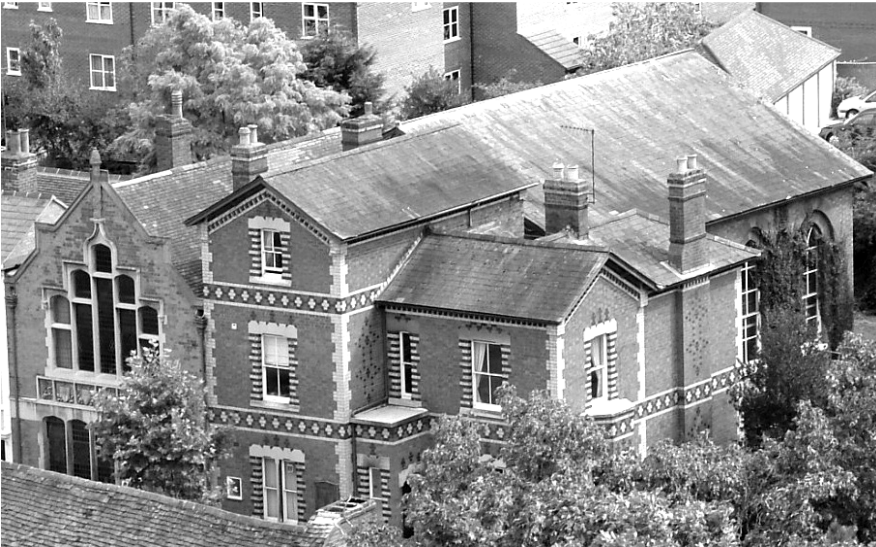


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Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

February 2009

www.pershorebaptist.org

Dear Friends

With the month of February, the season of Lent beckons us. Now we understand and may observe that the said season is characterised in many quarters as a season of partial fasting. In this vein, we might hear or even deploy ourselves the phrase 'giving something up for lent.' An age old custom of using up all the rich food stuffs and clearing the cupboards, now finds its rather more symbolic echo in using up, most especially of eggs, via the mass production of deliciously scrummy pancakes. Shrove Tuesday is, I understand, among the Covenanting Churches of Pershore Churches Together, followed by Frugal Lunches on the six Fridays following an ABC pattern of hosting (Anglican/Abbey – Baptist – Catholic) and leading up to Holy Week. These should offer wonderful opportunities for simple open fellowship, hospitality, prayerful sharing and listening together. I commend them to you. I commend also the solidarity with the poor and needy which will arise from the offerings and collections of the lent period, which, I pray, will in some way express the heart of true fasting as found in Isaiah 58. Please don't merely spiritualize such words!

The season of lent seeks exhort us to pattern in our lives something of the 40 day wilderness fasting experience of the Lord Jesus; who we are told 'was led by the Spirit

into the desert (whoops I nearly put two s's in there!) to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.' (Matthew 4:1-2) Hmmm, I have to confess to a degree of uneasiness with the whole matter of fasting. First, the kind of self denial that is framed in the context of giving up something doesn't come particularly easy to me. Perhaps the spirit is willing and yet the body is weak. Perhaps I am too wedded to the joyous sense of feasting on God's good and gracious provisions, receiving them with thanksgiving and sharing them freely and often with others in hearty table fellowship and community. (1 Timothy 4:1-5) Yet, perhaps there is also a God honouring reservation, about such potentially insular and morbidly distracted asceticism.

A few years back, exercised by my lack of apparent disciplined spirituality over the matter of fasting (after all Jesus did say 'when' and not 'if' you fast cf. Matthew 6:16-17 and did not the early Christians indeed fast at times corporately Cf. Acts 13:1-3; 14:23; 2 Corinthians 6:5, 1;27?) I sensed an inward whisper, which I believe was the Holy Spirit. I heard **'It's not what you give up, it's who and what you give yourself too, that matters most.'** This, I believe, is the key to true fasting. It involves, by the gracious help of God's Spirit,

