

Talking Point - March 2020

COOKE CHURCH

Reaching Out | Engaging | Growing



www.cooke.church

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104311)

Lent

Find these words having to do with the liturgical season of Lent in the puzzle below. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all directions.

H K Y G N I T S A F L F P W Z Z Y L G Y
 F L T T Y P L N Y G Z R R C D F G Z X T
 T R W W R R H H Q N Q Q T R Y N L N K N
 A S H E S A M T L P M M R A G K C K J O
 Y V D H Y Y C K D J E D D Z E H X P S I
 W Z L J J E P K K D R S H E P X R N A T
 M P Z W P R R T I K E X W R K E W O C A
 M L E K T M T T D N X Y M T P O D I R I
 M M Q N L N A Z D X L J F A R C R X I L
 G M Y G A T F E H O R M R R T P Q I F I
 Z N K C I N W Z H W X E O K P Q C F I C
 H B I O R H C P V P L S Z Q B N F I C N
 T Y N V S M Q E L X K Y F T W F X C E O
 N K C A I H D T K T T Q K B N V C U Q C
 T K S T P G W B S T W T L P M L Z R L E
 W B T P L K S L W S W C Z W B C F C X R
 R T N V R T L M Z N O C R N N T G P D N
 G N E K Y I R W L F O R G I V E N E S S
 Y N L K H N N C T A G T C R Q R B T M V
 D N K J K L D G R E T S A E Z N X C V G

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|---------------|----------------|
| alms giving | lent |
| ashes | meditation |
| Ash Wednesday | penance |
| cross | prayer |
| crucifixion | prepare |
| Easter | reconciliation |
| fasting | sacrifice |
| forgiveness | sorrow |
| Holy Week | spring |

A WORD FROM MORRIS

Life will get more hectic than normal during the first week in March as I have had to arrange a week of activities for the Moderator of the General Assembly, Right Reverend William Henry. The Moderator is visiting the South Belfast Presbytery as one of his 3 Presbytery tours this year. He will be visiting a number of congregations and projects during the week as well as schools, Queen's University and a courtesy call on the Lord Mayor of Belfast. He's coming to our Community Lunch in Cooke on the Thursday so if you're free come along and meet him.

It's a bit like when you have relatives from overseas coming to stay who want to visit the old country. The first thing that happens is the whole house needs redecorated. It is said that the Queen when she arrives anywhere is greeted by the smell of fresh paint! So where do you take them? Well, a trip to the Giant's Causeway is a must and then down to Newcastle and the Mountains of Mourne. What about the Titanic Centre and the Ulster American Folk Park? There is a big family gathering and the house is full and someone spills red wine on the new carpet. It is with an exhausted sigh of relief that you drop them off at the airport for their flight home!

After a day or two to recover you might reflect on the time spent with your long lost cousins. You might have seen places in your own country that you had not been to before. Instead of taking this place for granted you may feel a bit more proud of our wee country and above all else they might have been very nice people. You might even have got an invitation to visit them in their home.

Too often we take for granted the things that others are amazed by and sometimes when we are forced to look at them again we see them in a different light. Even in arranging the Moderator's visit I have become more acutely aware of some of the great things that congregations are doing in their local communities. Our denomination is far from perfect but we do some important and unheralded work in Jesus' name. I hope to appreciate it more as I accompany the Moderator during that week but I will breath a little more easily as Monday morning 9 March dawns and life gets back to normal.

Morris Gault

FOODSTORE@COOKE

Thank you very much to everyone for donating so generously to the Foodstore. We have given out 8 food hampers in February. The following are in short supply: Pasta sauces, fruit juice, spaghetti, rice, breakfast cereal and dilutable juice. A box is available in the Reception area for your donations.

CHURCH RAILINGS

Over the next number of weeks the Church gates and railings are being refurbished. The gates at the North Parade side have already been removed.

CLOTHING BAG APPEAL

21st/22nd March 2020

We hope after reading the church magazine last month that everyone will have made an early start at collecting items for the clothing bag appeal.

