

Easter 2020

# THE MESSENGER

“Well done my good and faithful servant”



Peter Moss, who died on February 29th at the age of 84, was one of the most community-minded people I have ever met. He was born in Eltham, and worked as a policeman locally for many years. After retiring from the force, he worked at Morden College, and subsequently ran the Neighbourhood Watch, organised the Christmas and Easter Processions for Churches Together in Blackheath, and spent a lot of time caring for the residents of the Gables, at the end of Blackheath Park.

He was also the heart and soul of our community at St Michael's, where he first came in 1966. He has done every possible job there, from sweeping the paths and being security guard at Holiday Club to being Church Warden for many years. He also edited, designed and delivered this magazine, the Messenger. Above all he wanted to be with and serve people. When he was young, he came top in the whole country in his police sergeant's exams, but chose not to seek further promotion, because he wanted to focus on helping people. He always saw the best in people, and genuinely never said anything negative about anyone. He was also one of the funniest people you could ever meet.

And now his life has come to an end. One of his phrases, which I have often quoted, was 'The graveyards are full of indispensable people.' Of course, none of us are indispensable, but Blackheath will not be the same without Pete. To meet him was to be blessed by him. You couldn't spend any time with him without feeling better. Jesus said 'whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.' Pete once said to a police colleague 'I've never encountered any corruption in my time in the police.' 'Of course you haven't' the man replied, 'you're Pete Moss.'



In his parable of the Talents, Jesus said to the man who had looked after 10 coins, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of 10 cities.' Pete will have great responsibilities in the world to come, because he was faithful with the small things here.

At Easter we remember that death is not the end. Jesus's resurrection is the first sign of the world to come, where those who have been faithful with the small things of this world will be entrusted with new roles and fresh challenges. Jesus's words seem to suggest the new tasks will be on a much greater scale than anything we see here. It will be a time of great reversal, when the last will be first and the first last. They say life is not a dress rehearsal, but in one sense that is exactly what it is. *Sandy Christie*

## CHURCH SERVICES

St Michael's is a Church of England Church. Our main morning service is at 10.30am. The first Sunday of the month is a shorter all age service, and on the other Sundays children leave for their own groups after about 15 minutes. There is a crèche for under 3's.

On the second and fourth Sunday of the month the service includes Communion.

The evening service is at 6.30pm and it is quieter and more reflective. Communion is celebrated on the first and third Sundays of the month. There is a Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion service at 9am on the fourth Sunday of each month.

## EASTER SERVICES

Good Friday 10th April 10.30am  
Service of Witness at Whitfield  
Mount on the Heath (Procession  
from church 10am)

Good Friday 10th April 2pm  
One Hour Meditation at St  
Michael's.

Easter Sunday 12th April  
9am Book of Common Prayer  
Communion  
10.30am All Age Communion  
Service with Easter Egg Hunt  
afterwards in the church garden.  
NB There will be no evening  
service

## The Spire EXTRA

Come and join us Wednesdays at 1.30 in the church hall. This is a place where someone will listen and chat over a cuppa. Louise, a health coach, and Rachel, a trained counsellor offer exercises and ideas to help us look after ourselves. Everyone is welcome.

## St Michael's Homegroups

*Homegroups are regular small meetings, usually conducted at members houses, when the Bible is studied, and people can share their stories. Alex and Mike Potts have in their five years with the church moved from wanting to know more about homegroups to being responsible for their coordination. This is their story.*



Alex and I joined St Michael's church family in mid-June 2014. I was a month away from proposing to her, and we were deep into conversations about what a life together might look like. I was keen on regular Bible study – not only to improve my knowledge of Scripture, but also to make friends and settle into the community.

Then-Curate Liz Franklin was very welcoming - inviting us to join a homegroup she had recently set up. Homegroup was held weekly on a Thursday, bar the first week of the month. The sessions were usually about an hour long and split into three parts - chat with tea or coffee, Bible study and prayer. In the early days I found group prayer a struggle as in my previous churches they had taught that prayer was a deeply personal matter. I appreciated the support of this homegroup in that first year, as Alex and I planned our wedding. We were very touched when members of our group helped at the reception. It was wonderful to see how quickly we had become part of a community.

In 2017 Liz completed her curacy and moved away. Before she left, she asked Alex and I if we would like to take over the running of our homegroup. We were equally flattered and daunted - could we maintain the high standard Liz had set? We drew strength from each other and other members of our group, deciding that Alex would lead study and I would concentrate on administration. As anyone who knows me might guess, this included setting up a webpage!

Over the past few years I have seen my faith grow and mature. I am praying more openly and have a lot more understanding of the context of the passages we study. 2019 brought new challenges as we had a few members leave and got a bit sad. We talked to Sandy about our concerns and he suggested we might like to take over homegroup coordination. Maggie Holland had done a wonderful job, but might we want to try some new things?

In September we had a stall with information after each service, handed out cards and wrote a passage for Notices to plug homegroups. It's early days, but we hope that people are more aware of what one is and why it's important. As for our group, this year we saw it grow in number again, with the addition of some lovely people. We look forward to the many years to come. *Mike Potts*

## Caring for God's Creation: Water



*"You care for the land and water it; You enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so You have ordained it." Psalm 65.9*

### Give thanks for Water

Without water, there would be no life on earth. Feel grateful for living where we receive clean water to our daily lives and help us explore ways not to waste this precious gift from God.

