

MINISTER'S LETTER



What do you think Easter is all about?

Easter means so many things to so many people that it is almost impossible to sum up all that it means in words, yet still we try. In so trying we will, in all

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likelihood, each turn to different words to help us to make sense of and explain to others those things that lie at the heart of the Easter story *for us*.

Instead of a letter this month, I give you a word search with no list of words for you to look up and no solutions page to check your work against. I simply invite you to look for words in all directions and to circle them as and when they appear to you. Then think about those words and ask yourself whether they help or hinder you as you seek to make sense of and share this story with others.

Easter blessings

Paul

Note: Random words may appear by accident rather than design!

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More Lent reflections....

Gagging Jesus

Thank you to Andrew for recommending Phil Moore's thought provoking book *Gagging Jesus*. I agree that it is not an easy read and as I progressed through the fifteen most offensive teachings of Jesus, I was challenged.

Particularly challenging was the chapter on different religions where Jesus exposes the Western worldview as arrogant. Arrogant because: it denies the reality of sin; denies that sin must be atoned for through sacrifice; denies our need for God to send a Saviour and denies the uniqueness of Jesus and his cross. At the end of the chapter, the author exhorts us that we need to shake off this arrogance and embrace the true humility of Jesus' statement that he is the only way to God.

The verse '*Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple*' in the chapter on families was also moving. Describing how painful it was to watch those members of his family suffer because of God's call to relocate, Phil says '*As I drove my son from his last day at school to our new home in London, he asked with all the naivety of a child, "Daddy, when everyone in London has started following Jesus can we move back here so I can go to school with all my friends?"*' Ouch!

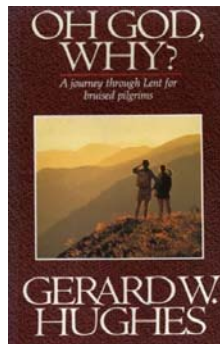
Here is another extract from a book highly recommended:

OH GOD, WHY?

A journey through Lent for bruised pilgrims

by Gerard Hughes

Lent is a time for prayer, so that we can unmask the subtle and destructive forces masquerading under the appearance of good in our own time, in our individual lives, in the life of the Church and of the nation.



The problem is that our spirituality is split: we have split God off from life. We worry about our dwindling numbers, emptying churches, blame secular values and the permissiveness of our age, but increase of numbers and packed churches would not necessarily touch the problem. Perhaps the dwindling numbers are a blessing, if we can use them to reflect on why so many good, generous and intelligent people abandon the practice of formal religious worship.

Here is an imaginative exercise which you can try for yourself.

Imagine a ring at your doorbell one evening and on answering, you discover the visitor is the Risen Lord himself. Somehow, you know it is the Lord. How do you react, what do you do and say? Do you shut the door on him, or tell him to come back on Sunday? Presumably, you welcome him in, summon everyone in the house, and find yourself making such ridiculous statements to the Lord of all creation as 'Do make yourself at home and stay as long as you like. Everything is yours.'

Now take a fortnight's leap in your imagination. Jesus has accepted your invitation and he is still with you. How are things at home now? You remember that disturbing passage in the Gospel where Jesus says, 'I have come not to bring peace, but the sword, to set daughter against mother, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law, son against father.' The letter to the Hebrews says that 'Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be forever', so presumably there has been a bit of friction over family meals in the last two weeks, some members leaving the table, slamming doors, possibly the front door, never to return. You invited Jesus to make himself at home, so he begun inviting his friends to your house. You remember what people said of his friends in the Gospel, how he dined with sinners. What kind of people do you see coming now to your house, what are the neighbours saying, and what is happening to the local property values? Then you decide that you must not keep Jesus all to yourself, so you arrange for him to give a talk at the local

church. You remember the scene in the Gospel where he addresses the scribes, Pharisees and chief priests and assures them that the criminals and the prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before they do. He gives the same message to a gathering of men and women at St Jude's parish and there is uproar, the parish losing its principle benefactors.

You return home with Jesus, your saviour, who has now become your problem. What are you to do? You cannot throw out the Lord of all creation. So you look around the house, find a suitable cupboard, clear it out, decorate it, sparing no expense, get a strong lock on it and put Jesus inside. Outside you can have a lamp and flowers, and each time you pass, bow reverently, so that you now have Jesus and he does not interfere any more!

