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Briefing 104: Wednesday 2nd March, 2022.

Dear friends,

Lent begins today. Traditionally, Lent has been a time of self-reflection, fasting and prayer, which leads us to a greater joy on Easter Sunday morning. How? Because the more we recognise our own sins and failings, and understand that at the cross that Jesus suffered and died **for us**, the more precious the cross becomes, and the more joyful our celebrations at the resurrection of Jesus, for it is his resurrection that demonstrates that the cross worked! That our sins can be forgiven, and we can, through repentance and faith, have eternal life.

So, for the 7 weeks of Lent, these columns will be shorter. Each week I'll offer a passage for reading and reflection, suggest a couple of questions to meditate on and recommend a song to listen to. You may like to use them in one of your daily quiet times. But however you mark it, may this Lent be a time when the cross of Jesus becomes more precious than ever to us who have been purchased through the precious blood of Jesus.

A passage to read: Psalm 51

2 questions to reflect on: How deep does David's sin (and ours) go? David's attitude to his sin, and his attitude towards God, show us the right way to find forgiveness. What are they?

A song: [Psalm 51 \(Have Mercy On Me, O God\) - Graham Kendrick - Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

Grace and peace,

Dave

IMPORTANT STUFF – DON'T JUST GLANCE- TAKE IT ALL IN!

LENT 2022. We're not having a special Lent course this year, but here are 2 ways to make the most of Lent:

1: Quiet Evening Prayer: For the 7 Wednesdays of Lent, we are restarting a quiet service of evening prayer in St Nicholas Church. This will run from 7pm to 7:30pm, starting tonight with imposition of ashes.

2: Read and Pray: A range of books is now available, all priced at £2 each. Why not take one and find someone to read it with, making time each week- in person, on the phone or Zoom - to chat and pray through what you've read?

PASSION FOR LIFE MISSION- 3 WARM UP EVENTS in Stevenage: Who will you be inviting along? Hard copy fliers are available now. Book your tickets at www.life22stev.org (you can add your own name + email for the tickets you order!)

The aim of these events is to gently introduce people to the Christian faith, have some fun and promote the main Passion for Life events which will take place in Letchworth in the week of 25th April. These will include interviews with **David Moss**, who became a Christian from a Jewish background, **Bill McCurrie**, an ex UVF Terrorist, **Yvonne Edwards**, a former drug addict with a powerful testimony and **Jeremy Marshall**, a businessman with terminal cancer- with talks from **Roger Carswell**.

PRAYER GATHERINGS: Our next Prayer Gathering is on **Wednesday 9th March** from 7:45pm in the upper Parish Room. This will be in-person only at St Nicholas Church and we will spend some time praying for the situation in Ukraine. Our next 7-8am early morning zoom prayer will be on Tuesday 15th March. Why not put those dates in your diary now and commit to coming along? The church will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12 noon.

READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS: The readings for the next 3 weeks are as follows:

6th March: Matt 24:1-51

13th March: Matt 25: 1-13

20th March: Matt 25:14-30



UKRAINE. We have all been shocked and appalled by the news from Ukraine over the past few days, and I'm sure that the people and leaders have been in your prayers. We want to stand with our brothers and sisters in the Ukrainian Church and help those in need, so for the **next 2 Sundays** both churches will be inviting donations which will be sent via Samaritans Purse (the organisers of Operation Christmas Child). They already have people on the ground, with more people and resources to come. See link: <https://sampur.se/3C22Ls5> To give, please place your donation in an envelope marker Ukraine and place it in the offering. At St Nicholas, you can also give via the tap and give panel. Simply click on the option that says 'Ukraine' and enter the amount. Thank you.

RESTARTING OUR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S WORK. You are all invited to a special joint breakfast at St Nicholas Church on **Saturday 12th March from 8:30am**. We'll enjoy a good breakfast together (cereals, bacon butties, toast, drinks) and then gather as men and women to discuss restarting our 2 groups. There are sign-up sheets in both churches.

OPPORTUNITY OF THE WEEK: Stevenage has one of the youngest populations in the country, yet we see very few children and teenagers in our churches. We want to help remedy that, and we hope you do too.

How can you help?

1: **PRAY.** We can **all** do this. Pray for the children and young people you know, both in the church, along your street and across the town, that they might come to faith in Jesus and follow him all through their lives.

2: **CHAT.** Oak Church are starting a term-time after school club on Tuesday afternoons at the Thomas Alleyne's Academy, to befriend and encourage some of the pupils at the school who, in some cases, are finding life tough. There will be 2 volunteers from Oak Church there each week, we'd love to send 1 or 2 of our own folks to join them. Could this be you? If we have several volunteers this could be on a rota basis.

3: **SERVE.** Thursday afternoons from 2:30-4pm, we've been offering hot chocolate and biscuits to young people heading home after school, as well as dog-walkers and, well, anyone else who is around! Along with 2 or 3 others, you'd be making and serving the drinks, chatting with the young people and getting to know them so that in time we can speak to them about Jesus. Could you serve in this way?

If you're interested in either 2 or 3, please speak to Dave or Mike or Karen asap. A DBS check will be required but we can help you with that...

Would you prefer to serve in other ways? There are lots of opportunities to serve God's kingdom in our 2 churches—just speak to Dave or one of our Church wardens- or read last week's newsletter for ideas.

ST NICHOLAS FLOWER FESTIVAL FUND: Thank you to everyone for their donations to the Flower Fund Penny Pot. Our first collection raised £23.57 so £23 was paid into the fund with 57p carried over to the end of March. The collection pot for small change will be out again on the 27th March and every last Sunday of the month going forward...