

TORRIDGE METHODIST CIRCUIT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2021 - Issue 118

Welcome to Edition Number 118

Contact e-mail address is newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk or
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This is the 16th Special Edition of the Newsletter, which we hope you will find useful during this period of uncertainty & distress in our homes, families, communities, nation & the wider world.

Any comments or items you wish to share, please contact the editor, Dave Watson by e-mail; phone 01237 451437 or to 6 Greenings Road, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, EX39 5LU.

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As well as the Circuit Facebook page – **Torridge Methodist Circuit**, we have a private Facebook Group where we care share thoughts, prayers & other material on **Torridge Methodist Circuit Group**. If you wish to join please push the Join button & I can add you.

Please pray for our Ministers, Rob Blackhall & Andrew Vidamour, for Frank Watson & Sarah Richards and all involved in the varied life of the Circuit; for those connected to the various Chapels & the communities in which they live & work.

CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICES

There is a plan for a Circuit Service, to take place weekly on Zoom, which will use the Services that are printed in the Circuit Newsletter. The Services now on Sunday Evenings & will start at 6.30pm – but the ‘doors will be open’ at about 6.15pm. The contact/entry details will be send out during the preceding week & the Service can be accessed via a computer/laptop with camera/microphone, I Pad/Phone or using a ‘normal’ phone. Even if you have a device with camera/microphone & do not wish to be seen – you can join in without the camera on. If you do not receive an email or want further information – please contact Sarah Richards, Circuit Administrator on 01237 472649 or sarahrichards185@gmail.com

FROM REV ROB BLACKHALL – SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER

Dear Friends

Each year the Methodist Conference meets. Not a year goes by without me thinking “why has Conference done that!?”

In some years its decisions have little impact on us, as they ask us to reflect on issues such as the nature of the Church and her ministry.

The Conference that has recently met in Birmingham will have more immediate impact and the consequences of its choice will be more immediate. Not least among these is the thinking about

Trusteeship; which in part encourages Chapels to work together, but also, to think about our mission and purpose.

Then there is the “God in Love Unites us” report. This was always about more than same-sex marriage, although some have seen to define it in that way.

It starts by affirming the following summary understanding of the principles or qualities of good relating:

- All significant relationships should be built on the example of Christ, in whom we see the supreme example of self-giving love, commitment, fidelity, loyalty, honesty, mutual respect, equality and the desire for the mutual flourishing of the people involved.
- It is through that self-giving, rather than through self-seeking, that the self flourishes and begins to experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10) (though it needs to be recognised that the universal Church’s historic emphasis on self-sacrifice has often been misunderstood and misused [e.g. by abusive partners] in a way that is destructive of the wellbeing of the ones abused [often women])

The report and its recommendations were passed by a large majority in all aspects, they were at all but one of our District Synods.

Of marriage itself the Conference said:-

The Methodist Church understands that marriage is given by God to be a particular channel of God’s grace, and that it is in accord with God’s purposes when a marriage is a life-long union in body, mind and spirit of two people who freely enter it. Within the Methodist Church this is understood in two ways: that marriage can only be between a man and a woman; that marriage can be between any two people. The Methodist Church affirms both understandings and makes provision in its Standing Orders for them.

The Methodist Church welcomes everyone, whether or not a member, who enquires about an intended marriage in any of its places of worship or elsewhere.

So, the Methodist Church voted to allow same-sex marriages to take place on its premises. However, that is not the end of the story. Each Chapel will now be asked what it wants to happen in its place of worship. The decision is that of the Church Council. Those votes will be happening shortly.

What has all this shown? It has shown that we disagree about same-sex marriage. The long discussions have made that plain.

But then we disagree about a lot of things – politics for example. Research has suggested that Methodists voted 50% for Brexit and 50% to Remain! We have disagreements about the way that the Church should be run. There are different views about scripture and the ways to interpret our most precious documents of faith.

You might not think that these things matter so much.

But the question remains, what are we going to do about this division?

- i) We can ignore it and pretend it isn’t happening. I am not sure that is a good idea and will perhaps only lead to more resentment and the division will re-appear somewhere else.
- ii) We can hive off into separate groups. The Church has traditionally done that over the years (and in the process paid little attention to the words of Jesus, see John 17). That might be fine until the next thing that comes along that we disagree with.
- iii) In Christ, and in love we can agree to differ and hold contradictory convictions. We can show the world that there is a better way – of love, of trust and of reconciliation.

We can worship together, pray together, read our Bibles together, grow in fellowship together. In short, we can explore together as faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

We can grow together in faith that we might understand more of the Kingdom of God, that we might know the length, breath, height and depth of the love of God. And that we might share those kingdom values and the great love of God with those around us.

I know what I think the Christian response to all this is.

Rob Blackhall

A pastoral letter from the President and Vice-President following the Conference vote on Marriage and Relationships

We wished to take this opportunity to write to you after the Conference voted on the resolutions contained in the marriage and relationships report.

We very much appreciate that these decisions will stir up many different emotions for our siblings across the Connexion. There will be some who will be deeply hurt and others who will rejoice by what has been decided.

Our Presidential theme this year is God's Table: An Invitation for All, and God's invitation is for every single one of us. The Methodist Church has held tension for many years and as a Church and a family, we must do all we can to live with contradictory convictions.

This work was first reflected on back in 1992 and we have been on this journey together since that point. During the past years we have continued to listen to and to pray for each other and remaining true to what God is saying to us. We must remember in all this, to continue to hold each other in prayer, and to support each other as we find a way forward, respecting our differences.

It is perhaps helpful to remember that there are other issues, some of them discussed at the Conference, on which we hold differing and sometimes strong opinions. We live with them and we do not allow them to impair our communion with each other. We respect each other's consciences, we exercise judgment in when to speak and when to be silent, and we hold one another in prayer. We do all this not for our own sake but for the sake of Christ and the sake of the world which urgently needs to know the power of Christ's reconciling love.

Our prayer for you, beloved siblings, is that in joy or sorrow, in pain or excitement, we might continue to live within that reconciling love.

The Revd Sonia Hicks - President of the Conference

Mrs Barbara Easton - Vice-President of the Conference

A Personal Statement from Revd Ashley Cooper - Principal of Cliff College

I have been a Presbyterian in the Methodist Church of Britain since 1999, serving in a variety of appointments. Prior to that I was nurtured by Wolstanton Methodist Church in my formative years – and it was here, and through the work and ministry of the local church, that I found a transforming faith in Jesus Christ. They gave a young 16 year old conservative evangelical a note to preach. This discovery, and their willingness to welcome me, has shaped my life since – and I am profoundly grateful.

I currently find myself serving as the Principal of Cliff College – a role that I love, and a place that is so important in both the history of our church, but also a place that is key to the future of our movement, as we rediscover our passion for evangelism and growth.

The recent conversations and decisions of the Methodist Conference have not been insignificant in my mind over these last years, they have been brought sharply into focus in recent months as the Conference made momentous decisions at its meeting in June 2021.

I want to say clearly at this point, I have been nurtured in, and hold firmly to, an Evangelical Theology – I remain committed to the authority of scripture, and that scripture is our primary source of revelation for all things that guide us as followers of Jesus. I also remain committed to a traditional perspective on marriage and hold that marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman.

The Methodist Church, its ministers and lay people hold differing beliefs concerning marriage and relationships and this has been the case for more than 30 years and may remain so. The decisions the Conference has taken embrace this reality and seeks to offer a path forward for all. I remain a member of the Methodist Church in Britain and I remain committed to its journey over these next months and years. I still believe that we are stronger together and together, with all our differences, we can be a powerful gospel witness to the world.

I believe the decisions the Conference has taken, still enable me to hold the theological position that I do, with integrity in our church, as I live alongside those who hold differing theological positions – in a spirit of collegiality and a sense of ‘watching over one another with love’. I am grateful that each of us can exercise our ministries with honesty and in the light – and I pray that God will continue to bless each of us.

As we journey forward, I am deeply concerned about the relationships within the group that would traditionally call themselves evangelicals in the Methodist Church, and I commit to doing whatever is within my power and influence to bring a sense of unity and healing to the evangelical family – as we offer a strong voice within the Methodist movement for many years to come.

Phil Barrett

I very much regret that Phil Barrett has stepped down as a circuit steward. I very much valued his support and input into our circuit life, as did the other Circuit Stewards. Phil is a wise man, who has the best interest of the Church at heart. He has served faithfully with distinction. Sadly, due the way that the Methodist Conference voted on Marriage and Relationships, Phil felt the need to resign his Methodist Membership. I am very sorry and distressed about that, but understand where Phil is coming from.

As part of staying in touch with him he has sent me the following, which I reproduce with his permission.

Phil, thank you. Rob

“An appeal to the many Churches in the Torrington Circuit who are struggling with numbers, office holders and or finance.

A few days after resigning my membership of the Methodist Church, I was aware of a lightness in my spirit and a feeling of release from a burden. I started to realise just how much the problems of the Circuit had been weighing on my mind and that I had been continually pondering on the problems without actually achieving anything or realising what I was doing.

It occurs to me that your other Circuit stewards are probably doing the same without realising it. We all carry a burden of responsibility for the duties we undertake but when nothing seems to change or improve it becomes even heavier.

Most of these Churches have at least one other nearby struggling with the same problems. My appeal is for you to please, please, please, accept the inevitability of change and the fact that it can be a positive. Meet with other churches to discuss ideas and be prepared to make compromises. Change is coming and you can either embrace it and work with it, or fight against it and lose.

Rob has highlighted several options that could be implemented, but they will only work if everyone is determined that they will.

