

MEMO

Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Outburst

**JUNE — AUGUST
2021**



See pages 10 — 11

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

As I write this article, Easter has been and gone, and with it that great feeling of hope of the good news of the Resurrection. Hopefully this hasn't been and gone!! for the Easter joy goes with us throughout the whole year and every Sunday we celebrate Jesus risen and with us, and in our worship we prepare to follow him and allow him to walk with us into a new week.

As we have looked at Easter hope, we, at the moment, are feeling hopeful about our lives as we cautiously move out of Lockdown. This morning we had Communion, for the first time since February 2020, it was different but still good to share in the body and blood of our Lord, to be reminded that he died for us, so much does he love us. I hope when you read this we will be well on the way to more 'normal' lives, maybe even closer to being able to sing in church!!

Thank you to all of you who have contributed to this 'Memo' it is reassuring to know that despite lockdown so much work has continued to be done in our Circuit in caring for people and keeping the good news of Jesus out there in the public domain, thanks to Zoom and Online Worship, Thought for the week, and so many other initiatives. We have shown it is impossible to lock down the people of God!! So please keep on with your contributions to 'Memo' it is so good to know what is going on around the Circuit.

One feature that Anne suggested was to ask people to write a 100 word article for 'Memo' In the last Edition Anne and I both produced articles and it was a discipline keeping them to 100 words!! Anne did suggest they could be about reflections on lockdown what you actually liked about it. Maybe now we could ask for 100 word articles on 'Life after Lockdown' or on

whatever subject you want.

At this time Rev. Charity is on her sabbatical from March to May and Rev. Christopher will be going on his sabbatical from May to July. This has put more work on our preachers and I want to say a sincere thank you to them all for 'filling in the gaps' during the ministerial absences. I am sure that we all love preaching and this has not been an onerous task! We do look forward to hearing all about their sabbatical activities in the course of the coming months.

So as we move on in the last quarter of this Methodist year, we can see again the work of the Holy Spirit in our Circuit and in our own lives. Life has been tough for a long time now, harder for some than others. I know that my prayer life has kept me going and I am sure that is the case for all of us as we have put our trust in Jesus the Light of the World in these dark times.

Best wishes

Dave

on behalf of Anne and Elaine.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF MEMO

**Please send all contributions
to the
Communications Team
C/O the Circuit office,
Nunthorpe Methodist Church,
Cnaught Road, Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough TS7 OBS**

**Or email to
mbrocircuit@gmail.com
by 1st July 2021**

The Superintendent's Letter

Dear Friends,

23rd May is Pentecost Sunday (Whitsun). It is always seven weeks after Easter and is a festival where we celebrate the birth of the worldwide church.

The origin of the Christian Pentecost is to be found in the Jewish festival of the same name which is celebrated fifty days after the Passover. In the bible, in Acts 2, we find that Jesus' followers were in Jerusalem at this time, praying together with the doors locked, because they were scared of persecution. Suddenly there was a sound like a stormy wind. Something that looked like flames appeared and settled on each of the believers. They became aware of God's presence and power in a new way and were 'filled with the Holy Spirit' of God. Miraculously they began speaking in languages they had not known before. They went outside and talked to the crowds of festival pilgrims in many different languages so that everyone could understand what was said. Then Peter stood up and talked boldly about Jesus. Three thousand people believed what Peter said about Jesus, and were baptised. After that day, the Christian Church spread steadily throughout the known world.

It is a remarkable story of how God gives himself to ordinary human beings. The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as a person, 'he' - not 'it'! We believe that God the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and that he helps us to live out the Christian life. The Church would not have been born, it would not have spread and it would certainly not exist today were it not for God's Holy Spirit. To this day he is God with us in the world

This year we celebrate Pentecost on 23rd May after 14 months of pandemic. We have been locked down in our homes, not for fear of persecution, but for fear of the virus. If ever the church needed rebirth, replanting and renewal then it is now. Pentecost reminds us that this work of renewal does not rest on human shoulders alone and certainly not on some kind of superhuman endeavour. The work is God's. We are his co workers, but it is he who births the church and breathes new life into it. This is an encouraging truth for those who are concerned about the church and its future after the pandemic. It is reassuring to know that God is with us, directing and empowering our work.

With every blessing,

Rev. David Godfrey

News from the Circuit Meeting 9th March 2021

Conversation on opening of buildings after lockdown

How and when churches may open was discussed, and Easter was being considered by several churches assuming that the strategies in place made it safe to do. Churches should not feel under pressure to re- open until they felt ready to do so and it was the responsibility of each individual church council to make that decision.

Appointments

Dawn Harris was appointed to serve as a Circuit Steward

Pat Barrett was appointed to serve on the Circuit Leadership Team

Safeguarding

Some DBS applications will soon be due for renewal – this needs to be done every 5 years.

Training – it is hoped that a foundation training course will be available late in April, via zoom, information will be circulated nearer the time across the Circuit about when, how and who might benefit from the course relative to roles they hold across the Circuit.

Matters from District/Conference for information

God in Love unites us report – (marriage and relationships) – which looks at all elements of relationships including same sex marriage. This will go to Conference in the summer for approval. If approved, church councils will have to make decisions for their own churches, probably in the Spring of 2022. In preparation for this, sessions will be held in the autumn to have a look at the issues and go through the report. (assuming it is approved)

Methodist Way of Life – booklets have been distributed to church congregations. It considers how, as Methodists we should live.

Sharing news from around the circuit

Young Sunday - This has continued fortnightly using Zoom and the group have just started a 5-session programme on the Methodist Way of Life. There are regularly 8-10 young people joining and they are provided with packs of everything needed for each session. The group are looking ahead to a summer fun experience when they hope to go out on a stargazing event

Social Justice – two issues were brought to the meeting Digital Poverty Campaign – a fund set up by the Mayor of Middlesbrough to provide computers for children in poverty – more details available from Elaine in the office

Christian Aid appeal to support Covid vaccinations in countries that are unable to access them presently. This is being promoted by the District and circulated to all churches

MAP

Digital connectivity has been possible by providing phones and has been invaluable in enabling service users to access the project. Request, if anyone is changing their phones and could pass their old ones on to MAP it would be much appreciated. On line classes have continued. Looking to the future, more face-to-face activities are being considered with the focus, initially, on doing as much as possible outside

TFFC

Sharon continued to work throughout the pandemic to ensure families were supported. At half term there was a family activity WhatsApp group with 12 families involved. All resources were provided and this proved so popular that this is continuing on Monday evenings. Sharon is hoping to start a Talk and Walk group once restrictions allow. During the Easter holidays the Feast of Fun event will be held using technology and with all resources provided.

