

The Good Shepherd Church
Park Road Loughborough
March Focus 2016

Please see the reverse for Services, meetings and other events.

"Create in me a new heart"

Easter is getting closer, but we are still in Lent - the 40 days period of preparation for Easter where confession and repentance are central.

I've been thinking a lot about repentance and forgiveness. We won't repent or ask for forgiveness if we don't feel we've done wrong - sinned. God has given us a conscience - that almost indefinable part of us that 'tells' us when we have done wrong. From my understanding of Scripture, our consciences have not escaped the effect of the Fall and of sin in our lives. At one end of the 'spectrum' our conscience might be much less sensitive than it should be or even 'dead' in some areas. Paul, writing to Timothy (1:15), talks of a 'defiled' conscience. A conscience that has been 'darkened and numbed by continual consent to evil' (William Barclay). The conscience is so quietened that we hardly hear it.

I know that my conscience is dulled in some areas of life: I have rationalised, justified, or excused what I've done rather than facing up to the fact that I've sinned! So I don't feel the need for forgiveness - my conscience has been 'silenced' (alas).

At the other end of the spectrum Paul talks about those with a 'sensitive' conscience. [Rom 14:2 in its context]. What he is saying is that in some situations our conscience 'condemns' us for things that if our Christian faith was more developed we would see our conscience had got it wrong.

There are areas where I am angst-ridden because of my past. I have asked God to forgive me, and I believe He has ... but I can't forgive myself. My conscience is wrongly condemning me. When I stand back and think about this carefully I realise how ludicrous this is: God has paid a stunning price that I might be forgiven (that's part of what Easter teaches us!). He has forgiven me but I say to myself that this is not enough, it doesn't 'count' unless I can forgive myself! How nonsensical this is! By analogy: say I have been convicted of a crime and have to pay a fine, but someone else steps forward to pay the fine for me but I insist that I pay it as well! What does that say about the value I put on the Person Who stepped in to pay the penalty for me??

Wherever we are at, Lent gives us the chance to wait quietly on God and to talk through different areas of our life with Him, in prayer. Then we can ask His forgiveness, repent and move forward knowing we are in a right relationship with God. That is one of the wonderful benefits coming from the first Easter.

With every Blessing Bryan Johnston

Contacts For Further Information

www.goodshepherdloughborough.org.uk

For Contacts please phone.

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March 2016 News, Views and Calendar

Church Services in March. Every Sunday Morning

8am

Holy Communion Traditional Prayer Book (BCP)

10am Services

March 6th **Mothering Sunday** Holy Communion & Sunday Club

March 13th Morning Worship

March 20th **Palm Sunday** Holy Communion & Sunday Club

March 27th **Easter Sunday** Holy Communion & Sunday Club

Sunday Prayer Meeting

March 13th 4pm.

Every Wednesday Morning 9.30am

Holy Communion (said)

Tuesday Prayer Meeting 9.30am



Parish Breakfast. March 6th 8.45am.

Please do try to come along.



Home Groups

Thursday Ladies' study group

2-3.30pm Please contact Jackie for details 01509 212207. New members welcome.

Tuesday Group 8pm

8 Freesia Close.



**March
19th
4.30pm**

Monday Club 6pm
Meets every Monday

Stage Group

Rehearsals every
Wednesday 7.30pm

Toddler Group

Meets every Friday
Morning 10am -
11.30am.

Wednesday Friendly Meets 2.30

March 2nd
March 9th
March 16th No meeting
March 23rd Spring lunch

Christian Aid Lunch

There is **NO** Christian Aid Lunch in March

Good Friday The Passover Meal.

On Good Friday 25th March commencing at 6.30pm we will be holding a Passover meal. The Passover meal is a Jewish tradition and one that Jesus himself would have celebrated. On the evening, Keith Munroe will explain to us, each stage of the meal and its significance as we all participate. The evening will also include Communion. This will be a very informative and enjoyable evening giving us all an in-site into this Jewish Tradition. A hot supper will be provided during the evening. The event will finish by 8pm. Please do try to come along.

Easter Flowers and Memorial List.

As in past years we will display in Church on Easter Sunday a memorial list of names for those we wish to remember. If you would like the name(s) of loved ones departed to be included please enter them onto the list in the Vestibule (please print the name clearly). Also flowers will go back into the Church on Easter Sunday. If you would like to make a contribution to this please leave it in the box in the Vestibule. Any monies unused at Easter will go towards flowers for the rest of the year



Annual Parish Meeting.

A reminder that this important meeting in the life of the Church will take place Immediately after coffee on Sunday April 24th. **PLEASE DO TRY TO STAY.**

Rev. Susan Willetts.

A reminder that the Service of Collation and Induction of Susan as our new Vicar will take place on Tuesday 26th April 7.30pm. Please do come along to give Susan a Warm Welcome

Don't Forget!
Clocks go forward
1 hour Sunday am.
27th March.

