



The
United
Reformed
Church

MAY 2021

South Leicestershire Group URC



SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE GROUP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
Saffron Lane-Wigston Magna-South Wigston
Oadby-Whetstone

<http://southleicsgroupurc.org.uk>

Part of the South and East Leicestershire Area with Abbots Rd URC

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Abbots Road

Revd Pam Smith Secretary 07830037308

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Martin's Message

Dear Friends

I had the opportunity recently to watch a programme about the epic journey of the first pilgrim fathers who sailed from England to discover the New World. It centred around puritan separatists who, due to persecution under King James, sought to break away from the established Church of England and establish a new society along the lines of their religious ideals. They boarded the ship called the Mayflower, but their journey was anything but plain sailing. The voyage was hampered by poor weather and cramped conditions, where death and survival were a harsh reality. In overcoming these challenges, it was pleasing to note how Christians and non-Christians alike came together and established a document called the Mayflower Compact. Its purpose was to form a rudimentary democracy, where everyone agreed to contribute to the welfare of the community.



Here were a people who were prepared to put their trust in God and to follow his call by stepping out in faith into the unknown; prepared for whatever challenges that may be set before them. Out of the 102 pilgrims, 45 perished within the first winter of the established colony. Pilgrimage was essentially part of their life and as Christians they sought to see life as a journey.

Pilgrimage is an essential part of life. Christians see life itself in terms of a journey, coming from God and returning to God. William Bradford who was Plymouth Colony governor for 30 years before his death in May 1657 wrote; *"Nevertheless, to keep a good conscience, and walk in such a way as God has prescribed in his word, is a thing which I must prefer before you all, and above life itself"*.

This journey reminded me of the many missionary journeys of the apostle Paul. A man who was greatly feared by the Christian community, prior to his conversion, when confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus. Paul grew to be a formidable advocate and follower of Jesus Christ. Due to the ongoing persecution that was growing in Jerusalem, believers fled across the Middle East, but continued to proclaim the gospel message and the church was growing rapidly. Paul orchestrated three pioneering missionary journeys in his time and influenced many who he encountered, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; *"They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God..." Acts 14:21-23.*

We are very much starting out on a new pilgrimage as the South and East Leicestershire Area begins to emerge into a 'new normal'. As with Paul and the early pilgrim fathers, it is a time for the Churches to step out in faith and discover new opportunities to engage with our communities both physically and virtually. In his book 'Crazy Christians' A radical way of life; Bishop Michael Curry makes the following point: *'Being a Christian is not essentially about joining a church or being a nice person, but following in the footsteps of Jesus, taking his teachings seriously, letting his Spirit take the lead in our lives, and in so doing helping to change the world...'*

To paraphrase Richard Holloway a former Bishop of Edinburgh during this post resurrection period, that Jesus continues to break out of the tombs to which we consign him. The question is, are we prepared to break out and follow where he leads, or remain where we are, consigned behind walls?

