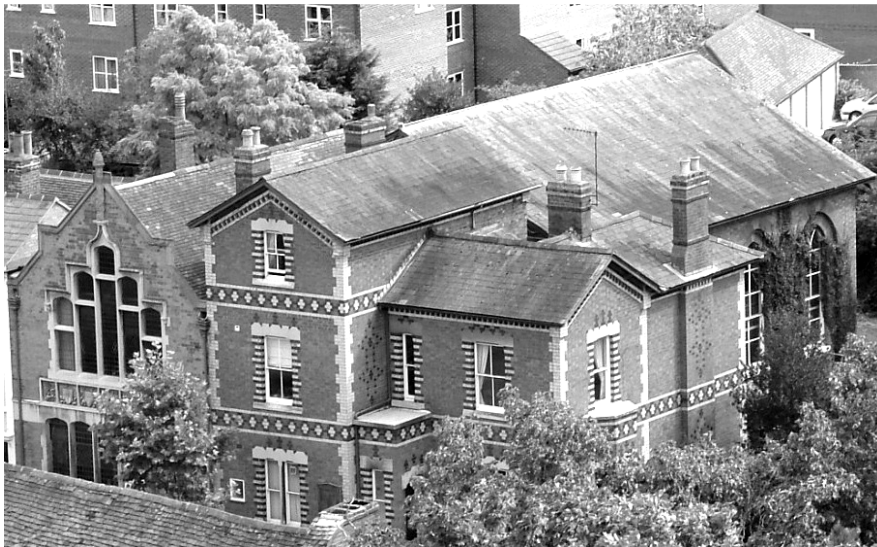


Minister Rev Mark Jennings
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Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

April 2009

www.pershorebaptist.org

Dear Friends

As I write, something beautiful, something marvellous is happening in the gardens and hedgerows around and about us. Daffodils are bursting forth in brilliant displays of golden yellow, crocuses and primroses are adding a low yet vibrantly colourful dimension to the once barren, frost bound soils. The verdant, growing grass has hopefully experienced its first cut. There is an awakening, as if from sleep. As I travelled to St Richard's Hospice, the roadside trees approaching Spetchley Gardens were magnificently adorned with the most brilliant white, intoxicatingly fragrant blossom. For a moment, it looked as if the trees were somehow laced with fresh fallen snow. To me, all the sights and smells around and about do bear '*manifold witness*' to God's great faithfulness, mercy and love; and also to his '*eternal power and divine nature.*' (Romans 1:20) How great Thou art! The season of resurrection, for seeing and celebrating new life is here. Easter is upon us.

The colour white is often taken and used by Christians as emblematic for the theme of resurrection. White is a symbol denoting something special, it conveys a sense of something new, fresh and clean, it speaks of purity and dedication, as with a wedding dress. It certainly echoes the eschatological pictures

of Daniel and Revelation where the righteous shine like the Sun, adorned, like Christ at his transfiguration, in dazzling, brilliant white. It clearly identifies with the Resurrection Day description of the risen Christ whose glorious 'appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.' (eg. Matthew 28:3 and also Revelation 1:12-18) Small wonder that in some circles, on Easter Sunday, everyone makes the willing gesture of wearing something white, be it a shirt, trousers, dress, suit, or even a hat or shoes and so, by token, identifying with the glory and majesty of Christ's triumphant, transformed and glorified person. It also anticipates our future sharing of his brilliant holiness as we remain faithful in our walk before Him. (Revelation 3:4-5)

