying to anxiety, rising to the new life of joy.

Dying to suspicion, rising to the new life of peace.

Dying to indifference, rising to the new life of love.



On Easter Sunday as we gather as his people may we recognise resurrection, in our lives, and in the life of the world, and may we know it to be true.

The old life is dead

Peter Macdonald (*Iona Community*)

Spring - the Bountiful Season

Welcome the first day of spring!

Sitting Bull once said, “Behold, my friend, the Spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!”

While Spring is known for its flowers and showers, it is also recognized as the season of renewal and rebirth. So it's probably not surprising that it's many people's favorite season.

The day the Lord created hope was probably the same day he created Spring. *Bernard Williams*

I suppose the best kind of spring morning is the best weather God has to offer. *Dodie Smith*

Spring is a time to find out where you are, who you are and where you're going.

The spring wakes us, nurtures us and revitalizes us. How often does your spring come? If you are a prisoner of the calendar, it comes once a year. If you are creating authentic power, it comes frequently, or very frequently.

Gary Zukav

Studham Methodist Church

An invitation to a

Quiz Evening

With fish & chip supper



Saturday 10 March

7pm for 7.30pm Tickets £10

Contact: Chrys Smith 01582 872989

smithlaws@hotmail.co.uk

March		
4	Holy Communion Rev John Fellows	10.30am
11	Rev Hilary Oakley	10.30am
18	Parade Service David Crew	10.30am
25	Chapman	10.30am
Messy Church Jenny Cope 768087		
March Friday 3rd in halls 3.30pm – 5.30pm		
Tuesday at Three Jenny Cope		
Meeting in the church 3 – 4pm		
Diary for March		
6	John Farrow	
13	Mmasape	
20	Tba	
27	Easter tea	
Lent study – Vivienne Kendall		
7	Softening hearts again	
14	Fuelling perseverance	
21	Creating transformation	

Making all things new

Lent Studies

The Wednesday evening discussions commence at 7.45pm during March in the lounge.

In the beginning was the God of new beginnings.

He was there because he is the God who was before all beginnings started.

Alpha – the very first but with no starting point.

The only 'I AM' with nothing preceding or needing to make him so.

The only original.

The one true initiator,
The author of the story.
The inventor of the idea.
The establisher of time.
The creator of creativity.

(Embrace the middle East)

*God of every new beginning and every second redemptive chance,
Thank you for placing your renewing love right at the heart of your
creation – and right at the heart of your image in us.*

*Help us to say 'Yes' to every invitation you speak to design brighter
futures for refugees in the Middle East.*

*May we ourselves forget any remaining apathy, stepping forward with you
into demonstrations of restoring love. Amen*