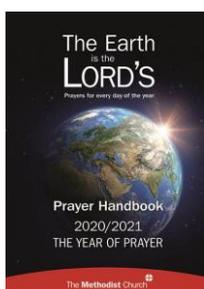
Being a Steward should be a joy and a privilege, not a burden. This issue has caused more stress and worry than any other and only you can change that.

Remember when Julia Spencer shared how she felt when her beloved chapel closed and she joined a new fellowship, it was a definite positive.

*Yours in Christ,
Phil Barrett.”*

BIBLE READINGS IN AUGUST

For those of you who do not have a Prayer Diary (always a good publication to aid our private devotions) here are the readings for the month of August.



Day	Reading	Psalm	Hymn (Singing the Faith)
Sun 1	John 6:24-35	78	Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Bread' (252)
Mon 2	Philippians 1:1-11	33:1-12	Your hand, O God, has guided (StF 692)
Tues 3	Phil 1:12-18a	33:13-22	Go to the world! Go into all the earth (402)
Wed 4	Phil 1:18b-30	39	Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided (StF 470)
Thurs 5	Philippians 2:1-11	40:1-10	Glory be to God on high (StF 199)
Fri 6	Luke 9:28-36	47	Transfigured Christ, none comprehends (StF 261)
Sat 7	Phil 2:12-18	22	O thou who camest from above (StF 564)
Sun 8	John 6:35,41-51	34	Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour (StF 593)
Mon 9	Phil 2:19-29	36:5-12	Christ, from whom all blessings flow (StF 676)
Tues 10	Philippians 3:1-11	37:1-11	All I once held dear, built my life upon (StF 489)
Wed 11	Phil 3:12-16	37:12-29	Here on the threshold of a new beginning (684)
Thurs 12	Phil 3:17-4:3	37:30-40	Take my life, and let it be (StF 566)
Fri 13	Philippians 4:4-13	38:1-12	God to enfold you (StF 648)
Sat 14	Phil 5:15-23	38:9-22	Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart (StF 545)
Sun 15	John 6:51-58	111	Be known to us in breaking bread (StF 573)
Mon 16	Galatians 4:4-7	45	We gladly celebrate and praise (StF 120)
Tues 17	Colossians 1:1-14	43	Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost (StF 379)

Wed 18	Col 1:15-20	44:1-8	We give immortal praise (StF 16)
Thurs 19	Col 1:21-23	46	Hear the call of the kingdom (StF 407)
Fri 20	Col 1:24-29	47	Lord, in the strength of grace (StF 448)
Sat 21	Colossians 2:1-7	48	Jesus, be the centre (StF 447)
Sun 22	John 6:56-59	84	How sweet the name of Jesus sounds (StF 322)
Mon 23	Colossians 2:8-15	50:1-15	We praise you, Lord, for Jesus Christ (StF 542)
Tues 24	Luke 22:24-30	146	A safe stronghold our God is still (StF 623)
Wed 25	Col2:16-23	51	There's a wideness in God's mercy (StF 416)
Thurs 26	Colossians 3:1-17	53	O God, what offering shall I give (StF 562)
Fri 27	Col 3:18-4:1	54	Let love be real, in giving and receiving (StF 615)
Sat 28	Colossians 4:2-6	56	Thou God of truth and love (StF 620)
Sun 29	Mark 7:1-23	15	God of all power, and truth, and grace (StF 498)
Mon 30	Matt 14:1-12	126	Day of judgment! Day of wonder! (StF 732)
Tues 31	Joshua 1:1-11	55:1-8	Moses, I know you're the man, the Lord said (473)

Daily reflections and questions to ponder may be found at
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/the-bible/a-word-in-time/>

Also, you can find a pray of the day at
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/prayer-of-the-day/>

**When you have read the passage for the day why not share your thoughts with a friend?
CIRCUIT PLAN for AUGUST (may change during month)**

	Aug 1	Aug 8	Aug 15	Aug 22	Aug 29
Circuit Zoom	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm
Alverdiscott		Dawe 11am		Withall 11am	
Alwington	Harris 11 (Village Hall)				
Bideford	Potter 10.30am	Withall 10.30am	Sherriff 10.30am	F Watson 10.30am	Vidamour HC 10.30am
Black Torrington					
Buckland Brewer		Parish Church @9.30am	F Watson 10am	Parish Church @9.30am	
Clovelly					
Langtree	Ley 11am		Blackhall HC 11am		
Littleham					
Milton Damerel					
Northam	Spencer 11am	Burgon 11am on 11th Aug	Ley 10.30am	Vidamour HC 11am 25th Aug	Hall- Tomkin 10.30am
Parkham					
Shebbear					
Sheepwash					
Thornhillhead					
Torrington	J Cole 10.30am	Harris 10.30am	Spencer 10.30am	Blackhall HC 10.30am	Bate 10.30am

BIBLE STUDY

Throughout the last year it has been a joy to gather for Bible Study across the circuit by zoom. I wonder what pattern of Bible study going forward people would like?

Please let us know what ideas you have. Rob

CIRCUIT MEETING

I am delighted to say that the Circuit Meeting made two significant decisions at the recent meeting. We had agreed, in principle, when we were thinking of putting up the Shebbear Manse for sale that money would be used for

- Circuit Lay Pastoral Assistant. We are delighted that Frank is in post.
- Family and Young People's worker. I hope we can move to making that appointment.
- Support the ministry of the District Rural Worker. We recall, and give thanks, that this work started, many years ago, in our circuit.
- Support the work of Youth Genesis and their work in Torrington. See elsewhere in the newsletter.

The Circuit Meeting gave a sum of £40,000 toward the Rural Worker. We will arrange for Andy Jerrard, the current holder of the post, to come and tell us about his work. In the meantime, please pray for Andy and his work; as well as his team of Chaplains in the local livestock markets. The situation in our rural communities and among our agricultural workers and industry are not great at present with so much sadness and uncertainty around. Andy's work remains so vital, indeed it is as important as it has ever being.

We also gave Youth Genesis £20,000. This guarantees their work over the next few years and gives them the space to continue their pioneering and necessary work. Again, I ask for your prayers.

Sometimes, we do not have the means to do the work ourselves, but we do have resources that we can share to enable others to continue the work of God's Kingdom. I for one, am grateful for the generosity of the Circuit Meeting.

Rob

FROM ROSE PEARD – SENIOR CIRCUIT STEWARD

Following the recent Standing Down of Phil Barrett as a Circuit Steward – Rose Peard responds with this message to Phil.

On behalf of the Circuit, we wish to say a big Thank You for your time – at least 6 years as a Circuit Steward.

You have dealt with the maintenance of the Manses, always knowing someone who could do the jobs. We have appreciated your help with working out the Assessments – all those spread sheets & then explaining it to everyone else. The Plan – can we remember that printed copy every 3 months in our hand?. You proof read it, altered it a few times, printed it & then spent time at Torrington photocopying it, ready to be folded & distributed. You have supported our ministers at Church Councils & so much more.

From the Leadership Team – Thank You for your support & friendship – You will be missed. We ask God to guide & protect you & Jo in the days ahead

Rose

FROM REVD ANDREW VIDAMOUR

Andrew remains on his Sabbatical & we wish him well on this time of rest & growth

FROM FRANK WATSON – LAY PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Alice and myself would like to thank the churches and many individuals throughout the circuit who have sent us cards, messages of best wishes and gifts on the occasion of our marriage. We feel blessed and will remember our special day for the rest of our lives.

Advanced Notice - **CIRCUIT HARVEST LUNCH** on Sunday 26th September 2021 at **Langtree Village Hall**. The time will be 12.30pm for 1pm. The Menu is Beef or Wrapped Breast in Bacon; Sweets – Strawberry Pavlova, Profiteroles, Fruit Salad & Fruit Crumble – Tea & Coffee included – the cost will be £13.50 per head.

Please will anyone who wants to attend tell your Church Steward so the orders for each church can be forwarded to Beryl Oke on 01805 624294 – Thank You

CELTIC MORNING PRAYER & COFFEE MORNING

On Thursday's at 10.30pm there will be a **Weekly Coffee Morning preceded by a Celtic Morning Prayer from the Northumbria Community on Zoom** – Login details will be available on the Circuit Facebook Group page or on the email that Sarah Richards sends out at the start of the week. Come along for a short period of Daily Prayer followed by an opportunity to share, drink a coffee, have a piece of cake with conversation - *Dave Watson*

SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

Online Training Programme 2021-2022

For all face-face dates please contact your District Safeguarding Officer or in the case of the Foundation course the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Jacqui Watson)

Jacqui would like to know if anyone books onto the Advanced & Foundation Courses & when you have completed it – please let her have sight of your certificate for her records.

Please book via Eventbrite – Follow the online instructions

ONLINE: Advanced Module – Creating Safer Space

Register by 2nd February 2022 for a Gathered Session on Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 7pm
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/online-version-advanced-module-safeguarding-training-registration-159105702439>

ONLINE: Foundation Module – Creating Safer Space

Thursday 16th September 2021 at 7pm
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103369461>

Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 9:30am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103666349>

Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 7pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103780691>

Thursday 12th May 2022 at 9:30am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103937159>

Torrington Youth Space Report March 2020 – May 2021 – Youth Genesis

Overview - As lockdown hit us, we had to close our provision at the Methodist Church and move the activities to an online forum. This worked well to start with, and the online provision was staffed by two youth workers – the young people engaged well through the initial lockdown and we were able to provide support and safeguarding concerns were still being picked up. We also sent out Empower Packs to all young people registered with us, with activities and resources to help with mental well-being.

As guidance changed and youth work is seen as an essential service, our aim was to re-engage with the young people we were working with before lockdown in March. The young people were very pleased to see us again on the streets of Torrington and engaged well. We have also made 80+ new contacts that were not using the provision before, which was positive. We initiated conversations around how they coped with lockdown, not seeing their friends, not attending school and any other issues that may have arisen due to the current situation. We will be seeing more young people present with mental health issues in the next months and years because of COVID-19.