Shalom

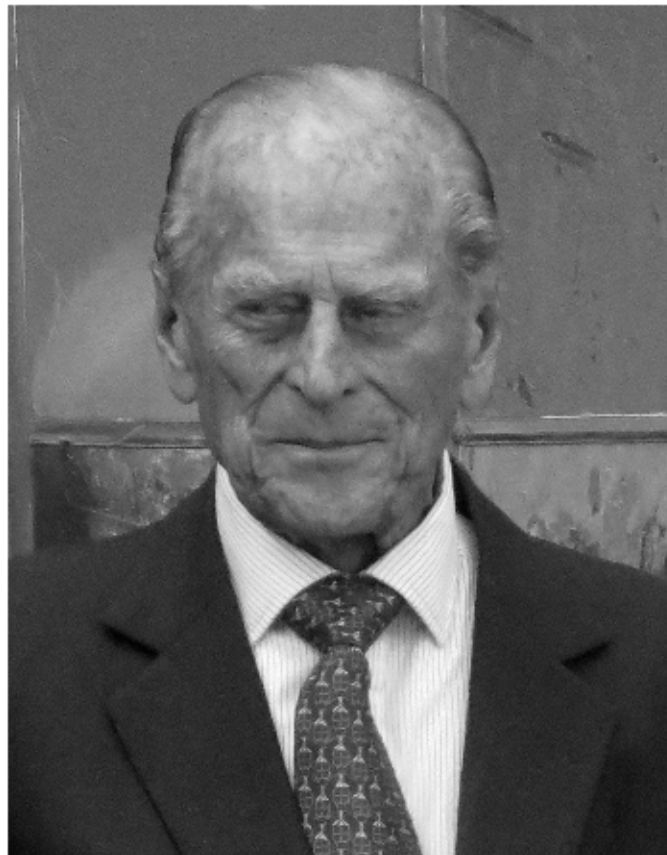
Martin

HRH DUKE OF EDINBURGH

I am sure we would all like to express our sadness at the passing of His Royal Highness, Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

He has done so much for our country and has been a strength and stay for the Queen for over 70 years.

I know that our thoughts and prayers are with the Queen and the Royal Family at this sad and difficult time.



NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

Whetstone URC	10.00 am
Oadby URC	10.15 am
South Wigston URC	10.30 am
Wigston Magna	10.30 am
Saffron Lane	11.00 am
Abbots Road	10.45 am

Please check with the relevant Church Secretaries to confirm if and when services are taking place at any of the Group Churches.



Your Giving is Still Needed

Please remember that the expenses of the church continue even if the building is closed. While we are unable to attend worship please put your weekly offering to one side and then bring it along when we start to meet again.

If you would like to set up a weekly payment arrangement direct to your church account please speak to the Church Treasurer.

Regular Group Church Events

MEETINGS / EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

For any more information / advice please contact the Church Secretary

South Wigston

Di Statham Secretary 0116 2810053

Wigston Magna

Eileen Williams Secretary 0116 2478929

Saffron Lane

Sandra Clay Secretary 0116 2835375

Oadby

Pauline Hudson Secretary 0116 2712913

Whetstone

Janet Statham Correspondence Secretary 0116 2863335

Jean Warner Room Lettings 0116 2752405

Abbots Road

Revd Pam Smith Secretary 07830037308

DEADLINE FOR JUNE 2021 MAGAZINE

Sunday 23 May 2021

Send your items to your church representative or direct to

di.statham@btinternet.com

If you do not have a computer a hand written copy can be accepted.
Contact Di Statham 0116 2810053 for information

Christian Aid Week Appeal 10 - 16 May 2021

The Leicester Christian Aid Committee have joined many other cities in inviting people to make a donation to Christian Aid as a thanksgiving for the vaccines we have had, or will have free of charge. The link to find out more is below.

This is part of the City's Christian Aid Week appeal for 2021

<https://giving.tapsimple.org/online/christian-aid/leicestercaq>

Giving thanks for our vaccines in Leicester

Share this campaign and help raise even more donations!

As more of our family, friends, and neighbours receive their vaccine, we are both joyful and relieved. But we are aware that many communities around the world are suffering and don't have access to vaccines. And many of them lack the basics they need to protect themselves like clean water for handwashing. As you or a family member is protected, please give to help protect those who don't have access to vaccines.

This appeal is initiated by the Leicester Christian Aid Group.

All donations will support Christian Aid's response to the coronavirus pandemic



SERVICES IN MAY

May 2 Julie Slatford
May 23 Jacqueline Gavin
May 30 Richard Eastman

MAY BIRTHDAYS

3 Julie Slatford
5 Gill Standley
9 Rosie Randell (14)
14 Ray Green
23 Charles Williams
29 Isobel Hudson (14)

CONGRATULATIONS

to

Charles & Eileen Williams

on their

Golden Wedding Anniversary

on May 22



RECIPE - MAY: Pork Chops with Cider (Serves 4)

4 Pork Loin chops

1 oz butter

1 large onion, chopped

1 large cooking apple, peeled, cored & chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ pint of cider

Salt & pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ pint double cream

Parsley sprigs for garnish.

- 1) Fry chops in butter on both sides for 5 minutes.
- 2) Remove and place in a casserole dish.
- 3) Fry onion and apple together for 5 minutes and add to chops.
- 4) Pour over the cider, and season with salt and pepper.
- 5) Cover, and bake in a moderate oven for 45 minutes, or until the chops are tender.
- 6) Spoon over the cream, and garnish with the parsley sprigs.

