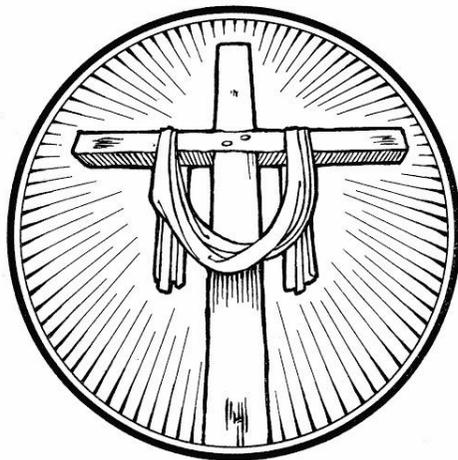


Wolds and Trent Methodist Circuit

☞ The Link ☞



*Happy
Easter*

Looking Ahead - April 2021

Editor's Letter

By now, most of us will have had our first covid vaccination, some our second, looking ahead and feeling hopeful – thinking of family visits, the rule of 6, hugs and holding tiny hands, holidays, meals out and walks at the sea-side, things we took for granted pre pandemic.

With little to plan for, other than what to have for tea or which way to walk round the village, I have often found myself dwelling on past life events and experiences, with the inevitable “I should have, could have, didn't do, why did I?” To come out of these reveries, I have been so thankful for relatives and friends around me, albeit at a distance. Their encouragement to walk, share a joke, swap books and jigsaws, try new past times and reconnect with old ones, not to mention the smiling faces at the end of the path has been invaluable. The weekly services and letters circulated by Rev. Louise has kept our Faith and Hope alive.

I am sure many of you will relate to this.

We are so fortunate living in the relative safety of our villages, but that does not stop us feeling profoundly grateful to all the frontline workers in the thick of it all and feeling such sadness for the bereaved families and those struggling alone at home through dark days. I have determined to look ahead with joy and positivity when we eventually get through this pandemic and not to leave things for another day.

So, we look ahead to the good times when we can reconnect with people in person – getting used to the “New normal” whatever that may be, making plans, sowing seeds, still maybe a little scared but so hopeful for the future.

“This Easter, may the Lord fill your soul with the Light of Hope and give a new start to your life. Get ready to welcome a new life”. (Unknown)

Pastoral Letter

Each year as I prepare for Easter, I remember a church member speaking of the bombings during the second world war in Sheffield. Major damage was done to a church, if I remember correctly, on a Saturday night and Sunday morning a sign had appeared on the rubble. This proclaimed the God of Resurrection. I wish I could remember the exact words but the persistence of the disciples of that place still amaze me with their grasp of resurrection.

It strikes me they took to heart the words of Psalm 137,

“How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?”

Perhaps a phrase that also strikes us in 2021, especially as Methodists - how can we sing the Lord's songs when we cannot sing? A year ago, we thought it might be for a few weeks or maybe months and we would be back. Now we recognise that like those exiled who raise the psalm, like the disciples in Jerusalem before and after Jesus death and resurrection, God is doing a new thing. We are responding in a different world to the same God and learning about the new things of God.

We have learnt that the steadfast love of God endures when we are separated and worship together but apart, whether on zoom, on paper or radio. We long for return but to what? We are encouraged to “build back better” or embrace the “new normal” as we begin to grasp that we will not return to what was, for we cannot forget or erase what has been for 12 months.

In this Easter season I encourage you to reflect on what you have learnt of God this year. What new things have you discovered in faith? What does it challenge you to try out that is different? What do you not want to lose as we begin to return?

Biblically, how are we to sing the songs of God in this foreign land?

How are we to live resurrection life and witness to it post Covid.?

My prayers and encouragement to all of you as we each reflect on and seek direction in these strange times.

Louise



From Jenny Atkinson - Glenthams

Looking Forward...Looking Back

I have just signed up for another year with the NMCGB or The National Methodist Choir of Great Britain. Born in response to social distancing measures, the choir aims to provide all singers, from all denominations, and all corners of the globe, an opportunity to come together to sing and worship. The unexpected outcome of forming the choir during the pandemic saw over fifteen hundred people from five continents signed-up as members of the choir, with hundreds of people coming together to collectively make the videos that have been added to Facebook and You tube. Tall oaks from tiny acorns?

This choir has been a joy and a blessing through a unique year of not being allowed to raise collective voices in praise, within churches and it has given me dates as markers to look forwards and faithful people to join in song.

