

# **TORRIDGE METHODIST CIRCUIT**

## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

### **March 2022 - Issue 124**

Welcome to Edition Number 124

**Contact e-mail address is [newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk) or [bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com](mailto:bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com)**

This is the 21<sup>st</sup> 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**

The Circuit Services continue to take place weekly on Zoom using the Services that are printed in the Circuit Newsletter. The Services are on Sunday Evenings starting 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](mailto:sarahrichards185@gmail.com)

#### **FROM REV ROB BLACKHALL – SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER**

Dear Friends

As we enter into March, we also start the Holy Season of Lent. From March 2, Ash Wednesday the Cross of Christ dominates. There is no getting away from it. We walk towards Golgotha; following the way of Christ. It is also, traditionally, a time for self-reflection, and consideration of our common humanity.

So, Lent raises the great questions of life and faith, about who we are and what we are about in the light of the one whom God sent into the world to be our Lord and Saviour.

During Lent I will be preaching a series of sermons focusing on the cross. We often, especially on Good Friday, focus on the words of Jesus spoken from the cross. In this series, I propose to examine the words spoken to the cross. Details can be found in the orders of service elsewhere in the newsletter.

The central question behind this series of sermons is "What sort of Messiah?". Who is this Jesus? And what are the implications for us. It is clear that in his own time, many did not understand Jesus and what he was about. Let's face it, they sought to do away with him. This produced a variety of responses, from the crowd at the foot of the cross who asked, "If you are the Son of God", to Pilate's ironic, "What I have written I have written", to the extraordinary comment of the centurion, "Truly this man was the Son of God".

In our own time, many misunderstand Jesus, and his way. Christian people are ridiculed or assumed to be "soft in the head".

So, the question, "What sort of Messiah?" remains.

But it is not only a question for our society, even if that society seeks to dismiss it. It is a question for us who seek to follow Christ. So, as we look upon the cross, either explicitly, or implicitly, we are forced to look at ourselves and our discipleship in the light of the cross of Christ.

I have resisted the temptation, another theme of Lent, to pick the hymn "When I survey the Wondrous cross" each week. It would have been apt to constantly sing Isaac Watts' great words; and yet that is the stand that we all take in this Holy Season.

*When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of Glory died;  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

May God richly bless us on our journey

Rob

### **VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE**

I am delighted to announce that the President of the Methodist Conference will be visiting the circuit on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March. As this is a special occasion, we shall all gather at Torrington to welcome Revd Sonia Hicks. We very much look forward to her sharing with us.

We are indeed blessed to have Sonia with us. I believe it is sometime since we had a President visit during their year of Office. I hope that we can do all we can to make this a special time.

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am at Torrington Methodist Church**

### **SYNOD**

We are going to be hosting the Presbyteral Synod at Torrington Methodist Church on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March from 10.30 until 3pm.

This is the annual meeting of all the Ministers in the District, both active and retired. We meet to confer on the work of God in our District. At this meeting we are each asked to re-affirm our ordination vows. In addition, we hear obituaries of any Minister who has gone to glory and the testimony of those who are "sitting down" (retiring).

Although this is at Torrington, it is the circuit who will be hosting.

We are going to need to following help

Coffee – 9.30am-10.30am; 12.45- 2.00pm, 3pm onwards.

It is the tradition that the host circuit provides **cake and things** at the end of synod.

We will also need stewards to look direct people from the South Street car park from about 9.30am onwards.

We could do with a First Aider.

Help with the technical side of things would also be appreciated.

If you are able to help, please could you let Rose or Sarah know.

### **Local Preachers**

We have included the full list of Local Preachers in this month's magazine. We always read the list out once a year at Local Preachers Meeting. However, I thought it good to share this with you all.

First can I ask for your prayers for our preachers, both active and those no longer taking services. We thank God for their ministry among us.

We are so grateful for all the acts of worship that they conduct for us – we really do value them. I hope we can use this list to support and encourage them.

In the annual service of Reaffirmation of Local Preachers we introduce the worship with the following words:

Sisters and brothers,  
we meet to worship God,  
to give thanks for the vocation of Local Preachers,  
to remember the commitments we have made,  
and to reflect upon our life and ministry.

With humility and joy  
we recall the gifts that God has given us –  
that within the church  
and in the world  
God has called some to be apostles,  
some prophets, evangelists,  
some pastors and teachers,  
some preachers  
to build up the Body of Christ  
until all come to the unity of faith and knowledge  
in God's Son.

And we pray:  
Loving God,  
as we rejoice in the ministry of preaching,  
let the Gospel of your Son come to us,  
not in words alone, but in power and love;  
that through our life and witness  
the world may believe;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen

We thank God for our loyal and hardworking Local Preachers. Rob

## **LOCAL PREACHERS:**

\*1946 **Mr Ewart Cockram**  
\*1953 **Mr A.E.(Ted) Lott**  
\*1963 **Mr Jim Wood**  
\*1964 **Mr John Dennis**  
1966 **Mrs Vivienne Sheriff**  
\*1967 **Mrs Miriam Symons**  
1984 **Mr David Ley**  
1986 **Mrs Nancy Hall-Tomkin**  
1986 **Mrs Elsie Potter**  
\*1987 **Mrs Trish Parkinson**  
\*1990 **Mrs Sarah Badham**  
1992 **Mrs Lorna Dawe**  
\*1992 **Mrs Margaret Knapman**  
\*1992 **Mr David Quance**  
1998 **Mrs Julia Spencer**  
\*2001 **Mrs. Sheila Babb**  
2006 **Mr Roy Harris**  
\*2006 **Mrs Rosemary Quinnell**  
2015 **Mrs Margaret Price**

\*Not taking appointments at the moment

### **Preachers on trial:**

**Mr David Watson**  
**Mr Frank Watson**

### **Other Preachers:**

**Revd. Lynne Burgon**  
**Mr Duncan Withall**  
**Mr Paul Bates**  
**Revd. Sue McBeth**

## **A COUNTRY PREACHER REMEMBERED by David Ley**

The name of Bill Carter might not be known to many in the Torridge Circuit but those of us that have our origins in the old Shebbear Circuit his name will bring a smile of warm recognition.

For Bill, who was a lifelong member of Milton Damerel chapel was the sort of preacher that you really looked forward to having at your Sunday service. Yes, he was traditional. Yes, he chose the favourite old Methodist hymns and yes, you expected to get the full hour. But he preached loudly and clearly a relevant message for his expectant listeners often including sporting or farming anecdotes that kept our interest. His prayers were methodical but always extemporary.

After the service he would make an effort to greet as many folks as he could, sharing a joke, pulling our leg or sharing opinion with other keen followers of sport. Behind his laughter and jollity hid a deeply committed and thoughtful Christian who had a big heart and caring nature.

He had a great respect (and even fear) for the legendary J.B. Morris, former Head of Shebbear College, and often referred to his time there with fondness.

At Milton Damerel he played his part especially at 'Gospel Specials' which were important calendar events for the many singing groups that performed all over North Devon and Cornwall. Often Bill would take the tea-cups around or pour the tea at the all-important supper and of course chatted to as many people as he could.

As a fellow preacher who often went to Milton when Bill was in the congregation, I always found him encouraging and a good listener to what I had said. As a busy farmer for most of his life, Sundays might have been special but livestock still had to be fed yet he still found the time to commit faithfully to the circuit plan. Sadly, in recent years, his health prevented him from preaching and robbed us of his ministry.