This is an image which you can use in your own prayer and reflect on afterwards.

Gwen Wildman

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New Wimbledon Studio is running some exciting adult drama & opera workshops this April at New Wimbledon Theatre. For more information contact **Alison Garner** via her email: alisongarner@theambassadors.com

Act! for Adults

Sat 5 April 2013, 11am – 1pm, £12.50 Suitable for ages 18 +

Take to the stage and discover *Fiddler on the Roof* in this practical and fun workshop led by a professional theatre director. Budding performers can learn more about the hit show through building their acting skills and performance techniques in our studio theatre. *Fiddler On The Roof* runs from 1 to 5 April at New Wimbledon Theatre.

Discover Opera: Aida

Sat 12 April 2014, 10.30am – 1.30pm, £40 Suitable for ages 16 +

Following the huge success of *Opera for Beginners*, this practical and theoretical workshop will introduce you to the story of Aida and teach you how to sing and understand opera. This is a unique opportunity to work with an acclaimed professional opera singer.

Christian CARE takes food and other items regularly and long-term to families with little or no money, especially where children are at risk. We try to respond to all appeals for help. Your gifts will help us support more needy families regularly. We prefer **vegetarian food** with **long sell-by dates**.

The following items are *particularly needed*:

Rice – long grain [*not* risotto or dessert] - required in large quantities

Pasta – favourites fusilli and shells and spaghetti

Pasta sauces – tomato, cheese

Cereals – e.g. Cornflakes, Weetabix, Cocopops, Cheerios

Fruit squashes

Fruit juices – e.g. tropical, mango

Drinking/hot chocolate [made with water]

Tea – ordinary in *small packs*, [*not* speciality/herbal]

Coffee - instant

Biscuits – sweet, [*not* savoury]

Sugar

Tinned vegetables – tomatoes, sweetcorn, peas, green beans

Tinned fruit – peaches, pineapple,

Tinned fish – tuna in brine/spring water, mackerel

Tinned desserts – eg custard, rice

Treats – peanut butter, strawberry jam, chocolate spread, honey, crisps, sweets, tomato ketchup

Lunch box items – small drinks cartons, raisins, dips, biscuit bars, jellies and custards

Nappies – all sizes

Baby wipes, baby bath, baby lotion, baby talc, baby shampoo

We can *rarely use*:

Soups, tins of spaghetti, marmalade, mushy peas, curry sauces, tinned beans /pulses

There will be a large box clearly marked as food items for Christian CARE in the vestibule of the church hall during April for donations.

Extreme Mother

Taken from: Extreme devotion, the voice of the martyrs from the co-authors of Jesus freaks. Serious followers of Jesus pay a price, and extreme followers often pay the ultimate price. Each story is true.

Susannah Wesley was born in 1668, in England, when the state church and government crushed any form of Christian worship or education not controlled by them. This determined Christian woman began programs of Christian education for adults in her kitchen and daily with her children.

In 1662, six years before Susannah was born, the English government passed a law forcing the state church's Book of Common Prayer in all worship services. Two thousand clergy were forced to resign.

In 1664, a law was passed forbidding more than five people who were not family members to worship together without a state official. In 1665, the Five Mile Act was passed aimed at Nonconformist ministers who were forbidden to come within five miles where they had founded a congregation. This law was upheld for almost 150 years. Soldiers destroyed meeting houses and took away furniture and Christian books. Five thousand Nonconformist Christians died in prison.

Although Susannah was associated at times with the official church, she refused to be a "Sunday-only" Christian. Her angry neighbours burned her fields and stabbed the three cows that gave milk to her family. They called her children "the little devils." One of her children, John Wesley, the founder of the Methodists, led a great spiritual awakening in England. He had learned perseverance from his mother.

Many believe the reason England did not experience a bloody revolution, in the same way that France was terrorised, is due to the Christian revival that began among the poor in Great Britain. This spiritual revival was led, in part, by John Wesley who also championed practical help, education, jobs and food. Did the influence of his mother, Susannah Wesley, help to save England? Your influence for Christ does change history. Even if we don't have biological parents or grandparents like the Wesleys who pass down the Christian faith to us, God gives us a spiritual family to nurture and love us. Who is your spiritual mother or father -- someone who taught you about Christ? To whom can you be a spiritual brother or sister?