Whilst I won't insist on but would welcome some white attire, this Easter Sunday we too are seeking ways to share in and celebrate the glory and power of Christ's resurrection. First, we will have the wonderful privilege of witnessing several water baptisms as followers of Jesus obediently step into the waters and follow the example of the Master. Turning from sin, trusting in Christ as Saviour, each is identifying with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection; each is pledging by God's grace to live in newness of life in Christ as his

disciple to God's glory. Yet also, as we stand by these watery graves and witness these baptisms, we will be reminded of and have opportunity to reaffirm our own baptismal vows. So we are offered a powerful, visual reminder of our own baptism and with them can enter afresh into the realities of what the apostle Paul declared in Romans 6:4: *'We were, therefore, buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.'* In both respects, we are standing in a rich and vibrant tradition handed down from the ancient church and we can, I truly believe, anticipate and experience strong currents of God's awesome love and amazing grace flowing through our hearts and lives and in our life together as God's precious, beloved, forgiven people. The challenge is this. We are to live as Easter People. We are called to proclaim not just with our heads, in intellectual assent or with theological apologetic, the fact that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, but also to embody in our lives, the faith of our heart's conviction and the Spirit's gift. The Easter faith which we profess is to be so lived out by us, that it becomes tangible and capable of being experienced and embodied and shared by others too; by those many, many folks who are hungry for something more and open to spiritual realities, who crave acceptance and yearn to belong and yes this resurrection hope, joy

and peace, this resurrection freedom from fear, this resurrection anticipation of good in store with God, can and may well be experienced amid the raw realities and seeming contradictions of our own genuine lived experiences. I had the privilege of preaching at Lloyd Lawrence-Dillon's funeral recently. Out of her sorrow and loss, His mother Ethelyn, fortified in her faith, sent word to me of a suitable text, from which I gladly preached. It was Psalm 16, especially verses 8-11:

I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Incidentally, these words are taken up by the apostle Peter at Pentecost, wherein he proclaims the resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 2:22-33)

Through it all, God desires that our lives be wooed afresh by the ravishing greatness of His heart melting love, strengthened by the wellspring of his very great and precious promises and adorned with the fragrant beauty of His contagious holiness. He desires that our lives be refreshed and animated by the power of the same

Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead. So, God, by your Spirit and in your time, work in us what is well pleasing to you, may something beautiful, something marvellous happen in the soil of our hearts and God may our lives be so adorned by the radiant beauty of Christ in us – that the hope of glory, the resurrection glory of Jesus be known to us and through us. A blessed Easter to you all, Mark

News of the Family

Claudine & Alan Mee – pray for a miracle.

Uphold in your prayers **Carol & the families** with the loss of **Lloyd**.

Keep in your prayers **Jim & Grace** that they may find daily strength to cope with the loss of **Rosemary**.

Keep in your thoughts dear **Mary Pugh, Tony Beaton, Pat & Mick Hooper**.

Sylvia Christian awaits surgery on her knee.

Congratulations

on two engagements;

Mark Fairweather-Tall is engaged to **Jenny Seal** and **Elisabeth Taylor** is engaged to **David Witter**.

We wish them all God's blessing in their lives together.

Heat

Teacher: "Give me an example of how heat expands things and cold contracts them."

Pupil: "Well, the days are much longer in the summer."

Prayer

If a prayer can move a mountain
If a prayer can stop a war,
If a prayer can foster love and peace

Where hatred ruled before,
If a prayer can conquer hunger
If a prayer has power to heal,
If a prayer can mend division

Why are we so slow to kneel?

Offering prayers up to our maker,
Throughout each brand new day
To change things for the better,
In every kind of way.

Colin Hammacott

If you want to be miserable, focus on what others have and forget what God's given you. Contentment is not getting what you want; it is enjoying what you've got.
Heb 13:5 & 1 Tim 6:8

Why Easter chocolate and wine are good for you

As Lent comes to an end, and you reach for your Easter chocolate, here's some great news: eating chocolate and drinking wine or tea can improve your memory.

In recent research, people who regularly consume modest amounts of all three performed best in a series of brain tests. Apparently chocolate, wine and tea all contain micronutrients called flavonoids, which may reduce the risk of dementia.

But - the bad news is that the positive effects of wine level out after just half a glass, while all your brain needs is four squares of chocolate. Most depressing. Better put the kettle on....