We have lost a real character, a proper country preacher. RIP

### Dates

<b>March 2022</b>		
Wed 2nd @2pm	Leadership Meeting	Kendor
Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup> @ 7pm	ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP	Torrington
Sat 5 <sup>th</sup> @10.30am	District Safeguarding Conference	
Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> @7pm	Bible Course 4	Zoom
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> @2pm	Bible Course 4	Torrington/Zoom
Thurs 10 <sup>th</sup> @7.30pm	Circuit Meeting	Torrington
Mon 14 <sup>th</sup> @7pm	Circuit Safeguarding Meeting	Buckland / Zoom
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup> @7pm	Bible Course 5	Zoom
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup> @2pm	Bible Course 5	Torrington/Zoom
Thurs 17 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.30pm	LP Meeting	TBC
Tues 22 <sup>nd</sup> @7pm	Bible Course 6	Zoom
Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup> @2pm	Bible Course 6	Torrington/Zoom
Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup> 10.30-3	Presbyteral Synod	Torrington
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup> @7.30pm	Thornhillhead CC	Thornhillhead
<b>Sun 27<sup>th</sup> @10.30pm</b>	<b>Visit of the President of the Methodist Conference Revd Sonia Hicks</b>	<b>Torrington</b>
Tues 29 <sup>th</sup> @7pm	Bible Course 7	Zoom
Wed 30 <sup>th</sup> at 2pm	Bible Course 7	Torrington/Zoom



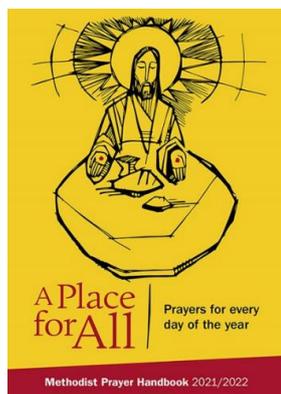
**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER** on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 2pm at **TORRINGTON METHODIST CHURCH** – Theme is 'I know the plans I have for you'  
Worship followed by refreshments

## ARCHIVE DAY

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at Buckland Brewer 10am

It has been obvious for sometime, that there are a number of archives and records in the Circuit that need to be sorted. Some items will need to be placed in the Records office for safe keeping; other we need to retain; and some items can be disposed of.

A team is going to spend the day at Buckland Brewer sorting this material. If you or your Chapel have any such material can you let Sarah, Andrew, Dave or myself know so that we can have it go through on that day



## PRAYER

The Methodist Prayer Diary for this year is a rich resource for use in our own and Church Prayer life. Copies are available from the Methodist Publishing House.

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

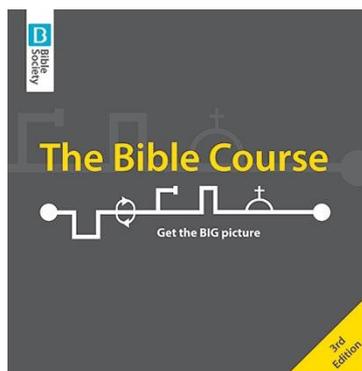
Also, you can find a pray of the day at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/prayer-of-the-day/>

## THE BIBLE COURSE FOR GROUPS

*An eight-session course helping you explore the BIG story.*

Whether you're well versed in Scripture or new to the Bible, The Bible Course offers a superb overview of the world's best-selling book. The course will increase your confidence, equip you to read the Bible better and help you to see its relevance to daily life. Over eight interactive sessions, it combines video teaching, group discussion, personal reflection and daily readings.

Meeting people in groups, where everyone shares their thoughts and experiences, lies at the heart of The Bible Course as everyone learns from each other.



A typical session includes:

Welcome from the Course host

15-minute teaching video

25-minute discussion time

15-minute teaching video

10-minute personal reflection to finish

Daily readings between sessions

*'If you are looking for a course to help your Church or small group engage and understand the story of the Bible, can I encourage you to look at The Bible Course. The Bible is the only book that we can read in the company of the author which is an incredible thought. The Bible Course will enrich you and you will discover truth, wisdom and guidance.'*

J. John – Reverend Canon

## BIBLE COURSE

Tues 8th Mar

Wed 9th Mar

Bible Course 4 - Judges and Kings

Tues 15th Mar	Wed 16th Mar	Bible Course 5 - Exile and Prophets
Tues 22nd Mar	Wed 23rd Mar	Bible Course 6 - Jesus and the Gospels
Tues 29th Mar	Wed 30th Mar	Bible Course 7 - Acts and the Church
Tues 5th Apr	Wed 6th Apr	Bible Course 8 - Revelation and Review

**ADVANCED NOTICE**

**BIDEFORD CHURCH ANNIVERSARY - Saturday 18th June at 3pm**

Preacher: Revd Graham Thompson

This will be a circuit event & will be Graham's last appointment in the District. As a week later he will be inducted as the President of the Methodist Conference.

This will be a good opportunity to celebrate our work in Bideford, but also to Wish Graham and Alison all the best as they leave the District and pray for them in Graham's year as President.

**FROM REVD ANDREW VIDAMOUR**

Dear Friends,

I once read a novel called 'Human Traces' by Sebastian Faulks, a fictionalised account of the birth of psychiatry in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.

This is based on two views of how our minds and bodies interact in life generally and in the experience of mental and physical distress in particular: one view is to see this mind-body relationship as mainly physiological, finding physical causes for psychological disturbance (such as anxiety and fear), and the other view is to see psychological illness as psychosomatic (with our thoughts and emotions having an influence on how our bodies function).

In reality, of course, both views contain an element of truth, and there is some mystery as to how our bodies and minds affect each other. The most important point here, however, is that mind, body and spirit are not separate compartments. And Jesus knew the wisdom of this as we see, for instance, in his healing of the paralysed man lowered by his friends on a stretcher through the roof of the house where Jesus was teaching the crowds (Mark 2: 1-12).

Now the words of Jesus to the paralysed man may seem strange: he did not ask 'What illness do you have?' or 'Do you want to be healed?', but he said 'My son, your sins are forgiven'. Perhaps Jesus knew the man and his background, and so realised that the man was paralysed by guilt and fear as much as by any physical ailment; or perhaps Jesus knew intuitively what was wrong.

In any case, the assurance of forgiveness had an immediately healing effect, for the man 'got up, and at once took his bed and went out in full view of them all'. Here, the spiritual truth of the man's being welcomed and accepted as he was, forgiven through the mercy of God, this freed the man in a very powerful and (it seems) complete way.

Sometimes in life, we too can be held back by emotional wounds, by a bad conscience or by dark fears, and that word of God's grace is just as readily available for us as it was for that paralysed man. Jesus says to us, too, in God's name, as we acknowledge our faults and failings before God: 'Your sins are forgiven: go in peace'.

May those words be healing and liberating for us as we take them into our hearts and minds and lives day by day.

Andrew Vidamour

### **FROM FRANK WATSON – LAY PASTORAL ASSISTANT**

Each year on the 21st March, World Poetry Day is celebrated. As we are in the Season of Lent this month here is a poem entitled...

#### **'Lent' by George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1593 – 1633**

Welcome dear feast of Lent: who loves not thee,  
He loves not Temperance, or Authority,  
But is compos'd of passion.  
The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says, now:  
Give to thy Mother, what thou wouldst allow  
To ev'ry Corporation.

The humble soul compos'd of love and fear  
Begins at home, and lays the burden there,  
When doctrines disagree,  
He says, in things which use hath justly got,  
I am a scandal to the Church, and not  
The Church is so to me.

True Christians should be glad of an occasion  
To use their temperance, seeking no evasion,  
When good is seasonable;  
Unless Authority, which should increase  
The obligation in us, make it less,  
And Power itself disable.

Besides the cleanness of sweet abstinence,  
Quick thoughts and motions at a small expense,  
A face not fearing light:  
Whereas in fulness there are sluttish fumes,  
Sour exhalations, and dishonest rheums,  
Revenging the delight.

Then those same pendant profits, which the spring  
And Easter intimate, enlarge the thing,  
And goodness of the deed.  
Neither ought other men's abuse of Lent  
Spoil the good use; lest by that argument  
We forfeit all our Creed.

It's true, we cannot reach Christ's forti'eth day;  
Yet to go part of that religious way,  
Is better than to rest:  
We cannot reach our Saviour's purity;

Yet we are bid, 'Be holy ev'n as he,'  
In both let's do our best.

Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,  
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one  
That travelleth by-ways:  
Perhaps my God, though he be far before,  
May turn and take me by the hand, and more:  
May strengthen my decays.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast  
By starving sin and taking such repast,  
As may our faults control:  
That ev'ry man may revel at his door,  
Not in his parlour; banqueting the poor,  
And among those his soul.