Some of the statistics around domestic abuse are quite alarming, for example –

- In the first 3 weeks of lockdown there were 16 domestic abuse related deaths in England – that number included 2 children. (Office of National Statistics)
- In June 2020 the National Abuse helpline saw a 77% increase in the number of calls over the month compared to the year before (National Abuse Helpline)

Initial Contact – It was clear that the young people we were having regular contact with have expressed the need for a shelter as there is no outside cover for young people to use. They are also concerned about how the wider community see them as they have recently had some negative press on social media in the area. These young people have also expressed an interest in a music project which was started in March 2021.

Ongoing Curriculum work – We have started informal work around subject areas such as the environment, active citizenship, engaging in formal education, keeping active and well-being. We did a six-week project called Active Youth, aimed at keeping young people active after lockdown. We engaged them in Hockey, Football and on the last week, we took the young people surfing. We have also had online activities running alongside the sessions where young people have engaged in a food hygiene course and also a road safety course.

Activities – We continue to deliver the music project out on the streets and the younger ages are currently learning the Jerusalem dance.

Long Term Aims – Our aims are to get back into the centre in July to continue our informal workshops as this can sometimes be difficult on the streets. We will also be looking at a youth forum where young people's voices can be heard and can contribute to sustainable change. The streetbase sessions will always hold value and can be measured by the amount of participation we see.

CONFERENCE BUSINESS DIGEST

The 2021 Methodist Conference, held in Birmingham and online: Presbyteral Session 24-25 June; Representative Session 26 June – 1 July.

www.methodist.org.uk/conference2021

Election and Induction of the President and Vice-President

On Saturday 26 June the Revd Sonia Hicks was elected and inducted as President of the Conference and Barbara Easton as Vice-President. In her Conference address Mrs Hicks focused on her theme for the year, “God’s Table: An Invitation for All”, reflecting on the racism and marginalisation she and her family have experienced and how the Church can respond to injustice and division in society today.

The Vice-President, Barbara Easton, drew on her experience as a quilter to address the Conference on a range of issues including on diversity, the environment and ecumenical relations.

Reception into Full Connexion

During Conference worship, 22 presbyters and three deacons were received into Full Connexion on Sunday 27 June, along with four presbyters by transfer and one presbyter by reinstatement. Later that day, ordination services took place in five churches in the vicinity of Birmingham. The Conference rejoiced that those ordinands who had been received into Full Connexion online at the 2020 Conference were ordained in six venues across the Connexion on the preceding weekend

Education strategy

The Revd Dr Roger Walton introduced the report, ‘Transforming Lives: A Schools’ Educational Strategy for the Methodist Church’, which outlines the strategy for Methodist schools for the next ten years.

The Conference:

- Affirmed those who work and volunteer to support education;
- Urged Circuits to audit local schools regularly as part of their mission;
- Encouraged Districts to appoint District Education Officers;
- Invited young people to consider education as a vocation and Circuits to support them;
- Encourages Circuits and churches to recruit governors for local schools;
- Asked Circuits and Districts to sponsor new Methodist schools where appropriate.

The Conference also agreed to:

- maintain and extend Methodist engagement with schools;
- pursue educational excellence;
- develop a confident Methodist ethos and working together with local partnerships including local heritage sites;
- prioritise areas of need.

Methodist Church House

The Conference received a report from the Methodist Council, which updated the Conference on the work that had been undertaken so far in relation to Methodist Church House. It heard that, in the light of the significant change of circumstances since the decision had been made to rebuild Methodist Church House, the Council had agreed to discontinue the proposed redevelopment. Instead, the Council now recommended that Methodist Church House be sold, with the proceeds of the sale used for alternative office accommodation for the Connexional Team in London. Under the terms of the required Charity Commission Scheme for the Centenary Hall Trust, the Conference confirmed the decision to sell Methodist Church House.

Deliverance Ministry

The Conference adopted interim guidelines for deliverance ministry, brought by the Methodist Council and the Faith and Order Committee. The Faith and Order Committee is undertaking some further theological reflection on deliverance ministry which will be presented to the 2022 Conference. The guidelines include the safeguards that such ministry should only be undertaken within a liturgical framework, should never be undertaken by only one person, should not be used for people under 18 years old, and should not be used in an attempt to change a recipient's sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Conference appointed a Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry which will have, amongst other things, oversight of this ministry, training materials, appointing of practitioners. The Panel will also act as an advisory body for deliverance ministry in the Methodist Church, particularly for District Chairs who will be the point of contact for those recommended for training. Feedback on the guidance is being sought: guidancefeedback@methodistchurch.org.uk

Climate Change and Fossil Fuels

The Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI) reported to the Conference on the further work undertaken in respect of investment in fossil fuels. In the light of this further work, JACEI has advised the Central Finance Board to disinvest from a number of companies, which are believed not to be aligned with the Paris Agreement goals.

Holy Communion and online worship

The Conference agreed to adopt a three year period of active discernment on the issue of Holy Communion and online worship, during which churches will be encouraged "with reverence and joy, to a time of discernment, both experiencing and reflecting upon what it might mean to celebrate the Lord's Supper online and to use this as an opportunity to discuss the issues raised in our churches thereby deepening our understanding of our life together."

In adopting the proposed period of discernment (beginning on 1 September 2021), the Conference commended the report to Districts and Circuits for study and reflection, and invited feedback.

Reflective Supervision

The Conference adopted the Reflective Supervision Policy for ordained ministers in the active work and those in designated lay roles within the Methodist Church. A review of the implementation of the policy, including its extension to relevant lay roles, is to be brought to the Conference of 2026.

The Conference thanked the Revd Dr Jane Leach, making her final report as Connexional Director of Supervision, for her work in this area.

Ministry in the Methodist Church

After a period of consultation and feedback on the draft Statement, the Conference adopted Ministry in the Methodist Church as a considered Statement of the judgment of the Conference. Alongside the formal Statement, the Changing Patterns of Ministry report considered the life of the Church in respect of the context of ministry, for those who are lay and ordained, and some of the practical considerations and challenges connected with that.

The Conference adopted the recommendation that the office of Local Lay-Pastor be established with the Ministries Committee directed to establish details of the scope of the role, its training and licensing.

The Conference also adopted a new understanding of itinerancy as a characteristic of ministry in the Methodist Church, directing that this be brought to the attention of all candidates and probationers. Some aspects of stationing matching process will also be reviewed and

to ensure there is a clear process for enabling some presbyters to serve in local, pioneer and specific cultural or language appointments.

The Ministries Committee is to produce a resource detailing guidance for “good endings” to help manage Church relationships when appointments end.

Budget

In presenting the budget, the Connexional Treasurer, the Revd Tim Swindell and the Director of Finance and Resources, Matt Tattersall, told the Conference that there is a deficit in the pension scheme and a fall in income over the previous year which has led the budget to be further revised. Mr Swindell told the Conference that “The Church is full of tired people and we all need them to recover. We are right to be ambitious but we don’t have limitless people or resources.”

The Conference adopted a resolution asking for churches, Circuits and Districts to give, according to their ability, towards a target of 15% of their reserves to address the pension deficit. It adopted a budget which is based on a reduction in the District Assessment of 1% in 2021/2022.

Oversight and Trusteeship

The Conference reaffirmed the Our Calling vision statement, which was launched 21 years ago, and adopted it as the primary strategic driver for the Church’s work.

The Conference adopted resolutions that raise the minimum size of a local church to 12 members from six with churches being asked to examine creative ways of working with other local churches so they are not over-burdened with matters of trusteeship; and directed that work continues towards the creation of a Connexional Council as the connexional trustee body, and to replace the Methodist Council and Strategy and Resources Committee.

Work to review the constitution of the Conference and its ways of working will carry on in the coming year with a report coming before the 2022 Conference.

A Task Group for Regional and District Structure Planning will be set up with the aim of reconfiguring the district structure more appropriately.

Marriage and Relationships

A report on marriage and relationships, ‘God in Love Unites Us’, was received by the Conference in 2019 and the District Synods were asked to consider the provisional resolutions and report back to the 2021 Conference. The Conference received a report on the results of the Synod votes (which showed that 29 out of the 30 Synods confirmed support for the provisional resolutions) and on the range of views expressed in the Synods and by ecumenical and overseas partners.

The Conference confirmed provisional resolutions on the principles or qualities of good relating, understanding of cohabitation and same sex marriages conducted on Methodist premises or by Methodist office-holders.

The Theology of Safeguarding

The Conference adopted The Theology of Safeguarding and commended it for study and reflection throughout the Connexion. The report explores the theological roots of safeguarding, how theological thinking is used, the failure to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour, how churches can welcome people who have experienced abuse, grappling with power and forgiveness and change. It also explores spiritual abuse and the trauma of abuse and acknowledges how the Methodist Church has cause to repent, seek forgiveness and take responsibility for past actions.

Notices of Motion

The Conference expressed its concern and support for campaigns in the following areas:

- Changes to the social care system and the work led by Methodist Homes (MHA) to #FixCareForAll;
- The situation in Myanmar;
- The recent cuts to the foreign aid budget;
- The change to the immigration rules, particularly as they impact refugees;
- Climate justice as we approach the COP26 climate change conference in November.

All We Can

In the All We Can report to the Conference, the Methodist Relief and Development charity detailed its work.

Since September 2019 All We Can has had a transformational and measurable impact upon the lives of 2,139, 475 people and has partnered 22 local organisations in six countries. Due to the overwhelming impact of COVID-19 on All We Can's local partners, a significant portion of the charity's workload was spent responding to this ongoing emergency situation. All We Can's long term development partners and other local organisations were supported to pivot their programmes to assist communities in coping with the impact of COVID-19.