April 12 - EASTER

Easter, of course, is the most special day of the Christian year: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the first to use the Hebrew lunar calendar to come up with firm dates for Good Friday: Friday 7 April 30 AD or Friday 3 April, 33 AD, with Easter Day falling two days later. Modern scholars continue to think these the most likely.

Most people will tell you that Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which is broadly true. But the precise calculations are unbelievably complicated and involve something called an 'ecclesiastical full moon', which is not the same as the moon in the sky. The earliest possible date

for Easter in the West is 22 March, which last fell in 1818 and won't fall again until 2285. The latest is 25 April, which last happened in 1943 and is next due in 2038.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from Eostre, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month', but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like Eos and Aurora, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' - a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.

" during this time of pain and suffering, especially those who are being denied access to their churches. We wish to assure them of our love, support and prayers as they face gross violation of human rights, hunger and loss of life as well as the scourge of a cholera epidemic, all due directly to the deteriorating socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe."

Pray now for Zimbabwe

31 March marked the first anniversary of the disputed elections in Zimbabwe, the results of which Mr Robert Mugabe has since flagrantly disregarded. Now the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have called for prayer for Zimbabwe. They note "with horror" the "appalling difficulties" of the people under the current regime.

We give thanks to God for the faithful witness of the Christians of Zimbabwe

Andrew Motion, the Poet Laureate, has warned that every child should be taught the Bible at school or they will fail to properly understand culture and literature.

Mr. Motion said that generations of teachers with less and less knowledge of the Bible had left even the brightest students with a "sketchy" understanding of once familiar stories.

The poet, **who describes himself as an atheist**, called for an overhaul of the school curriculum to reverse the "depressing" trend which threatened to leave future generations unable to fully understand the works of Milton and Shakespeare or even more recent writers such as TS Eliot.

The solution, he said, could be to **include study of the Bible and other religious stories** into a new wider general studies curriculum as well as working it into everyday lessons.

Mr. Motion, who holds a chair in creative writing at Royal Holloway, University of London, said that he had struggled to teach Milton's Paradise Lost to undergraduates because they had no concept of the fall of man.

"These were all bright students, very hard-working, all with good A-levels, but their knowledge of the great ancient stories was very sketchy," he said in an interview.

"So when the time came to talk about Milton, I found very few knew there had been a civil war. As for the Bible, forget it, they just about knew who Adam and Eve were."

He insisted that while secularist ideas had put many people off studying the Bible, parents who do not believe in God should have nothing to fear from their children learning about the Bible.

"If people say this is about ramming religion down people's throats, they aren't thinking about it hard enough," he said.

"It is more about the power of these words to connect with deep, recurring human truths, and also the story of the influence of that language and those stories."

And he warned that growing ignorance of the great stories of the Bible as well as classical mythology was becoming an increasingly serious handicap for those studying literature.

"Many of my students stumble into vaguely mythological stories in their writing," he said.

"When I ask them anything about the Bible, they frankly, by and large, don't know."

"I don't particularly blame them for it but I do think there is a real problem with the education system that has allowed these great stories to disappear, to fade out of the diet everyone gets at school."

"It's an essential piece of cultural luggage."

He also called for university students to be given courses in the stories of the classical world and texts such as the Koran in order to have a more rounded cultural understanding.

"There is nothing elitist about this, I just find it really depressing that

large parts of our heritage are going to become the preserve of only the academies and only parts of the academies," he said.

"It seems a great denial of the opportunities open to us as human beings."

*The Telegraph
Feb 09*

Polite

A New York traffic expert says that some London taxi drivers are refreshingly different - and witty - compared to those in New York. He tells the story of the London taxi driver who screeched to a halt when a tourist bolted into the road, and then stopped, looking around in confusion. Leaning out of the window the taxi driver asked very politely: "I say, sir, may I ask, what are your immediate plans?"



"It comes to something when the state of the pound is such that we *hope* to find lots of foreign coins!"