### **CELTIC MORNING PRAYER & COFFEE MORNING**

These will resume in a couple of months – thanks to all you came along & joined in  
*Dave Watson*

### **SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION**

#### **Online Training Programme 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 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: Foundation Module – Creating Safer Space**

Thursday 12th May 2022 at 9:30am

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

#### **Advanced Module**

The Advanced course is being delivered Online and Onsite across the region.

Onsite Advanced course is being delivered in Districts as a Face/Face option in central locations & it is hoped that one can be arranged in our area.

**Online Advanced is to be booked through your Circuit Safeguarding Officer**, the course is an e:learning exercise through an online platform which delegates progress through at their own speed. On registration, delegates will be given the booking link to sign off your learning journey at the relevant gathered session.

The next gathered session is below - **note you cannot attend a gathered session until you have completed all of the online modules;**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May – Advanced Zoom Gathered Session – 7pm



## **Plymouth & Exeter District** of the Methodist Church

### **SAFEGUARDING ZOOM CONFERENCE**

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

**10am-12-30pm**

**10am - Welcome**

**10-15am - Domestic Abuse - An introduction to the new Domestic Abuse policy of the Methodist Church: Chrissie Slaney DSO.**

**11-10am - Comfort Break.**

**11-20am - Training updates: Howard Wilson. Learning Network Regional Co-ordinator.**

**11-30am - Managing Safe-Guarding Groups: Revd Julian Albrow.**

**11-45am - Safe-Guarding Standards: Reg Marriott. Independent Chair.**

**12-10am - Mental Health awareness: Howard Wilson**

**12-25pm. Closing Prayer**

### **DISTRICT SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE**

This Conference (see above) is planned to be watched on Zoom on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March at Buckland Brewer Methodist Church

Message from Jacqui Watson, "Attached are the details about the District Safeguarding Conference. The plan is to meet together at Buckland Brewer and just have the one Zoom registration.

The reason for doing it this way is that we will have a stable connection and the support of each other as we will be covering some difficult subjects. Tea break refreshments will be provided.

If you wish to bring sandwiches etc. for your lunch this will give us the opportunity for a time of fellowship at the close of the conference.

If you wish to join the conference from home I can send the Eventbrite registration link. The conference is not just for Safeguarding Officers and Circuit Stewards, so feel free to invite other members of your Church".

### **BIBLE MONTH – 30 Days with Isaiah**

This Year the Bible Month will look at Isaiah during June.

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March there will be an Event based at Salisbury Methodist Church from 10am-3.30pm. This will be Live Streamed to Districts & Circuits around the Connexion.

It is planned that anyone interested in this can meet at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** to be able to watch together this event.

There will be some refreshment available – you can bring your own or there is the Community Shop available to buy pasties, etc.

Please let Dave Watson know if you plan to come along – bucklanddave1953@btinternet or 07484 223515 or 01237 451437

Come along & will can Learn Together

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

### **LENT 2022**

During our zoom services in Lent will be focusing naturally on the cross of Christ Jesus. Often people reflect on the words which Jesus spoke from the cross. But I would like us think about the words spoken to the cross. I say to the cross, as the last one are words said after Jesus' death. The question that I am seeking to explore with this series of sermons is "What sort of Messiah?". The sermons were written sometime ago, and I have always intended to revise them and revisit; so I am glad of this opportunity to reflect once again.

### **What Sort of Messiah?**

**CIRCUIT ZOOM LENT SERVICE for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March - Lent 1 "If you are?"**

#### **Call to Worship**

*Let us worship the Lord in times of trouble.*

***You are our refuge and our stronghold, our God in whom we put our trust.***

*Let us worship the Lord in moments of temptation.*

***You are our refuge and our stronghold, our God in whom we put our trust.***

*Let us worship the Lord in trials and triumphs of life.*

***You are our refuge and our stronghold, our God in whom we put our trust.***

#### **StF 317 At the name of Jesus**

#### **Prayers of Adoration**

*Energetic Creator, delivering and protecting your people, you spread your shelter over us wherever we walk. Your name is Love:*

***And we adore you.***

*Understanding Christ, you have walked every step before us, resisting the darkness, faithful to the Father. Your name is Love:*

***And we adore you.***

*Powerful Spirit, you drive us and direct us, pushing us and challenging us, and breathing in your healing strength. Your name is Love:*

***And we adore you.***

*In the name of Christ. Amen*

#### **Prayer of Confession**

*God, in your Word, you tell us that those who call on your name, you will answer.*

*We call on your name, confessing our weakness and wilfulness.*

*We call on your name, confessing our shallowness, our commitment like butterflies in the wind.*

*We call on your name, confessing our shadowy, flickering love.*

*We call on your name, we listen for your word of grace and healing*

Silence

*Your answer never fails us: "Rise, refreshed, for your sins are washed whiter than snow."  
Like the flowers pushing their way into Spring, we open ourselves to your sunshine and shalom.  
In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*

**Matthew 4:1-11**

**StF 236 Forty days and forty nights**

**Matthew 27:39-44**

**Sermon "If you are the Son of God" (Matt 27:40b)**

**StF 442 Beneath the cross of Jesus I find a place to find**

### **Intercessions**

*Loving God, throughout all ages you have rescued and restored your people; we come to you for refreshments and renewal. Lord, protect us from all the terrors of the night and the dangers of the day. We pray for all who are seeking to know their vocation and calling, all who are trying to sort out their priorities. We pray for all who are called to minister to others.*

*Lord, in you we trust.*

**You are our refuge and strength.**

*We pray for all in positions of authority, that they do not misuse their powers; for leaders of people and for all who make decisions about our future. We remember all who are suffering from hunger or poverty. We pray for all who are living below par, all you have lost their way.*

*Lord, in you we trust.*

**You are our refuge and strength.**

*We give thanks for all who have provided for us and protected us, for those who inspired us or directed us. We pray that we may be sensitive to your call and ready to do your will. We ask you to bless and protect our loved ones and friends.*

*Lord, in you we trust.*

**You are our refuge and strength.**

*We pray for all who are caught up in crime or addiction, for all who are wasting lives or giving their allegiance to wrong things. We pray for all who regret what they have done and are full of remorse; may they find new hope and courage in you, O Lord. We remember all who are ill and longing to live full lives. We pray especially for.....*

*Lord, in you we trust.*

**You are our refuge and strength.**

*We give thank for all who have escaped the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil and are now at peace in your eternal kingdom. We pray for all who have been part of our Christian journey, for the saints who have enriched our world. May they, with our dear ones departed, rejoice in doing your will in your kingdom.*

*Lord, in you we trust.*

**You are our refuge and strength.**

*In Jesus name. Amen*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**StF 276 Lift high the cross the love of Christ proclaim**

### **Blessing**

*The Lord deliver you are all evil,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
refresh you as you hunger for him;  
and the Blessing of Almighty God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Be with us, now and always. Amen.*

### **What Sort of Messiah?**

**CIRCUIT ZOOM LENT SERVICE for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March - Lent 2 "This man has done nothing wrong"**

### **Call to Worship**

The Lord is my lights and my salvation—whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

**StF 455 All my hope on God is founded**

### **Prayers of Adoration**

*Everlasting God, you hold all things in your hands: time, space, and all creation. We realise how small we are, and yet we rejoice that through your Spirit we are enabled to respond to your goodness.*

*The wonder of your suffering love, revealed to us in your Son Jesus Christ, is almost too much for us to bear, and beyond our expression in word or thought.*

*Accept, we pray, the unspoken adoration that comes from thankful hearts; for the sake of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen*

### **Prayer of Confession**

*Loving God, we are so readily tempted, so fearful, so prone to lose our courage. Sometimes we take the easy way out, allowing evil to triumph, shrinking from action, because we do not hold firmly to our true beliefs. We complain about our own suffering, which is as nothing in comparison with that of your Son, our Saviour.*

*Forgive us, O God, that it is our own waywardness, our own blindness that prevents us from recognizing you in every part of our lives. Forgive us that we too often expect to find all the answers or to see the way ahead. May we be more ready to learn from our Lord Jesus Christ the way of trust in your care.*

*We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**Isaiah 53:4-9**

## HAP 393 Jesus hands were kind hands

### Luke 23:26-38

**Meditation: Truly I tell you: today you will be with me in Paradise.**

“Jesus, remember me when you come to your throne”.