a deposing, a dethroning, a dealing thoroughly, progressively of anything and everything that has taken prior claim or occupied undue attention in our hearts and minds; it is dealing honestly, vigorously, purposefully with anything and everything with distracts or detracts from us from living 'in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.' (1 Corinthians 7:35) It's identifying anything that dulls our appetite for God, anything in us that seeks foolishly and vainly to find satisfaction in a way that only God truly can. Surely, the '... worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and desire for other things (can) come in and choke the word.' (Mark 4:19) Food, possessions, relationships and affections all have their proper place, in God's providence and good timing, but they must not get out of kilter or proportion. They must serve, not master us even as we use them to serve the Master, Christ Jesus. Can we echo the resounding, emphatic words of the apostle Paul who declared 'I count all things to be loss in view of (i.e. when compared to) the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.' (Philippians 3:7-8) Just a caution: as John Piper rightly alerts us 'In fasting, as well as in all other privations, every loss is for the sake of 'gaining Christ.' But this does not mean that we seek to gain a Christ we do not have. Nor does it mean

that our progress depends on ourselves. Four verses later Paul makes plain the dynamics of the entire Christian life – including fasting: 'I press on in order to take hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.' May God awaken us to a new hunger for himself, that having tasted that the Lord is truly good, that we would hunger for more. May we also know his promise and be filled; so that having experienced something of his presence and power in our midst and in our lives, we would ache and long, deeply and joyfully, for more ... more of him. Come, Lord Jesus. Yours, because we are His Mark

In Christ we are as many members, but one body

This is the theme of this year's **Women's World Day of Prayer Service** which has been prepared by the women of Papua New Guinea. This service will take place in our church on **Friday March 6th at 2.30pm.**

We hope as many as possible will be able to join with us and congregations all around the world on this special day.

Remember, this is not a service for women only, it is simply prepared by women and everyone is welcome.

We have seen better days.

Shakespeare

News of the Family

Sadly **Deidre Wellon** died on 21st December. Our thoughts and prayers go to her family and friends.

Our thoughts are with **Jim & Grace Faisey** as they face up to the serious 'cancer' tumours in their only daughter **Rosemary**. Please bear them up daily in your prayers. Hopefully, soon, Rosemary will be in Pershore Hospital.

Please remember **Carole Heath and Lloyd Dillon** in your prayers. Carole is trying to hold down a job at Kingham (away all week) whilst her son **Alex** is on dialysis – and **Lloyd** is in a 'bone cancer' battle in St Richard's Hospice. As a Church Family let us 'feel' for this family at this time.

Brian Collingbourne is never in

the best of health, but now his wife, **Frances**, has a troublesome back problem – though she puts on a brave face.

Please remember **Tony Beaton** in your prayers. He seems to be failing of late and 'letting himself go' in a way that concerns those of us who knew the 'once immaculate' Tony. Visit him if you can.

Mary Pugh is getting better but still not well enough to return to church as yet.

He Prayeth Well

He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast,
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Lent Project

The Lent Project is chosen in turn by the three churches in Churches together in Pershore and this year it is the turn of the Baptist Church to choose.

The Lent 'Lunches' start with a pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday evening.

On the Friday lunchtimes during Lent there are frugal lunches organised, in rotation, by the three churches.

All of these take place in the Baptist Church.

Because the charity this year is our choice we hope for a good response from people willing to help the project.

At the time of printing I do not know the particular charity chosen.

More details can be got from John Gosney.

Ishmael & Isaac

The story of these two half-brothers is found very early in the Bible, in Genesis 17 and 21. Abraham was their father but while Isaac was Sarah's, Abraham's wife, son, Ishmael was the son of Sarah's maid, Hagar.

God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have children but after many years they were still childless. Sarah then suggested that Abraham should have children by her maid Hagar and as soon as Hagar was pregnant, the trouble started. Sarah was jealous of Hagar and forced Abraham to send her away. God protected Hagar and told her to return to Abraham's house. There her son Ishmael was born and God promised that he would be the progenitor of a great nation (17:20). Some years later Abraham had a son by Sarah, Isaac, and the

tensions in Abraham's home became unbearable. Ishmael mocked Isaac, and Sarah again demanded that Hagar and her son should be sent away. God provided for Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness and renewed his promise that Ishmael would be the father of a mighty nation.