For Methodism was born in song and through this choir, Matt Beckingham from Doncaster has prayerfully enabled singers to continue to sing together in harmony under his leadership and baton, to produce songs of comfort, praise and thanksgiving.

Initially, I joined the rehearsals for 'Ten Thousand Reasons,' and was daunted by the prospect of recording my part and submitting it digitally to be added to the compilation. When another familiar local preacher voice within the circuit also joined the rehearsals, I plucked up the courage to 'have a go.' I sent in my recording and two weeks later, it was added to the whole.

We were offered the opportunity to sing with Lou Fellingham , 'Lean on the Everlasting Arms,' and to sing the song that I had chosen for my acceptance as a Local Preacher: 'In Christ Alone' by Graham Kendrick and Keith Getty with a solo from Graham Kendrick.

Imagine having the opportunity to sing with Graham Kendrick?

For Harvest the choir size had grown hugely. We sang together my favourite hymn of thanksgiving, 'Come Ye Thankful People Come' and at Christmas we put together a jazz version of, 'O Come All Ye Faithful'

and StF 203 :‘Love Shone Down.’ This incorporated a National Methodist Youth Orchestra, ‘One Sound,’ and a verse of the song just for the children. To my joy, my eight year old granddaughter joined me and was so proud to see herself singing on ‘Youtube!’ Her school played the clip in assembly! As a result, she intends to join in on future projects at a time when we cannot offer her something age related in her local church.

...So looking forwards, we are rehearsing Howard Goodall’s beautiful version of: H&PS 267:

‘ Love Divine All Loves Excelling,’ to celebrate Easter and raise our Voices in thanks and Praise.

Join us? NMCGB You are invited to add your voice to the National Methodist Choir of Great Britain.

Karen Elvidge

Middle Rasen

One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village

The child of a peasant woman

He grew up in another obscure village

Where he worked in a carpenter shop

Until he was thirty

He never wrote a book

He never held an office

He never went to college

He never visited a big city

He never travelled more than two hundred miles

From the place where he was born

He did none of the things
Usually associated with greatness
He had no credentials but himself
He was only thirty three
His friends ran away
One of them denied him
He was turned over to his enemies
And went through the mockery of a trial
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing
The only property he had on earth
When he was dead
He was laid in a borrowed grave
Through the pity of a friend
Nineteen centuries have come and gone
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race
And the leader of mankind's progress
All the armies that have ever marched
All the navies that have ever sailed
All the parliaments that have ever sat
All the kings that ever reigned put together
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth
As powerfully as that one solitary life

Here at Middle Rasen, for the past 30 plus years, we have turned the Cross of Sorrows into the Cross of Joy on Easter Sunday morning. We bring flowers to turn the ugly, cruel wood into something of beauty and full of new life, to celebrate the joy of the resurrection of our saviour. After evening service we then take the cross outside to display to the village. In our congregation it is one of the occasions looked forward to with great anticipation.

As the church is closed this Easter, we are going to bring the cross outside and asking people to decorate it during Easter Sunday. Things are not the same but at least we will be able to experience the spine tingling feeling as we place our flowers, held in place by wire wrapped around the cross.

A happy peaceful and safe Easter to you all.

Brian Cook



that truth became excitement
as again we saw those wounds, from which your life had bled.
For we really knew at last our Saviour
had not died upon that tree, but was risen from the grave
and now lived for all eternity.
Then later, gathered in a quiet room upon the upper floor
I saw you there, within the wind and flame that came in
through the door. For 'twas then you kept your promise and left
your Spirit as our friend
To safely lead us home, as down life's long road we wend.
Although in many ways I've hurt you Lord,
off' times denied your name,
Deep in my heart forgiveness reigns. For you took all my guilt and
shame,
Through God's boundless grace and mercy, your LOVE has set me
free.
Oh! how can I repay your wondrous gift? Of life,
So freely given, for sinners, just like me.

Peter R Atkinson

March 2015

The Holy Bible in our Lives

I have had the privilege of attending lectures that focus on the Bible in English Literature. Two poets that we have been studying are George Herbert and Henry Vaughan. The lecturer recaps Vaughan's life by telling us that Henry is transformed through his losses. Vaughan has lost his wife, a younger brother, his king as he was a keen royalist, and his church. In 1645, the book of Common Prayer is banned, and many churches were shut. The professor believes that the Bible became even more important to Vaughan at this time as appreciated in his poem, *To the Holy Bible*.