LRRC

A.A have continued to meet and Millennium meals have been using the premises each morning.

The Chinese Church has continued its activities using Zoom and YouTube. The Rev. Lawrence Law, the Minister of the Chinese Church is coming up to retirement.

Methodist Women in Britain

**Incorporating Women's Network and British unit
of the World Federation of Methodist and
Uniting Church Women**



Methodist Women in Britain 2011 - 2021

2021 marks 10 years since the launch of Methodist Women in Britain at the Methodist Conference at Southport in 2011. Various activities and events have been planned to mark this 10th Anniversary, some have already taken place. One event still on is the following.

April – October 2021 at Epworth Old Rectory

An exhibition highlighting the people, projects, events and campaigns that tell the story of the first ten years of MWiB. The exhibition may be repeated in 2022, and it is hoped to produce a booklet to accompany the exhibition.

Full details of all events etc. can be found on the website www.mwib.org.uk. Most things are happening online at the moment.

There are no meetings planned for Circuit Network. We do not meet during the summer months so we will hope the situation has improved by September.

The usual District events that would have been held at this time of year are also cancelled.

The following is an online event.

Monday 19 July would normally have been our Summer Evening event so to replace this there will be a Music Quiz on Zoom at 7pm. Please talk to your church MWiB secretary for joining details if you would like to take part.

Kath Smithies

Circuit Methodist Women in Britain (Network) Secretary

On being courageous



A week or two ago I surprised myself by being what I thought was courageous. Now this is a word I would never use as one of my attributes – shy, quiet, caring, daft – yes, but courageous? Not me at all. I generally think a lot and say little but I found myself starting a conversation with a complete stranger. She was someone I'd seen fairly regularly walking around the neighbourhood, as you do in lockdown, and we had exchanged smiles. This young lady usually walked very slowly, with elbow crutches and what looked like a lot of effort, but this time she looked to be walking quicker and easier. It was this that made me feel the need to speak to her, to comment on her somewhat speedy walking.

It turns out she was badly injured in a fall at school and was told she would probably not walk again. She was determined, from that young age, that would not be the case and had worked very hard over the years to put the wheelchair aside and build up to this. Now to me, that's courageous.

After some research it seems that there are various types of courage. Physical courage is about feeling fearful but choosing to act on that fear, emotional courage is following your heart, intellectual courage is gained by expanding our horizons and letting go of the familiar. With social courage we can be ourselves in the face of adversity, with moral courage we can stand up for what is right and spiritual courage is facing pain with dignity and faith.



There is a modicum of caution however – speaking from experience there can be a fine line between courageousness and stupidity! I remember the time I was walking through the playground and came across an altercation between two teenage boys angling for a fight, and a growing crowd of onlookers. The immediate thought was to separate the two which was easily done by putting a hand on each head to push them away from each other at arm's length. But what could I do next? Luckily another member of staff was just coming round the corner so

help was at hand.

I'm sure you can all think of courageous people over the years – those who have signed up to fight for their country, the suffragettes, the missionaries, the peacemakers, the activists like Greta Thunberg as well as the courageous folk in our local community. How can we live a more courageous life? These are some of the ways I found – embrace vulnerability, admit you have fears and face them, reduce your stress, think positively to cope with risk and uncertainty, continue to learn and actively demonstrate courage. By naming your fears you should be able to enlarge your comfort zone. In the words of Aristotle **“You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of mind, next to honour.”**

Anne Smith



What can we share with each other right now?

Martin Luther (1483-1546) lived during an episode of the plague and shared his thoughts about how he would conduct himself. Sound advice.

"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbour needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."

From: Luther's Works Volume 43 pg 132. "Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague," a letter written to Rev. Dr. John Hess

Rob Johnson

George Winlow

Many of you will remember George as a Local Preacher in our Circuit. He was also Local Preacher Secretary for many years.

Some time ago he moved away from our area to live near to his family in Aylesbury.

I have heard through Kath Smithies that George will soon be receiving his 60 years certificate for preaching. This is quite an achievement and we do pass on our congratulations to George, who will have his celebration at his local church in Aylesbury when Covid restrictions allow.

I have sent him congratulations on behalf of our Circuit. He keeps up to date with our Circuit as he receives MEMO every quarter sent by Elaine.

Rev. Len Karn kindly supplied the photograph.



Dave Elliott

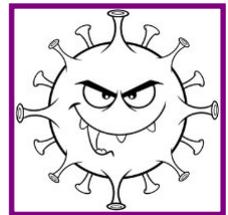
Who would true valour see StF 486 H&P 688 John Bunyan (1628-88)

A hymn we don't often sing now, but maybe we sung regularly as a child in school is *To Be a Pilgrim* with the tune *Monks Gate*, a traditional melody adapted by Ralph Vaughan Williams. As a child it appealed to me: lions, giants, hobgoblins words straight out of fairy stories! And of course, it originated in Bunyan's book *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a gripping allegorical story of Christian life and experience which appealed to children. Well, the considerably abridged version I read with its pretty pictures appealed to me. When at University I studied and had to write essays on the real full book, I wasn't so keen.