That was all he said.

He didn't was, “I believe you are the Christ”.

He didn't even say, “Jesus, forgive”;

just,

“Jesus, remember me, remember the robber who found himself so unwillingly at your side”

He received no instruction, he made no profession of faith, he was never baptised!

Is the love of God in Christ so comprehensive? If this was enough for a robber to enter Paradise what happens to Church protocol?

**Jesus, your love has a way of breaking the barriers and reaching out in unexpected ways to unexpected people. It is a love so much greater than our won and we suspect that it includes people whom we have written off. Forgive us for our failures of love and in your mercy bring us at the end to be together with all your people in the eternal kingdom.**

**Sermon “This man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:41b)**

**Hymn: The Old Rugged Cross**

#### **Intercessions**

*We pray for all who work in stressful situations,*

*that they may have peace to enable them to make wise decisions.*

*We hold before you especially those who work in the health service, whose decisions can mean life or death.*

*Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer***

*We remember those faced with the stress caused by poverty – for whom there is a constant fear that there will not be enough, and every spending decision is a challenge.*

*We bring to you those around the world who do not have immediate access to health care and clean water, who take risky actions because it is easier than doing what is safe – or it is the only option.*

*Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer***

*We ask that you will give wisdom to those who make the decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of others – including politicians and all in authority. May they have vision and compassion to act in ways that are beneficial to all.*

*Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer***

*We pray for all who need our prayers this night; those who are upon our hearts and in our thoughts.*

Time for silent and open Prayer

*Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer***

*In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.*

## **StF 248 I heard the voice of Jesus say**

### **Blessing**

*God's love surround you, God's Spirit guide you,  
God's whisper cheer you, God's peace calm you,  
God's shield protect you, God's wisdom arm you,  
wherever God may lead you.  
And the blessing of Almighty God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us now and evermore. Amen*

### **What Sort of Messiah?**

**CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE for Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March - Lent 3 "What I have written"**

### **Call to Worship**

*Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord  
**That he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.**  
(Isaiah 2:5,3)*

## **StF 347 Crown him with many crowns**

### **Prayers of Adoration**

*Lord of all, in reverence and humility, awe and wonder, we come to worship you.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*We step aside from the busy routine of our lives – a few moments away from our daily activities and humdrum concerns; an opportunity to bring them quietly and prayerfully before you, and to place them in your hands.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*We bring ourselves – our strengths and weaknesses, our faith and doubts, our hopes and fears.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*We bring our families, our friends and neighbours – those we love, those we know and those we simply pass in the street.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*We bring our community, our town, our country and our world – places near and far, integral to our lives or far removed from our experiences.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*In quiet confidence we entrust all into your care, knowing that your love is more powerful and your power more loving than we can ever know or imagine.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*Lord of all, we come to worship you, bringing ourselves, bring ourselves, bringing our loved ones.  
Meet with us now, **be with us always.***

*In the name of Christ Jesus. Amen*

**John 18:28-40**

**StF 326 Jesus comes with all the grace**

**John 19:17-22**

**Meditation: Then they crucified him**

“He saved others,” they said, “but he cannot save himself.”

Of course he couldn't; that was the whole point if only they could have seen it. At the heart of sin, at the heart of all rebellion against God, lies self-interest and saving love had to come from a completely different mould.

We, who throughout our lives are driven by self-interest, see her the one in whom self-interest had no part.

He couldn't save himself because it wasn't in him to save himself; all his love and all his power were directed away from himself to others. At the cross we are faced with the pain that lies at the very heart of a loving God.

“Come down from that cross; if we see that, we shall believe”

It sounded like a challenge, but in reality it was the final temptation. Had Christ been able to come down from the cross the loving God would have disappeared and a magician taken his place.

He could save himself: but from our self-centeredness, from our limited horizons, from the mean actions which we clothe with high-sounding principles, and from all the sins, named and nameless which fetter us, and hold us back from the heavenly kingdom,  
**he can and he will save you and me.**

**Sermon “What I have written” (John 19:22)**

**StF 278 O Love divine, what have you done!**

**Intercessions**

*O loving God, we lean on your love as we pray for your church, collectively, and as a mixed bag of individuals, with needs, disappointments and fears.*

Silence for prayer

*In all things, O God: **we pray your kingdom in.***

*We lean on your wisdom as we pray for local, national and international leaders, subject to pressures and conflicting values.*

Silence for prayer

*In all things, O God: **we pray your kingdom in.***

*We lean on your affection and understanding as we pray for our homes and all homes in this area, with their expectations and misunderstandings. Their security and insecurity.*

Silence for prayer

*In all things, O God: **we pray your kingdom in.***

*We lean on your compassion as we pray for all who are hurting in body, mind or spirit.  
Silence for prayer*

*In all things, O God: **we pray your kingdom in.***

*We lean on your faithfulness as we pray for those who have died, and those who mourn.  
Silence for prayer*

*In all things, O God: **we pray your kingdom in.***

*We lean on your accepting love as we pray in thankfulness for all you are doing in our lives and all you have in mind for us in the future.  
Silence for prayer*

***Merciful God, accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen***

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**StF 280 O sacred head, sore wounded**

#### **Blessing**

*May the knowledge of God's presence be your strength throughout this day,  
a source of wisdom, love, light, and grace.  
And as darkness falls may you find peace in that presence, and the gift of sleep.*

*And the blessing of Almighty God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us now and evermore. **Amen***

### **What Sort of Messiah?**

**CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March - Lent 4 "The King of the Jews"**

#### **Call to Worship**

*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteousness, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.  
(Psalm 32:11)*

**StF 284 There is a green hill far away**

#### **Prayers of Adoration**

*Eternal God, we praise you, for you are the source of light and life.  
Your word made the whole of creation, in all its beauty and splendour, bringing order out of chaos,  
light out of darkness.  
We praise you that the evidence of your creative activity is all around us still.  
We praise you, O God, for the supreme revelation of yourself in our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the  
clear vision of your love that we see in him.*

*Inspire us now with the life and light he came to bring, that our praises may be worthy of him and resound to his honour and glory;  
In the name of Christ Jesus. **Amen***

### **Prayer of Confession**

*Father, you know us better than we know ourselves, and in the light of your glory all the darkness of our sin is revealed.*

*In your presence we confess our failure to respond fully to your commandment to love, our reluctance to follow you, our desire to please ourselves rather than serve you.*

*We confess that we have only feebly responded to that clear revelation, given to us in Jesus, and that we have allowed the light of his glory to be obscured by our own apathy and indifference.*

*Father, you know us better than we know ourselves; but we know that we are sinner. Grant us an awareness of sins forgiven and your abundant grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

### **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

#### **StF 272 The servant king**

#### **Meditation: The coming of the King**

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem to be welcomed as God's promised Messiah, his disciples must surely have found all their fears and doubts evaporating in the warmth of that reception and the hope that the kingdom was now at hand.

Then came days of mounting tension; fear returned, hopes were cast down; brutally swiftly the scene changed, Jesus was betrayed, arrested and crucified.

From the heights they plunged into the depths. It was only when they had reached rock bottom, all hope gone, that they discovered to their amazement, that the kingdom had indeed come and come in a way they could never possibly have imagined. In the days that followed it drew from them a strength and courage which they never knew they had, and gave them joy beyond anything they had previously experienced.