BIRTHDAYS

6 Revd Richard Eastman - Happy Birthday Richard!



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

*The best way to find yourself
is to lose yourself in the service of others.*

Mahatma Gandhi

South Wigston News

PRAYER LIST: Please pray for:

- 1 Our Queen & the Royal Family as they come to terms with the loss of a dearly loved husband, father and grandfather
- 2 All who are still ill with coronavirus, especially those in hospital..
- 3 All may enjoy the bank holiday, even if simply staying at home.
- 4 Key workers, still working hard for our health and well-being.
- 5 On the eve of elections, our politicians, that they may work for the good of our country.
- 6 Give thanks for our worship leaders, especially Richard on his birthday.
- 7 Those suffering from a terminal illness.
- 8 All who are bereaved.
- 9 All charities at the start of Christian Aid Week.
- 10 The people in those countries where the pandemic is still rife.
- 11 The lonely.
- 12 Those worrying about relatives and friends in far-off countries
- 13 On Ascension Day, give thanks to God for sending us His Son.
- 14 Charities trying to build up their funds.
- 15 Those who live in countries where the vaccine is difficult to get.
- 16 At the end of Christian Aid Week, pray for all those who are benefiting from the help it gives.
- 17 Those who will be starting a new job in the near future.
- 18 Those who lost their jobs in the past year, and are now unemployed.
- 19 Students who are still following their university courses from home.
- 20 All those with physical and mental disabilities.
- 21 All troubled nations that they may live in harmony.
- 22 Those who give their time to work for charities.
- 23 At Pentecost, give thanks for all those who are back in church.
- 24 Children everywhere that they may receive love and security within their home
- 25 All those coping with a disability.
- 26 Those who grow our food.
- 27 All who are suffering from depression.
- 28 Give thanks for fellowship with one another as we slowly return to some sort of normality.
- 29 All who are affected by a breakdown of marriage.
- 30 Our friends in the other churches in our localities.
- 31 Give thanks for the opportunities that each day brings.

GARDENING NOTES - MAY

- 1) Pinch out growing tips of michaelmas daisies, golden rod, heleniums and other vigorous plants.
- 2) Remove faded flowers from irises and spring-flowering rock plants.
- 3) Divide gentians and saxifrages.
- 4) Put straw round strawberry plants.
- 5) Plant out young dahlias from cuttings once danger of frost is over.
- 6) Feed figs with liquid manure and mulch.

A Fisherman's Prayer

God grant that I may live
To fish until my dying day,
And when it comes to my last cast,
I then most humbly pray,
When in the Lord's safe landing net,
I'm peacefully asleep,
That in His mercy I be judged
As big enough to keep.



Saffron Lane News

Preachers and Readers list for May /June 2021

	OT	NT	SERV	COLL	Preacher	
May 2 nd	8	7	8	13	R Eastman	Communion
May 9 th	30	12	30	13	D Todd	Communion
May 16 th	35	36	35	13	E Williams	Communion
May 23 rd	3	4	#	14	R Green	Family Service
May 30 th	5	6	#	13	S Eastman	5 th Sunday
Jun 6 th	7	8	7	13	R Eastman	Communion
Jun 13 th	12	30	12	13	K Drinkwater	Communion
Jun 20 th	36	35	36	13	S Eastman	Communion
Jun 27 th	4	3	#	14	P Tiplady	Family Service

3 Kath T	7. Angela S	12. Elizabeth R	# no server
4. Maureen F	8. Brian S	13. Darren C	30 Sandra
5. Sue B	10. Molly B	14. Mackenzie	35 Anne
6. Pat S	11. Richard B		36 Dec B

Please Note

The Church is currently still closed on Sunday's. It is still our plan to re-open on **SUNDAY 23 MAY 2021.**

(If this plan changes we will let everybody know)

THANK YOU

To everyone who has continued to send in their weekly offerings during the time when the church has been closed. It is very much appreciated

Saffron Lane News

Birthdays May

6th Richard Eastman

14th Mackenzie Bloxham

Birthdays June

15th Anne Goss

28th Sandra Clay

NEWS

Dec has had a fall and she is in the LRI with a broken collar bone. Please remember her in your prayers.

