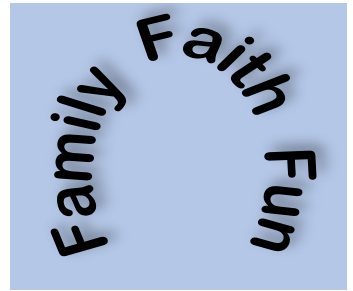




Charity No 251394

May 2023

A NEW COMMANDMENT



“A new commandment I give to you. As I have loved you, you must love one another.

These were words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper, just before the terrible events of Good Friday, the day of his crucifixion. Even on the cross he asks his father in heaven to forgive the soldiers because they didn't know just what they were doing.

What is a “commandment” – it's an order that should be obeyed. Moses was given 10 Commandments by God to give to the people of Israel when they were in the desert (see Exodus) which became the rules by which most of us live. We are told not to steal, not to tell lies, not to be jealous of what others have, not to kill, to love God, to name a few. They are the principles that have become the basis of our laws today.

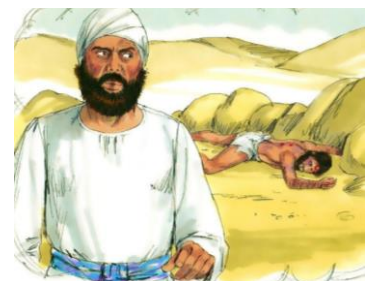
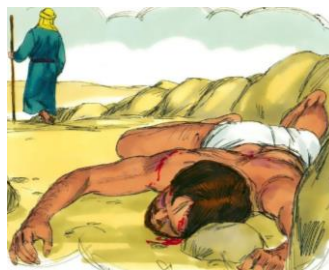
And now here is Jesus giving us another one! But if you think about it, if you really love other people you will not want to do anything to harm them, and will forgive them if they hurt you in some way. A very difficult rule to live by. Jesus said we should love our neighbours as we love ourselves when he was talking to a crowd of people.

One man asked who should we consider are our neighbours? So Jesus explained in a way that he knew would be easy to understand. He told a story. It begins.....

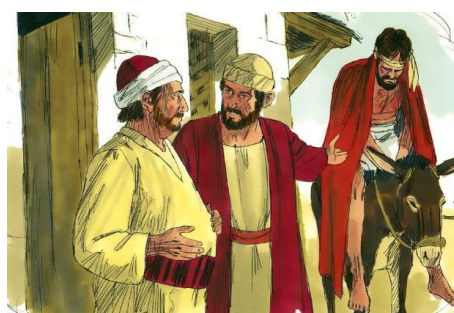
Once there was a man who was on the road from Jerusalem, going to Jericho. In a lonely and deserted stretch, he was attacked by robbers. He was beaten, stripped and robbed of all his possessions. Then he was left for dead on the roadside.



A priest on his way to the temple in Jerusalem came along, saw the man, and hurried by on the other side of the road. A little later, a Levite, someone who served at the Temple, also came by, saw the man and passed by on the other side.



Then a Samaritan, a man from the country of Samaria, came along. People from his country were hated by the Jews who would never dream of helping one of them. The Samaritan stopped by the injured man, bound up his wounds, and put him onto his donkey. He took the man to the nearest town, found an inn and asked the innkeeper to look after him, leaving money for his expenses.



At the end of the story Jesus asked, “Which one of these acted like a neighbour?” Then told the man to go and behave in the same way to all those he met in life.

On May 28th this year, Christians will celebrate Pentecost, a birthday that marks the beginning of the Christian church. What is it about?

Forty days after the momentous events of the time we call Easter, the atmosphere in Jerusalem is tense. The authorities are known to still be keen to wipe out all memory of Jesus. The disciples were gathered in the upper room of the house in the city. They were gathered together to celebrate the Jewish festival of Pentecost.

Suddenly, the house was filled with a sound from heaven like the roaring, mighty windstorm. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and were no longer afraid. This was Jesus' promised gift. They all felt a need to speak out about Jesus and his wonderful promise of salvation for all.



Outside the streets were filled with visitors from many of the surrounding countries, there to celebrate Pentecost. Seizing the moment Peter stood and spoke to the crowds. Each person could hear what he was saying in their own language! (Read all about it in Acts 2:1-4)



Look and See

Below is a picture by the artist Rebecca Brogan. See the hands of Christ at the top, showing the marks of the nails. He is releasing a dove (a symbol of the Holy Spirit) while at the same time rivers of fire are pouring down on the people below, who are dressed in the costumes of many nations. The love of Jesus is freely given to all who wish to know and follow him, wherever they come from.

A Pentecost Puzzle



Beginning at the top from the letter C, can you follow a path through the flame, finding the letters in your path and fill in the blanks below. Be careful not to take a wrong turn!



Make yourself a Flame Crown and perhaps wear it to church on Pentecost Sunday,
Cut out flames in a long strip to fit round your head. Then use different shades of red, orange and yellow tissue paper to cover it, or paint it, and then join the ends together.