I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. (2 Timothy 1:5)



FAITH IN ACTION

helping with homelessness

10 years helping the Homeless in Merton

Merton Faith in Action set up in 2004 and have a day time Drop-In Centre at the Salvation Army Citadel in Kingston Road, South Wimbledon. Every Wednesday and Friday it provides a warm and safe environment for about 65 homeless and vulnerable people.

Each year Merton Faith in Action:

- Prepares and serves over 7000 meals

- Runs over 600 laundry washes

- Provides over 3000 showers

- Distributes over 800 food parcels

- Gives out over 80 sleeping bags

- Supplies warm clothes including coats, jumpers and shoes

Faith In Action's main purpose is to offer friendship and provide meals to those who come to the Drop-In. It also provides professional support and advice alongside a team of dedicated volunteers who cook meals and give companionship to all who need it. Many service users have complex problems relating to mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and the professional project workers put them in touch with agencies that can help them.

Those working at the Drop-In Centre also provide help with finding somewhere to live, job applications and benefit claims.

Faith In Action works closely with the Winter Night Shelters, which provide places in Merton for 12 people between December and March.

It costs £7,000 a month to keep the Drop-In Centre open twice a week all year round. We urge you to support the Square Meal Appeal - £5 a month pays for two Square Meals each month.

To find out more the website www.mertonfaithinaction.org or to give a donation visit www.justgiving.com/faithinaction



As part of the wider work of St Raphael's, the **Jubilee Centre** gives day care support to patients who are living in the community. The Centre offers complementary therapies, creative activities,

chaplaincy, music therapy, counselling, bathing and hairdressing. It also hosts a monthly carers lunch where relatives can access free advice from a solicitor, CAB worker, Age UK and a social worker. One patient said that attending the Jubilee Centre each week made her "feel human again".

This is just one of the services provided to residents of Merton and Sutton who are facing life-limiting illnesses. The hospice also has an in-patient unit, community care nurses, a Hospice@Home service and bereavement counsellors.

St Raphael's Hospice was founded in 1987 by the Daughters of the Cross of the Liege and has recently become independent from another of



its works – St Anthony's Hospital. In January, **Mike Roycroft** was appointed as CEO of St Raphael's. Mike says "I have a clear mandate to ensure a strong and vibrant future for the hospice. Together with our many supporters throughout the community, and with God's help, I have every confidence that we will succeed in building on all that has been good in the past and the best of what is new to become stronger and even better."

The hospice needs over £5 million each year to continue to provide vital care services and only 20% of this comes from the NHS. Many individuals, churches and community groups support us financially and we are most grateful for this. Our annual fundraiser 'Make Your Will Fortnight' is from May 9-23rd when local solicitors waive their usual fee in favour of a donation to the hospice, visit www.makeyourwill.org.uk. Another way people help us is through sponsored places in running and cycle events such as the London Marathon or Ride London. For more details of these or other ways you can get involved, phone me on 020 8254 2464 or email rosey.johnson@straphaelshospice.org.uk

Rosey Johnson



**CHRISTIAN
SOLIDARITY
WORLDWIDE**
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

JESUS' SUFFERING

In the run up to Easter we are surrounded by symbols of new beginnings, representing Jesus' resurrection from the grave. But before he was raised to life, he suffered terribly and died in agony. During Holy Week, please pray for Christians and others across the world who endured harassment, violence and worse, just because of what they believe.

Before he went to the cross, Jesus told his disciples about the suffering he was going to go through, and concluded with these words:

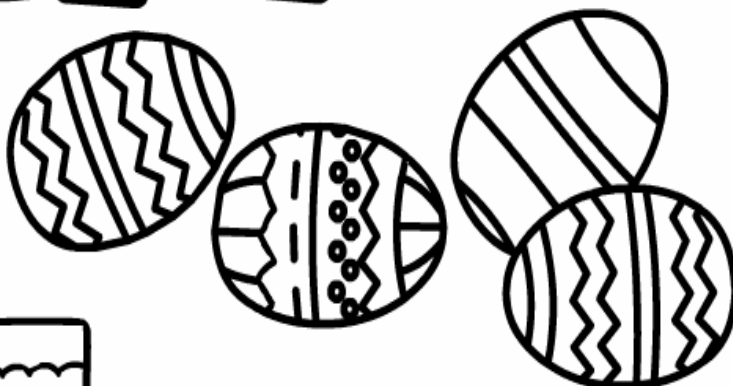
"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Please stand with us in prayer:

- pray for those who have been abandoned by friends or family because of their beliefs;
- pray for people who were falsely accused to cover up the fact that they were imprisoned for their beliefs;
- pray for justice for the hundreds of Muslims and Christians in Pakistan charged falsely with blasphemy;
- pray for provisions for Christians in Zanzibar who are taken to court on baseless charges aimed at using up their meagre resources in legal fees;
- pray for four Christians in Iran who were sentenced last year to 80 lashes for taking communion;
- ask God to comfort the families of those who have been killed because of their religious beliefs;

LENT REFLECTION: Read Luke 4:18-19 and pray for freedom for the poor, oppressed, and those unjustly imprisoned.

EASTER COLOURING





FAIRTRADE RECIPES

Hot Cross Buns Makes about 12 buns.



Ingredients

50g, plus 1 level tsp, caster sugar
1 level tbs dried yeast
450g plain flour
1 level tsp salt
1 rounded tsp mixed spice
125g Tropical Wholefoods
Fairtrade Raisins
40-55 ml warmed milk
1 egg, beaten
50 g butter, melted

For the glaze

2 tbs granulated sugar
2 tbs water

For the crosses

4 oz (110 g) plain flour and 3 tbs water
You will also need a greased baking sheet.

1. First stir the teaspoon of caster sugar into 150 ml hand-hot water, then sprinkle in the dried yeast and leave it until a good frothy 'beer' head forms.
2. Meanwhile sift the flour, salt and mixed spice into a mixing bowl and add the remaining 50 g of sugar, and the raisins.
3. Make a well in the centre, pour in the yeast mixture plus 40 ml of milk (again hand-hot), the beaten egg and the melted butter. Now mix it to a dough, starting with a wooden spoon and finishing with your hands (add a spot more milk if it needs it).
4. Transfer the dough on to a clean surface and knead it until it feels smooth and elastic – about 6 minutes.
5. Now pop it back into the bowl, cover the bowl with a lightly oiled plastic bag, and leave it in a warm place to rise – it will take about an hour to double its original size.
6. Turn it out and knead it again, back down to its original size.
7. Divide the mixture into 12 round portions, arrange them on the greased baking sheet (allowing plenty of room for expansion). Leave them to rise once more, covering again with the oiled plastic bag, for about 25 minutes. Meanwhile pre-heat the oven to 220C/425F/gas mark 7.
8. For the crosses, mix the flour and water, roll out very thinly and divide into small strips, dampen and place on top of the buns before baking.
9. Bake the buns for about 15 minutes. While they're cooking, make the glaze by melting the sugar and water over a gentle heat. Brush the buns with the glaze as soon as they come out of the oven, to make them nice and sticky.



The Passion of Jesus

The huge Wintershall cast – including a donkey and horses - in colourful costumes, realistic scenes and a heart moving crucifixion and resurrection, The Passion of Jesus makes a great impact.

The Passion of Jesus has grown enormously over the years and is no longer performed only at Wintershall and goes out to the people, in London, Trafalgar Square every Good Friday and in Guildford on Easter Saturday, and new for 2014 Staines on Easter Saturday. In 2013 it was live streamed onto the internet and went all round the world.

Now a regular, and highly praised addition to Easter in London, the Passion is free and attracts up to 20,000 people for each of its two performances at 12 noon and at 3.15 p.m. on Good Friday.

Big screens are used so wherever you are you can see and hear the acting. BSL interpreters will be available for both London performances.

The Staines Passion

For the first time ever Staines shoppers will be able to witness the Passion on Easter Saturday 2014 at 12 noon and at 2.30 p.m. in the memorial gardens just off Staines High Street.



The Guildford Passion

Guildford shoppers are enthralled but originally unexpected with the Passion on Easter Saturday at 12 noon and at 2.30 pm in the High Street.