**We should have thought it folly, Lord, to ride, unguarded into Jerusalem knowing that rejection and death lay ahead; leaving all the hopes of your mission in the hands of a ragbag group of followers. And yet we see that this folly was wiser than all of our wisdom. Lord, help us to let go of whatever hinders us from seeing things from your perspective and help us to recognize the signs that show your kingdom is even now at work in our midst.**

#### **John 19:17-22**

#### **Sermon "The King of the Jews" (John 19:19)**

#### **StF 275 Jesus the carpenter, hanging on Calvary**

#### **Intercessions**

*Gracious God,*

*we pray that your reconciling love may bring harmony to our world.*

*We pray for those caught up in conflicts between nations and states;  
for all who live in fear of the bullet or the bomb.*

*May the leaders of the nations listen to each other,  
and commit themselves to peace.*

*We pray for those whose relationships have broken down.  
May your love bring reconciliation, your peace dissolve bitterness,  
and your grace disperse anger.*

*We bring to you homes that are filled with conflict,  
and pray for all who suffer from domestic violence and abuse.  
Bring healing to those who bear the scars  
of the ways they have been treated,  
and enable them to experience love.*

*We pray for all who seek to mediate,  
to bring reconciliation and peace,  
that they may have wisdom, patience and compassion.*

*We bring our prayer in the name of Christ,  
through whom all are reconciled to you, our God. **Amen.***

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **StF 285 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?**

#### **Blessing**

*God of outrageous love!  
Thank you that we cannot fall out of your love,  
no matter what our mistakes,  
no matter how mean and grudging our love is.  
As you welcome us with ever open arms, enlarge our hearts  
and minds, to serve faithfully and to love outrageously!*

*And the blessing of Almighty God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us now and evermore. **Amen***

### **BIDEFORD AND NORTHAM NEW YEAR BIBLE STUDY**

At the home of Diana Yendall in Northam - Phone 01237 477836 or 01237 425361  
The Topic will be 'The book of P r o v e r b s' & continues weekly on Fridays at 2pm & will be Led  
by Julia Spencer

### **Proverbs: Learning to Live Wisely. William Mouser Life Builder Study**

We Welcome fresh people to our group where we learn from each other!

#### **Purpose and Theme**

1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

2 for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight;

3 for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair;

4 for giving prudence to those who are simple - knowledge and discretion to the young—

5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—

6 for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.

## Invitations of Wisdom and Folly

9 Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars.

2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

3 She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,

4 "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says,

5 "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.

6 Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight."

7 Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.

8 Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you.

9 Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

11 For through wisdom[b] your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.

12 If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.

13 Folly is an unruly woman; she is simple and knows nothing.

14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,

15 calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way,

16 "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says,

17 "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!"

18 But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

### Introduction

5. Proverbs 6: 12-14; 16:30; 17:4; 18:8; 26:23; 29:5

6. Proverbs 10:19; 15:23; 16:24; 17:10; 24:26; 25: 11-12

7. Proverbs 6:6-8; 13:4; 15:19; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:14-16

8. Proverbs 10: 4,15,22; 13:8; 18:11,23; 19:4; 21:6; 30: 8-9

9. Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:6,17; 21:13

10. Proverbs 11:3; 14:12; 15:22; 16:9; 21:5,31; 27:1

Bad Words

Good Words

The Sluggard

Wealth and Poverty

Giving

Planning the Future.

### FROM DIANA YENDELL

Julia Spencer's Bible Study Group have been discussing guidance for our lives from the book of Proverbs. Today, considering the search for wisdom and how to attain it, the following reminded us to appreciate the wisdom of God found exclusively in the Bible:-----

### THE BIBLE

Either this Book will keep you from your sins or your sins will keep you from this Book.

Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to those who aren't.

Seven days without the Bible makes one weak.

While some books inform and others reform, only the Bible transforms.

The value of the Bible does not consist merely in knowing it, but in obeying it.

Study the Bible to be wise, believe it to be safe, practise it to be holy.

### BUCKLAND BREWER

We Live Stream Services on the Buckland Brewer Methodist Church You-Tube Channel.

The Weekly **'Time Together' Toddler Group** continues at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** with both Methodist & Anglican volunteers being present. We meet on Monday's from 9.30am to about 12noon, The cost is £1.50 per family & the numbers have been steadily increasing – families do not just come from Buckland but from neighbouring communities – they often come as friendship groups – so if anyone is aware of any Babies & Toddlers, who with their parents, grandparents or carers are looking for a 'chilled out' session of play & chat with tea/coffee/biscuits – just point them in the direction of Buckland Chapel – Dave Watson 07484 223515 or [bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com](mailto:bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com)

The **Wednesday Weekly Coffee Morning** also continues at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** from 10am-12noon – this is for **ALL** but especially for those who have moved into the parish/village since lockdown or anyone who would like to meet others in the community over a mug of tea/coffee with Tradecraft Biscuits & possibly Cake!! – details from Dave Watson (see above)

### **NORTHAM CHAPEL NEWS**

As we walk around our community, the signs of spring are easy to see. Lighter mornings and nights, daffodils and primroses, lots of snowdrops and the wonderful sound of birds calling to one another as they get ready to mate. We are gradually emerging from the winter months and so too are we gradually emerging from the restrictions brought about by this awful virus. As more people become vaccinated, we can see how the virus is slowly being defeated. The latest variant of Covid 19 (Omicron) seemed to be more infectious but less damaging and we thank God for answered prayers and our scientists for their discoveries. Here at Northam, we are gradually reopening our community outreach. People remain cautious and we are still adhering to Covid regulations as advised by our Circuit Superintendent.

#### **Coffee Mornings**

We continue to have an informal coffee morning on Saturdays at 10am to which everybody is welcome. We really enjoy sharing fellowship together, such a blessing.

#### **Messy Church**

We held our first Messy church meeting of the year on February 6th at 4pm. We had a good number of people attend who all seemed to enjoy the planned activities. Lindsey and I would like to thank our loyal band of helpers without whom we wouldn't be able to continue. We have also received some very generous donations of money for which we are very grateful. We want the families we are trying to reach to know the love and generosity of God through our provision for them. However, one of the sadness's we experience is some families aren't able to come at the last minute because of illness or needing to self-isolate. We try to be positive through our difficulties and pray God will continue to send the families who really need to know the love of the Father. We feel booking is still necessary because we limit numbers to keep us Covid safe. Contact Lindsey to book. (07813 130475)

#### **Thursday Fellowship**

Maggie (with a little help from her friends) restarted our fellowship meetings on February 3rd. It is planned to hold them fortnightly so our meetings in March are the 3rd and 17th respectively. Do come and join us, each session starts with a short act of worship followed by a speaker which varies each time. We finish with tea and coffee. A lovely afternoon. It is good to connect to our community in this way.

#### **Choir Practice**

The choir continue to meet each Wednesday, ably led by Jenny and again we hope Covid won't put an end to their activities.

## **Christian Aid**

We hope to hold our Lent lunch following the service on Sunday March 20th. As usual we shall be offering soup and a roll and ask for donations to support the work of Christian Aid. Lindsey is co-ordinating the event, please do support us if you can.

We are all looking forward to the **Torrige Circuit service at Torrington Chapel** on Sunday March 27th when we shall welcome the current Methodist President. Hope to see many of you there.

God Bless, Rev. Lynne Burgon



## **LANGTREE CHAPEL NEWS**

### **Shoebox Appeal Update**

At the beginning of February I received news that our 116 shoeboxes had been delivered to Central Asia and Albania. Because of political and religious sensitivities in Central Asia we cannot be more specific about the exact countries. Boxes delivered to Albania were also given to Afghan refugees at outreach events hosted by local churches. Samaritans Purse is also providing relief to this area with medical care, trauma healing support and supplies for babies and children. Your shoebox gift is helping to show the love of Christ to children across the world.

For more information see

[Albania \(samaritans-purse.org.uk\)](http://samaritans-purse.org.uk)

[Central Asia \(samaritans-purse.org.uk\)](http://samaritans-purse.org.uk)

Thank you so much for all your help and support.

### **Bible Study**

We have recommenced our Thursday evening Bible study and are currently studying the Bible Course (by The Bible Society) with 8 interactive sessions to give an overview of the Bible. [The Bible Course - Bible Society](#). We start at 7.30pm and usually finish at about 9pm with tea and biscuits. Please feel free to join us.

## ALVERDISCOTT CHAPEL

### Garden Club News

Our next meetings will be on Monday February 28th and Monday March 28th at 2.30pm in the chapel schoolroom. Everyone is welcome and the cost is just £1.00.

### Arts and Crafts

Meetings of the Arts and Crafts Club are now in full swing, and we meet on the second Tuesday of each month at the chapel schoolroom from 10.00am until 1.00. Tea, Coffee and light refreshments are provided. All are welcome so why not bring along your craft/hobby and enjoy a pleasant morning with friends. The cost is just £1.00. The next meeting will be on March 8th.