Social Events

April 5th – **Palm Sunday Lunch** – Pershore Baptist Church

April 25th – **Skittles Evening** – The New Inn, Cropthorne

June 7th – **Church Walk & Treasure Hunt** – Pershore

September 19th – **Barn Dance** – Peopleton Village Hall

October 17th – **Variety Evening** – Pershore Baptist Church

November 21st – **Quiz & Chips** – Pershore Baptist Church

For details of any of the above see Tracy Wheeler

Badminton April 3rd at **PERSHORE LEISURE CENTRE** – details from Anne Sadler

Saturday April 25th – Evangelism Training Day – Warley Baptist Church

Star-gazing

I can see how astronomers figure out the distance of the stars and their size and temperatures and all that. What really gets me is how they find out what their names are!



EASTER JOY!

When you wake up on Easter Day it feels different – really full of joy - because we are celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus.

But on the first Easter morning the friends of Jesus were very sad when they woke up because they didn't know that Jesus had risen. They wouldn't believe Mary when she told them she had seen Jesus in the garden by the tomb. Thomas refused to believe unless he saw Jesus and could feel his wounds (that's why we still call someone a 'doubting Thomas'). But Jesus wasn't angry and he invited Thomas to see for himself the marks the nails had made. Why don't you read about the first Easter Day in each of the Gospels? The accounts are easy to find as they are at the end of each Gospel.

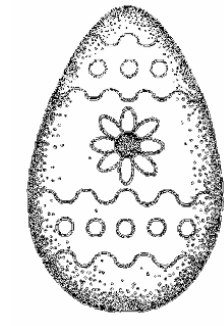
We can't see the actual marks like Thomas, but we can know the real truth, that Jesus is risen. Jesus told Thomas, and all of us, "Happy are they who never saw me and yet have found faith." So Easter Day must be the happiest day of the year!

EASTER EGGS

Melt 6 oz plain Fairtrade chocolate in a bowl over a pan of hot water. You might need some help with this.

Take the bowl with the chocolate in it away from the hot water. Add 2 eggs yolks, 1 oz butter and 2 teaspoons single cream. Beat the mixture until it is thick then put it into the fridge to chill until it is firm enough to handle.

Shape the mixture into 12 eggs and roll them in chocolate strands.



And here is an Easter egg to colour in - you could trace the pattern off to make Easter cards if you want.



What did the mother egg say to her baby on its first Easter? Don't get over-eggcited.

April 12

Zeno of Verona (d. 371)

Zeno should be the patron saint of all ministers who suspect that the more things change, the more they remain the same.

For instance: ethnic diversity... church-planting... teaching.... concern for the poor... women's ministry in the church... sound like modern-day Christian concerns? Not a bit of it - this was the life work of Zeno, bishop of Verona in the fourth century.

Ethnic diversity? Zeno was an African who had been consecrated a bishop in Italian Verona.

Church-planting and teaching? Zeno had a reputation as a hard-working pastor and dedicated preacher who founded churches throughout his domain. Some of his sermons still survive.

Concern for the poor? Zeno was zealous in alms-giving, and encouraged others to do the same. *Women's ministry?* He founded nunneries and encouraged virgins living at home to be consecrated long before ever Ambrose did the same in Milan.

As for down-time? Zeno may well have been addicted to fishing in his spare time - he is, after all, usually represented with a fish. Nothing wrong with that: the links between fishermen and Christian leaders go back a long way!

Why Easter chocolate and wine are good for you

As Lent comes to an end, and you reach for your Easter chocolate, here's some great news: eating chocolate and drinking wine or tea can improve your memory.

In recent research, people who regularly consume modest amounts of all three performed best in a series of brain tests. Apparently chocolate, wine and tea all contain micronutrients called flavonoids, which may reduce the risk of dementia.

But - the bad news is that the positive effects of wine level out after just half a glass, while all your brain needs is four squares of chocolate. Most depressing. Better put the kettle on....