The action starts with the trial of Jesus at the corner of Quarry Street ending with the crucifixion and resurrection outside Holy Trinity Church at the top of the High Street.



the Elizabethan Floral Arrangement Society



We have regular workshops where you can learn how to create stunning floral arrangements for your home from everyday garden flowers and foliage.

Watch Floral Art demonstrations by experts
Build a wider knowledge of plants and gardening

We meet at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday of every month at
Martin Way Methodist Church
Merton SW20 9JZ

Visitors Fee £5.00

For more information contact James Long
tel:07939 357959
email: jamesefas@hotmail.co.uk

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Raynes Park Methodist Church celebrates 100 years

On **SATURDAY 17th MAY**, Raynes Park Methodist Church buildings will be open to everyone from 10.30am to 3.30pm. There will be a Flower Festival, an exhibition of historical artefacts and a presentation of the Church's history.



The Lantern Arts' Studios will also be open to view and refreshments will be available in the Coffee Shop.

From 2.30pm to 6.00pm there will be a re-union of past and present members, followed by tea and entertainment, but this is by invitation only.

On **SUNDAY 18th MAY**, worship at 10.30am will be led by Revd Margaret Adams, and the guest preacher will be Dr Daleep Mukarji, Vice President of the Methodist Conference. Refreshments will be served in the Bond Hall after the service when a celebration cake will be cut.

Please come along and help us celebrate our 100 years in Raynes Park.

David Mortimer

CHURCH DIARY



Tue	1	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	4	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	5		<i>Spring Harvest (to 9th April)</i>
Sun	6	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	8	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	15	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by David Eagle
Mon	14	7.30 pm	Easter Meditation
Tues	15	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Hugh Proctor</i> - Fun with Numbers
		7.30 pm	Easter Meditation
Weds	16	7.30 pm	Easter Meditation
Thurs	17	7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Fri	18	10.30 am	Good Friday United Service at Merton Park Baptist Church
Sun	20	6.30 am	Sunrise Service on Cannon Hill Common followed by Breakfast at Martin Way at 7.30am
		10.30 am	Easter Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	22	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	25	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club

Sun 27 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Brenda Cannon
 12.30am-1.30pm Church General Meeting
 6.30 pm Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis

Tue 29 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
 8.00 pm Time for Prayer

*Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk)
 or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

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We wish all of those who celebrate a
 birthday
 in April a very

Happy Birthday

and especially to:

Celia Johnson on 4th April
Rosie Randall on 10th April
Phoebe Pallister on 29th April

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MARTIN WAY MAY FAIR

Saturday 10th May ~ 10.30am-2.30pm

- We need prizes for the Raffle. Can you or someone you know donate a voucher or a gift for children or adults?
- Do you have any small gifts or items that might be suitable for the children's lucky dip?
- Jane Bryan is organising a Jar Tombola. Please start collecting jars and filling them as soon as possible. You can fill them with anything you like - be creative! Filled jars can be given to Jane.
- Save you old books for the Book Stall - but please don't bring them along just yet.
- We also need helpers on the day.

Please speak to Anne Conquest if you can help with any of these things.

FLOWERS

Do you have a special anniversary coming up? Are there loved ones whom you wish to remember? Perhaps you just like seeing an arrangement of flowers at the front of the church, although we are looking at other places where they might be more eye-catching. If so, perhaps you would like to sign up on the chart on the noticeboard in the corridor just outside the church, under the “donor” column, where you will see a list of dates. Anyone is welcome to sign up to donate flowers for a particular Sunday. You do not necessarily have to purchase the flowers, but you can inform your arranger should you want a particular colour scheme or a specific flower.



Perhaps you have a hidden talent for arranging flowers. You are more than welcome to sign up in the “arranger” column.

Maybe you would like to donate and arrange your own flowers as several people do, although there is a flower fund for those occasions where there is nobody donating.

Do you know of anyone who would appreciate receiving the church flowers? This does not necessarily have to be a member of the congregation. It could be a friend or neighbour or anyone who would appreciate a visit.

And is there anyone who would be able to help with the distribution of the flowers? Ideally this would need to be done on a Sunday provided there was no evening service, or the Monday.

If the answer to any of these questions is a definite or even a tentative YES, then come and talk to Sue, Gwen Wildman, Brenda or myself and we can reassure you that none of this is too onerous!

Lesley Mortley

Items for the **May Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox,
(email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 20th April** at the latest