**RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH**

Eastwood Road, Rayleigh

**Minister**

Rev. Stephen Watts 01268 770333

**Coordinating Steward**

Mrs Pat Norman01268 781896

**THE NEWSLETTER**

**MARCH 2019**

**Friends**, we are well into the new year now and it will not be long before we have the shorts back on and we are lounging by the pool. That is the impression given by some of the TV being thrust our way at the moment. We seem to race through the seasons without time to enjoy them, although I guess its not much fun when your out of the sun and your bones are creaking!

I know there will be many more cold wet days, that is where we live, but do try to keep warm.

Also you might like to try reading, maybe something different. Having just renewed our covenant with God in the Methodist church it is interesting to see what other church leaders have to say when there is renewal. In particular I am thinking of the apostle Paul, himself new as a christian and what he has to say to churches which are springing up in response to the word of God and his love through Jesus Christ and his disciples.

Read Paul’s letters to the Corinthians for an idea of what what expected in the early church in response to what was happening. It did not always go right and he has a lot to say about that. Remember you do not have to always agree with what he says, but he is determined to build God’s along the right lines with its people pulling together.

There is a lot we can learn from his teaching about church today and what we should be doing. Make a comparison, draw up opposing lists, and then ask yourself, where am I in all this, what should I be doing.

It will be interesting to see if there is a response to this letter, because life is sometimes about how we respond in times of need. Merely to sit passively on the bank of the river watching it roll by is not what we should be doing. Sometimes it helps to get your feet wet!

Every Blessing Steve

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**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

Congratulations and best wishes to Eric Weeks, who celebrated his 90th birthday recently.

We have missed seeing Pat and Les Oatley, who have not been well, but we send good wishes and  hope they will soon feel better.

We are sorry to announce the death of Jim Smith, a long-standing member of our church family.
Loving sympathy is sent to his wife Valerie and all the family.

 Please send details of any special birthdays or anniversaries during the year.

There is now a Braille version of Singing the Faith available in the Vestry .

Val Tyler

**LADIES CLUB**

**Our programme for March is as follows:**

6 March - Tracy Kemsley - Life as a Policewoman

13 March - David Tweddle - Venice

20 March - Westwood Singers

27 March - Anniversary Tea

3 April - Easter service

Elizabeth Ellis

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**WESLEY GUILD**

**Our programme for March is as follows:**

 7 March HOME SECURITY

 Ian Davidson

14 March No Meeting

16 March Anniversary Dinner

 (Ticket Only)

17 March Anniversary Service

 Rev Stephen Watts

21 March “Love Island (Isle of Wight)

7:30 pm Start

28 March Rev John Stanton

Margaret Flintham

**Coffee Morning**

**for**

**The Leprosy Mission**

**(DILYS HAND)**

**on**

**Saturday 23 March 2019**

**10.00 to 12.00 noon**

***It will include the following stalls, cakes cards, books, bric-a-brac,***

***and much more***

**Experience**

Experience is something you don’t get until just after you need it.

**Moses and IT**

When you think about it, Moses was the first one to download files from the cloud, using a tablet.

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**MAKING SENSE OF LENT**

This month sees the start of Lent, the six-week period leading up to Easter. In the early Church, it was a time when new converts were instructed in the faith, ready for their baptism at Easter. Over the years, Lent has become a season of penitence, self-examination and fasting.  Jesus began His earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and taught his disciples to fast, ‘when you fast..’ (Matthew 6:17). Fasting might involve missing one or two meals in a day, refraining from TV or alcohol, or whatever gets in the way of us fully focusing on God. What are the reasons for fasting?

* The act of giving up something is a tangible sacrifice to God, reminding us of our desire to put him first in our lives.
* Giving up things I value shows me how depend I can be on other things rather than God. Fasting helps me to surrender my ‘idols’ to God.
* When fasting I am reminded of a deeper hunger and need for God in my life: ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.’ (Matthew 5:6). I learn to be more dependent on God, while releasing the stuff I depend on in my life.

**Lent can also be a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines eg joining a study group,**‘random acts of kindness’**, giving more time to prayer and Bible study Whatever you do, have a great Lent!**

**THOUGHTS**

**Happy**

Never miss an opportunity to make others happy, even if you have to leave them alone in order to do it.

**Science**

Protons have mass? I didn’t even know they were Catholic.

**TV**

The mind is like a television…when it goes blank, it’s a good idea to turn off the sound.

**Unique**

Always remember you’re unique. Just like everyone else.

**Don’t’ lie**

If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.

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**5 March – SHROVE TUESDAY:  Pancake Day**

Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent?  The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.