Don't be grumpy

Have you ever started the day cheerful, then run into someone very grumpy... and realise soon after that your cheerfulness had been damped down? Well, it seems that bad moods are indeed contagious - so much so that they can spread through friends, and family members even miles away.

Every grumpy 'connection' with someone will decrease your happiness by seven percent, according to New Scientist magazine. Every happy 'connection' will raise your chance of happiness by nine per cent.

So - take care when you choose your friends! (You have less choice with your family.)

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
7.45pm	Prayer meeting at Church
Tuesdays	
7.30pm	House Group – Main Street , Pinvin
Wednesdays	
2.00pm	Women's Own – Lower Room
7.30pm	House Group – 46 Holloway Drive
7.45pm	Prayer and Bible Study 21Ganderton 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 April 23rd Joan May will give a talk entitled "Beautiful Beads". The meeting will be in the lower schoolroom and begin at 7.30pm. All are welcome

Women's Own

April 1	Members' Meeting
April 15	Communion Service Rev Mark Jennings
Friday April 28	Spring Rally at Pershore Baptist Church Rev Marion Pengelly-Phillips

Cameo Meeting

Next Meeting 3rd April 2009

Venue: Jacqui and Steve, Holloway Drive

Come and join us, relax over a cup of tea, and get to know people.

There will be a quiz

Discussion on how to meet the needs of local people, who have been affected by the current credit crunch.

Bring along any old DVDs or CDs you do not want, so that we can put them to good use for the yearly "Shoe Box Appeal".

The Prayer Watch churches for April are

5th Bromsgrove	12th Bewdley
19th Pershore	26th Malvern

Sweet

The young couple were watching every penny. "Can we afford this cake?" the husband asked one evening.

"Sure - it is a sponge cake," said his wife. "I sponged the eggs from Mrs Brown, the flour from Mrs Smith, and the milk from Mrs Jones."

Sidesman

Sidesman to newcomer at church door: "Good morning. How far down do you wish to sit?"

Baffled newcomer: "Well, all the way, of course."

The Gardeners' Hymn

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

But what we never mention,
though gardeners know it's true,
Is when He made the goodies,
He made the baddies too.

*All things spray and swattable,
Disasters great and small,
All things paraquatable,
The Lord God made them all.*

The green fly on the roses,
the maggots in the peas,
Manure that fills our noses,
He also gave us these.

All things spray and swattable, etc.

The fungus on the goose-gogs,
the club root on the greens,
The slugs that eat the lettuce
and chew the aubergines.

All things spray and swattable, etc.

The drought that kills the fuchsias,
the frost that nips the buds,
The rain that drowns the seedlings,
the blight that hits the spuds.

All things spray and swattable, etc.

The midges and mosquitoes,
the nettles and the weeds,
The pigeons in the green stuff,
the sparrows on the seeds.

All things spray and swattable, etc.

The fly that gets the carrots,
the wasp that eats the plums,
How black the gardener's outlook,
though green may be his thumbs.

All things spray and swattable, etc.

But still we gardeners labour
midst vegetables and flowers,
And pray what hits our neighbours'
will somehow bypass ours.

All things spray and swattable, etc.

© Barbara Robinson

Barbara Robinson explains the background to her popular poem:

The poem came to me, sitting looking out of the window at the garden. I sang it at the Harvest Festival supper at All Saints' Leamington Spa, and lots of the congregation wanted copies to send to their friends. So I asked Les Twoby, an artist and art teacher, to illustrate it for me. He wrote it out beautifully, and made a lovely drawing and decorated border. We printed 300, some we gave away, some were sold in the church porch.

Then I moved back to Wiltshire and showed the poem to the cathedral bookshop. They liked it and started to sell it for the benefit of the cathedral. It sold well, they photocopied more and then asked if they could get their normal supplier to print it commercially. This he did, but sadly without Les Twoby's art work. Every-now-and-then someone writes to the cathedral to ask if they can print it in their parish magazine. I've always agreed to it, and I'm very pleased to have it included in the Parish Pump.