Ishmael and Isaac were to have significant destinies. Ishmael became the father of the Arab nations while Isaac became the father of the nation of Israel. Down the long centuries, and at the present time, the conflict between Jews and Arabs is a constant reminder of how it all began. Abraham and Sarah failed to wait for God's promise to be realised and so Hagar and Ishmael enter the story. The two half-brothers grew up in a home full of tension, bitterness and hatred - and sadly, the legacy continues to this day.

Ursula Bruhin

snowboarder extraordinaire....

Ursula Bruhin was a competitive snowboarder from 1994 to 2006. During that time she won 20 World Cup races, was world champion four times and ranked World Number 1 three times. The one that got away was the Olympic title. In 2002, she was World Number 1, but incredibly was not selected for the Olympics.

It remains a big disappointment: "I was sure to make the Swiss Olympic team. I crashed in the first race in the Olympic trial and came second in the second race. The selectors told me if I did well in the next World Cup race they would reconsider me.

"I won the race and never heard from them. I was number one in the world and I was not selected for the Olympics. I was really disappointed. I could not understand why, if God wanted the best for me, I was not going to the Olympics.

"Then I came to realize: NOT going to the Olympics must be God's best for me". In the 2006 Olympics she was 7th in the Parallel Giant Slalom.

Growing up in Switzerland, snow was always around. Ursula's talent emerged at a very young age. She recalls being taken up a mountain when she was three or four years old. "We went up a mountain to ski down. My parents were worried how they would get me down - would I be able to ski - but I

managed it and enjoyed it and had lots of fun."

Ursula had grown up going to church but only out of a sense of duty. When she left home, she stopped. "Then in 1998 I was in something of a crisis. I got injured, had surgery on my knee and then my boyfriend left me. I put on weight because I could not exercise and my self-esteem dropped. I felt angry with my boyfriend. My sister went to a Bible Study group and seemed so happy. She said, "I believe God wants the best for you but first you need to forgive your ex boyfriend".

"I said that I couldn't and she suggested that I prayed that God would give me the strength. He answered my prayer. I was able to forgive him and suddenly I was free from hate and anger. I started a new life as a Christian. It showed me that if you ask God, he will help you, bless and heal you. Gradually my faith grew and I came to see God as the source of power. I realized that whether I won or lost was in God's hands, that he was in control."

When she told her team-mates that she was a Christian, it produced a mixed reaction: "At first people would laugh at me and the other Christians in the team. Gradually they started to ask questions and to be interested in what we believed. The Christians in the team started to pray together for the others."

For Ursula the essence of her faith is knowing that God is with her all the time. "Having Jesus in my life

Pastoral Care is offered in many and varied ways,

formally and informally, not least through the various Church and House Groups.

The Pastoral Care Group compliments the Prayer Chain by seeking to offer practical support as well as phone calls or visits. By so doing it is our goal to help extend the love of Christ and show that everyone is a valued part of the church family.

To help undertake this effectively we would welcome being informed of particular needs or concerns as they arise so that support can be offered.

The main points of contact are: Jean Gelaky on 01386 555758 and Allan Hitchman on 01386 550373.

If you would like to be included in the Prayer Chain do let Richard Tisdall know 01386 860828.

makes a big difference. Even if you fail, God can make the best of it. He stands behind you and carries you through the difficult times. I don't know how I would survive without God. Knowing that whatever I do in competition is good enough and doesn't affect what God thinks of me. To get to the top in the world of sport there is so much pressure. People may think you have everything in life but I have learned that knowing Jesus and being loved by him is the only thing that can really satisfy me."

Believing in Jesus affected her motivation too - did she want to win for selfish reasons or to honour God? "It reminded me of some words from the Bible (Isaiah 55:9) 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'. Once I was sick and I asked God why this happened in the middle of an important competition and told him he needed to give me strength. He did and I won.

"In the next race I was completely healthy and sure I would win but I crashed. That experience taught me that winning was God's gift, not something that came from my own strength. I have had so many great experiences with my God and I realize how much he has generously given me. - I urge you to believe in him!"