We are collecting all good quality clothing, however we aren't accepting quilts or duvets.

In the event you didn't get a bag or if you need additional bags please collect them from the Campbell Reception Area or contact Joan on 02890640395.

Bags are to be returned on Saturday 21st March between 11am and 12pm and Sunday 22nd March from 10:30am to 1pm.

We had a great response last year and we thank you in advance for your support this year.

DEATHS

Sarah (Sadie) Gilmore

117 Kimberley Street

31 January 2020

FLOWER TEAM

March	Joan Hamilton
April	Eleanor Brennan
May	Jean Wilson
June	Pamela McWilliams
July	Cecil Hetherington
August	Ruby Rankin

PALM SUNDAY - 5TH APRIL

Easter is the biggest event in the Christian calendar. We will all prepare ourselves spiritually in different ways during the period of Lent but on Palm Sunday, as a church family, we will meet together to share in a service of Holy Communion where we reflect on Christ's journey to the Cross and what that means for each one of us.

If you are a Communicant member of the congregation but haven't been able to attend a Communion service for some time, it would be a joy and delight to have you worship with us on Palm Sunday this year and you will leave worship feeling richly blessed and spiritually prepared for the events of Holy Week.

"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

WELCOME TEAM FOR MARCH

Reception & Count

Lisa Gaylor // Harvey Glenn // Janice Glenn
Patricia Emerson

WELCOME TEAM FOR APRIL

Reception & Count

Karen Curran (Reception Only) // Ruby Rankin (Reception Only)
Stephen Campbell // Karen Hetherington // Heather Stacey (Count Only)

WORD FOR TODAY



"With God's help, King Jehoshaphat overcame not just one army, but three! And his victory teaches us how we can win life's battles. First, identify the enemy.

Many of us have no clue who the real enemy is. We think it's the person who is interested in taking our job, our spouse, or our money. But many times the enemy is our own attitude! It's not so much what's happening that gets us down, it's our response to the situation.

Before you can win on a personal level, you must identify the enemy. Note how Jehoshaphat reacted when he heard 'a vast army' was coming against him. He was 'alarmed' (vv. 2-3 NIV 2011 Edition). It's a fairly typical human response.

We see a big problem, panic, and become fearful about what's going to happen to us. And in truth, fear isn't all bad unless we deal with it in the wrong way. We can use it to motivate us to conquer the problem and drive us closer to God. It's when we get discouraged, give up, get angry, and start asking, 'Why me, Lord?' that fear defeats us. If you're in a situation that's filling you with fear and anxiety today, remember – God doesn't respond to need; He responds to faith.

So stake your faith on His unshakeable Word and stand on His promise: 'Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand' (Isaiah 41:10 NKJV). Unshakeable trust in God's Word is what brings His help.

Copies of "Word for Today" are available in the Campbell Reception Area and are a free resource. Please take one and you will find it to be a daily encouragement.

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

1st March	Roy Black	IMO of parents Matilda & Archie
8th March	Elaine Mc Neill	
15th March	Nessa Kirk	IMO Ray
22nd March	Joyce & Keith Savage	IMO Karen Skelton
29th March	Karen Curran	

SUNDAY WORSHIP VENUE CHANGE

On Sunday 23rd February a few members mentioned that the heating pipes in the church were making strange "gurgling" noises and the building got very cold! When plumbers attended on Sunday afternoon they discovered a major leak from a heating pipe going into the Church, and boiling water was gushing from it into the basement.

As these pipes run underground, it may take some time to locate and fix the source of the leak and so, over the next few weeks, we will meet in Coffee@Cooke in the Cordner Hall for Sunday morning worship instead of in the main Church building.

Heating will be available in the MacMillan Halls and in the Church Hall.

Please pray that this pipe will be quickly located and can be easily fixed so that we can return to our Church building as quickly as possible.