Methodist Ministers' Housing Society

The Conference received a report from the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society, which set out the activities of the Society in the last year. The Conference asked that collaborative conversations take place to consider how the covenant relationship between the Church and its supernumeraries and their widowed spouses can be expressed fully and appropriately in the housing of supernumeraries, and to bring recommendations to the Council.

Methodist Women in Britain

The Conference received a presentation from Methodist Women in Britain, which marked the tenth anniversary since the group was established. They shared the highlights of their work over the past ten years.

3Generate

3Generate, the annual Children and Youth Assembly of the Methodist Church took a different form in 2020 and became 3Generate365, a year-round process of engagement with children and young people in their local setting to enable them to listen to God, discern what God is saying, deepen their faith and be confident in being evangelists sharing their faith with others. The Conference reaffirmed the importance of hearing the voices of children and young people in discerning future direction, and directed that there is such consultation when revising strategic policies.

Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

The Conference adopted a far-reaching Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, which will see "a profound change in the culture, practices and attitudes of the Methodist Church". As it is rolled out, the strategy will support Methodists with issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, with the aim of becoming a Church in which God's unconditional love is expressed in word and actions and where all people are able to play their part.

The strategy's recommendations include a celebration of the richness of the Church's diversity and opportunities to learn more of, and to be changed by, God through encounter with each other across the Church. Comprehensive training on topics of racism, gender, disability and LGBT+ awareness will be mandatory for anyone in a leadership role.

The strategy will also introduce moves to ensure that the leadership of the Church reflects the diversity of its membership.

A series of structures, processes and practices will be put in place to ensure that people are treated with justice and dignity and that the discipline of the Methodist Church is upheld in the face of discrimination; preventing, challenging and redressing all behaviours which are discriminatory or belittling.

Ecumenical Matters

The Ecumenical report to the Methodist Conference detailed how the global pandemic has seen already existing good relationships with ecumenical partners, in most cases, grow stronger as we have continued to share experience and expertise in support of one another.

The Revd Helen Cameron has served as Moderator elect of the Free Churches Group from April 2021 and will become Moderator in April 2022.

The Conference received the report of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group, which proposed that a new, successor, group be established, to be named Life in Covenant. The Conference approved the terms of reference for the new group and appointed the Revd Ruth Gee as its Methodist co-Chair.

Memorials

Memorials are messages from Circuit Meetings and District Synods to the Conference. They play a vital part in enabling the Conference to hear and to respond to concerns from across the Connexion. This year, the Conference considered and replied to 44 memorials on topics including marriage and relationships, online communion, oversight and trusteeship, local preachers' training, finances and the pandemic, fossil fuels, and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Israel Palestine

In response to four memorials which were received on the subject of the Kairos Palestine statement 'Cry for Hope', the Conference commended the document for study, whilst acknowledging the complexity of the situation.

The Conference also adopted the reply to memorials presented to the 2020 Conference, and which were referred to the Methodist Council for full consideration.

Conversion Therapy

The Conference received a memorial calling for a ban on Conversion Therapy in any form. The Conference agreed to support and adopt the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK' definition of conversion therapy, to call on all Methodists to refuse to offer or participate in offering conversion therapy in any form.

The Conference directed the Methodist Council to consider, draft and publish a policy on 'Conversion Therapy', called on the UK Government to ban the practice without further delay, and to consider further the most appropriate way in which to engage with HM Government on this issue.

President and Vice-President designated for 2022-2023

The Conference designated the Revd Graham Thompson to be President and Anthony Boateng to be Vice-President of the Methodist Conference 2022/2023.

Appointments

The Conference made a number of appointments and reappointments, including:

The Revd Michaela Youngson as Assistant Secretary of the Conference for a period of six years from 1 September 2021.

The Revd Dr Janet Corlett as Chair for the Isle of Man District from 1 September 2021;
The Revd Daniel Haylett as Chair for the Plymouth and Exeter District from 1 September 2022;
The Revd Novette Headley as Chair for the Birmingham District from 1 September 2022.

Future dates of the Conference

The Methodist Conference will meet in Telford from 23-30 June 2022

WEEKLY SERVICES TO USE ON ITS OWN OR WITH THE ZOOM SERVICE

SUNDAY 1st AUGUST – CIRCUIT EVENING ZOOM SERVICE – ‘GOD’S CREATION’

Welcome **and Introduction:** Summertime and Holidays.
So I thought we may focus our Worship on **God’s Creation**

Call to Worship:

As the Creator loves his creation
So creation loves the Creator
Creation of course was fashioned to be adorned, to be showered
To be gifted with the love of the Creator
The whole world has been embraced by his kiss
God has gifted creation with everything that is necessary. *Hildegard of Bingen.*

Hymn: StF 82 – ‘O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder’

Let us Pray: Using StF 393 She sits like a bird

She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
Hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
She sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
Waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
Lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
She nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
Nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
Waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;
She weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
Nor can she be captured, silenced or restrained.

For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key opening the scriptures,
Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

by John L Bell & Graham Maule ~ Lyrics

Hymn: StF 727 - ‘God in his love for us lent us this planet’

Psalm 8: StF 801

Poem: If the earth were only a few feet in diameter.

If the earth were only a few feet in diameter
Floating above a field somewhere
People would come from everywhere to marvel at it
People would walk around it
Marveling at its big pools of water
And the little pools of water flowing between the bigger pools
People would marvel at the bumps on it
And the holes in it
And they would marvel at the thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas

The people would marvel at the creatures walking around the surface of the ball
and the creatures in the water
The people would declare it precious because it was the only one
And they would protect it so that it would not be hurt

The ball would be the greatest wonder known
And people would come to behold it
To be healed
To gain knowledge
To know beauty, and wonder how it could be

People would love it
And defend it with their lives
Because they would somehow know
that their lives, their own roundness
could be nothing without it.
If the earth were only a few feet in diameter. *Threads of Creation p.10. [18].*

Prayers: We are not our own by Brian Wren

We are not our own. Earth forms us,
human leaves on nature's growing vine,
fruit of many generations,
seeds of life divine.

We are not alone. Earth names us:
past and present, peoples near and far,
family and friends and strangers
show us who we are.

Through a human life God finds us;
dying, living, love is fully known,
and in bread and wine reminds us:
we are not our own.

Therefore let us make thanksgiving,
and with justice, willing and aware,
give to earth, and all things living,
liturgies of care.

And if love's encounters lead us
on a way uncertain and unknown,

all the saints with prayer surround us:
We are not alone.

Let us be a house of welcome,
living stone upholding living stone,
gladly showing all our neighbors
we are not our own!

We will now join together with the prayer Jesus taught us **Our Father**.....

Hymn: StF107 – ‘I sing the Almighty Power of God that made the Mountains rise’

Reading: Genesis 1: 1 and 20 to 22 and 26-28 - The Beginning

Prayer: Great Lover, calling us to share

Great Lover, calling us to share
your joy in all created things,
from atom-dance to eagles' wings,
we come and go, to praise and care.

Though sure of resurrection-grace,
we ache for all earth's troubled lands
and hold the planet in our hands,
a fragile, unprotected place.

Your questing Spirit longs to gain
no simple fishing-ground for souls,
but as life's story onward rolls,
a world more joyful and humane.

As midwives who assist at birth,
we give our uttermost, yet grieve
lest folly, greed or hate should leave
a spoiled, aborted, barren earth.

Self-giving Lover, since you dare
to join us in our history,
embracing all our destiny,
we'll come and go with praise and care. *By Brian Wren*

Matthew 9: 35 – 38 - The Workers Are Few

Matthew 13: 1-12 - The Parable of the Sower

Hymn: StF 102 - ‘For the Beauty of the earth’

Ecological Commandments

In October 1982: That's 40 years Ago - Young Jews and Christians met together to explore the meaning of their faith in the context of today's ecological and environmental crisis. They were addressed by Rabbis and by Christian Pastors, but much of their time was spent in joint Bible Study. In the six days they were together some of them discovered in their own way that while the truth of the original commandments remains unchanged, the law of love shows a new and vital interpretation for today's problems. They united the old and the new in the form of Ten Ecological Commandments.

Ten Ecological Commandments.

1. I am the Lord your God who has created Heavens and Earth. Know that you are my partner in creation, therefore, take care of the air, water, earth, planets and animals as if they were your brothers and sisters.
2. Know that in giving you life, I have given you responsibility, freedom and limited resources.
3. Steal not from the future; honour you children by giving them a chance at longevity.
4. Implant in your children a love of nature.
5. Remember that humanity can use technology but cannot recreate life that has been destroyed.
6. Set up pressure groups within your community to prevent impending catastrophes.
7. Throw out all arms which cause irreversible destruction to the foundations of life.
8. Be self-disciplined in the small details of your life.
9. Set aside time in your weekly day of rest to be with the world rather than use the word.
10. Remember that you are not the owner of the land, merely its guardian. *Barbara Wood.*

Prayers of Intercession - We share in a Rainbow Covenant from *Threads of Creation*

Brothers and Sisters in creation, we covenant this day with you and with all creation yet to be

With every living creature and all that contains and sustains you

With all that is on earth and with the earth it's self

With all that lives in the waters and with the waters themselves;

With all that flies in the skies and with the sky itself.

We establish this covenant,

That all our powers will be used to prevent your destruction.

We confess that it is our own kind who put you at risk of death

We ask for your trust

And as a symbol of our intention

We mark our covenant with you by the rainbow

This is the sign of the covenant between ourselves

And every living creature that is found on the earth.