Edna Poughter

We are sad to report the death of a dear friend who has attended Saffron Lane Church regularly since she found it too far to get to her own Church at old Aylestone. Edna who was 92 died at home on Tuesday 13th April when her daughter was visiting her. What a blessing that she had someone with her at the end.

We were able as a Church to go out for a Sunday lunch to celebrate her 90th birthday and she always supported all of the Church events.

As she lived opposite the Church we always knew where to go when we ran out of milk, or she would ring me if someone had left the Church lights on. I could ring her if we were expecting a workman to call. She was my eyes on the Church.

Sandra Clay

Saffron Lane News

When God closes a door, somewhere he opens a window

Written by Joy Rice

Sometime we choose to close a door ourselves,
And that chapter of our life ends.
We leave behind our old routine,
Say farewell to colleagues and to friends.

There is sadness in our leaving,
We wonder how can we bear to part?
But, be assured that there will always be,
Fond memories within our heart.

And...so we close that door,
There's a bright future to look forward to,
And there will always be possibilities,
Plenty to try that is new!

The door closes, and we go through,
God opens a window of opportunity,
New thing to discover, new chances to take,
New ways to engage with the community.

So, look through that window,
Enjoy that great view.
Remember that wherever you go,
That God will be there with you

This was written when a head teacher was retiring

Whetstone News

Back to Worship

For those of you who receive "Daily devotionals" from Richard, he recently mentioned that he felt like singing "Oh what a beautiful morning".

The same could certainly have been said for Easter Sunday morning at Whetstone: The air was crisp, the sky was blue, the daffodils danced in the breeze, the church doors were wide open and it was wonderful to be back inside the church for collective worship!

Eighteen people joined us to celebrate the triumph over death by our Risen Saviour.

Thanks to Eileen for the Easter eggs, which were available at the rear of the church for people to help themselves to at the close of the service.

Thanks to Jean and Kevin for cleaning and preparing the church in advance of the service.

Special thanks to the Reverend Les Gill for leading our worship which was both joyful and uplifting. Including Holy Communion, it was a wonderful service. Thanks Les.

We also thank Eileen Williams, Kevin and David Todd for leading our worship throughout April.

Kevin has been producing PowerPoint presentations to display the words of our hymns each week. We thank him for his hard work and for the beautiful images he includes on the screen between hymns.

Whetstone News

Members News

Many of our congregation have now received their second dose of the Covid vaccine. Whilst not a cure, it is certainly a preventative measure, ensuring the health of our congregation and indeed our nation!

We have already seen some lockdown measures eased but we must still remain careful to protect ourselves and others.

We continue to pray for Dorothea and thank her and her daughter, Liz, for their continued support.

We pray for Aldyth, who is in constant pain from broken bones. We hope that something can soon be done to ease her suffering.

We pray for Jean and Mick - Kevin's parents - as they continue to deal with various health problems.

We also pray for all those around the Group who, for whatever reason, need the power of prayer at this time.

Planned preachers for May:

2nd - Mrs. Eileen Williams (Holy Communion)

9th - Mrs. Judith North

16th - Mr. Ray Green

23rd - Rev Richard Eastman (Pentecost)

30th - Mr. Kevin West

Whetstone News

Answers to last months "What's that hymn?" quiz:

Christ the Lord is Risen today
Hail, Thou once despised Jesus
I serve a Risen Saviour
I will sing the wondrous story
Jesus Christ is Risen today
Jesus is Lord
O sacred head once wounded
On a hill far away
There is a green hill far away
When I survey the wondrous cross

I hope you managed to get them all correct.

Missing words Quiz.

What words are missing from these lines from well known hymns?

Morning by morning new ----- I see
Oh what ----- pains we bear
Watching and waiting----- above
The ----- offender who truly believes
For by His power, each ---- and flower
Not a ----- nor a fear, not a ---- nor a tear
In Jesus begun, in Heaven made -----
I see the -----, I hear the ----- thunder

Whetstone News

On "Low Sunday" or "Quasimodo Sunday" our own Kevin led us in worship. He was fantastic, as usual, and inevitably ended with a funny story:-

Following the tragic and devastating fire at Notre Dame, Quasimodo was asked if he had any idea how the fire started.