### Coffee Morning

Our coffee mornings have resumed. They happen on the first Thursday of every month from 10.00 am till 12 noon with the proceeds going to a different charity each month.

Thank you all who came to the February Coffee Morning, there were 16 of us and we raised £72 which has been sent to the Prostate Cancer charity. Our next is on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March and is for the Talking Newspapers. Come and enjoy good coffee, or tea if you prefer, and a relaxed time of Fellowship.

### Sunday Services

We are having our Sunday Services at 11.00am on alternate Sundays see the plan which is in the Newsletter. If you would like to join us you would be very welcome.

## WALKING WITH MICAH

Our Calling as Methodists means we long for God's justice in the world. Around the globe and in their own local communities, Methodists are working for justice through responding to needs and campaigning for change.

The prophet Micah reminded people that the worship God wants is for us to act justly, to love as God loves, and to walk humbly with God. Justice-seeking has always been integral to our relationship with God.

The Walking with Micah: Methodist Principles for Social Justice project will help the Methodist Church in Britain to focus on our principles and priorities for justice and through that increase our ability to seek God's justice, as a Church and in our own Christian lives.

### This two-year project will involve

Drawing on our Methodist heritage of challenging injustice and learning from the insights and challenges of others within and beyond the Christian faith.

Consulting widely within the Methodist Church and listening to what matters to Methodist people at this time.

Working with others to resource individuals, churches and leaders, to speak and act for justice both individually and in the name of the Methodist Church in Britain.

## THE METHODIST COUNCIL 26-27 JANUARY 2022

After worship, the Chair of the Methodist Council, Mrs Jill Baker paid tribute to Mr Peter Pay, moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, who had attended the Council as an ecumenical observer who died in December. She described him as a 'much valued participant in our Council meetings who we shall miss and we remain grateful for all he contributed.' Mrs

Baker welcomed the Revd Philip Brooks, Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations for the URC, who attended the meeting.

Mrs Baker updated the Council with the news that a building at 25 Tavistock Place has been purchased which will house the Connexional Team. The Connexional Secretary Doug Swanney gave more details about the move out of 25 Marylebone Road and how plans for a service to mark the closure of the current MCH are in progress.

The Council received reports from the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

### **Accounts**

The Director of Finance and Resources, Matt Tattersall, introduced the consolidated accounts which in addition to Connexional Funds, include among others, All We Can, Cliff College, the London Mission Fund and The Wesley Hotel. He reported that while there had been a drop in income during 2020-21 there had also been a drop in expenditure and our fund balances at the end of last year compared with the year before were significantly better. The Connexional Treasurer, the Revd Tim Swindell presented a financial 'state of health' for the Methodist Church in Britain and reminded Council members of the commitment to a reduction in the assessment which will have an impact on amount of work that can be taken on. Mr Swindell said that despite a long term reduction in its income, the Church is wealthy, although the funds are not always in a place where they can be easily accessed. The Council received the reports and adopted the consolidated accounts.

### **Forces Board**

The Connexional Secretary, Doug Swanney presented the Forces Board paper to the Council, which agreed to recommend to the Conference that changes be made including for the Board to be chaired by the Ex-President of the Conference, and for the Secretary of the Board to report to the Assistant Secretary of the Conference.

### **Impact Assessment**

The Connexional Secretary Doug Swanney presented a paper on the work around Impact Assessment which was discussed at the last Council meeting. Members took part in small group discussions on how better decisions can be made about what work the Church does in the future.

### **Model Trust 14(2A)**

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, Mrs Joanne Anderton, presented the paper to the Council proposing changes to the conditions around sharing premises with other denominations by bringing in lease arrangements. Mrs Anderton told the Council that this is the first time we have considered offering leases and also there is still work to be done on 'doctrinal differences'. The Council received the report, and adopted the policy recommendations, directing the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice to work with the ecumenical officers and the Faith and Order committee in order to produce guidance.

### **Budget**

The principles to be used in setting the 2022/23 budget were agreed by the Council. This included using the Mission in Britain Fund to support the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy.

### **MMPS**

To date there have been 758 individual donations to the Pension Reserve Fund totalling £5.7m. However, some of these were on behalf of all the churches in a circuit so the number of churches, circuits and districts that have responded to the appeal is greater. Whilst this amount is

significantly below the target set, the Pension Reserve Fund has benefitted from a recovery in investment values and additional income from property sales. A more detailed paper will go to the Council in April.

### **Justice, Dignity and Solidarity**

The Council received an update on the progress of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) strategy from the co-chairs of the Shadow JDS Committee, the Revds Charity Nzegwu and Sam McBratney. The Council heard that good progress has been made with the work of the group with many pilot programmes taking place and that the group will be as transparent and open in its processes as possible. Draft Terms of Reference for the new JDS committee and future recruitment are being worked on. The Council received the report.

### **Oversight and Trusteeship**

The Secretary of the Conference, Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler presented this update which he described as “multi-layered and complicated work”. He said significant progress has been made in a number of areas, the lynchpin is the introduction of the Connexional Council, which will replace both the Methodist Council and the SRC, and a considerable amount of work has been done to bring into being a smaller Trustee body with a clear and defined relationship with the Conference. Dr Hustler said the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Law and Polity Committee will be bringing proposed changes to the Deed of Union to this year’s Conference along with a review of the Committee structure of the Church.

Dr Hustler introduced proposals to reduce the number of districts in the Connexion by saying the current number shapes the oversight and governance bodies and has budgetary implications and an impact on the amount of work that needs to be done. He reminded Council members that much work has taken place to listen to each district and said the work needs to be ‘consensual, contextual and connexional’. Council members were invited to discuss the proposals in small groups. After an opportunity for feedback to the wider group, members voted in favour of beginning detailed work to work towards reducing the number of districts.

### **Youth President**

Former Youth President Michael Pryke presented a review of the Youth President’s role. Council members agreed recommendations that the role of the Youth President should be refocused on advocacy and involvement in decision making.

### **Complaints and Discipline**

The Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler presented an update on the review of Part 11 of Standing Orders, which set out the Complaints and Discipline processes. He explained that while considerable progress had been made with the work, it was not complete and there was still work to be done on the opportunities for reconciliation and reducing the numbers of complaints. Dr Hustler told Council members that the group needs to wait for the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse which may have a bearing on how the review is completed. The Council agreed that the review should now be brought to the Conference of 2023.

### **Action for Hope**

The Head of Mission, Ms Jude Levermore presented a progress report on Action for Hope, the work to develop a Methodist Faith Plan to work towards net zero carbon emissions for the Methodist Church in Britain. Ms Levermore reported that several consultations have started with the plan’s three key areas in mind: assets, wisdom and lifestyles. The Council received the report.

## **Walking with Micah**

Rachel Lampard joined the Council meeting to give an outline of the justice project, Walking with Micah, which she is leading. Walking with Micah aims to review our understanding of social justice to enable the Methodist Church better to speak and act on issues of justice in the future. After a presentation, members took part in group work examining the issues and fed back to the wider Council.

## **Audit of Safeguarding Practice**

Safeguarding Policy Manager, Nicola Sylvester presented this paper to the Council which proposed an audit framework for safeguarding practice across the Connexion. This framework is designed to assess independently the effectiveness of safeguarding structures and processes across the Connexion. The Council received the report, and requested that there be full consultation and further work on the framework with District Safeguarding Officers and others. The Council will consider the framework at its next meeting.

## **IN SOLIDARITY WITH TONGA**

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, along with the Assistant Secretary of the Conference, have sent this letter of solidarity to the people of Tonga and to the Free Wesleyan Church there following the volcanic eruption that took place on the 14 January 2022.

For the attention of:

Dr Tevita Koloa'ai Havea President,  
Free Wesleyan Church in Tonga  
27 January 2022

Dear Dr Tevita Koloa'ai Havea,

It is in a spirit of solidarity with the people of Tonga that we greet you, and all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the Free Wesleyan Church, from the Methodist Church in Britain.