So on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be ‘shriven’, or absolved from their sins, which gives us Shrove Tuesday.   At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today’s pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire.  She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession.  Afraid she’d be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Flipping pancakes is also centuries old.  A poem from Pasquil’s Palin in 1619 runs: “And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne.”

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life,  salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity.

Shrove Tuesday is always 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between 3rd February and 9th March.

**GIVE YOUR GARDEN BIRDS A FEAST!**

March is a hungry time for birds, but you can easily help them.  Here are some things they will love:

Seed and grains like nyjer, millet, oats, and sunflower seeds.
Unsalted peanuts fit for human consumption. (cut them up, or the chicks could choke)
Cooked pasta, rice and boiled potatoes.
Grated cheese, unsalted uncooked bacon rind,
Raisins and sultanas (be careful! These are poisonous for dogs)
Suet and fat balls. Mealworms and waxworms.
Apples, pears and soft fruits, cut small.

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**6 March – Ash Wednesday:  a good time to admit you are sorry**

Have you done something which haunts you?  Which makes you feel restless and defensive, every time you think of it?  Why not deal with it this month, and put it behind you?   Whatever your mistake has been, consider what the Bible has to say to you:

‘I have not come to call the virtuous but sinners to repentance’ (said Jesus). (Luke 5.32)

‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  (Isaiah 55.7)

‘Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.  Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.’  (Joel 2:12-13)

God is inviting you to come to him this Ash Wednesday.  What a wonderful offer!   Make the most of it and remember how the prodigal son was welcomed back by his compassionate father.

**31 March – Mothering Sunday : 4th Sunday in Lent**

The Fourth Sunday in Lent was called ‘Mid-Lent’ or ‘Refreshment Sunday’, when the rigours of Lent were relaxed more than was normal for a feast day. It is called Mothering Sunday as a reference to the Epistle reading for the Day (Galatians 4:21-31).  The Lenten Epistles follow from each other with teaching about our life as Christians and how we are to follow Christ.

On Mid-Lent Sunday the Epistle talks of bondage and freedom; the bondage of the Law and the Old Covenant as compared to the freedom in Christ, “the promised one”, and the New Covenant. Verse 26 reads “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”  We gain our freedom from Christ and, as it was seen before the Reformation, the Church.

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Thus, Mothering Sunday is about the freedom that we gain through the promise of Jesus Christ delivered through our Mother the Church.  People were encouraged to go to their ‘Mother Church’ (their home church or their home Cathedral) to worship and give thanks.  Hence apprentices, and others, went home for the weekend and often brought gifts (or accumulated pay) home to their family.

On the other hand, Mother’s Day is a secular festival invented in 1904 and is celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in May in most countries in the world.  The UK seems to be the exception. In recent years Mothering Sunday has been hijacked to take the place of a special, secular day to give thanks for our mothers.

**It WAS**

80 years ago, that the fictional superhero Batman made his first appearance, in Detective Comics no. 27.

75 years ago, from 24th to 25th March 1944 that World War 2’s ‘Great Escape’ took place.  76 Allied prisoners broke out of the Stalag Luft III prisoner-of-war camp near Sagan, Germany after digging tunnels.  73 were recaptured and 50 executed.  The event was dramatised in the classic film The Great Escape.

60 years ago, on 9th March 1959 that the Barbie doll was launched at the International Toy Fair in New York City, USA.

50 years ago, on 4th March 1969 that British gangsters Ronald and Reginald Kray (the Kray twins) were found guilty of murdering the criminals Jack McVitie (‘Jack the Hat’) and George Cornell.  They were sentenced to life imprisonment.

40 years ago, on 26th March 1979 that The Camp David Peace Accord was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, ending 30 years of war.

30 years ago, on 12th March 1989 that Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Webb while working at CERN.

25 years ago, on 12th March 1994 that the first women priests in the Church of England were ordained.

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**17 March – St Patrick: beloved apostle to Ireland**

St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland.  If you’ve ever been in New York on St Patrick’s Day, you’d think he was the patron saint of New York as well… the flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz.

It’s all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland.   Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde.  But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master’s herds.

Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer.  He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he “knew not the true God”.

Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country.  He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland.

After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family.  But he was much changed.  He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted.

But by 435, well-educated or not, Patrick was badly needed.   Palladius’ mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery.  He set up his see at Armagh, and worked principally in the north.    He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick’s writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church.  They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care.   He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ.

**Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as, of course, is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.**

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1. **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE**
2. at
3. Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Church, London Hill, Rayleigh, SS6 7HP
4. on
5. **FRIDAY 1ST MARCH AT 1.30PM**
6. There is parking at the rear of the church
7. This service is for everyone, -  ladies and gentlemen, and takes the form of a service of thanksgiving, hymns, prayers and narration from the Women of Slovenia. It usually lasts for about 1 hour. After the service we meet together with tea/coffee and cake. Please come.
8. Please feel free to join us. If you would like more information please contact Penny Gendall on 01268 750324 or phg7782@gmail.com

**DO YOU LOVE SINGING?**  Come and join Rayleigh’s BIG Sing!  We welcome all singers, you do not have to be pitch-perfect, maybe you just like singing in the shower.  Whatever your reasons for coming, you will find that we are one big happy family, uniting together to sing positive and uplifting songs. Sessions cost £7.00 per week pay as you go.  No joining fees or termly commitments.  We meet Wednesdays at the Rayleigh Baptist Church from 7-9pm.  We look forward to seeing you.

We also have our LITTLE Sing choir for primary school ages (5-11yrs), just £4.00 a week PAYG!!

**Edie Farrell
Big Sing Tutor & Admin**
**Social Media Manager
The BIG Sing & From The Heart Productions Ltd**
A: 66 Sheepcote Drive, Long Lawford, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 9FG T: +44 [0]1376 512292

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**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME FOR MARCH IS AS FOLLOWS**

 4 March Social Afternoon with Raffle

11 March SpeakersElaine and John

                   "Northern Lights Cruise"

18 March      Speaker David Clarke

                     "Illustrated Talk"

25 March     Speaker Sheila Cooper

                      "Musical Afternoon"

Elaine Blades

**Grannie**

After church, the mother asked her young son if he had enjoyed Sunday School.  “Oh yes,” he replied.  “My new teacher is pretty cool – she is Jesus’ grand-mother.”
Startled, his mother asked what made him think that. “Obvious, she never stops talking about Jesus,” he replied.

**Adam & Eve**
At Sunday School the children were learning how God created everything, including human beings.  Little Josh was especially intent when the teacher told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam’s ribs.   Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down and looking scared.   “Josh, what is the matter?”
Josh whispered “I have pain in my side. I think I’m going to have a wife.”

**Hair-cut**

A minister, known for his lengthy sermons, noticed a man leave during the middle of his message. The man returned as the service concluded. Afterwards the minister asked the man where he had gone.  “I went to get a hair-cut,” was the reply.
“But,” protested the minister, “why didn’t you do that before the service?”
“Because,” said the man, “I didn’t need one then.”

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* + 1. **RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH**
1. **PRAYER GROUP MEETING DATES**
2. **2019**
3. *March: 13th & 27th. April: 10th & 24th.*
4. *May: 8th & 22nd. June: 5th & 19th.*
5. *July 3rd & 17th. NO MEETING IN AUGUST.*
6. *September: 11th & 25th. October: 9th & 23rd.*
7. *November: 6th & 20th. December: 4th.*
8. ALL MEETINGS ARE IN THE WELCOME AREA, COMMENCING AT 9.30AM, FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES.

1. ***FROM THE EDITORS WE NEED YOUR ARTICLES for the APRIL 2019 EDITION***
2. *The deadline for the submission of articles for this edition of the Newsletter is Sunday* ***10 MARCH 2019*** *( in Welcome Area) or Wednesday* ***13 MARCH*** *b y post or email.*
3. ***johnward816@gmail.com***
4. **Bible Study** at Clifford and Linda's house at 10am on 29 March 2019, theme, “Women who had contact with Jesus ”.

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**SERVICES**

**Sunday Services**  10:45 am and (6:30 pm 2nd and 4th Sunday)

**Junior Church**  10:45 am

**Mid-Week Communion**

With the exception of August it is held on the third Tuesday of each month in the WESLEY ROOM at 10:30 am.

**REGULAR WEEKLY MEETINGS**

**Monday**

1:15pm Sunbeams Parent and Toddler Group

2:30 pm Women's Fellowship

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

1:45pm – 3:15pm Ladies Club

4:15 pm-5:30 pm Rainbows

5:45 pm -7:15 pm Brownie Guides

7:00 pm-8.45pm Guides

**Thursday**

10:00 am Care and Share

5.15 pm- 6.15pm Beavers

6:30 pm - 7:45 pm Cubs

8:00 pm – 9:30pm Scouts

8:00 pm Wesley Guild (Sept to May only)

**Friday**

4:30 pm-5:45 pm Rainbows

5:30 pm-7:00 pm Brownie Guides

7:15 pm -9:00 pm Guides

7:15 pm -9:00 pm Guides Senior Section (fortnightly)

**Preschool**

Mon 9:15 am to 11:45 am

Tues Weds Thurs Friday 9:15-11:45 am and 12:30-3:00 pm

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