### Find out about Virtual Water or Water Footprint

Virtual-water roughly refers to the total sum of water used in the various steps of the production chain to create a product. Take time to investigate the water footprint, of everyday items in your home. Here are some examples.

- Jeans: The textiles industry uses 1.5 trillion litres of fresh water per year and uses 200 tonnes of water for 1 tonne of dye. Many cheap clothes are made where there are few or no environmental protection systems in place and toxic chemicals such as arsenic, mercury, and lead pour into the waterways. This toxic disposal further increases the water footprint of that item. Action: Keep clothing for as long as possible or buy pre-loved.
- Burger: Meat production is one of the most water intensive systems in farming. For 1kg of beef produced a staggering 15,000 litres of water are needed. When comparing like for like, the water footprint of a 150-gram soy burger produced is about 160 litres. A beef burger from the same country uses about 1000 litres. [TheWaterFootprint.org]. Action: Try to incorporate a little less meat in your weekly meal plan.

### Check your Cupboards

Many cleaning products are harmful to the environment and end up in our water system. Action: Switch to environmentally friendly cleaners where possible. Research natural cleaning suggestions as they frequently do work and can be cheaper than store bought products e.g. white cleaning vinegar, bicarbonate of soda, lemon juice.

### Be Careful not to waste the water. Here are some suggestions

1. Use a bowl in the sink when washing fruit / vegetables. This water can be used for your plants.
2. Fill a jug of water and put it in the fridge for when you want a cool drink.
3. Turn off the tap when you clean your teeth. A running tap uses up to nine litres of water a minute.
4. Wait until you have a full load before using the washing machine or dishwasher.
5. Take a shower instead of a bath. A five-minute shower equals 40 litres of water, about half the volume of a standard bath.
6. If it takes a while for the hot water to come through on the shower, leave a bucket to catch that water and use to flush the loo. Pop the water from your (now cold) hot water bottle in the bucket too.
7. Use a water-saving device in your toilet cistern which could save between 1 and 3 litres per flush.
8. Use a watering can, or drip irrigation system in the garden. Garden sprinklers and hosepipes use 500 to 1,000 litres of water an hour.
9. Collect rainwater off your roof. Water butts usually store about 200 litres of water. Rain water is better for your plants than treated water from the tap.
10. Check your property regularly for leaks and dips.

### Don't give up Hope

Pray for people already experiencing damaging climate change to have courage and strength. Pray that the leaders and business managers in all countries prioritise the environment in their policies.

### Prayer for Water

Creator God, we thank you for the water to drink, cook, wash, clean and play with. We know it is essential to all life on earth so we pray that everyone may learn to use water more wisely and share it fairly. Amen.

*Catherine Ashcroft*

## Getting into good shape.

In 2017/18 we undertook significant work on the church building, essential repairs to the outside, and improvements to the interior, under the banner PRISM (Preserve Restore Improve St Michael's).

That initial phase omitted the repair work on the boundary wall. Every 5 years our church architect inspects the buildings, and numerous inspection reports have pointed out that we need to repair the boundary wall. In October 2019 we applied to Viridor Environmental Credits for a grant out of the Landfill Communities Fund. On 31 January we heard the good news that we had been granted a sum of £53,444, based on the lowest of three tenders we sought from specialist stonemason contractors.

We have now got permission from the Diocese to undertake the work and our chosen contractor is hoping to begin work in April. The work will take about 10 weeks so we are hoping to finish in June.

At the same time, encouraged by members of the local community, we have put together a subtle lighting scheme to floodlight the exterior of the church. Light Perceptions, a specialist lighting consultant, have been advising us. Two demonstrations of the proposed lighting have been held, with a number of people attending. Feedback has been positive. We now have planning permission from the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and permission to proceed from the Diocese of Southwark.

A number of local donors have kindly made or promised gifts, as it is intended that the scheme is paid for out of funds other than church funds. (This is because the church is still repaying Interest Free Loans from the first major building project). We encourage anyone wanting to invest in the scheme to make a gift now, because we hope to undertake the work in the next few months and need to be confident of having enough funds before we start. (Please contact me at [treasurer@se3.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@se3.org.uk) if you want to give).



Miles Dennison, a landscape architect and member of the congregation, has offered to draw up a landscape plan so that for the foreseeable future we have a sound framework for our planting within the church grounds.

This fits in with our Christian commitment to care for creation and make the church grounds a beautiful place. We are also planning to review the suitability of our buildings other than the church, namely the Halls, the bungalow, and the garage, to ensure that these are going to be fit for purpose in the next 25 years. We are aiming to get into better shape. If you want to have your say about our plans, do contact the church office on [church@se3.org.uk](mailto:church@se3.org.uk). *Stephen Hingston*

## ISIS clarification

Several people have asked for more information about the use of the word ISIS after reading Bruce Pearce's excellent article "What it is like to be a prison visitor" which explained about the "Sycamore Tree Course"— a prison visiting project, in the two last editions of the Messenger. Here is his explanation

"HMP ISIS at Plumstead, next to Belmarsh prison is named after The River ISIS, an alternative name for The River Thames. The Thames, is of course, close by. The name ISIS is used from the source of the Thames in the Cotswolds until it is joined by the River Thame at Dorchester in Oxfordshire. It's an ancient name deriving from the Latin Tamesis. It is also considered a reference to the Egyptian god, ISIS, the perfect mother and the mother of the University city of Oxford. The prison was so named before the modern-day usage of ISIS, the terrorist group which stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. It has nothing to do with the terrorist organisation".

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## St. Michael's: making time for the things that matter.

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