New Responsibility *Kate Compston*

Great Spirit still brooding over the world -

We hear the cry of the earth we see the sorrow of land raped and plundered in our greed for its various resources

We hear the cry of the waters, we see the sorrow of stream and ocean polluted by the poisons we release into them

We hear the cry of the animals we see the sorrow of bird, fish and beast needlessly suffering and dying to serve our profit or spot or vanity.

PLEASE TEACH US

A proper sensitivity towards your feeling creation,

A proper simplicity in the way we live in our environment

A proper appreciation of the connectedness of things

A proper respect for the shalom of the universe.

We turn from our arrogant ways to seek you again, Lord of all life.

Redeem us and redeem your world,

and heal its wounds and dry its tears.

May our response to you bear fruit in a fresh sense of responsibility

towards everything you have created.

Kate Compston

Hymn: StF 92 – ‘Think of a world without any flowers’

Blessing: - A MUSLIM PRAYER *Mahammad*

Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded. If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and men and beasts eat from it all of it is charity on his part.

The world is green and beautiful and God has appointed you as his stewards over it.

We Bless Each Other With The Grace

CIRCUIT ZOOM EVENING SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 8th AUGUST

Call to worship

Jesus said ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never thirst’ (John 6.35)

Hymn - Jesus stand among us (StF30)

Opening prayer

Lord God open our ears to your call and our hearts to your love. You have given us Jesus as the bread of life. May we know his presence here with us this evening, may we receive Him into our lives and may our words and actions show others His love and grace. Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Lord God we come before you this evening in praise and adoration for the blessings we have received throughout our lives already. We know we are not always deserving of your love and grace but because you love us unconditionally you forgive our sins and wash away our wrong doing. Your love for us is so amazing and yet often we fail to appreciate all you have done for us. Thank you Father for your love and care, thank you for sending your Son Jesus to show us the way to our eternal home with you and thank you Holy Spirit for being our guide, our helper and comforter until we are reunited with our Father forever. Amen

The Lords Prayer

Hymn - How sweet the sound of Jesus sounds in a believers ear. (StF 322)

Psalm 34 - (StF 809. 1-18) Responsive reading

OT. Reading - Exodus 3.13-15

Hymn - Lord for the years (StF 470)

NT. Reading - John 6.35, 41-51

Thought for the day.....

Who do you think Jesus is? This might seem an obvious question to you but the answer you give will reveal the assumptions you have made about Him. How you see him will be based on many things, the Bible reading you have undertaken, the Bible study you have participated in, the many sermons from varied preachers you have listened to over the years. Your own experiences will influence you too, your prayer life and how you perceive answers to prayers, healing you may

have witnessed, lives you may have seen changed. There are probably many more examples of how we learn, develop and grow in our faith but it's enough to know that each one of us have assumptions and opinions.

Obviously we can see from today's reading from John's gospel that the people listening to Jesus had their own assumptions too. Some knew Jesus from personal experience, his background and upbringing, and some knew Him through following him and listening to his teaching. Here in this passage we see the different reactions people had towards Jesus. Some were offended by his words, seeing Jesus as the humble carpenter and not a learned Rabbi. Why should they listen to him they wondered, especially as he was making quite an outrageous claim! Jesus said to them 'I AM the bread who comes down from heaven'. (V41).

Why was that outrageous? Well to understand more we need to know our Old Testament history. The reading we heard earlier from Exodus goes some way to explain. Here God was talking personally to Moses from the burning bush. When Moses asked who was addressing him God said 'I AM who I Am'. This was the God of the Israelites, the one they worshipped and followed. So when Jesus makes this claim 'I AM the bread of heaven' the rulers of the Israelites would instantly be reminded of Moses learning whom God was to be known as. Jesus words could therefore be seen as blasphemy, was Jesus saying He was God? Surely not, they exclaimed. He can't be, we know who he is, the son of Mary and Joseph, a carpenter...their assumptions blocked them from seeing the truth. They are spiritually blind.

Jesus is well aware of their spiritual blindness, he knows that unless the Father reveals the truth of who Jesus is to them, they will remain blind to what is staring them in the face. Their hearts and minds have to be opened by God, who reveals Himself to whom He chooses at the time He judges up is right. But to those who can hear and believe blessings beyond measure are theirs. Jesus brings bread that enables them to really live and to live eternally with the Father. The manna (bread) that came down from heaven to sustain the wandering exiles only fed their physical hunger. Jesus is the person who feeds us spiritually, His 'bread' brings forgiveness and salvation leading to eternal life. Jesus is the metaphorical bread given so we will not have to hunger or thirst for God anymore. We will be united with Him through Jesus. Blessings indeed...

But what does this teach us for today? Well perhaps it helps us understand why it is often so difficult to get people to discuss faith questions. Mention Jesus name and you sometimes see the shutters come down in the faces of those you are addressing. They switch off, they have assumptions, they think they know who Jesus was, maybe they have a kind of 'folk religion' learnt through childhood Bible stories. They dismiss Him in the same way the people listening to Jesus speak did in our gospel passage. They are spiritually blind. God has not yet softened their hearts or opened their minds because they are not ready to hear and believe. Maybe they never will be.... Or maybe they will. We will never know unless we are prepared to talk about Jesus again and again. Because many seeds have to be sown sometimes before they take root.

We are not told how many of those original grumblers went on to become believers and followers, we are not told how many did not. God alone knows the answer.

So the next time you are sharing what you believe about Jesus look for those who are spiritually searching, those whom God has prepared. Because He has, he told us the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Let us work hard at sharing the blessings of love and salvation to whomever we can. **Amen.**

Hymn - I will sing the wonderful story (StF 323)

Intercessory Prayers

In the power of the Spirit we come to the Father through Jesus his Son....

Blessed are you, oh Lord our God for you have provided for your children. You have given us abundant resources upon the earth, yet we often plunder and destroy your gifts, refusing to share them fairly with others so some go hungry whilst others grow fat. Help us Lord to be more considerate with your blessings, to share more with those around us and to conserve the precious resources for the future. Reveal to us how we should act, both individually and as chapels as we seek to follow your will for our lives.

Lord our God our hope is in you.

Father, we give you thanks that you have called us to know you and to love you. You have drawn us to you with bands of love, help us to listen and obey your word. We pray for all ministers, preachers and pastors as they declare your word of truth and share the gospel of love to others. We pray for those who do not know or love you. We pray for a softening of hearts and minds so the spiritually blind will see the love you have for them. We ask for your blessing upon all those who reach out in love and mission to minister to others who do not believe. We pray especially for those who have lost faith in themselves and in you.

Lord our God, our hope is in you.

We thank you Lord for the love and protection of our homes. We ask your blessing upon our families and friends. We bring before you families where there is division and strife, discord and disharmony. Pour your Holy Spirit of comfort and peace upon them and bring healing to those who suffer. We remember those for whom today may bring suffering of mind, body and spirit. We pray for complete healing as we call upon the name of Jesus, He who had compassion on the suffering and the outcast, the poor, the widow and the downtrodden. Heal your world we pray.

Lord our God, our hope is in you.

We give you thanks Lord for our own well being and for all that feeds our minds, body and spirit. We rejoice that you sustain us with the bread of life. Through our union with Jesus you offer us life eternal and we celebrate our communion with the saints who have gone before us and remember all those who grieve their loss. May the comfort of the Holy Spirit surround them now and always.

Amen.

Hymn - All I once held dear (StF 489)

The Blessing

*The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and those you love and those you find difficult to love. Now and forever. **Amen.***

CIRCUIT EVENING ZOOM SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 15TH AUGUST

Fanfare for the common Man by Aaron Copeland

Call to Worship - Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Hymn - All people that on earth do dwell (StF 1)

Prayers

Almighty and holy God,

We gather as your people to worship you, to praise you for being here amongst us, and to thank you that, for all your goodness and greatness, that you welcome us into your presence.

We come with all our weakness and failings, rejoicing that in Christ we have been cleansed and made new; that, through him, you have set your mark upon us, and called us to be your people.

*Receive what we are **And direct what we shall be.***

We come with all our weakness and failings,

rejoicing that in Christ we have been cleansed and made new;

that, through him, you have set your mark upon us, and called us to be your people.

*Receive what we are **And direct what we shall be.***

Forgive us when we fail you, our lives betraying our calling and your love.

Forgive us when people look at us, and instead of seeing something of you, see only ourselves.

Forgive us when the things we say and do obscure and deny the Gospel, rather than proclaim its message to all.

*Receive what we are **And direct what we shall be.***

Help us truly to be a holy people, reflecting your love, showing your compassion, and responding to your guidance.

Renew and restore us through the love of Christ and the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.

Touch our hearts through this time together and strengthen our faith, so that in the week ahead we may live and work for you, to the glory of your holy name.

*Receive what we are, **And direct what we shall be.***

*Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen***

Psalm 96

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Hymn - Christ be our light (StF 706)

Luke 19:1-9

John Donne – ‘No Man is an Island’

It's now 400 years since John Donne, the celebrated poet and preacher was appointed Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1621. Not long after this appointment, and shortly after the death of his daughter Lucy, Donne himself was taken seriously ill, quite possibly from typhus. For many days in late 1623 he was perilously close to death, before recovering to serve as Dean until his death in 1631.

Throughout this time Donne was determined to reflect and write about his illness, a task undertaken with such commitment that his book was actually registered for publication on 9th January 1624 and published later that year as *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, and several steps in my Sickness.*

The book itself is structured in 23 chronological sections, one for each day of Donne's illness, with in turn a 'meditation' describing a stage in his illness, an 'expostulation' containing his reaction to

that stage, and a prayer for that day. But while much of it is not widely known, the Meditation for Day 17 includes one of the most famous passages in English, albeit in the gendered language of his time.