It's sobering to realise that Bunyan spent twelve years in prison simply because a non-conformist at the time of the restoration of Charles II, he wouldn't give up preaching. At the age of 16, he had been a soldier in the Parliamentary army, yet all the religious freedoms for dissenters like him were lost when in 1660 the Royalists came back and the established church ruled. As a child the pictures of dungeons in the Doubting Castle of Giant Despair seemed quite frightening, and now I suppose Bunyan wrote of that from life's literal as well as metaphorical experience. He had been in prison, and like all of us, like all Christians, he had known doubt and despair. The heroes Christian and Hopeful stuck in the Dungeon are despairing. They pray, and pray, and pray until Christian remembers *What a fool am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.* Of course, the key, the promise, works and they escape. So when you are in doubt and despair, remember the promise. Christ's promise.

For a while, the hymn wasn't included in church collections because of the fanciful notions of hobgoblins and foul fiends. This past year of pandemic shows us how apt those words were. If ever there was a hobgoblin-like thing, it's the cartoonised images of Coronavirus with all its lurid sticking out bits. The foul fiends might be Covid-deniers, or internet trolls targeting scientists and medical staff. All these can daunt the spirit. But we shouldn't give in to despair even if we have to learn to live with the virus, rather than eradicate it.



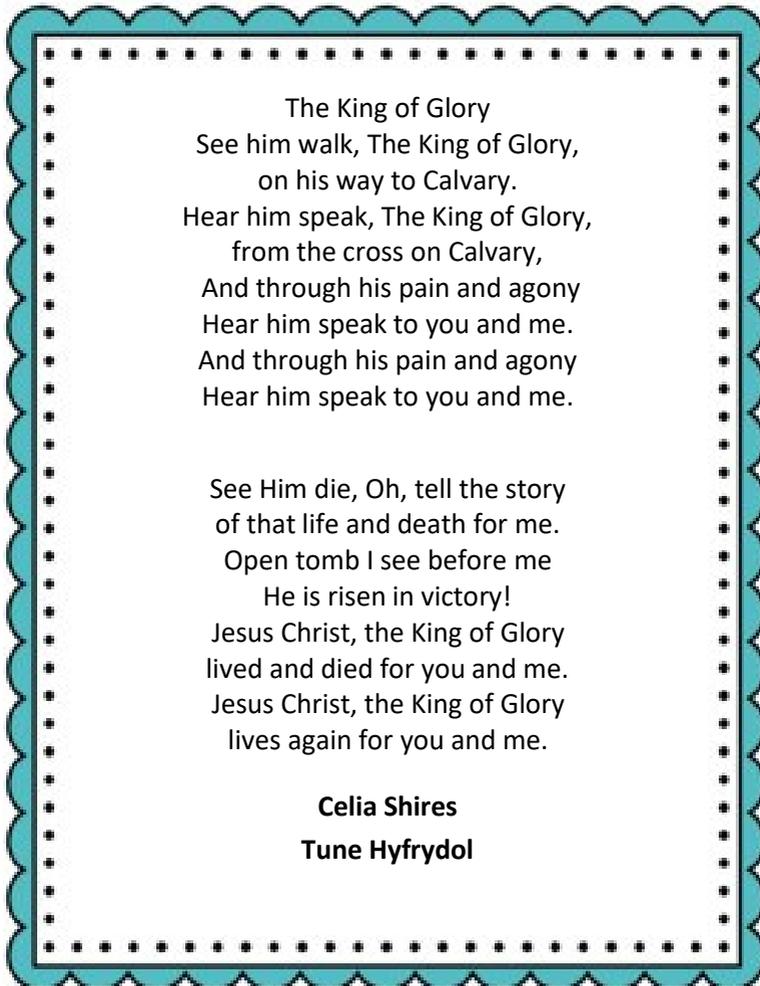
We are all pilgrims, on a journey, albeit a pilgrimage of the soul rather than the feet. And as Bunyan knew pilgrims are brave, have "true valour" whatever the weather, or the circumstances of their lives. Pilgrims have "strength" and have to work hard at it "labour night and day". It is a celebration of the ordinary Christian life not an adventure of super-heroes.

The hymn forms an important part of our nation's cultural life. It's actually the battle hymn of the SAS. One wonders what Bunyan would have made of that! It's

been used as background music in *Dr Who*; Richard Attenborough's World War 2 film *A Bridge Too Far*; Margaret Thatcher had it sung at her funeral, Tony Benn had it as one of his Desert Island Discs. So both the political right and left appreciate its merits. The tune *Monks Gate*, is much younger than the words. Based on another Sussex folk song, collected in the early years of the twentieth century and adapted by Ralph Vaughan Williams, it is very catching. I certainly enjoy singing it, not just because it brings memories of school days, but also because it reminds us, we have to be brave if we want **to be a pilgrim**.

You can enjoy Maddy Prior's delightful version on YouTube if you copy the link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vHJMPw8RHU>

Ruth Lewis





HEART-BOMBING!

My friend Revd Jo Cox-Darling is one of the Church's most creative evangelists. At the beginning of Lent she mentioned something about heart-bombing and I asked her if I could borrow the idea and make it our own. "Of course" she said, "I borrowed it from someone else too!".

Knowing I was going to be on sabbatical during Lent and Easter this year I mentioned the idea to my colleagues but in the end planned for it just to be a 'project' of Trinity and Linthorpe Road Methodist Churches. I designed a postcard and wrote a blessing and I asked church members if they could make some hearts - out of anything, knitted, crocheted, cardboard, paper, wood. They said yes and then the idea stretched out a bit with Kay Braithwaite, Julie O'Key and Pat Martin asking if they could take part too. Nathan Oxnard from Christchurch Mission in Norton also heard about the idea and so I shared the postcards with him and he adapted the church information on them and 'heart-bombed' Norton too.

The idea was a simple one, evangelism and/or encouraging ongoing discipleship through church members handcrafting small hearts to be given to the community or within the churches along with a postcard message which said that at Easter we wanted people to know they were loved and an Easter blessing on the other side of the postcard.

Below you'll read the experiences of Trinity, Nunthorpe and Marton Methodist Churches and Christ Church Mission in the heart-bombing campaign but I would like to say a huge thank you to all of you who made hearts, delivered them and prayed for the recipients during Holy Week. Evangelism often seems a big scary thing, actually it can come in small acts of kindness such as putting hearts and postcards through the doors of Whinney Banks and into the shops there or in the town centre. We are called to evangelise, and some of us are more comfortable with that than others however I want you to be encouraged that it doesn't have to be big and scary, it can be in the small acts of love.