The gifts of the Holy Spirit

are absolutely, vitally important, they are essential to the functioning of the church. Without them the church lacks its spiritual equipment outlined in the first epistle to the Corinthians, this twelfth chapter is so necessary for an aggressive conflict with the powers of darkness.

The Bible is full of God's supernatural dealings with His people, the experience of regeneration whereby we become new creatures in Christ is supernatural. Yet these same Christians often shrink from the thought of supernatural baptism in the Holy Spirit with supernatural signs attending it and the ensuing supernatural gifts. I don't know why the average minister is so afraid of supernatural power, the early church was founded on supernatural power and we need to get back to it again – or die.

The Lord Jesus said, "He that believes on me, the works that I do he will do also", but if we ignore the gifts of the Holy Spirit we despise the heritage which is granted to us in Christ and the promise is in perpetuity "unto you and to your children and to as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2.39".

Kathryn Kuhlman

No philosophical theory

which I have yet come across is a radical improvement on the words of Genesis, that 'in the beginning God made heaven and earth.' - C S

Lewis

Who is this?

Who is this chippy, this hippy, this lippy young man from the sticks?

Who is this creature, this preacher, this teacher who's so full of tricks?

Who is this wheeler, this dealer, this healer who raises the dead?

Who is this Stranger, this danger, this manger-born breaker of bread?

Who is this leader, this feeder, this pleader for justice and grace?

Who is this singer, this covenant bringer, this flinger of stars into space?

Who is this sower, this grower, this knower of all that I am?

Who is this mender, this sender, this tender Redeemer, the Lamb?

Who is this maker, this shaker, this breaker of death's final sting?

Who is this pastor, the 40-day faster, this Pharisee blaster, this demon outcaster?

He's our Master, our God and our King!

Taxing

An exasperated woman, being questioned by a HM Revenue inspector about her tax deductions, was heard to say: "I wish the government were half as fussy about how it spends money as it is about how I spend it!"

February 8 - Kew

St Kew has nothing to do with gardens or the 'Q' of James Bond fame. This Kew lived in Cornwall in the 5th century, and should be the patron saint of girls with difficult older brothers.

Kew's older brother was a hermit who felt his younger sister was not worthy to even visit his cell. But big brothers often underestimate their younger sisters, and he was no exception. One day Big Brother saw a wild boar charge out of the woods towards his sister. She spoke to it kindly in tones of such purity and sweetness that it immediately slowed down to a peaceful walk.

Big Brother was so shaken by this that he repented of his superior attitude. When he then bothered to spend time talking with young Kew, Big Brother discovered her nature to be of "rare virtue and holiness". Other people thought so too, and after her death they decided Kew had been a saint, and should have the parish church named after her.

Perhaps the moral of all this is that if you want to win over a difficult older brother, you should first practise on wild boars.

Broker

Quick, get my broker, Miss Jones. Yes sir. Stock or pawn?

Modern evolutionary secularism

provides no foundation for valuing human life.

R C Sproul

Sing Gregorian!

Amateur singers and give-it-a-riers will enjoy discovering Gregorian Chant at a Saturday workshop in the Pershore Abbey Community Centre, on 7th February. Experienced teacher John Rowlands-Pritchard will welcome men, women and young people for a day's introduction, climaxed by chant singing under the soaring arches of Pershore Abbey.

John, who has led these popular workshops across the country, including at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival, says 'Gregorian chant is the music which our great mediaeval cathedral and abbeys such as Pershore were built to enshrine.'

The day in St. Andrew's will be based on the monastic 'Little Hours' from Worcester, will feature a 10th century English Respond, and will finish with a simple Compline sung in the Abbey.

Advance booking is recommended, at £20 or £10 for students under 25, on the web at www.opus-anglicanum.com or by phone: 01749 675131.

Efficient

First lady: "My husband is an efficiency expert in a large office."

Second lady: "What does he do?"

First lady: "Well, if we women did it, they'd call it nagging."

The market is a place set apart where men may deceive each other.

