

Contact

MAY 2024



Dear Friends,

The month of April was very much a month of visiting castles. Over the Easter holidays we made one of our regular visits to Conwy and Caernarfon Castles, courtesy of our trusty Cadw membership and Tesco Clubcard reward points! And later in the month, we ventured further north to visit Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, home of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, and more recently, a filming location for Harry Potter and Downton Abbey. Finally, we spent a lovely morning exploring the historic Edinburgh Castle, high upon Castle Rock and dominating the Old Town.

Though many people associate castles with princesses and fairy tales, what we think of as ancient castles are actually examples of military fortresses. Castles were built on strategic, defensible locations, generally on high ground that afforded a long line of sight of the surrounding land. They contained tall towers that provided 360 degrees of visibility so lookouts could see any approaching threat far in advance.

Castles are traditionally surrounded by moats, which were often simply deep dry ditches meant to impede an invading force's entrance. Moats also served the purpose of further elevating the entire structure of the fortress by excavating the surrounding area down 12 to 15 feet.

Inside the moat, the castle would have been surrounded by high and thick walls around which you would find arrow slits also known as loopholes. From the exterior they are narrow, usually vertical, slots in the wall, but on the inside, they would be larger openings that would allow archers to draw back their bows and fire arrow after arrow into advancing forces.

Castles were generally built in ever elevating concentric sections so that defenders could flee further inward and upward if the exterior fortifications didn't hold against enemy attack. And the top of the castle was meant to provide a fortified space for cannons and other artillery so that soldiers could duck behind the wall and place the cannon barrel through the gap as they loaded and fired their weapons.

In Biblical times, ancient cities often protected their citizens from a military attack by building high walls to surround fortresses and create a safe atmosphere in people's lives where communities could have the freedom to thrive. The defence of cities and trade centres has been important for centuries and the citadel was the fortress of the ancient world, appearing in the cities of Egypt, Greece, and the Roman empire.

In the Book of Psalms, one of the overriding themes is that of God's protection and provision and the Lord is referred to as a rock around 20 times because of the security he provides for those who trust in him.

Psalms 31 refers to the Lord as both a 'refuge' and a 'fortress.' A 'refuge' meaning a place where people can fall back to in times of hardship or danger and a 'fortress' being a building designed for battle. It provides safety from an attacking enemy and gives those inside the means to withstand an assault. And Psalm 46

reminds us that 'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.'

Many of the Psalms were thought to have been composed by King David, who often viewed God as his rock, his fortress, his refuge and his shield. In Psalm 57 when David, hiding in the rocks and caves of the desert from Saul's attackers, says 'God is my fortress,' he is saying that, despite the absence of fortified walls, he is safe because of God. He is putting his trust in God, and understanding that God will protect him just as surely as if he were in the highest tower in a well-armed, perfectly situated fortress.

But you don't have to be the King of Israel to receive God's protection. We can seek refuge in him as our fortress at any time in our lives. God is our fortress, a strong fortress to save us and protect us with his love. In a fortress, you are safe. Things can attack but the walls will hold. It's the same with God. No matter what happens, no matter what you're facing, you can find refuge in God. Make him your fortress. When you are under attack, go to God, you are always safe with him and nothing can ever separate you from God. He is always there, bringing peace in the midst of chaos, and the ultimate security offered by God is eternal. God is our rock and our strength, a refuge and a strong fortress for us all.

The Lord is my protector; he is my strong fortress.

My God is my protection, and with him I am safe.

He protects me like a shield; he defends me and keeps me safe.

Psalms 18:2

With all good wishes - Liz

CHRISTIAN AID 2024

During the month of May, we will be donating the proceeds from our themed lunch and cake sale to Christian Aid. Donation envelopes will be available at the back of church and there will also be a retiring collection following the service on Sunday 12th May to coincide with Christian Aid week.

Your donation will help push back against the inhumanity of poverty this Christian Aid Week, so please give generously.

NEW TO YOU - THURSDAY 9TH MAY

SUNDAY 5TH MAY

Help is needed at 9.30am to put tables up and bring bags down and also after the service to begin sorting.

MONDAY 6TH MAY

Sorting will continue at 10am.

THURSDAY 9TH MAY

Volunteers are needed from 10am - 8pm to man the stalls and the café.

FRIDAY 10TH MAY

Volunteers are needed at 7pm and further help is required at 8pm to take tables down.

Thank you for your support.

DIARY – May 2024

Sunday 5th May	10.30am	Songs of Praise Family service Lunch/ Begin sorting New to You
Monday 6th May	10am 7pm	Continue sorting New to You Deacons Meeting
Thursday 9th May	10am – 8pm	New to You
Friday 10th May	7pm	Jumble Sale
Sunday 12th May	10.30am	Family service led by Frank Wroe and featuring music from Ricky & the Slippers Church Meeting
Wednesday 15th May	12 noon	Scoffs
Friday 17th May	7pm – 9pm	Junior Disco
Sunday 19th May	10.30am 12 noon	Whit Sunday service led by David Lewis United service at St Thomas' Leesfield
Sunday 26th May	10.30am	Family service led by Peter Butler Cake Sale

Regular Activities

Sunday

Toddler Sundays 10am – 11.30am

Monday

Exercise Group 2pm

Wednesday

Scoffs 12 noon (2nd Wednesday)

Thursday

Rainbows Toddler Group 9.30am

Friday

Badminton 6pm

Offertories

7th April - £67.20

14th April - £48.75

21st April - £70.75

28th April – No Service

Standing orders - £637.00

Total £823.70

Other Income

Lunch - £43.12

Ploughman's Lunch - £83.65

Toddlers - £100.00

Badminton - £40.00

Flower Rota

May 2024

5th – Beryl 12th – Gill

19th – Beryl 26th – Karen

STANDING ORDERS

If you would be willing to support the church by paying your offertory – weekly or monthly – by standing order into the church's bank account, this would benefit the church by giving us a clearer indication of what our income will be each month and help us to plan for the future.

You can do it online through internet banking account or at your bank.

You will need the following details:

Church Account

Springhead Congregational Church

Sort code

01- 06 - 39

Account No

04880722

If you pay Income tax, any money donated can be gift aided and this will mean that the church receives an additional 25p for every pound you donate.

Please see Justine about Gift Aid.

WHIT SUNDAY 19TH MAY

There will be a short service in church at 10.30am.

Please make your own way down to Lees for the Churches Together United Service at St Thomas' Leesfield at 12 noon.

SONGS OF PRAISE

Sunday 5th May

If you would like to request a favourite hymn and would be willing to share what it means to you, please let Gill Fletcher know as soon as possible.

The service will be followed by a themed lunch.

All welcome to stay and join us

CHURCH MEETING

The next church meeting is after the service on

Sunday 12th May

Everyone is welcome to stay and attend the meeting

JUNIOR DISCO

Friday 17th May - 7pm – 9pm

All additional volunteers would be very welcome

CAKE SALE

The next cake sale is following the service on

Sunday 26th May

Any donations of cake would be gratefully received

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