Half way through Lent I had an idea that we could give a substantial amount of hearts and postcards to Cleveland Police. As you'll know in 2019 Cleveland Police were rated inadequate by the inspectorate, they've been mired in controversy; on top of that recent events involving the MET police were also at the front of my mind. The Church has a significant role to 'call out' organisations that don't meet the standards expected of them and it's always right that we do that, however I don't believe you gain excellence from breaking down rather you gain it by building up. Being a 'critical friend' and having the integrity to call out wrongdoing is and remains really important to me in public life, but equally I noticed the diminishing of the hardworking and compassion-ate officers and so we agreed to bless them. Two members of the CLT, Kay and Anne



and I went to Hemlington Community Police Hub and handed over a few hundred hearts and postcards to Neil Harrison (Faith Communities Engagement Officer). They were really moved by this small act of blessing as their tweet indicates!

The love of God is too transformative to hold onto ourselves, it overflows in all kinds of ways and touches those around us. This Easter it overflowed in the handcrafting of nearly 3000 hearts.

Revd Charity

Trinity Heart-bombing

On the afternoon of Good Friday eight intrepid Trinity members, plus dog, went heart-bombing on the estate behind the church building. Thankfully the weather was glorious as we made our way in pairs to houses old and new. For some of us it was new territory especially with the recent and ongoing new house building. Some people came out and told us we had made their day, some were overwhelmingly grateful that the hearts had been hand-made for them and they all commented on the words and prayer. We must have delivered over 450 hearts to houses and the local shops, a hundred or so were taken to be distributed to Cleveland Police and on Sunday there was a heart for everyone who attended church with a few to spare. Many thanks to all who contributed to our stash, some of the heart makers didn't want to see another heart while others wondered what they could do to fill up the gap in their time.

Anne Smith

Nunthorpe Heart-bombing

All friends on our pastoral list received an 'Easter Goody Bag' which included a heart and postcard message. In addition two trees in the church grounds were bedecked with hearts for passers by to take as an Easter gift from the Church—there were none left!

Kay Braithwaite



Marton Heart-bombing

Through our dedicated pastoral visitors everyone received a palm cross, wooden heart and Easter blessing card together with an Easter message from our minister David. Many emails and phone calls were received expressing thanks for the gifts and how lovely to feel part of the church family.

Pat Martin

Linthorpe Road Heart-bombing

Some of Linthorpe Road ladies enjoyed making a good number of hearts to go towards Charity's stash and to members of their congregation. They miss crafting them, but I'm sure Charity will have something else to keep them busy when she returns.

Lesley Walker



As a church, Christ Church Mission wanted to do something a little bit different this Easter considering what has happened in the past year.



I put a message on Facebook asking what other churches would be doing in terms of doorstep evangelism and Charity was kind enough to share her plans. The idea of heart bombing touched me deeply and the prayer I believe covers exactly what we want to get across to the non-believers in our area, which is the essence of love.

Unfortunately, we did not have time to knit hearts but we cut a thousand out of felt and attached them to the flyer. This was great for us as a church with being separated over the year it felt like something which brought us back together.

A team of us took to the streets to put them through the doors, this was fun to do and there were a few conversations with residents. We even had a few conversations with older residents who remembered coming to our church many years ago, it was a great opportunity to let them know we were still there and open. As we walked around, we also prayed over those streets and spoke blessings over the homes.

Following the drop off, we have received messages on Facebook thanking us for the hearts. Some even said that though they do not see themselves as 'religious' the message made them smile and brought comfort to be thought of.

I like to think that when we do these things we are planting seeds, once planted all we can do is pray that God waters them and brings them to germinate in his time. It did make me think of the hymn 'Showers of blessings'.

Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need;
Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.

And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.
Ezekiel 34:26

Nathan Oxnard

We forget that we do not inherit the earth from our parents, but we borrow it from our children. This world is not ours to despoil and destroy. It is the gift of God, and through its fecundity and beauty, is one of the chief ways in which God speaks to all nations.

Andrew Dotchin



The Parish Pump

FEELINGS ON COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN.

I know that I have mentioned our suggested 100 word articles, but this is a little bit longer. It is important to reflect on all our life experiences and I guess the Pandemic will be part of our lives for a little while longer, but in our memories for many years to come. Some people have compared the experience to living through a war, but I feel that isn't really accurate, at least there are some similarities but in the main there are many differences.

There is still the sadness of loss which is part of both war and Pandemic, and also in the 'Long Covid' the after effects of the illness are now becoming more public. I think that watching the programme about Kate Garroway's husband Derek who has been so ill was a real insight into the extreme suffering experienced by some people.

However for many of us we have counted our blessings and we have had some positive experiences. I have spent much more time at home and with my wife, which has been enjoyable at least for me!! I think having more time to read and to get out and about for walks in our local area, has been really a blessing.

We have missed going to church and I have missed preaching and so what a joy to be back in church on Easter Sunday, a very appropriate time to open most of our churches. I think another feature of the journey out of lockdown is being able to travel in our own country. We are looking forward to visiting some of our favourite places, a trip to Scarborough, and this week we hope to go to Otley and Ilkley two of our favourite destinations. Lots more trips out will be planned and it will be so lovely to go where we want to go.

I am not a great fan of shopping but I do need new boots and walking trousers and so a trip to Harrogate is a good excuse to do that.



I am looking forward to visiting friends and family most of all. At the moment we can sit in the garden, but eventually we will be able to go inside and maybe soon be able to go out for meals, as well as having people in our homes for meals. All these things which pre lockdown we just took for granted and now we just long for normality.

I think one word sums it up and it is the word 'freedom.' I think that I didn't realise the value of freedom until the lockdown came along. Maybe for all of us a sensible and cautious move back to some sort of normality is the only way we are going to be safe. Who would have thought before lockdown we would be told who we could and couldn't have in our homes, so in the near future we can return to the freedom to invite who we want and when we want them to be with us.