He said he didn't know but he had a hunch.

A solitary workman tasked with completing repairs was working late at night in the belfry. He slipped, fell forward and hit his head on one of the Cathedral bells.

Being the only person around, Quasimodo quickly called the emergency services. Paramedics soon arrived and revived the injured workman. He was suffering concussion and was confused.

The Paramedics asked: "Do you know this man?"

"Not really," Quasimodo replied, "but his face rings a bell..."



Abbots Road News

Easter Witness to The Community

As we were unable to worship in church this Easter, we decided to witness to the Community around Abbots Road by putting an Easter display in our windows. If this Easter had've been a 'normal' Easter we would have greened the cross with fresh flowers but this year it would have been unfair (or not possible) to expect someone to go to church to look after the flowers so we decided to ask adults, children and young people to make flowers. We received lots of beautiful flowers and June White donated greenery from her garden.

As well as the cross there was a model of the tomb with the stone rolled away, more flowers and a picture of the Resurrection morning. The display was put together by Paul and Alison Hadley and Dorothy Russel. All in all it was a wonderful display.

And we were told that many people passing by the church stopped to have a look at our display, a witness to our Lord's Resurrection.



Abbots Road News



SIX LITTLE STORIES WITH LOTS OF MEANING

1. Once all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That is faith.
2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That is trust.
3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set alarms to wake up. That is hope.
4. We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That is confidence.
5. We see world suffering, but still, we get married and have children. That is love.
6. On an old man's shirt was written a sentence "I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience." That is attitude.

Have a happy day and live your life like these six stories. Remember - Good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and impossible to replace!!

This piece was posted on our Whatsapp Fellowship Group page by Kate Lee.

EASTER EGGS - DID YOU GET ANY?

I remember when I was of school age and I lived with my parents. After the Easter holidays, my friends would ask me this very question.

Now, for me this was easy to answer and the answer was lots! It was as though my Mum and Dad collected them throughout the year as I would usually have around 6 large eggs and maybe 15-20 smaller crème egg size ones. How happy was I (plus my 4 brothers and sister of course!) A very healthy option for me!

Now to bring this question right up to the Easter of 2021. Easter eggs, did I get any? Well yes. A friend presented me with a larger egg, I won an egg in a raffle and my parents gave me some money to buy some (well, I am only 51 years old!) and I duly purchased 2 bars of Lindor chocolate. Yes, I am still taking the healthy option!

However, regardless of how many chocolate treats I had this Easter, the greater treasure was those eggs that were given to others. We at Abbots Road have in previous years purchased an Easter egg for all of our COGS children (Children of God on Sunday - our "Sunday School" children). Was the current pandemic going to stop this.....no way! So we delivered eggs to our smaller COGS on the Saturday and knocked the door, having placed the eggs at the doorstep and backed away. The 3 young children came to the door with their mum and they saw the eggs. The look on their faces was a picture indeed and one we will not forget. For the older ones, we went out early Easter Sunday morning and hid their eggs in their front gardens. During our time of "zoom" worship we asked them to go out and search their gardens to see if they could find anything. Well of course they did and they came back on screen. Again their faces were a picture and remember these were not the younger children.

Abbots Road News

Cont.....

So this got me thinking. These eggs cost £1.25 each plus a little bit of effort to deliver but the rewards given back to us all were tenfold! I wondered about all the simple things we, any of us, all of us could do that cost us very little but give a massive amount of pleasure to others, which we then receive back in our hearts. Maybe a visit to a persons front door. How about picking up that phone and giving an hour of our time to chat about nothing or something. Maybe write a letter or an email. Maybe just a smile to someone we don't know in the street.

What opportunities we have, even if we just take one of them we can make someone's life just that little bit more special, for longer than we can imagine.

I will look to challenge myself in this way and maybe if you have any success in this you could write to the magazine so we could all read it. After all, I think that would make a few of us smile and get that warm feeling.