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
As well as if a promontory were:
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.*

Why come back to this piece, some 400 years after it was written? It seems to me that Donne's words, and particular his reflections in this Meditation, resonate with so many of the concerns with which we have been wrestling with over the last 18 months of coronavirus and restrictions.

Donne is careful to observe the spread of the illness across his body, not as a disinterested observer but as someone assessing how serious the situation is. In the same way, we have been watching and waiting on news, first of infection rates, then more hopefully of vaccinations, and in recent months once more with nervousness about rates of new variants.

Donne is properly interested in his own situation, but he knows himself dependent on the care and attention of others. Given his own crisis, he knows that he cannot ignore the bell which tolls for him, but equally he recognises that it may call on others, differently; 'as therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come; so this bell calls us all.'

Donne sees in this mutual need and interdependence upon others as a sign of the 'catholicity' of the Church, a recognition that in each individual action the fullness of the sacrament can be observed.

'The church is catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does, belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me... And when she buries a man, that action concerns me.'

All this speaks to us in a world where we recognise that the virus knows no boundaries and safe zones, and we reflect that no-one can feel secure in the vaccine until everyone has the vaccine available.

Finally, throughout his illness, Donne is concerned to find out what God may be saying in this crisis, what there is of purpose to be found in all this suffering. His conclusion is that God's hand can be found in every page if we are willing to look; 'some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again, for that library where every book shall lie open to one another.'

Across the centuries scholars have wondered why Donne rushed to get these devotions out so soon after his illness. Was it to challenge the dominant Puritanism of his time and reassert a more open, Arminian, welcoming theology? Or was it a coded message to a new King not to isolate himself from the wider body, both politic and religious? We cannot know – but in this time of uncertainty, when we have been challenged by our mutual vulnerability and interdependence in ways we could not have imagined, there is something about Donne’s words that commands us, above all, to listen.

‘Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.’

I have to admit to finding the recent political discourse distressingly depressing. Let’s take the recent G& meeting in Cornwall. They made a big song and dance about pledging 1 billion Covid vaccines to the world. Good. Except that the world needs 11 billion; and of these 7 of the richest states in the world are only offering 1 – under 10%. Where is the rest coming from?

The decision of our government to cut overseas budget from 0.7% GDP to 0.5% is scandalous; going against what they said in the manifesto and it is also against a law passed in Parliament. This will have a major affect across our Globe. Don’t we stand for justice. The Bible screams about injustice from every page.

If we are going to get through this crisis and others, for example Global warming, then we can no longer just act by ourselves. International c-operation is no longer an optional extra. Neither is it possible for any Chapel in this circuit to work by itself.

No man/ No one is an island.

Prayer

O Loving God

We pray that we may develop our ability to feel compassion. May we grow towards a deeper awareness of other people, their joys, their fears and their sufferings. May we strive to become involved, not just in ourselves, but in the rest of the human race.

*We ask this prayer in Jesus name. **Amen***

Hymn - Let love be real, in giving and receiving (StF 615)

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, you have called us to be a living community, a people bound together as the body of Christ, a family united in love.

Draw us closer to you. **Draw us closer to one another**

Forgive us that we fall so far short of that ideal, that we allow division to grow between us, petty disputes and differences of opinion separating us from one another.

Forgive us that we are much too concerned for ourselves, so often forgetful of the needs of others within our fellowship.

Forgive us that we miss opportunities of supporting and strengthening one another, of sharing each other’s joys and sorrows.

Draw us closer to you. **Draw us closer to one another**

Help us so to grow together that when one of us suffers we all suffer, and when one of us rejoices we all rejoice.

We pray for those who suffer this day, and for those that rejoice.

Draw us closer to you. **Draw us closer to one another**

Help us to show together that we care for one another, that we are truly one body, that we depend upon each other if we are to be the people you would have us be.

We pray for those gathered here and for our friends in other Chapels.

Draw us closer to you. **Draw us closer to one another**

So may we be a people of love and acceptance, a healing, renewing fellowship, a community in Christ.

Draw us closer to you. **Draw us closer to one another**

In his name we ask it. **Amen**

Lord's Prayer

Hymn - O Thou who camest from above (StF 564)

Blessing

CIRCUIT ZOOM EVENING SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 22nd AUGUST

Supporting Our Brothers & Sisters in Christ

This Service is based on the Prayer Requests from OPEN DOORS

We readily support many people in prayer. Sometimes at their request & sometimes because of our concern and love – all this is part of our Calling & Work as Christians.

Every 2 months Open Doors produces themes for prayer, In the July/August edition most of the prayer focus is on India.

Eddie Lyle recounts a meeting with Christians in India. He recalls that, as he walked to the front of the church, someone whispered in his ear that he should remove his shoes as he was standing on Holy ground. After he had spoken to a large congregation, he was introduced to 12 battered men whose suffering was still evident in their scars & eyes. All of them had been beaten & stoned by members of their villages because they had chosen to follow Christ. Eddie felt humbled and privileged to be in their presence & sensed a passion for Christ in them that was beyond his own experience. He asked if they would like him to pray for them and they smilingly said yes & they then dropped to his feet! He knelt down with them and held his hands over them and prayed – Eddie says that it must have almost looked like a rugby scrum!

Listening to Eddie speaking, one senses that he felt almost unworthy as he was with them.. they were indeed on Holy ground – he was awed by the cost these men so lovingly & trustingly bear – to the extent that each of them was going to return to the village where they had been attacked in order to share the gospel.

The text that seems to reflect their attitude is 'For me to live is Christ'

There are the 3 texts that Eddie shared with these men:-

Psalm 93:4

'Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea – The Lord on high is mighty'

Isaiah 46:4

'Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and will carry you – I will sustain you and will rescue you'

2 Timothy 1:7

'For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline'

In our Hymn we recall the people of faith over the centuries who have been stirred by the Holy Spirit to face change and to trust & obey in order to serve His purposes.

Hymn – StF 464 – 'God it was who said'

Prayer of Confession

Loving Heavenly Father

As we prepare to pray for others – your Word tells us that we come into the presence of utter Holiness, Majesty and Glory.

And as we approach your throne we are acutely aware of our own unworthiness, so much so that we almost flinch from looking into our own hearts.

But, because of Jesus, we also know that you gaze into our hearts with unconditional love and you see that we long for them to be more pure.

We know that there are many who serve you with zeal at great cost,

And this challenges us deeply.

Forgive us for all that is wrong within us, for all the self-interest that poses for the approval of others and for all that hinders your work, dishonours your name and pains your heart.

Cleanse our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit and guide us in our prayers so that they reflect your perfect will and becomes a means of blessing.

*In the name of Jesus. **Amen***

Prayer of Praise

Almighty Holy God

All glorious, all victorious

All seeing, all embracing.

Ever loving, ever calling

Ever seeking. Ever merciful

Ever giving, ever faithful

Ever listening

We offer you our praise and adoration

For ordinary people who do extraordinary things in your name

We praise you

For those who have encouraged us to use our gifts

We praise you

For those who have reflected your love and drawn us to Jesus

We praise you

For those who have spiritually nourished us

We praise you

For those who opened the doors of your church and welcomed us in
We praise you

For all indescribable gifts of grace and good you have lavished upon us
We praise you

All glory to your Name – **Amen**

Hymn StF 45 verses 1-3 – ‘Earth’s creator, everyday God’

With the rise of Hindu nationalism, persecution in India has significantly increased and anti-conversion laws are used to harass & intimidate Indian Christians. On top of this, poorer communities are now extremely vulnerable because of the pandemic. In the face of these challenges, your prayers are an enormous encouragement.

Preetha, who received help from Open Doors local partners says *‘I want to say thank you, not just to God, but also to His people who have helped us. I am thankful for what God’s people have done for me. They helped, thinking of me as their own’*

There are 3 sections in our prayers, each will begin with the story of believers experiences & then a guide as to what to pray for. It has not been possible to write out the script of the recordings that we will see & hear, so I have written a precis of the stories, so that if those who are on the phone cannot hear what is being spoken on the recording, they will be able to understand the needs and the reason for prayer requests.

The times of prayer will be split by further verses from Hymn StF 45 as indicated below

Hymn StF 45 verses 4-5

Preetha and Vinita

When trying to share her faith, Vinita was vehemently opposed. This expanded to violence when her sister was attacked as she returned home from work. On reporting to the police they were refused help because the attackers had already bribed the police not to take action. Shaken & anxious, they called their pastor and he and his wife Preetha came to pray with them. Their prayers were violently interrupted by 8 or 9 men who were carrying rods. They were beaten for almost 30 minutes. Vinita was only saved because she fled to the house of a neighbor, who protected her. Preetha’s 6 month old daughter was snatched from her arms and thrown to the floor and she, herself, was, severely injured with one hand almost cut off, a leg was broken and she had internal injuries. Having been refused treatment at the hospital, they received help through Open Doors and their treatment was paid for in another hospital. Legal support is also being given.

Prayer Time

Praise God for Vinita & Preetha’s continuing faith, despite their suffering and please pray for their ongoing physical & inner healing

Preetha asks us to pray for her persecutors, so that those who now oppose God would come to know the love of God

For Open Doors local partners in India, that they would have the wisdom & energy they need to give the best help they can to persecuted believers

Hymn StF 45 verses 6-7

Revisiting Kumsam

When Open Doors first visited Kumsam, a widow, 5 years ago, she had been blamed for the death of her husband & son, who had died from natural causes. She has faced persecution for her faith and her father in law tried to kill her. But she has remained faithful & has done her best to share her faith. Since the pandemic has begun, 10 new local families have come to believe in Christ! This has been through her willingness to pray for their healing. Many of her family have come to faith and her father in law is also interested. She is very encouraged but there are still many difficulties in daily living & nearby villages are showing hostility.

