

the January Sunday Funday at Winchmore Hill where we had nearly 50 children, and she has supporting a weekend youth discipleship course run for the circuit at Ponders End.



Forward events – please come...

In the near future please note and come to the following:

- **Palm Sunday Circuit Service – 6.30pm**
Trinity, Enfield
- **Holy Week Quiet Day – 11th April, Goffs Oak – 11.30-3.30pm**
- **Coffee Morning Communion – Ponders, 12th April 11.30am**
- **Maundy Thursday – 8pm at Ponders End**
- **Good Friday Services: 9.30am Ordnance, 11am Ponders, 2pm Goffs (United at St James)**
- **Ponders Art Quiet Day – 29th April – 10am-3pm (bring own lunch)**

In the end – I'm sure you can see that lots of good things are going on and no doubt I have missed some! Of course it's not all about activity – the Lent season calls us to repentance and reflection on our need for Christ. May your faith be challenged, uplifted and sustained in the coming weeks.

May God bless you all – Revd Alan Combes

Minister - Ordnance Road, Goffs Oak and Ponders End

Spring 2017 - to the Churches of Ordnance Road, Ponders End and Goffs Oak

Dear Brothers and Sisters



As I write we approach Easter - the most significant moment in the Christian year where we are drawn inexorably towards the cross...

Our Lent Bible study included John 14 where Jesus, in the midst of raising Lazarus from the dead says; *'I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one comes to the Father except through me.'*

I've always found this verse to feel almost arrogant. Jesus stating he is the only way. But as we discussed this verse a new understanding emerged. We all fall short of the glory of God, and none of us can enter into God's presence based upon our own goodness. Our weakness and sin separate us from God and there is absolutely nothing that we can do about it.

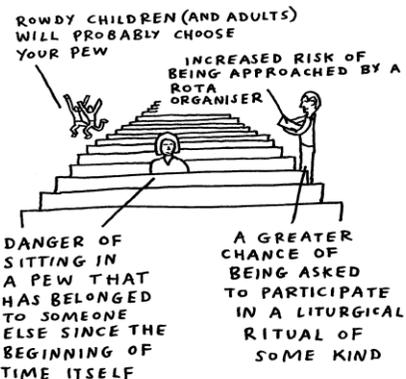
It is at the foot of the cross that we see with true clarity that God, in Christ, has acted on our behalf. It is God who has stepped towards us, it is God who has come up with a plan and sent his son to take away the sin of the world and to reconcile us to God. So when Jesus says – *'no one can come to the Father except through me'*, he's not bragging, or making a claim of exclusivity - all he is saying is that only he can and has dealt with our sin.

Suddenly all becomes clear - when Jesus says *'I am'* he embodies all that God is, God's nature, perfection, love and justice. The writer to the Hebrews (1:1-3) puts it so beautifully when he says; *'Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³ He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.'*

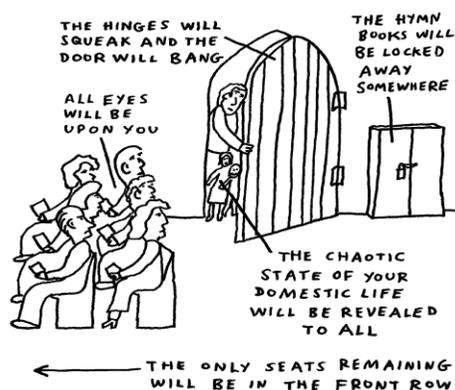
Jesus who is God, both fully human and divine, is the only one able to do this for us and so it is that we cannot come before God without Christ's intervention on our behalf.

ARRIVING AT CHURCH

THE PERILS OF ARRIVING AT CHURCH TOO EARLY:



THE DANGERS OF ARRIVING AT CHURCH TOO LATE:



What does this mean for our lives today? I am reminded of the words of Martin Luther King (jr) – as we approach the cross this Easter perhaps his words can be our prayer:



*“So I say to you, **seek** God [in Christ] and discover Him and make Him a power in your life. Without Him all of our efforts turn to ashes and our sunrises into darkest nights. Without Him, life is a meaningless drama with the decisive scenes missing. **But with Him** we are able to rise from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope. With Him we are able to rise from the midnight of desperation to the daybreak of joy. St. Augustine was right—we were made for God and we will be restless until we find rest in Him.” Amen.*

Across our small group of three churches I have seen God’s hand at work in the many prayers that have been answered recently...

At Ponders End we are close to the total needed for new chairs and then the worship space renovations will be complete. What an amazing challenge this has been. The back hall starts its journey towards becoming a shared space for all the Church and wider community. Substantial refurbishment is needed but with help from the circuit CEO we have unlocked a legacy that has funded re-roofing which is already complete. There is a long way to go inside but we have a vision and we continue to seek-out lettings that specifically align to the kingdom principles of supporting and building people up. Meanwhile we are delighted that two new young church helpers have come forward.

At Ordnance Road – we are delighted that in answer to prayer a leader has come forward to create a brand new 10-15s Sunday group which is much needed. We are not quite there yet but plans are underway. New relationships with the Scouts has meant good attendance at our occasional parades. New builders have been visiting to tender for our rear refurbishment project and to help us complete the long awaited new front door canopy. All of which will enable the church to have more of a presence in the street. Meanwhile new CCTV is keeping us secure.

At Goffs Oak – two new year Baptisms each brought over 60 visitors with opportunities to witness to the love of God. A new font - a gift from a local craftsman (Ron Gibbs) - has allowed Baptisms to face the congregation which is a great blessing. Our new projection system has added a visual dimension to worship. Growing links with users of the building has brought new growth opportunities and more varieties of coffee are planned at our coffee mornings following the recent closure of the village tea room!! Rachel Banner – one of our guides - has raised an amazing £1,035 for the Alzheimer’s Society by doing a skydive! Meanwhile the church looks ahead to its summer holiday club and continues to plan vigorously for 2018 and the 150th anniversary of Methodism in the village.

Across all three churches we pray for more prayer, we pray for those who through illness or infirmity are unable to make it to worship and we continue to seek out what the good news means in terms of serving and helping our local community.

Looking Wider – the joint Church’s Public Issues team has been encouraging us to see our role as peacemakers; *‘peacemaking lies at the heart of the biblical story, and remains a central Christian vocation, yet conflict remains inevitable.’* The local church has a key role in living out unity through diversity. There over 20 different nations represented across the circuit churches and yet we stand together as brothers and sisters in Christ. *Our work is to examine the challenges to peace and wellbeing today and to offer alternative approaches to violence...*

In February I had the privilege of attending the ENACT Youth and Community awards at the Oasis Academy in Innova Park near Enfield Island Village. ENACT seeks to encourage young people and the wider community to see and realise their potential through a range of projects and clubs. It was wonderful to meet so many inspiring people who are trying to build a community in which we all want to live. The guest of honour was Rev Steve Chalke – founder of Oasis. We pray for ENACT, Steve and for the work of Oasis.

News from Circuit - the wonderful Isata Jalloh has joined us as our circuit youth and children’s worker. She has already had a big impact ensuring the best attended young adult group of the year, helping with the formation of a new 18-30s God’s Own Disciples (GOD) group, supporting