We do give thanks to all those amazing people who have helped those afflicted with the virus and all who have been on the 'front line' and risked their own lives in caring for people. We give thanks to God for hearing and answering our prayers through the amazing vaccine. We continue to pray for all who use their great gifts

to look for more cures and ways to make life more normal once again. I really feel that as we come out of lockdown, we should be determined to maybe value our lives more fully than we used to do. We should stop taking things for granted and realise just how fortunate we are in so many ways. To get up in a morning and to know we are free to do what we want or need to do, to see who we might want to see.

For so many people who have been unable to work in the last months, I guess if they are lucky, to have a job again! As the old hymn says; 'Count your blessings name them one by one, then you will remember what the Lord has done'.

We may be fortunate in journeying out of lockdown feeling optimistic and thankful. Let us not forget those who come out of lockdown, having lost loved ones, dealing with the pain of grief. We pray for them. We remember those who are still afflicted by the virus and who may suffer the effects for a long time and we pray for them. We think of those who may have suffered a family split or a marriage split because of the pressure of these last months and we pray for them.



As we thank God for new blessings every day, let us never forget those less fortunate than ourselves and continue to offer them support and love.

Dave Elliott



What do our readers most need from you right now?

Probably reassurance of God's care would come pretty high on the list – especially if they or any of their loved ones has got Covid 19. People are craving for peace and calm just now.

Three Bible verses of Encouragement

'In the day when I called, you answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul.' (Psalm 56:4) God hears us, and *always* does something – He gives us strength which we did *not* have, before we asked Him for it.

'Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.' (Psalm 23:4). Death is our final enemy, but we know that Jesus conquered death, and offers us eternal life.

'I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.' Psalm 34:4. We can take our anxiety and depression to Him because He *wants* to help us. He will always listen to us and help us.

The Parish Pump

Pen Portrait Trinity Methodist Church

The room we call the small hall was the original church building on the site. The new church was granted planning permission on 11th December 1956 (Just after I was born). A planning application was submitted in February 1964 for the main hall and associated rooms, which joined the two buildings together, on a site which is exactly 1 acre.

We generally have 2 services on a Sunday with a Junior Church in the morning. There has always been a wide range of activities for all age ranges in the buildings. The uniformed organisations have always had a strong presence but there have also been activities like the Sisterhood, Ladies Circle and Men's Fellowship, some of which continue today. The large hall also gives us the opportunity to play sports like badminton and table tennis. The stage is large enough for dramatic productions, particularly pantomimes. The large hall also gave us the opportunity for a youth group who attended many MAYC events throughout the country.



In 2006, Trinity had a dream to work more closely with the local community and improve the premises to allow this to happen. We looked at various options including complete demolition and a new build and using the newly constructed Acklam Green Centre over the road. However, we decided to retain the buildings and one of the first projects we undertook was to remove the pews (which we sold to a catholic church in London) and replace them with chairs. This allowed us to have different forms of worship but it also created a multi-purpose room.

This came in very useful when we raised over £200,000 and carried out a major improvement to the building, particularly the main hall, as the majority of activities could continue on the premises.

We then set up the Trinity Family Friendly Centre in 2014 as a separate charity that allowed access to outside funding. We employed a community worker and this enabled more intensive work in the area. The improved premises and the work of TFFC encouraged local groups to use the premises for a wide range of additional activities including children's birthday parties, baby massage classes, flower arranging, a gardening club, various dancing and exercise groups and more recently a café providing a safe environment for people to meet and discuss personal and local issues. We also have outside organisations using the premises i.e. Foodbank, WEA (Adult Learning Within Reach) and local schools.

Although some activities have been curtailed due to the pandemic, the building is gradually opening up again and hopefully soon will be able to serve the community once again.

Bernard Nixon

Outreach Moving Forward

Throughout lockdown we have continued to support our local community through practical and pastoral support. Immediately reacting to the practical needs by supply food parcels, vouchers and activities for families, and individuals who lived alone.



As I delivered the parcels, I built up a rapport which has led to a trusting relationship with the families we are serving. I found that many lived in poor housing conditions, some had little or no garden, many had gardens that were unloved and used to store piles of rubbish they did not know how or where to dispose. The stresses of lockdown were clear to see on the single mothers' face, with four children, one with special needs and three with behaviour problems. She had extra lines of worry and despair etched on her face, she looked lost and did not know how to break free from the prison that was her home. I felt safe, but also felt like a heavy yoke around her neck. I had 'things' to give her, however I knew that these things would be gone in a few days, I was reminded of that scripture when Peter and John were going to the temple, this was after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit had come upon them, equipping them for the work of the Kingdom. You can read this in Acts 3:2-9.

This ministry has been able to bless our community with resources however we have Jesus Christ living on the inside of us, He is able to transform their lives. We are called to bring people out of darkness into His marvellous light. The last thing Jesus said to His disciples, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age**”. This is the great commission; this is what Christianity is built upon. Jesus said, “GO!”. I feel as the body of Christ we have lost our way, man can get so caught up with what he himself can build, even in attempt to build for Him. But He wants to build through us, He wants us to lay down our earthly tools, He wants to fill us with His Holy Spirit who will equip us for every good works. Remember that one day we will give an account, Corinthians 3:11 **For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, his workmanship will be evident, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will prove the quality of each man's work.**

Evangelism is one of the gifts Jesus has given to us His body, and as we move into this new season, we are walking into a harvest that is ready for the picking. Yes, these are unprecedented times and things look pretty grim on some levels. But the church needs to be ready to say as Peter did, “**silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you**”! We are not meant to keep Jesus to ourselves, we are meant to share Him, to introduce Him to others so He can do for them what He has done for you. He has forgiven your sins and given you everlasting life. People need the gospel more than ever, and I want to be a harvester in this community.