The Council of the Methodist Church in Britain, meeting on the 26th and 27th January, expressed its grave concern as we have gradually learned about the effects of the volcanic eruption and subsequent tsunami which have disrupted the lives of the people of Tonga.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you start the process of clear-up and reconstruction. Especially we join you in praying that the relief efforts already underway will be able to assist those who are most in need, and that these efforts will not lead to an outbreak of cases of COVID infection. Groups in Britain with Pacific connections have also alerted us to the need to pray for rain to wash away the ash from vegetation and crops.

We praise God for the news we have heard of deep faith shining through the Tongan people in this time of adversity, and we are praying for all those involved in offering spiritual and psychological support, both in formal pastoral and professional roles, and as good neighbours. We ask that God will grant wisdom, courage and the peace of God's presence to all those who seek to minister in the Name of Christ to those whom they serve.

We deeply value and thank God for the historic partnership of our two Churches and for the blessing of Methodist people of Tongan heritage within the Methodist Church in Britain, whom we have upheld in prayer as they have awaited news from Tonga.

Our information is still very scarce, and we look forward to renewed contact. In the meantime, please be assured of our concern and prayers.

Yours, in Christ,

The Revd Sonia Hicks President of the Methodist Conference 2021/2022  
Mrs Barbara Easton Vice - President of the Methodist Conference 2021/2022  
The Revd Michaela A Youngson Assistant Secretary of the Conference and Connexional Ecumenical Officer

**The following is the Plan for March, April & May**

HC= Holy Communion                      PC= At Parish Church  
MC= Methodist Church                    C& F= Coffee and Fellowship  
Café= Café Worship                      SB=Sunday Breakfast  
T = Transport

**Post codes of Chapels**

Alverdiscott – EX31 3PT	Alwington – EX39 5BU
Bideford (High Street) – EX39 2AN	Black Torrington – EX21 5QF
Buckland Brewer – EX39 5LP	Langtree – EX38 8NF
Littleham – EX39 5HW	Milton Damerel – EX22 7DJ
Northam – EX39 1BS	Parkham – EX39 5PG
Shebbear – EX21 5SJ	Sheepwash – EX21 5NA
Thornhillhead – EX39 5NT	Torrington – EX38 8AL

**LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MARCH, APRIL & MAY**

**March 6. Lent 1** Deut. 26:1-11; Ps. 91:1-2, 9-16; Rom. 10:8b-13; Lk. 4:1-13

**March 13 Lent 2** Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18; Ps. 27 ; Phil. 3:17-4:1 ; Lk. 13:31-35

**March 20 Lent 3** Isa. 55:1-9; Ps. 63:1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Lk. 13:1-9

**March 27 Lent 4** Josh. 5:9-12; Ps. 32; 2 Cor. 5:16-21 ; Lk. 15:1-3, 11b-32

**April 3 Lent 5** Isa. 43:16-21; Ps. 126; Phil. 3:4b-14; Jn. 12:1-8

**April 10 Lent 6** Isa. 50:4-9a; Ps. 31:9-16; Phil. 2:5-11; Lk. 22:14-23:56 or Lk. 23:1-49

**April 17 EASTER DAY** Acts 10:34-43 or Isa. 65:17-25; Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Cor 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43  
Jn. 20:1-18 or Lk. 24:1-12

**April 24 Second Sunday of Easter** Acts 5:27-32; Ps. 118:14-29 or Ps. 150; Rev. 1:4-8; Jn. 20:19-31

**May 1 Third Sunday of Easter** Acts 9:1-6, (7-20); Ps. 30; Rev. 5:11-14; Jn. 21:1-19

**May 8 Fourth Sunday of Easter** Acts 9:36-43; Ps. 23; Rev. 7:9-17; Jn. 10:22-30

**May 15 Fifth Sunday of Easter** Acts 11:1-18; Ps. 148; Rev. 21:1-6; Jn. 13:31-35

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> Sixth Sunday of Easter** Acts 16:9-15; Ps. 67; Rev. 21:10, 22-22:5; Jn. 14:23-29  
or Jn. 5:1-9

**May 26<sup>th</sup> ASCENSION DAY** Acts 1:1-11; Ps. 47 or Ps. 93; Eph. 1:15-23; Lk. 24:44-53

**May 29<sup>th</sup> Seventh Sunday of Easter** Acts 16:16-34; Ps. 97; Rev. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21; Jn. 17:20-26

	<b>Mar 6</b>	<b>Mar 13</b>	<b>Mar 20</b>	<b>Mar 27</b>
	<b>Lent 1</b>	<b>Lent 2</b>	<b>Lent 3</b>	<b>Lent 4</b>
<b>Circuit Zoom</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>
<b>Alverdiscott 11am  5pm</b>	<b>Macbeth</b>		<b>Blackhall HC</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Alwington</b>	<b>Vidamour 3pm</b>			<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Bideford 10.30am</b>	<b>Bate</b>	<b>Vidamour</b>	<b>Harris HC</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Black Torrington Friday 3pm</b>		<b>Blackhall on 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Withall 25<sup>th</sup> @3pm</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Buckland Brewer 10am (PC)  10am (MC) Clovelly</b>	<b>HC (9.30am)</b>	<b>F Watson</b>	<b>Anglican preacher</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Langtree 11am</b>	<b>Dawe</b>	<b>Parish Church</b>	<b>Withall</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Littleham 10.30am</b>	<b>Price</b>		<b>Hall-Tomkin</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Milton Damerel 11am</b>		<b>Blackhall HC AAW</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Northam 10.30am  4pm</b>	<b>Vidamour HC  Messy Church</b>	<b>Burgon</b>	<b>Spencer T</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Parkham 11am</b>		<b>Sunday Breakfast</b>	<b>Vidamour HC United</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Shebbear 10.30am</b>	<b>Parish Church</b>	<b>C&amp;F</b>	<b>Ley HC</b>	<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Sheepwash 11am</b>	<b>D Watson</b>			<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Thornhillhead 11am</b>		<b>Potter</b>		<b>@Circuit Service Torrington 10.30am</b>
<b>Torrington 10.30pm</b>	<b>Blackhall</b>	<b>Harris</b>	<b>Whatton HC</b>	<b>Hicks Circuit Service</b>

	<b>Apr 3</b>	<b>Apr 10</b>	<b>Apr 17</b>	<b>Apr 24</b>
	<b>Lent 5</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<b>Easter 2</b>
<b>Circuit Zoom</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>	<b>6.30pm Blackhall</b>	<b>6.30pm Spencer</b>
<b>Alverdiscott 11am</b>	<b>Spencer T</b>		<b>Potter HC</b>	
<b>5pm</b>		<b>Blackhall HC Cafe</b>		<b>Potter Explore</b>
<b>Alwington</b>	<b>Vidamour @9.30am</b>			
<b>Bideford 10.30am</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>Vidamour HC @11am</b>	<b>F Watson</b>
<b>Black Torrington Friday 3pm</b>		<b>F Watson On 8<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Blackhall on 22<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Buckland Brewer 10am (PC)</b>	<b>HC (9.30am)</b>	<b>Blackhall</b>		
<b>10am (MC)</b>			<b>Anglican preacher HC @9.30am</b>	<b>D Watson</b>
<b>Clovelly</b>				
<b>Langtree 11am</b>	<b>Blackhall HC</b>	<b>Parish Church</b>	<b>Ley HC</b>	
<b>Littleham 10.30am</b>	<b>Dawe</b>		<b>@Buckland Brewer 9.30am</b>	
<b>Milton Damerel 11am</b>		<b>Hall-Tomkin AAW</b>	<b>@Langtree 11am</b>	
<b>Northam 10.30am</b>	<b>Bate</b>	<b>Vidamour</b>	<b>Vidamour HC @9am</b>	<b>Sheriff</b>
<b>4pm</b>	<b>Messy Church</b>			
<b>Parkham 11am</b>		<b>Sunday Breakfast</b>	<b>HC Parish Church @11am</b>	<b>Harris</b>
<b>Shebbear 10.30am</b>	<b>Parish Church</b>	<b>C&amp;F</b>	<b>@Langtree 11am</b>	<b>Withall</b>
<b>Sheepwash 11am</b>	<b>Harris</b>			
<b>Thornhillhead 11am</b>		<b>Harris HC</b>		
<b>Torrington 10.30pm</b>	<b>Macbeth</b>	<b>Ley</b>	<b>Blackhall HC</b>	<b>Blackhall</b>