Prayer Time

Thank God for Kumsam's faithfulness to Jesus, for her witness to other villagers and her example of perseverance to fellow believers

For the many Christians in India who are struggling to survive in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic; pray for His wondrous provision

For those who persecute Indian Christians through discrimination, intimidation & violence. Pray for God to touch & change their hearts.

Hymn – StF 45 verses 8-9

Kouroush – an Iranian refugee

After having endured imprisonment & torture in Iran because of his Christian faith, Kouroush was well known to the authorities. He was threatened with arrest again because he continued with his Christian work & witness and so he fled from Iran to Turkey. There he was terribly isolated, full of fears, sadness and confusion, having lost everything. He cried to God for comfort. Help eventually came and how he is involved with the building of a Centre of Hope – a place of support for other refugees who have lost everything & have nowhere else to turn. It is hoped that the Centre will be operating from this Summer.

Prayer Time

Praise God for the comfort & strength that He gave Kouroush even when he was persecuted in Iran and even when he felt isolated as a refugee in Turkey

Thank God for the new Centre of Hope as it opens this summer. Please pray that it will make a great difference to Iranian refugees and help them to grow in their faith.

You can let Kouroush know that you're praying for him by joining in with our letter-writing campaign. Find out more at opendoorsuk.org/act/letter

Hymn – StF 45 verses 10-11

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn – StF 106 – 'Thou almighty word'

In our final prayer we pray for all Christians around the world, including ourselves!

Prayer

We stand in the present & walk into the future knowing that God will NEVER fail us, nor forsake us. His steadfast love never ceases and His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning.

So Heavenly Father

Help us to walk in faith with total trust in your faithfulness & power

*Heal and strengthen the bruised and battered
Inspire anew the doubting and struggling
Comfort the isolated and broken hearted, all known intimately by you and treasured in your heart*

*Help us all to go out into the world
Knowing that Christ goes with us
May we fruitfully share the light of your truth and the wonder of your love
So that your desire that none should perish may be fulfilled
May the grace of Christ uphold us
As the father's love enfolds us*

*Let us go out in peace to love and serve the Lord – **Amen***

CIRCUIT EVENING ZOOM SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 29TH AUGUST

Today's service is one of reading, meditation and prayer on the opening sections of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew's Gospel.

Call to Worship

Come into the presence of God, as those who are seeking to serve with faithfulness, as those who are pure in heart and mind, as those who are true to God's purposes.

Come into the presence of God, as you are, and as you would be, and know that you are loved for yourselves, and for your great desire, today and forever.

Hymn God, whose almighty word (StF 106)

Prayer of Adoration

Praise Christ - who has turned upside down the wisdom of the world.

Praise Christ - who has saved us by a degrading death.

Praise Christ - who has hung before us in terrible vulnerability.

Praise Christ - who turns shame from the complacent comfort of his church, but shares in the laughter of the dying, links arms with those who dance on the fringes of respectability, and weeps in the shadows, where, with those who do not even merit a name, he makes his home.

Prayer of Confession

Lord, you have turned our values upside down, and we find it hard to take.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit', you said; but we like to think we are self-sufficient.

'Blessed are the sorrowful', you said; but we turn away from sharing the pain of others.

'Blessed are the gentle', you said: but we like to get our own way.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness', you said; but we can't be bothered with things like justice.

'Blessed are those who show mercy', you said: but we believe in getting our revenge. 'Blessed are the pure in heart', you said; but we fill our lives with all kinds of distractions. 'Blessed are the peacemakers', you said; but we find peace-making difficult, and leave it to others.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right, you said: but we prefer not to get involved, and to be left alone.

*Forgive us, Lord, that we like to take the comfort from our Christian faith, but too often ignore the challenges it brings us. By your power, set us free from our failures and help the values of your kingdom to grow in our hearts and lives, this and every day. **Amen.***

Hymn - Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world (StF 462)

Matthew 4:23-25

Silent moment of reflection

Preface to Matthew 5:1-12

The sermon on the mount, the first of five collections of teaching in Matthew's Gospel, opens with the beatitudes. They provide a summary of the teaching of Jesus marked by a strong moral tone. Each beatitude opens in the well-known Jewish form 'Blessed are . . .', and the teaching is presented in a way similar to that found in the book of Proverbs.

Matthew 5:1-12

Silent moment of reflection

Meditation of Simon Peter

I couldn't get it at first. What blessing can there be in persecution, in facing hatred and hostility for the sake of Christ? OK, so they slandered the prophets before us, hurling all kinds of insults against them, but that doesn't make it good, does it, let alone to be desired. Surely there must be easier ways to secure heaven's rewards, a less costly and demanding path? What about those other things he mentioned, like hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Won't one of them do instead? OK, I'm not as meek and merciful as I should be, as poor in spirit or pure in heart, but I'm working on it, and will get there in the end. But can any of those stand alone, in splendid isolation from the rest? There's the rub. I want to say yes, but his words said no, everything he said and taught speaking of distinctive commitment, a way of life different from the world's, challenging its norms and undermining the status quo. In other words, true faith will ruffle feathers, get under people's skin, and that spells trouble, for they won't like it - won't like it at all, and they'll silence us if they can, just as they tried with him. It's easier to keep your head down to conform with the crowd and not ask awkward questions, but from this one, at least, there's no running away. I can stay in my comfort zone and leave others in theirs, or I can stay true to Christ. Sadly I can't do both.

Prayer

*Living God, give us, where necessary, the courage to be different, to go against the expectations of the world when they conflict with your truth, your way, your will. Help us, as far as possible, to live peaceably with all, never seeking confrontation or discord, but aware also that there will be times when, like those who have gone before us, we must make a stand, sticking up for the things we believe in, even though that may entail facing scorn, hostility, rejection. Inspire us through the life and witness of saints of old - their faith, service and commitment - to walk in their footsteps. Save us from loving the world so much that we love you less, from confusing the rewards of earth with the joys of heaven - blessings you alone can give. **Amen.***

Hymn - Blest are the pure in heart (StF 244)

Preface to Matthew 5:13-20

In this passage from the Sermon on the Mount, the images of salt and light are used to suggest the nature of true discipleship. In Jewish thought, salt is associated with wisdom, and this passage may imply that Christian disciples, not the representatives of Jewish wisdom, are the truly wise who now show God's light to the world.

Matthew 5:13-20

Silent moment of reflection

Meditation of a scribe

I've come, he said, not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it. What gall! What impudence! To suggest, even in passing, that anyone - let alone this peasant, this nobody from the sticks - can add to God's commands, enlarging on what they mean. Blasphemy, I call it, and I should know, for I've spent my life studying the Scriptures, poring over the fine print to understand every nuance, every jot and tittle, down to the very last detail. It's a complex business, everything needing to be just so: the right rituals followed and sacrifices made if we're to atone for our sins, escape punishment and find favour with God. So does this Jesus fellow realise what he's saying – that all this, the requirements of the law, can be replaced by one man; that our mistakes can be miraculously dealt with and our punishment taken away through anything he might do? I tell you, people have died for saying less, and, mark my words, he's heading the same way, but he doesn't seem to care, almost as though he feels that would prove his point. Well, let him carry on if he wants to - it's his funeral. Let him die if he must – tried and condemned by the law he claims to fulfil - and we'll see what that achieves, won't we!

Prayer

*Lord, we've heard it so many times: that the requirements of the law are fulfilled in you, summed up in two commands - to love you and love one another. Yet though we know this in theory, in practice it's another matter. Still we turn faith into a matter of rules and regulations, and still we have an uneasy sense that you're looking over our shoulder hungry to enforce them: swift to condemn, eager to punish. Help us to understand that this is our way, not yours; a caricature of faith shaped by our fears rather than your grace. And, realising that truth, may we begin to grasp the depth of your love and extent of your mercy, so that we might celebrate the freedom you offer us in Christ, the fullness of life he died to bring. **Amen.***

Hymn - Do Something Beautiful (We are a shining light)

Prayers of Intercession

All-seeing and ever-present God, you know how we live under the pressures of everyday life, and how often we look at the world from a very narrow and personal angle.

Help us now to open our hearts and minds to the ways of the kingdom of our Lord; that strange, dangerous, exciting kingdom, which has a habit of turning all values and judgements upside-down.

We pray for those who suffer the miseries of war, and for those starving in a world of plenty. We confess that the evil in the hearts of men and women which makes these things possible is also in our own hearts.

Forgive us when we shut our ears to things we don't want to know about; and when we talk as though all the blame for what is wrong in the world rests on others.

We pray for the Church. Continue to break down the barriers separating Christian from Christian; and help us to grow closer together in love, that the world outside our fellowships may believe that your kingdom is indeed among us.

We pray for our families and friends. May we grow in caring for one another, and in awareness of those little signs which tell us when those who are close to us need extra understanding and support.

*We remember loved ones who have died and lift up to you those who are near to death. We rejoice that you came to give us life which not even death could destroy. Lord, may this life indeed flow in us and through us now and forever. **Amen.***

Hymn - Darkness like a shroud covers the earth (StF 170)

Prayer of Dismissal

Go into your daily life as salt, to preserve what is good, to bring out the best in others, and to cleanse all things with love.

*Go into your daily life as salt, to be God's people hidden amongst the nations, yet available and offered to all the world. **Amen.***

NORTHAM METHODIST CHURCH GIFT DAY!

A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED SO GENEROUSLY.

The money raised will help to fund the new Audio-Visual system.

The new railings have been fitted and re-modelling of the front of the Church to include disabled access is almost complete. A dedication service will be arranged when Andrew returns from sabbatical leave.