I am hopefully starting a new project called Revelation Wellness, which uses exercise classes as a tool to spread the gospel. This is to share the love of Christ, speaking words of encouragement and building community. It will also be an opportunity to be still, to



sit in His presence and rest. Building physical strength and spiritual muscles. The exercise is aimed at everyone, people can even sit in a chair, while doing what they can, these are exercise for everyday living. This means that the exercises are to help you to be able to push the Hoover, take the lid off the jam jar or even get up out of a chair as I am 42 and already having pain in my lower back when sitting for long periods. So do not be put off by the word exercise, this would be predominantly to share the gospel with those who would not normally walk into a church service. I completed my training to become a Revelation Wellness Fitness Instructor in the lockdown, which was answer to prayer as this ministry has been in my heart for some time, I hope to start classes in June.

Hope Café will be opening on May 20th, this has been missed by many throughout lockdown as it has supported many families/individuals. Our main aim of the café is to provide a seat at our table, everyone is welcome and many have shared how they feel a peace when there. Hope Café provides free food for families and individuals in difficulty. We have free clothing, and we also give food parcels to those who are in crisis due to benefit cuts or delays. We also sell food for those who can afford to pay. Computers are available for the public to use, to fill out benefit claims or CV's. Our vision is to see lives transform, and to stop poverty from going from generation to generation. We are excited to invite Accredited Qualifications to TFFC, Level 2 Sewing Machine training, if you are interested, please contact Sharon via email trinityfamilyfriendlycentre@outlook.com or ring 07568070458. WEA Adult Learning has been at TFFC for 2 years now, offering a wide range of courses. If you have a course that you want to see at TFFC please get in touch.

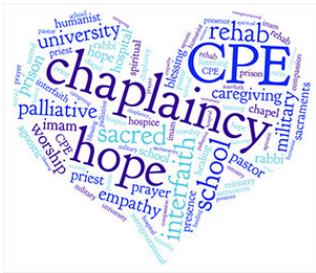


The beauty in nature, a flower, the different shades of green, the wonder of how to grow, sustain our own food in our community garden is going to be a focus. Richard has been amazing in keeping the garden going, he definitely has green fingers! He is going to take the lead in using this project as a way to build relationship, teach, educate families/individuals how fruit/vegetables grow. The vision is to have a community garden, as a sort of Fruit/Veg Bank. Climate change and the environment is something we all need to take responsibility for, and also to educate the next generation why this is important.

There are many more things coming to TFFC, working together with other charities, to provide a wholistic approach to help serve our community, being the hands and feet of Jesus. We are ALIVE to serve, I am excited to share again soon how God is miraculous putting all the pieces of this vision together.

Thank you, Lord for Your amazing grace, for Your faithfulness and hand upon TFFC. Please pray for TFFC, that God's will, will be done through this ministry.

Sharon Sewell



CHAPLAINCY

After a recent conversation with a chaplain, I was encouraged to reflect on the theme of noticing. Chaplains are gifted in the ability to notice what's going on around them, even when it's not the centre of attention: to see the world in different ways and notice the real value of each human life.

This made me ponder the ways in which Jesus noticed others. I thought about the widow's offering (Mark 12:41–44 or Luke 21:1–4). Who would most people notice? The large gifts and the rich people, but who does Jesus notice? The widow and her small gift. What does he see? A woman giving away all she had.

We must never underestimate this gift of noticing. Seeing things in a different way to the world. Chaplains, immersed in the narratives of the world, see with eyes like Jesus. They notice, they respond and they challenge. Even at this difficult time, chaplains are noticing and responding. I think of a recent conversation with prison chaplains, where through prison doors, PPE and over telephones, they continue to notice the needs of prisoners and respond to support them with God's love.

I invite you to join me in praying these words as we think about the work of all chaplains at this time.

Loving God,

There is so much human need at the moment,
in so many places,
in so many lives.
Be with those who stand among people in need,
who notice the value of each human life,
and respond with the love of God.

Strengthen them to serve,
as Jesus served those around him,
through the sustenance of your Spirit.
Amen.

Every blessing,

Gary Hopkins

hopkinsg@methodistchurch.org.uk

The Easter Offering from the Circuit

The Easter Offering raised a total of £814 19. This will go to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain, supporting and working with our 65 Partner Churches around the world. Grateful thanks for all your contributions.

Kath Smithies



...between you and me, it's the only way I can remember my PIN number!

Expensive boat

A minister was planning a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and was aghast when she found it would cost her £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of

Galilee. She protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. 'That might be true,' replied the travel agent, 'but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked.'

'Well, at £50 an hour for a boat,' she replied, 'I am not surprised!'

Slow down

Each Sunday morning our minister was mildly irritated by a member of the congregation who was a fast reader. Finally, announcing the 23rd Psalm, he added:

"And will the lady who is always by 'the still waters' while the rest of us are still in 'green pastures,' please pause until we catch up?"

Pray with gran

A small boy went to church with his grandmother and joined her when she quietly slipped off the pew to kneel and pray. He even copied her example of burying her face in her hands. But after a few seconds his curiosity got the better of him. "Who are we hiding from, gran?"

Left behind

Shortly after the funeral of a local wealthy man, two friends were discussing the Will. "How much did he leave?" wondered one. His friend thought a moment, and ventured: "Well, I suppose, everything!"

Diabetic

A fellow nurse at my hospital received a call from an anxious young woman. "I'm diabetic and I'm afraid I've had too much sugar today," he said.