	<b>May 1</b>	<b>May 8</b>	<b>May 15</b>	<b>May 22</b>	<b>May 29</b>
	<b>Easter 3</b>	<b>Easter 4</b>	<b>Easter 5</b>	<b>Easter 6</b>	<b>Easter 7</b>
<b>Circuit Zoom</b>	<b>6.30pm Vidamour</b>		<b>6.30pm Potter Easter Offering</b>	<b>6.30pm Vidamour</b>	<b>6.30pm F Watson</b>
<b>Alverdiscott 11am  5pm</b>	<b>Bate</b>		<b>Price</b>	<b>LA Explore</b>	
<b>Alwington</b>		<b>Vidamour @3pm</b>			
<b>Bideford 10.30am</b>	<b>Spencer T</b>	<b>Burgon</b>	<b>Vidamour HC</b>	<b>Potter</b>	<b>Withall</b>
<b>Black Torrington Friday 3pm</b>		<b>Vidamour on 6<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Hall-Tomkin on 20<sup>th</sup></b>	
<b>Buckland Brewer 10am (PC)  10am (MC) Clovelly</b>	<b>HC (9.30am)</b>	<b>Withall</b>	<b>Anglican preacher</b>	<b>Spencer T</b>	<b>Bate</b>
<b>Langtree 11am</b>	<b>D Watson</b>	<b>Parish Church</b>	<b>Macbeth</b>		<b>LA</b>
<b>Littleham 10.30am</b>	<b>Vidamour HC</b>		<b>Harris</b>		
<b>Milton Damerel 11am</b>			<b>Burgon AAW</b>		
<b>Northam 10.30am  4pm</b>	<b>Harris  Messy Church</b>	<b>Potter</b>	<b>F Watson</b>	<b>Ley</b>	<b>Vidamour HC</b>
<b>Parkham 11am</b>		<b>Sunday Breakfast</b>	<b>Ley United</b>	<b>Vidamour HC</b>	<b>Alternative Worship @10.30am</b>
<b>Shebbear 10.30am</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>C&amp;F</b>		<b>Harris HC</b>	
<b>Sheepwash 11am</b>	<b>Withall</b>				
<b>Thornhillhead 11am</b>				<b>Dawe</b>	
<b>Torrington 10.30pm</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Blackhall HC</b>	<b>Bate</b>	<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>Hall-Tomkin</b>

### **SEEKING JUSTICE BY ROGER WALTON.**

The Methodist Church is currently undertaking a two year exploration of what it means to be a justice-seeking church through the Walking with Micah project. Theology Everywhere is working in partnership with the project to host a series of articles about justice. For more information visit [www.methodist.org.uk/walking-with-micah/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/walking-with-micah/)

Justice is talked about everywhere, and not least in Christian communities. Embracing Justice, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2022, is the latest in a string of books on the subject,<sup>[i]</sup> whilst The Methodist Church is undertaking a two year project, Walking with Micah, to discern how best to be a justice-seeking church. This is the tip of the iceberg. Many write from places of injustice or campaign about specific issues that demand resolution or restitution, and academic departments from politics and philosophy to science, law and theology engage with how to enact justice.

That Christians should be part of this endeavour needs no argument or justification here, I hope. We stand in the Judeo-Christian tradition, where the call for justice is deeply embedded and an essential part of being a disciple. Our task is rather to wrestle with how to pursue justice in our own day and age.

This is not a straightforward exercise on several fronts. First, justice is a contested notion in theory and practice. Some seek justice for the unborn child in the name of right to life whilst some fight for the justice of women to decide what to do with their own bodies. Some see free speech as the key to both truth and a fair society but others point to the damage done by hate speech.

This raises the second problem. We approach justice from where we find ourselves. For some that will be from the experience of marginalisation, discrimination and the denial of rights; for others it will be places of power and privilege, the latter often benefitting, consciously or unconsciously, from the systems that perpetuate the former. Becoming aware of where we start our engagement and what are our interests, is crucial but may not be easy.

Equally problematic is that the Bible, whilst having much to say about justice, does not set out a full picture or theory of justice. Indeed, there are hints that God's justice may be different from human notions of justice and only partially glimpsed.<sup>[ii]</sup> Further, we need to acknowledge that what some biblical texts claim in the name of justice is merely a cover for revenge and even genocide.

Having said that, we have much to aid us in our wrestling.

First, the scriptures carry persistent themes, which inform our practice of seeking justice. God is concerned about injustice particularly as experienced by the oppressed, the marginalised and the poor. The Exodus begins with God hearing the cry of an oppressed people. The prophets consistently take up this theme, which is echoed in the Psalms and in the life and teaching of Jesus. All people are made in the image of God and to be honoured and treated fairly, but the weak and vulnerable are to be accorded special attention. In the contemporary world, this will include hearing the cries of an oppressed and exploited creation.

In the Wisdom literature, upholding justice is a prime responsibility of those in power. Here wisdom is wisdom for justice.<sup>[iii]</sup> Thus hearing the cries of the oppressed, attempting to understand the experience (if it is not our own), being alongside those seeking justice and reminding those in power of their responsibilities is the Christian calling. For this, we can learn from and be challenged by the lived experience of personal testimony and the reflections of Christians who stand in and with oppressed communities (e.g. Black, Feminist, Womanist, Queer and Eco-theologians).

Second, we are part of an ongoing active and interpretative community. The fact that the Bible does not give an exhaustive or all-encompassing view of justice acts as an invitation to participate in the ongoing search for justice, which requires the engagement of our minds, as well as our action. We cannot stand outside the concrete issues of our world theorising. We find justice in

the struggle and all must be activists in some form. This requires courage, humility and a willingness to make the, sometimes costly, journey of discovery.

Finally, participation in the mission of God requires we keep in tune with God, for our transformation is part of this too. Fortunately, we have the gift of the Spirit but this requires our disciplined engagement with the means of grace. Kathy Galloway outlines a set of disciplines that the Iona's community use in its work on justice and reconciliation.[iv] These include prayer, listening to those with first-hand experience, solidarity and acting together a community. There is much here to help us to pray and work for justice.

[i] Isabelle Hamley, *Embracing Justice*, 2021 SPCK. Others include James Jones, *Justice for Christ's Sake*, SPCK 2021; Tom Stuckey *Covid-19 God's Wake-up Call*, 2021; and Vic McCracken *Christian Faith and Social Justice Bloomsbury* 2014.

[ii] See e.g. Isaiah 55.9; Job; and Matthew 20.1-16.

[iii] Prov 8.15

[iv] Kathy Galloway, *Living by the Rule*, Wild Goose Publications, 2010

## EASTER OFFERING

'Tell Her Story, Tell Our Story'

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31:25-26 (NRSV)

This year's theme, 'Tell Her Story, Tell Our Story' features the stories of women which have often been forgotten or overlooked. They are stories of courage, compassion and calls for change. The theme is inspired by the tenth anniversary of Methodist Women in Britain and the work it has done to empower and enable women around the world.

The offerings collected during this act of worship go to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain. As we listen to and reflect on the stories of women from around the world and through time, we will consider how we can share our story, our sisters' stories and God's story with the world.

### About Easter Offering

Each year, the Methodist Church holds an Easter Offering dedication service. This tradition dates back to 1883, when women in Manchester collected £32 for missionary work overseas from 'Christmas pennies' at family gatherings on Christmas Day. In March 1884, the London Districts distributed Easter envelopes and collecting bags asking for a penny a head, and collected around £100. In 1900, Women's Work raised £1,655 for the work of overseas missions.

Since then, each successive Methodist women's movement has encouraged donations in support of God's mission. Recently, Methodist Women in Britain (supported by the Global Relationships team) have produced an annual service of dedication, often used widely around the Connexion as a circuit service.

All the money raised through the Easter Offering goes to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain for work in our Partner Churches around the world.

In 2019, collections from Easter Offering services raised over £370,000, thanks to the generosity of Methodist men, women and children.