May God continue to bless us all.

Paul Hadley



Abbots Road News

THE EMMAUS ROAD A POEM BY DOROTHY RUSSELL

We walked along the Emmaus Road,
We didn't recognise the Lord.
Our hearts were breaking - self was first.
We didn't listen for His word

We thought He had abandoned us,
Our bitter disappointment grew.
And sadness, doubt, consumed our minds,
And crushed faith we once knew.

Our joy of living with our Lord
Had filled our lives each day.
But this new road we travelled
Led us on a different way.

Our kind companion listened to
Our deep despair and pain.
Then told us scripture said that
"Christ would suffer for our gain."

We urged this man to stay with us.
The growing darkness matched our mood.
We offered hospitality,
We offered him our food.

Then at the table, giving thanks,
He broke the bread for us,
And we in awe and wonder knew
This was our Lord Jesus.

How could we not have recognised
The true and risen Lord?
The darkness of our spirits
Has been lifted by His word.
With open eyes we trust Him
And claim him as our guide.
With faith restored, we clearly see
He's walking by our side.

THE BRIDGE OUR CHARITY FOR THIS YEAR

What is The Bridge? The Bridge is an organisation which helps homeless people and those vulnerably housed in Leicester, and comes under the umbrella of Health and Wellbeing. Their motto is 'From Homelessness to Hope'.

The help the Bridge gives includes:

1. A mentoring project
2. Meal provision 6 days a week
3. Provision of clean clothes and Sleeping bags
4. Weekly Job Centre Drop-In on Mondays from 10a.m. - 1pm
5. Health awareness days
6. Drop-in advise and MORE

With thanks to all who continue to contribute their money to help homeless people in our city.

Pam.

Zoom for Charity!

Last year when Lockdown was first imposed, a weekly coffee morning and a quiz night were set up to maintain our fellowship alongside Sunday morning worship. We quickly decided to put aside the cost of coffee each week for the church Charity of the Year. A raffle was added; each week a different person donated prizes and the opportunity to share our news was a welcome interlude amid the Lockdown routine. At the end of the year £1750 was forwarded to 'Rainbows'. That was about three times as much as we would normally have raised.

On Easter Sunday this year's contributions were totalled up. We were delighted to learn that £782 was already raised for this year's charity, 'The Bridge'.

For us Zoom has not only kept many of us in close contact with each other, but also has encouraged regular giving to our Charity of the Year. Now, I must put this week's money in the pot!! Irene W

Abbots Road News

The Ascension

After Jesus' resurrection, more than 500 people saw him alive, according to 1 Corinthians 15:6. When Jesus ascended into heaven, it was to prepare a place for all of us! Find the important words in the Word Search below

C E W W I A S N H A D J F A T P K N
E R R I O T E O P F D E I S I O X O
L O D C T V I O M U D R N K M W P I
P T E A A N S R O E A U Q I E E S Y
O S H E T T E L I M D S W N A R D Q
E E H U L E C S A P D A T G A R J X
P R J E S U S S S S S L Y E F U T X
R G S R E T U R N E O E L O D X D S
E A U T H O R I T Y S M R E H T A F
A U G N I H C T A W W G A L I L E E

APOSTLES

CLOUD

GALILEE

JERUSALEM

PEOPLE

RETURN

SPIRIT

WATCHING

ASKING

DATES

HEAVEN

JESUS

POWER

SAMARIA

STRAINED

WITNESSES

AUTHORITY

FATHER

ISRAEL

JUDEA

RESTORE

SOMEDAY

TIME

Lectionary Readings

May 2nd

Acts 8: 26-40
Psalm 22: 25-31
1 John 4: 7-21
John 15: 1-8

May 9th

Acts 10: 44-48
Psalm 98
1 John 5: 1-6
John 15: 9-17

May 16th

Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26
Psalm 1;
1 John 5: 9-13
John 17: 6-19

May 23rd

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b
Romans 8:22-27 Or Acts 2: 1-21
John 15: 26-27, 16: 4b-15

May 30th

Isaiah 6: 1-8
Psalm 29:
Romans 8: 12-17
John 3: 1-17