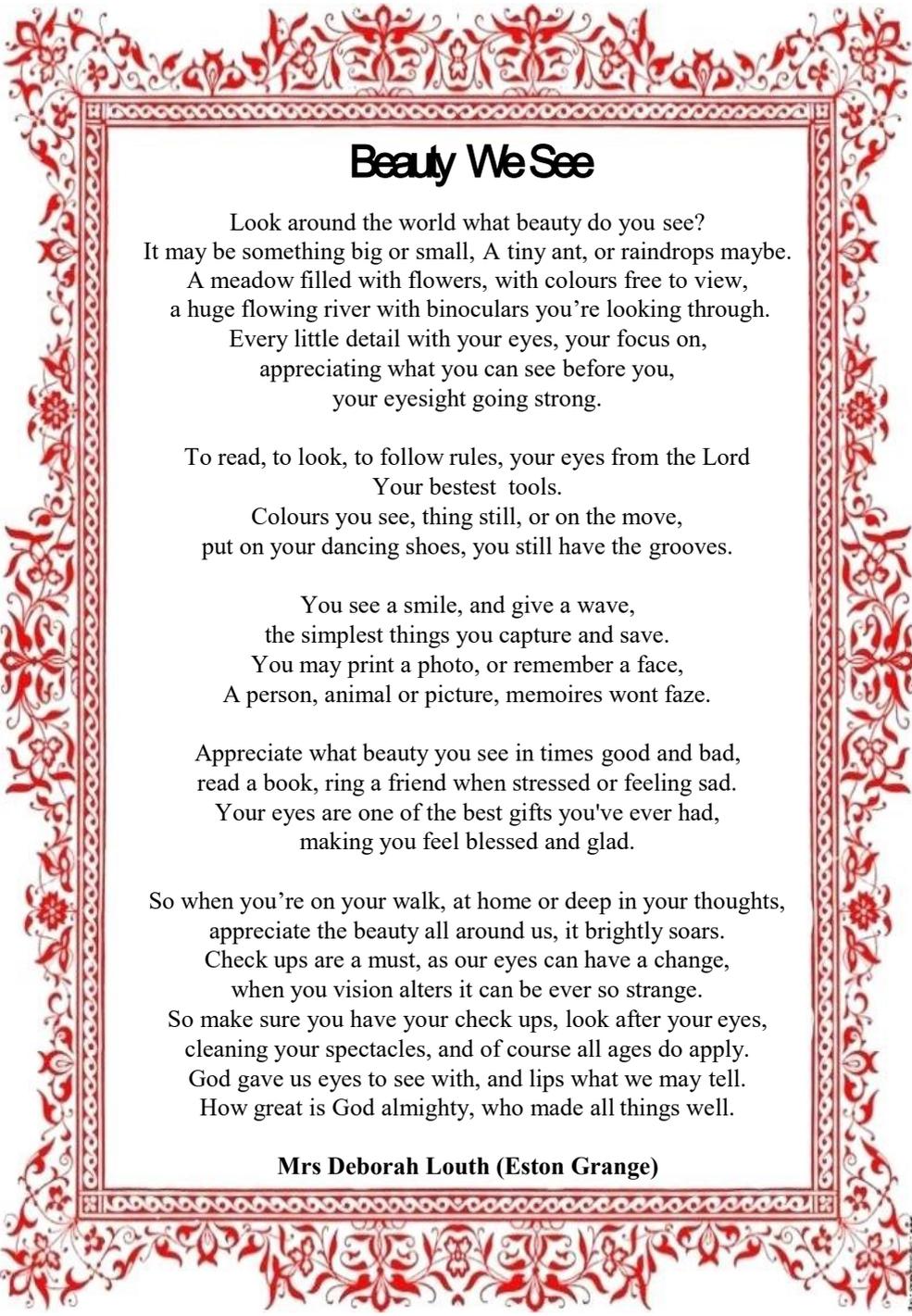
"Are you light-headed?" my colleague asked.

"No," the caller answered, "No, I'm brunette."

Knock Knock

A conscientious minister decided to get acquainted with a new family in his church and so he visited them one evening. After his knock on the door, a lilting voice from within called out, "Is that you, Angel?"

"No," replied the minister. "But I'm from the same department."



Beauty We See

Look around the world what beauty do you see?
It may be something big or small, A tiny ant, or raindrops maybe.

A meadow filled with flowers, with colours free to view,
a huge flowing river with binoculars you're looking through.

Every little detail with your eyes, your focus on,
appreciating what you can see before you,
your eyesight going strong.

To read, to look, to follow rules, your eyes from the Lord
Your bestest tools.

Colours you see, thing still, or on the move,
put on your dancing shoes, you still have the grooves.

You see a smile, and give a wave,
the simplest things you capture and save.
You may print a photo, or remember a face,
A person, animal or picture, memoires wont faze.

Appreciate what beauty you see in times good and bad,
read a book, ring a friend when stressed or feeling sad.

Your eyes are one of the best gifts you've ever had,
making you feel blessed and glad.

So when you're on your walk, at home or deep in your thoughts,
appreciate the beauty all around us, it brightly soars.

Check ups are a must, as our eyes can have a change,
when you vision alters it can be ever so strange.

So make sure you have your check ups, look after your eyes,
cleaning your spectacles, and of course all ages do apply.

God gave us eyes to see with, and lips what we may tell.
How great is God almighty, who made all things well.

Mrs Deborah Louth (Eston Grange)

Young Sunday

At our last meeting on Zoom we enjoyed a session led by the Methodist Youth President Phoebe Parkin. She told us all about her role, and how the voices of young people are represented in the Methodist Church.



Phoebe concluded with a prayer of blessing for the children and young people of the Middlesbrough and Eston Circuit.

If you know of a young person (11-16) who may be interested in Young Sunday please contact **Kay Braithwaite** 01642 320627 or **Anne Smith** 07913243893

North East Churches Acting Together Environmental Conference

Eco Conference 4th September 2021

Are you a church member who is interested in
Care for Creation, impacts of Climate Change,
practical steps to become an Eco Church, ac-
tion in the North East of England and more?

Free one day conference on Zoom

Strap lines

Peace may sound simple – one beautiful word – but it requires everything we have, every quality, every strength, every dream, every high ideal. (*Yehudi Menuhin*)

Pride makes us do things well, but it is love that makes us do them towards perfection.

The best vitamin for a Christian is B1.

The Parish Pump

OBITUARIES

Joan Bennison

It was with great sadness that we heard the news that Joan had passed away on February 26th after a short illness.

Many of you will know Joan because of her involvement in events throughout the Circuit. Her work was not limited to Grove Hill. She was a member of the Circuit Leadership team and a regular member of the Circuit meeting which she always attended.