Greek proverb

The very first Valentine card - a legend

The Roman Emperor Claudius II needed soldiers. He suspected that marriage made men want to stay at home instead of fighting wars, so he outlawed marriage.

A kind-hearted young priest named Valentine felt sorry for all the couples who wanted to marry, but couldn't. So secretly he married as many couples as he could - until the Emperor found out and condemned him to death. While he was in prison waiting execution, Valentine showed love and compassion to everyone around him, including his jailer. The jailer had a young daughter who was blind, but through Valentine's prayers, she was healed. Just before his death in Rome on 14 February, he wrote her a farewell message signed 'From your Valentine.'

So the very first Valentine card was not between lovers, but between a priest about to die, and a little girl, healed through his prayers.

The mystery of marriage

First woman: "I don't see Charlie half as much as I used to."

Second woman: "You should have married him when you had the chance."

First woman: "I did."

Anything is a blessing which makes us pray.

C H Spurgeon

Weekly Church Events

Sundays	
10.30am	Family service with Sunday School Communion 3rd Sundays
6.00pm (5.00pm in winter)	Evening Worship Communion 1st Sundays
Mondays	
1.30pm	Little Fishes playgroup
7.30pm	House Group Middle Lane, Cropthorne
7.45pm	Prayer meeting at Church
Wednesdays	
2.00pm	Women's Own – Lower Room
8.00pm	Bible Study 48 Mayfield Road
7.45pm	Prayer and Bible Study 21 Ganderton Court
Thursdays	
10.30am	Baby talk
7.45pm	Deacon's Meeting 1st and 3rd Thursdays

There is a **Monthly Communion service** on a Wednesday at 2.30pm

Impact- A generation Youth Event on 4th Sunday at 7.00pm

The **Thursday Club** meets in the Lower Room at 7.30pm on the 4th Thursday of each month.

Church Badminton is between 8-9pm on 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in Pershore High School. Details from Anne Sadler.

The **Multiple Sclerosis Group** meet on Monday mornings in the Worship area.

The **St John's Ambulance** use the Upper and Lower Rooms on Tuesday evening.

U3A Choir uses the Upper Room on alternate Wednesdays at 2.15pm.

Thursday Club

On February 26th, Dr David Webster will give a talk entitled 'The Shimmering Heat', memories of a bush doctor in East Africa. The meeting will be held in the lower schoolroom and begin at 7.30pm. All are welcome

Women's Own

Feb 4	Wesley, Muriel and Fred Poetry and Music
Feb 18	Rev Arthur Williams Communion Service

Badminton group at Pershore High School.

We have decided to bring this group under the banner of Pershore Baptist Church, and follow the Safe to Grow Guidelines.

We meet generally on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in the school hall. Two courts are available, and adults and families from the Church, or their friends, are welcome (children from 10 years upwards). All children under the age of 18 years need to register, and any visiting young people **must** be accompanied by a responsible adult (playing or non-playing). Please come with a badminton racket and the correct fees, which are £2 adult, and £1.50 youth.

Coordinators are Anne/Andrew Sadler and Nick/Yvonne Price. **Note** that a session will have to be cancelled should there be less than one male and one female adult available to supervise.

If a watch proves the existence of a watchmaker but the universe does not prove the existence of a great architect, then I consent to be called a fool.

Francois M Voltaire

The Lord's Prayer is not, as some fancy, the easiest, the most natural of all devout utterances. It may be committed to memory quickly, but it is slowly learned by heart.

Maurice



CELEBRATE?

Have you had a cold this winter?

Hope is at hand if you've got a sore throat because February 3rd is St Blaise's Day and he is the patron saint of sore throats. There is actually a church in London, St Ethelreda's, where they still hold a special service of Blessing the Throats.

Another way to celebrate February 3rd is to join in the Japanese festival of Setsuban. Setsuban (which means 'change of seasons') separates winter from spring. You throw beans to drive off imaginary devils and scatter beans in the home to discourage evil spirits.



I have a feeling that spreading baked beans on the living room carpet wouldn't be a good idea – nor throwing the odd tin at friends!