CHURCH ROOF REPAIRS

A "drone" survey of the Church roof highlighted some areas where slates had slipped or been dislodged.

A Contractor has been engaged to repair or replace these, and you may have seen a very large "Cherry-picker" (or hydraulic crane) in the church grounds over this past week to enable access to the roof to do this work.

We are delighted that this has started, especially after the recent storms and strong winds. We ask for your prayers that the workmen would complete this work in safety.

LENT

During February we begin a spiritual time of reflection. In many churches there will be the occasion on Ash Wednesday to begin Lent with the "Imposition of ashes". This is the lighting of the Palm crosses from last year and the placing of a cross in ash on the forehead. Repentance and

ashes are biblical and spoken of in scripture. It is a sign of the life of the cross, the acceptance of all that owning that cross can bring. Through this commitment we have access to spiritual growth and healing.

Lent is a time to be penitent and to seek God's will for our life as surely as Jesus sought God's direction in the wilderness. We live our lives under the shadow of the cross and this is a good time to consider what the implications of that are. It is a time to say to God 'teach me afresh, where am I going wrong, how do you want me to change?'

In the Old Testament ashes were a sign of sorrow at having let God down. They were a demonstration of looking for the new direction and being sorry for what was in the past. They were a sign of repentance and looking forward. The Christian response is of course to see the new direction for us all in the cross. That is where we come to find God's forgiveness and direction for our lives.

One of life's special gifts is that it provides us with countless experiences that help keep things in perspective. We visit a hospital and see people enduring great physical suffering and suddenly the fact that we have the flu doesn't seem so monumental. We view documentaries about famine striking people all over the world and consequently the burnt toast is not catastrophic. We read news of whole societies suffering under repressive dictatorships, and the need to obey a 30mph speed limit over the bumps down the High Street does not so much fray our nerves.

People with wealth and influence die and are cremated. Power, ambition, worries, hassles, manipulations, and posturing are all reduced to a carton of ashes. The point of citing this is not to make us morbid, but to prompt us to reflect. Lent begins with ashes, because ashes can put things into perspective. On Ash Wednesday, we acknowledge our mortality, that all things will pass, and that we too will pass. None of us is indispensable. Family goes on, the economy goes on, the job goes on-life will go on, without us.

"You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

Lent is a time to reflect on matters that we might not reflect on at other times of the year. It is a time for putting things back into perspective, for taking a good look at ourselves, at what we have become, and at what we are doing with our lives. Ashes provide us with a perspective about what counts and what doesn't. Ashes also inform us that our time is limited and that we should take advantage of the time we have left to continue our spiritual development.

We welcome Lent, therefore, with ashes for the opportunities it will afford us to clear our vision and reset our sights. We have much to do before we turn to dust. Lent is a time for tough questions. Where are you going in life? What are you doing with yourself? What kind of priorities do you live by?

What changes should you need to make to ensure a more worthwhile life for yourself? What should you become more serious about? Less serious about? Are you preoccupied and overly concerned with trivia? Do you get angry over petty things?

Do you lose sleep over matters that have little lasting import? Do you need to push yourself more on worthwhile projects? Do you need to slow down?

Think in terms of ashes and see if it doesn't change your perspective.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Worship - Morning

Date	Time	Morning
1st March	11:00am	Morris Gault
8th March	11:00am	Morris Gault
15th March	11:00am	Morris Gault
22nd March	11:00am	Morris Gault
29th March	11:00am	All Age Service
5th April	11:00am	Palm Sunday - Communion

Worship - Evening

Date	Time	Evening
1st March	---	---
8th March	7:00pm	Presbytery Rally in Saintfield Rd with the Moderator
15th March	7:00pm	Bible Study on Ruth
22nd March	7:00pm	Bible Study on Ruth
29th March	6:30pm	Cafe Church
5th April	7:00pm	Bible Study on Ruth

DEADLINE FOR APRIL MAGAZINE: Sunday 29th March

You can email contributions to magazine@cookecentenary.org.uk

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