She was involved in Methodist Women in Britain and attended Circuit events associated with this organisation. She was a keen supporter of MAYC (Methodist Association of Youth Clubs) across the Circuit and she attended the well remembered London Weekends on a number of occasions. She would always support Circuit Services as she saw her responsibility as reaching out to the Circuit.

Grove Hill was and always had been, her home church. There she met and married Colin, and there her children and her grandchildren benefited from her Sunday School teaching, and were part of the church family. Joan was one of the pillars of our church. She took her responsibility for the church very seriously and was not patient always with those who were on the sidelines and not participating in the life of the church.

Joan was always one of the first people to go and greet new people and ensure they were made to feel welcome. She never allowed them to feel strangers for very long. If there was a job to be done, Joan would be there to do it. I remember not long before she became ill, I had contacted her to say Sue and I were going to do some litter picking and her immediate reaction was; 'I'll be there tell me when you're going!!' Whenever there was a Church Fair or Circuit service, or Concert, Joan would always be relied upon to be the first to offer to help.

She was an avid money raiser, so many inventive ways of helping people to collect. She would bake cakes and produce them every Sunday morning to sell after church. She was always a keen supporter of ways to bring people together, our Adult Youth Club, Ladies Fellowship, Sisterhood, there she would be never missing a session. She had, before Lockdown, obtained a carpet bowls set and thought this would be good way to bring people together.

Her real love was her work with children and young people. They were drawn to her, and she never turned them away. The Sunday School or Steps as we re named it was so important and even well into her eighties she was still teaching the younger children about Jesus and the Christian way of life. No wonder so many adults remember her for all she had done for them and their children. Joan was also a Brownie leader for many years.

Of course Joan's priority was always her own family which seemed to grow and grow, and she was always proud to relate the stories of her grandchildren and latterly great grandchildren.

Joan's faith was very much a practical faith, nothing showy, just down to earth service. She will be much missed.

Dave Elliott

Tom Towers

Tom Towers was a member of Normanby Methodist Youth Club back in the good old days! He was part of 'our gang', Colin Brown, John Prest, Sylvia Jackson, Joan Little, Audrey Hall, Christine Hickman, and myself .

He made a lovely cross for the Youth Club which is still treasured by those of us who remember those times. which is still held in the church . He and his beloved wife, Judith, took over the reins of the Youth Club as leaders back in the late 1960's living just a few doors up from the premises. They took the then Youth Club on holiday to the Youth Hostel in Guernsey. Their children Kirsty and Damian were part of the Sunday school and the Playgroup . Both he and Judith became Special Constables in the Police Force, Tom eventually making it his career.

After Judith died of cancer, Tom turned to and devoted his time to the Church at Normanby as Property Steward and was on duty sometimes 24/7 when alarms went off, or the pavement needed clearing of snow before services or meetings despite being affected by Parkinson's disease, and having heart trouble. Being an ex officer of the Police force he was very keen on security, and was always there doing odd jobs where needed.

An important part of the History Group which met at Normanby Methodist, he organised celebrations every year, and we all fondly remember the Spitfire /Hurricane fly overs, and the old trolley bus being parked outside the church. People came from far and wide to remember the history of Normanby during the war and after.

He was a driving force around Remembrance Sunday, always making sure that those brave people were honoured and remembered by a display in the church, and he organised the service at Normanby cenotaph, involving the children of the local school and inviting all back to the church for coffee and biscuits.

He had to give up his stewarding as his health deteriorated but nonetheless was always a presence there in the Church building.

I remember him coming across as a bit gruff but he was a kindly soul and had a great sense of humour.

He will be greatly missed within the community

Thank you Tom, you have been a blessing to us.

Celia Shires

PRAYER DIARY

June 6th We pray today for our whole Circuit for the hope for continuation of church families now meeting for worship again. We pray today for Rev David Godfrey as he is coming soon to the end of his first year here with us. We pray for God's blessing on his continuing ministry with us. Pray for Stainton.

June 13th We pray today for the possibility of some of the activities of our churches being able to find a way back to normality. We thank God for the work that has continued during the restrictions which shows the church to be alive and caring. Pray for Rev Christopher Wood-Archer and Normanby

June 20th On this Father's Day we pray for all Dads and Grandads and for those who have been separated from their families during recent months, that hopefully they are able to be together again. We pray for all families. We think of God as our loving Heavenly Father. Pray for Rev Charity Hamilton, for Linthorpe Road and the University.

June 27th We pray today for all who continue to be affected by Covid, for all who are ill and for those who care at home, or in hospital and in care homes. Pray for Rev Sarah Ramsden and her ministry at the Hospice.

July 4th As we have met in the last week as Preachers, we pray today for all who lead our worship, whether Lay or Ordained. We think too of our Worship Leaders in their ministry. We pray for all who may be feeling a call to preach that the Spirit will give them the courage to obey that call. Pray for Rev Mike Harland and Nunthorpe

July 11th We pray for all who have special responsibility in their churches and those who serve on the Circuit

meeting. Pray for Elaine at the Circuit Office and David our webmaster. Pray for Grove Hill.

July 18th We pray today for all children breaking up for the summer, those leaving school and those looking to new beginnings, we think of those whose education has been disrupted by the Pandemic. Pray for Rev Lawrence Law and the Chinese Church.

July 25th We pray for those who feel left out and lonely and for whom the last months have been so difficult. Pray for Rev Len Karn and Eston Grange.

August 1st We pray today for the caring work of the Methodist Asylum Project, for Ailsa and her team, and for all who care in our communities. Pray for Marton.

August 8th We pray for all who work in our churches with children and young people. Pray for Trinity and for the Family Friendly Centre and for Sharon.

August 15th We pray for the mission and outreach of our churches and for ourselves as the church, reaching out with the good news of the Gospel. Pray for the Avenue Community Project.

August 22nd We pray for ministers who are beginning their travel in new appointments and those who have left active ministry and in some cases have retired. We pray for all who are in training for Ministry who have answered that special call.

August 29th We pray today for the Darlington District and for all the many church families within the District. Pray for the Rev. Richard Andrew the Chair of the District.