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT... sent in by Maureen Ellis (Black Torrington)

With increasing frequency, people are asking me what the post-pandemic future of the (rural) church might be. They inquire with genuine concern and more than a hint of fear; perhaps they are apprehensive that the physical church they last attended in March 2020 might not be recognizable upon unmasked return.

Numerous church leaders have confided that they are completely spent. They are worried about the return of their congregations, especially younger families. The pandemic has shown many of them that they have exhausted themselves over the years pursuing a church model that I am not sure is either biblically prescribed or contextually desirable.

We were recently visited by some long-standing friends, who chatted to us about their church which meets in a rural market town in England. Their church has a vision to become a congregation of thousands; the passion and energy of their leadership to reach out to the de-churched and those of no faith was commendable. There was much to admire in the striving for excellence in the presentations they use, services they broadcast and the professionalism of the various worship groups. However, our friends were beginning to question the level of expenditure supporting the growing staff and infrastructure. Could this be (really) sustained going forward? They also felt increasingly detached from their local context, a small village, as they travelled to this larger church.

Some years ago, a family member sent me a birthday card with a Spike Milligan cartoon on it. The cartoon was of microscopic figures, each with a speech bubble emanating from them. In the speech bubbles were numbers and simple equations, with the tagline "It's the little things that count." More recently, this cartoon has become something of a prophetic image for the church, that the smaller things will indeed count far more than we have previously allowed them to. Bigger is not necessarily better. I find it interesting that the biblical emphasis on the weak, the marginalized, and the smallest is rarely applied in the study of the church; indeed, these metaphors have much still to teach us. So many of the images that Jesus uses for the kingdom of God are small in proportion but significant in effect, yet it seems that we often measure our

success in the church by the size of the congregation. Many leaders are becoming increasingly unsure how much longer they can keep going in the obsession with numerical growth. It seems that we have invested so much of our thinking and ministerial formation in the flawed belief that the local church must be collections of 100-300 people to be valid and over 300 to be significant. Our strategizing, energy and resources have focused on supporting a growing staff team and infrastructure. Have we perhaps lost the importance of the 'one-anothering' around a kitchen table, or in a front room, of journeying together as fellow limping pilgrims? Have we failed to appreciate that it is often the little things that count? Historically, when the church has been unable to gather due to external pressure (disease, famine, war, or persecution), it has continued through smaller groupings. Operating in this way has often, and perhaps surprisingly contributed to kingdom growth. Christianity went viral when the early church was banished from the temple courts and forced underground (see Acts 8). The Methodist revival in the 18th Century was mainly built using a system of small groups. Today, it is thought that the fastest growing church in the world is in Iran, where people meet only in groups of 2-3 for fear of persecution. Could it be that the rural church, with its tendency to be smaller and more locally focussed, still has a few things to teach us? The rural church, with its propensity for flatter, less hierarchical structures, where most people can play a part (as a volunteer) regardless of their class or education. Could it be that the rural church, with its growing dependence on the power of God because resources are so stretched, offers us hope? I am more energized by congregations who are more intent on fulfilling their calling than filling their buildings. I wonder if it is the little things that will really count in the days ahead. (See Zechariah 4:10)
Simon Mattholie - CEO, Rural Ministries

PARKHAM METHODIST CHURCH - Parkham Village Open Gardens

When - Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th August 2021

Time - 2pm to 5pm

What - Interesting but not perfect gardens around the village and a great chance to meet others!

Toilets - Yes - at the Chapel

Cost - £5 per adult, Children FREE

Tea - At the Vicarage (next to Chapel) or in Chapel if wet - Tea/coffee 50p (free refills), squash 20p, cake 50p each

Map - A map showing all gardens for all visitors

Dogs - Assistance dogs (only) on a lead welcome

Who - **EVERYONE** welcome

Funds - Any profits will be split between St James Church & Parkham Chapel

Help - We're looking for some help

Make a cake/savoury item for the tea

Sell maps/tickets by St James Church

Waiter/waitress service to tables for the tea

Wash up plates/cups etc

ALL HELP VERY MUCH APPRECIATED

Please contact Sarah for further details or offers of help on 01237 451686 or email sarah@rsagri.com or Jane on 01237 451641

The following is the Pan for September, October & November

HC= Holy Communion

PC= At Parish Church

MC= Methodist Church

C& F= Coffee and Fellowship

Café= Café Worship

SB=Sunday Breakfast

Post codes of Chapels

Alverdiscott – EX31 3PT
 Bideford (High Street) – EX39 2AN
 Buckland Brewer – EX39 5LP
 Littleham – EX39 5HW
 Northam – EX39 1BS
 Shebbear – EX21 5SJ
 Thornhillhead – EX39 5NT

Alwington – EX39 5BU
 Black Torrington – EX21 5QF
 Langtree – EX38 8NF
 Milton Damerel – EX22 7DJ
 Parkham – EX39 5PG
 Sheepwash – EX21 5NA
 Torrington – EX38 8AL

	Sept 5	Sept 12	Sept 19	Sept 26
	Ordinary 23	Ordinary 24	Ordinary 25	Ordinary 26
Circuit Zoom	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm
Alverdiscott 11am	Potter		Blackhall HC	
5pm		Blackhall CW		LA Explore
Alwington 11am			Spencer	
Bideford 10.30am	Harris	Vidamour HC	Burgon Harvest	Withall
Black Torrington Friday 3pm		Blackhall HC 10 th Sep		Bate 24 th Sep
Buckland Brewer 9.30am (PC)	HC	F Watson		
10am (MC)			Anglican preacher	Blackhall
Clovelly				
Langtree 11am	Hall-Tomkin	Parish Church	Ley - Harvest	
Littleham 10.30am	Withall		Vidamour - Harvest	
Milton Damerel 11am		D Watson All age		
Northam 10.30am	Spencer	Bate	Potter	Vidamour HC
Parkham 11am	Vidamour HC	SB	LA Harvest	
Shebbear 11am		C&F		Harris - Harvest
Sheepwash 2.45pm	United Service		Harvest Parish Church	
Thornhillhead 11am		Dawe		
Torrington 10.30pm	Blackhall HC	Blackhall Harvest	Harris	Harding

Lectionary

Sep 5 - Proverbs 22:1-2,8-9,22-23; Psalm 125; James 2:1-10,14-17; Mark 7:24-37
 Sep 12 – Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 19; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38
 Sep 19 – Proverbs 31:10-31; Psalm 1; James 3:13-4:3,7-8a; Mark 9:30-37
 Sep 26 – Esther 7:1-6,9-10, 9:2-22; Psalm 124; James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50

	Oct 3	Oct 10	Oct 17	Oct 24	Oct 31
	Ordinary 27	Ordinary 28	Ordinary 29	Ordinary 30	Ordinary 31
Circuit Zoom	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm
Alverdiscott 11am	Blackhall Harvest		Withall		Potter CW
5pm		Vidamour CW		Blackhall HC Explore	
Alwington 11am			Vidamour Harvest		
Bideford 10.30am	Vidamour HC	D Watson	Potter	Sheriff	Ley
Black Torrington Friday 3pm		Blackhall Harvest 8 th Oct		Withall 22 nd Oct	
Buckland Brewer 9.30am (PC)	HC	Hall-Tomkin			
10am (MC)			Anglican preacher	D Watson	Blackhall
Clovelly					
Langtree 11am	F Watson	Parish Church	Blackhall HC		
Littleham 10.30am	Burgon HC		Spencer		
Milton Damerel 11am		Ley All age		Hall-Tomkin	
Northam 10.30am	Harris Harvest	Vidamour	Burgon	Ley	Vidamour HC
Parkham 11am	Parish Church Harvest	SB		F Watson	
Shebbear 11am		C&F		Withall	
Sheepwash 2.45pm	Blackhall US				
Thornhillhead 11am		Blackhall Harvest			
Torrington 10.30pm	Bray	Briggs	Bate	Blackhall HC	Burd

Lectionary

Oct 3 – Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1-4,2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

Oct 10 – Job 23:1-9,16-17; Psalm 22:1-15; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

Oct 17 – Job 38:1-7; Psalm 104:1-9,24,35c; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

Oct 24 – Job 42:1-6,10-17; Psalm 38:1-7(19-22); Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

Oct 31- Ruth 1:1-18; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

	Nov 7	Nov 14	Nov 21	Nov 28
	Ordinary 32	Ordinary 33 Remembrance	Sun before Advent Christ the King	Advent
Circuit Zoom	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm
Alverdiscott 11am	Harris		Blackhall HC	
5pm		Potter CW		LA Explore
Alwington 11am			Harris HC	
Bideford 10.30am	Vidamour HC	Bate	Macbeth	Harris
Black Torrington Friday 3pm		Vidamour HC 12th Nov		F Watson 26th Nov
Buckland Brewer 9.30am (PC)	HC	M Bray Rem 10.45am		
10am (MC)	Thompson 3pm	War Memorial & MC	Anglican preacher	Bate
Clovelly				
Langtree 11am	Bate	Parish Church	Withall	
Littleham 10.30am	D Watson		Dawe	
Milton Damerel 11am		Harris All age		
Northam 10.30am	Thompson	PC Rem	Sheriff	Vidamour
Parkham 11am	SB	PC Rem	Vidamour HC	
Shebbear 11am		PC Rem		Spencer
Sheepwash 2.45pm	United Service			
Thornhillhead 11am		Vidamour HC		
Torrington 10.30pm	Blackhall	Sheriff Rem	A Biggs	Whatton HC

Lectionary

Nov 7 – Ruth 3:1-5,4:13-17; Psalm 127; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Nov 14- 1 Samuel 1:4-20; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Hebrews 10:11-25; Mark 13:1-8

Nov 21 – 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 132:1-18; Revelations 1:4b-8; John 18:33-17

Nov 28 – Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36