



**Kempston East
Methodist
Church
Newsletter
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'Lenten Valentines'

This month both Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day! The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love! Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives.



This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires.

Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him.

Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine.

Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God's love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14th February. Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate our love for one another on his day.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found:

*'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing?
Know it well, love was His meaning.'*

By Canon Paul Hardingham

Supporting those in need on Church Action on Poverty Sunday



This year Church Action on Poverty Sunday is on 11th February, when Christians around the country are urged to remember those in real need.

Perhaps one of the most serious impacts of poverty is the dire state of homelessness. The numbers are staggering. More than 300,000 people are homeless in the UK; 119 families in England are made homeless every single day; and 140,000 children are currently without a home. The figures are the highest on record.

When you picture a homeless person, he or she will probably be a rough sleeper; but rough sleeping is only one manifestation of homelessness, and not the most frequent one.

Homelessness ranges from living on the streets, to living in emergency accommodation, in women's shelters, and in other temporary accommodation.

Homelessness is not always a visible problem. But the cost-of-living crisis, record rent hikes, stretched local services and withdrawal of emergency Covid measures have led to more people falling into desperate positions than ever before this past year.

Green Pastures is one organisation who is working to enable Christians to make a difference. It has been housing the homeless for 25 years, and it exists to help Christians do their bit to tackle the growing homelessness crisis.

Green Pastures has grown to now house more than 1500 formerly homeless people across the UK, in more than 100 towns and cities. To fund property purchases, Green Pastures has raised more than £47 million in funding, through everyday people who lend them some of their savings and receive interest in return. This model enables the organisation to buy property and work in partnership with local ministries to directly impact the lives of people in need.

For those facing homelessness, it starts with the life change of a safe and secure home. Tenants are also offered compassionate wraparound support, pathways towards recovery and independence, and the opportunity to know Christ for themselves.

With many more people in need waiting for help, this month is a great time to consider how the Church can make a significant impact. You can find out more about Green Pastures' work, and how you might get involved, at <https://www.greenpastures.co.uk>.

Improve your love life – with Care

The romance of Valentine's Day can be a reminder that it is good to take stock of your own romantic relationship. In other words, how well are you getting along with the one whom you love at present?

If you feel things could be improved between you, but that you are running out of enthusiasm or direction, you might want to explore what *Care in the Family* could offer.

Care in the Family has been running events for nearly 30 years, speaking to parents and couples all over the country, in an effort to support and help those in all stages of family life.

Its online courses offer people “engaging, practical and experienced speakers” who “aim to share helpful insights to support you and those you love.”

One such course, Date Night in a Box 2, says that participants will come away with:

- An appreciation of the past and the role it can play in both your present and future as a couple
- An understanding of your emotional bank accounts and the impact of deposits and withdrawals
- An insight into the legacies that your relationship can leave and what that looks like in practice
- Activities that can be used again and again, even without the video content
- Practical, relevant teaching that you can apply straight away

More details on Date Night in a Box 2 at:

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/events/events-online/date-night-in-a-box/>

Daffodil Day

Daffodil Day takes place at Westminster Central Hall on the first Saturday in March and supports the Marie Curie organisation. For many years a number of people went by coach to Central Hall to share in the special time of worship - but the pandemic stopped it for a while.

Last year a few of us went from the North Bedfordshire Circuit. We took the train from Bedford or Flitwick to London at approximately 10.00am/10.30am, took a taxi to Central Hall, had lunch there, shared in the wonderful service and returned home via taxi and train, arriving at approximately 6.30pm/7.00pm. This year Daffodil Day will be held on Saturday 2nd March. If you would like to share in this day and travel from Bedford or Flitwick, please put the date in your diary, let Linda know and we will sort things nearer the time.

Linda Pitts (Impsttrinians@btinternet.com)

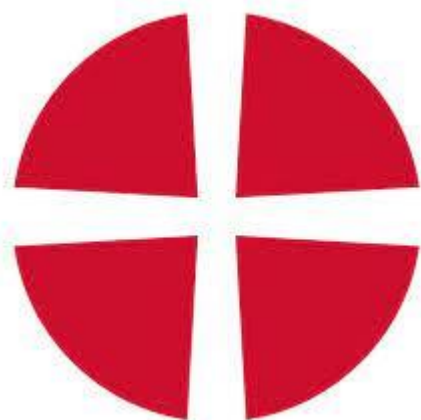
Don't forget those nestboxes!

On 14th February the annual National Nestbox Week begins.

Now an established part of the ornithological calendar, it aims to encourage people to help out the birds in their gardens each Spring.

Everyone is invited to put up more nestboxes in their local area, and a very helpful website gives full instructions on how to do this. More details at:

<https://www.nestboxweek.com>



District Synod – Volunteers Needed

The North Bedfordshire Circuit is hosting the District Synod this year on Saturday 14th September at Stratton School in Biggleswade. District Synod is an annual meeting involving all the Ministers in – in our case – the Beds, Herts. and Essex District of the Methodist District, plus a steward from each Circuit and lay representatives elected by the Circuit Meeting.

Our representatives are Jane McVey, Roz Addington, Alan Davis, Nick Guy, Maryan Pateman and Jenny Snelson.

The Circuit is looking for volunteers to help with cake making, serving tea and coffee, directing car parking, setting up tables and chairs, running the sound system and being a designated First Aider. Although it is a long way away yet, if you are able to help please let Stephanie Field know sooner rather than later to help with the planning. You can contact her in the Circuit Office (northbedscircuitoffice@gmail.com; 07522 928936

If you are attending Synod and are able to bring a cake that would be great too.