The new version is now sold in churches and garden centres. It's proved very popular; I'm not absolutely sure why but it does seem to strike a chord with people. Alan Titchmarsh recorded it and used it as part of his stage show, An Evening with Alan Titchmarsh. The organist at Leamington was on tour in America, and found that one of his hosts had it stuck to the fridge door. It's been sung by choirs for harvest supper, printed in one of the less salubrious national newspapers and sung as a barber shop quartet on local radio. It's now on lots of forums on the internet. Sometimes it's printed with the wrong name as the author, and I would like to take this opportunity to say it was me who wrote it! I hope your readers like it as well.

Easter Weekend

April 10 - Good Friday

March of Witness – Meet at Baptist Church at 10.15am
March to Chapman Court (outside Co-op) for a 10:30am service

Walk up Bredon Hill – start from Woollas Hall at 1:45pm
Service on Bredon Hill at 3.00pm

Evening Communion – 7:00pm

April 12 - Easter Sunday

Easter Breakfast 9:00am
Morning Worship – Baptismal Service 10.30am

Palm Sunday - 5th April

There will be no Evening Worship here on Palm Sunday to give us the opportunity of sharing in the joint worship service at **St Peter's Baptist Church, Worcester** at 6:30pm. If you would like to go to this service and need transport or are able to provide transport please see Ann Taylor.

Prayer

If a prayer can move a mountain
If a prayer can stop a war,
If a prayer can foster love and peace

Where hatred ruled before,
If a prayer can conquer hunger
If a prayer has power to heal,
If a prayer can mend division
Why are we so slow to kneel?

Offering prayers up to our maker,
Throughout each brand new day
To change things for the better,
In every kind of way.

Colin Hammacott

It adds up

The debt expert was helping a worried householder. "Let's begin with how you spend your present income."

"Well, about 30% is for the mortgage, 10% on household bills, 20% cent on food and clothes, 20% on our children's education, 10% on holidays, 20% on credit card payments.... "

"But that adds up to 110%...."

"Yes, that's right. So what do we do?"

A mother becomes a true grandmother the day she stops noticing the terrible things her children do because she is enchanted with the wonderful things her grandchildren do.

Lois Wyse

The Christian church has the resurrection written all over it.

E G Robinson

Christianity is the revelation of God, not the research of man. *JA Stewart*

Prayer Calendar for April 2009

- 1 Nick & Yvonne Price & family
- 2 Barbara (Joan) Pritchard
- 3 Trevor & Elizabeth Pryce-Jones
- 4 Mary Pugh
- 5 **May you experience the love of Christ** *Ephesians 3:19*
- 6 John & Lee Rawson
- 7 Pam & Paul Rayner
- 8 Peter & Rosemary Read & family
- 9 Andrew & Anne Sadler & family
- 10 **He will be our guide even to the end** *Psalms 48:14*
- 11 Hasnah Sheriff
- 12 **ALLELUIA! – THIS IS THE DAY;**
- 13 Andy Smith
- 14 Simon & Julie Smith & family
- 15 Phyllis Smith
- 16 Alan & Mary Taylor
- 17 Mike & Brenda Taylor
- 18 Pete & Ann Taylor
- 19 **You must love the Lord your God** *Mark 12:28*
- 20 Elisabeth Taylor
- 21 Margaret Thomson
- 22 Richard & Alison Tisdall & family
- 23 Marina Townend, family & Sheriff
- 24 Simon Townend
- 25 Peter & Penny Wagner & family
- 26 **Please, Lord, give us success** *Psalms 118:25*
- 27 Gemma Watford
- 28 Margaret West
- 29 Rob & Tracy Wheeler & family
- 30 Andrew Whichman

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the May edition to be in by **noon on Sunday 19th April**. 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