CELEBRATING

We all celebrate lots of different things – can you say what is celebrated when

1. You blow out the candles on a cake and have presents?
2. When children eat lots of chocolate eggs?
3. Jesus and his disciples celebrated it with a special meal?
4. People remember the day they got married?
5. We decorate our homes, sing carols and remember when Jesus was born?

Answers at the bottom of this page.



What cake can you eat in heaven?

Angel cake.



Why did the banana go out with a prune?
Because he couldn't find a date.

My dad's a light eater. As soon as it's light, he starts eating.



Answers: 1. Birthday Cake
2. Easter Eggs
3. Communion
4. Wedding
5. Christmas

What are people like in your street?

A family was having to move house because of the husband's job. They'd been living in London and were moving into our area. After much searching, they found just the right house for them.

On their visit to make final arrangements, they asked the estate agent who was selling the house what people were like around here. Since they'd never lived in these parts before, they wanted to know what to expect.

The estate agent paused, and then asked: 'What are people like where you live now?'

They answered: 'They're awful; no one seems to want to help anyone else, no one will stop for a chat. You can't rely on people, they're rotten neighbours. We'll be glad to leave.'

The estate agent said: 'Sadly, they're exactly like that here, too.' And when the new family moved in, sure enough, they found that it was true. No one helped them, everyone kept themselves to themselves, and there was no community spirit. They were as lonely as they'd been in London.

By chance, another family also had to move house from London to the

same road up here only a few weeks later. After much searching, they found just the right house for them. On their last visit to make final arrangements, they asked the estate agent who was selling the house, what people were like around here. Since they'd never lived in these parts before, they wanted to know what to expect.

The estate agent paused and asked: 'What are people like where you live now?'

The family answered: 'They're wonderful; we'll be so sorry to leave our neighbours, everyone looks out for one another, you can always rely on people to help when needed. There is a real community spirit.'

The estate agent said: 'Well in that case I've got good news for you. The people around here are exactly like that, too.'

And when the second family moved into the same round as the first family, they found that it was true. The neighbours were lovely, people were welcoming and kind and reliable. The new family were so happy to have moved there.

Jesus said: "As you judge others, so you will yourselves be judged and whatever measure you deal out to others will be dealt to you."

Manner of speaking

"Are your father and your mother in?" asked the vicar when the small boy opened the door.

"They was in," said the youngster. "But they is out."

"They was in. They is out.' Where's your grammar, young man?"

"She's gone upstairs, for a nap."

Rice

A man who had been dating a girl for a number of years took her out to a Chinese restaurant. As they studied the menu he asked: "How would you like your rice, fried or boiled?"

She looked at him sadly, "Thrown."

Prayer Calendar for February 2009

- 1 **You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart** *Jeremiah 29:13*
- 2 Chessie Coakley
- 3 Brian & Frances Collingbourne
- 4 David & Vera Davies
- 5 David & Sandra Dixson
- 6 Hilda Everitt
- 7 Pete Everitt
- 8 **Stay close to anything that makes you want to do right...** *2 Timothy 2:22*
- 9 Jim & Grace Faisey
- 10 Marshall & Helen Faizey & family
- 11 Jimmy & Rosie Flanders
- 12 Philip & Jean Gelaky
- 13 Tracy Genever & family
- 14 John & Doreen Gosney
- 15 **My heart has heard You say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."** *Psalms 27:8*
- 16 Paul & Lynne Gosney
- 17 Anne Harding
- 18 James & Rebecca Harrison & family
- 19 Keith & Theresa Hart & family
- 20 Colin & Val Harvey
- 21 Carol Heath & Family
- 22 **He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him** *Matthew 6:33*
- 23 Naomi Haywood
- 24 Allan & Rose Hitchman
- 25 Mick & Pat Hooper
- 26 Mike & Francisca Hooper
- 27 Mark Jennings & family
- 28 Steve & Jacqui John & family

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the March edition to be in by **noon on Sunday 15th February**. Please observe this deadline.
2. If there are any serious errors/oversights, please tell me!
3. If you would prefer a larger print version of the Messenger, have a word with me.

Thanks

Mike Taylor