Upcoming Events at Kempston West

Coffee Morning will be held this Saturday, 10th February 2024 from 10.00am to 11.30am. This month it is in aid of Sue Ryder. Do come along and ask your neighbours and friends too, the more the merrier and the more we can help others.

Craft and Cuppa will be held on Tuesdays 13th and the 27th February 2024 at **2.00pm** in the community room at the St. Johns Homes, Bedford Road, Kempston.

All are welcome - come along and learn new crafts or just bring your own.



Our Church Family



Please remember in your prayers:

- Rosemary H
- Pauline E recovering at home
- Jean B in the Archer Unit
- Bimla and Anwar (with thanks for your continuing prayers)

This Week at Kempston East

Tuesday Feb 13th	10.30am	Bible Study Group meets in the New School Hall
	2.00pm	Tibbs Dementia meets in the New School Hall
Wednesday Feb 14th	11.30am-1.30pm	Open House in the Beginners Room
	2.30pm	Guild meets in the New School Hall for a Games and Quiz afternoon
Friday Feb 9th	9.30am	Parents and Toddlers meet in the Halls
	1.30am	Thanksgiving Service for Sylvia Phipp in the Church
Saturday Feb 10 th	4.30pm	Soup Kitchen in the Old School Hall

THANKSGIVING SERVICE for Sylvia Phipp

The Thanksgiving Service for the life of Sylvia Phipp from Willington will be held at Kempston East Methodist Church on **Friday 16th February at 1.30pm.**

The reception will be at Willington Village Hall, MK44 3PY and the service will also be streamed live online.

The link needed to login to watch the service live on YouTube is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbaEajGQdt0>

WORSHIP AT EAST

Our service this morning at 10.30am will be led by Perlynn Thomas from Amptill Methodist Church.

Our normal live-streaming will also be in action for this service. Details of how to connect into this will be given in Richard's covering email. There will, as usual, be an audio recording available on the website and for those who normally receive this.

Future Services at Kempston East

Sunday February 18 th	10.30am	Local Worship led by Geoff Talbot
Sunday February 25 th	10.30am	Rev Michael Giles (Holy Communion)
Sunday March 3 rd	10.30am	Paul Cooper (Parade Service)

LENT COURSE 2024

This year Kempston East is running two groups each with different study material.

Tuesday Morning Group led by Marjorie Stevens

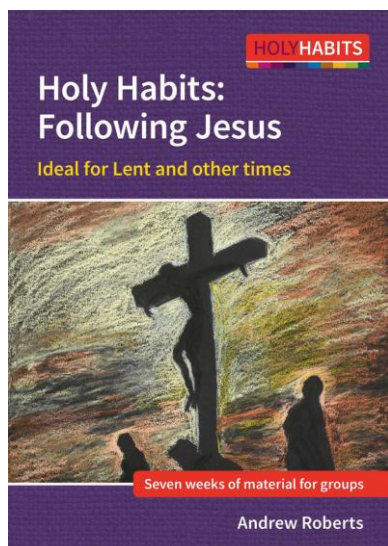
Venue: New School Hall at Church

Time: 10.15am for 10.30am to 11.45am

Dates: 20th, 27th February, 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th March

Course Material: Embrace (the Middle East – formerly Biblelands) www.embraceme.org

Theme: Healing and Hope: In the one household of God



Wednesday Evening Group led by Rosemary and Stuart Simms

Venue: Wootton – please contact Rosemary or Stuart for full details

Time: 7.30pm to 8.45pm

Dates: 14th, 21st, 28th February, 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th March

Course Material: Holy Habits: Following Jesus by Andrew Roberts

www.holyhabits.org.uk

Kempston Good Neighbour Scheme Residents' Survey

Following last week's introduction to the possibility of setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme in Kempston we have listed below the services we think a Good Neighbour scheme could offer that might be useful to people in the area. Please read the list and tick the boxes to show whether you might use the service listed or might be able to volunteer your help. You can tick boxes in both columns.

If you think you might like to help, the amount of time you volunteer is entirely up to you – even a couple of hours a month helps! All volunteer expenses are reimbursed and all volunteers are fully insured and DBS checked for free (as appropriate).

Possible Services	I might need this myself	I might be able to help with this
Occasional lifts to doctors, lunch clubs, shops, etc.		
Befriending – popping round for a chat & cup of tea		
Form filling, letter writing, help with using a computer		
Collecting prescriptions and occasional help with shopping		
Small household repairs/practical tasks (such as changing a light bulb)		
Pet-care, dog-walking etc.		
Indoor plant watering, light gardening		
Being part of the phone rota, to answer callers and match them to a suitable volunteer		
Being part of the organising group – helping with publicity, fundraising, etc.		
Other – please specify		

Name..... Telephone/email.....
Address.....

If you need further information and to return the completed survey, please email amanda.higham@bedsrcc.org.uk

If you have any prayer requests, thanks and, indeed, any other items and news that you would like to go into the weekly newsletter then please email these to Geoff Talbot (geofftal1@outlook.com) as soon as possible and ideally by the previous Wednesday.

If you know of someone who would like to receive this emailed newsletter could you please send their email address to richard.ward4@btinternet.com. Equally, if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, please let Richard Ward know.