Lifes guide!

How shall we part

And thou so long seiz'd of my heart!

...

*With meek, dumb looks didst woo mine eye
And oft left open would'st convey
A sudden and most searching ray
Into my soul
With whose quick touch
Refining still, I struggled much*

...

*And having brought me home
Didst there
Shew me that pearl
I sought elsewhere.*

What is interesting about this poem is that Vaughan puts the following chapter and verse at the end which at first glance might appear to have nothing to do with his poem, *To the Holy Bible*.

***Luke Chap. 2. Ver. 14, Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth
peace, goodwill towards men.***

I do not know what was in Vaughan's mind, but it has been suggested that the glory of the Lord surrounding the shepherds and the good tidings given to them that day led them to the city of David to see the Word manifested in the flesh, a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. That sudden and most searching ray that came into the shepherds' lives that day, was the same sudden and most searching ray that entered Vaughan's soul bringing him to 'that pearl' of great price.

Might this be a reminder to us all in our circuit of the importance of the Holy Bible in our lives. Especially since our churches have remained closed during this time, yet we have still gathered around the Holy Bible in our Zoom Lent discussion groups, and in our own private devotions. Although Luke Chap. 2., Verse 14 appears out of context in the Lenten season, we are prompted of the sudden and searching rays

of the words found in *the Holy Bible* that tell of the glory, peace, and favour found in Jesus, in the Word made flesh that came to dwell, to die, and to rise again.

Rev. Heather Wilson

TELESCOPE

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. - II CORINTHIANS 4:18 NKJV

From the mouse-hole at GMC

Hi WnT...Thanks for inviting me again to the Link.... Anon-e-mouse's life is never dull. Gainsborough Meths takes up a bit of time, not just writing newsletters, agendas and minutes, but worship, fun hours and quizzes on ZOOM too.... Rough with the smooth... depends on who is driving this computer. Must say though it feels like we are all building an exciting new life.

Between all these tasks, I have taken time out to search out optimistic sayings (makes a change from Christmas cracker jokes)...here goes....

You know you are on the right path when you feel good about moving forward and you couldn't care less about looking back.

I try to avoid looking forwards or backwards and try to keep looking upwards.

Don't look back and ask why.... Look forward and ask why not?

No-one makes the finish line by always looking back.

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

They who don't look ahead remain behind.

Sometimes you have to forget what's gone, appreciate what's still remaining, and look forward to what's coming next.

It's better to look forward and prepare than to look back and regret.

I'm looking forward to things that I've never done before.

I'm looking forward to the future and feeling grateful for the past.

Hope but never expect, look forward and never want.

Our eyes are placed in front, because it is more important to look ahead than look back.

I'm really looking forward to, not more of the same, but a continual growth.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.

Be someone who makes someone else look forward to tomorrow.

Don't look back, you are not going that way.

Look to the future, because that is where you'll spend the rest of your life.

Until next time, we at GMC send you our love and blessings.

Anon-e-mouse

Easter 2020

And where is Jesus, this strange Easter day?

Not lost in our locked churches, anymore

Than he was sealed in that dark sepulchre.

The locks are loosed; the stone is rolled away,

And he is up and risen, long before,

Alive, at large, and making his strong way

Into the world he gave his life to save,

No need to seek him in his empty grave.

He might have been a wafer in the hands

Of priests this day, or music from the lips

Of red-robed choristers, instead he slips

Away from church, shakes off our linen bands

To don his apron with a nurse: he grips

And lifts a stretcher, soothes with gentle hands

The frail flesh of the dying, gives them hope,

Breathes with the breathless, lends them strength to cope.

On Thursday we applauded, for he came

And served us in a thousand names and faces
Mopping our sickroom floors and catching traces
Of that *corona* which was death to him:
Good Friday happened in a thousand places
Where Jesus held the helpless, died with them
That they might share his Easter in their need,
Now they are risen with him, risen indeed.

By Malcolm Guite

Pat Gray – Lea

The Little Retreat at Lea

I am writing this a year to the day after we had our last service in the building. Although it was obvious things would be different, I don't think any of us thought we would still be out of the building a year later. The positive side is we have the building back and it is looking beautiful (photos on Facebook, The Little Retreat at Lea), we are wondering which wall they moved to make it so big! So far, we have not been able to open but we have booked a grand reopening date, the first weekend in November 2021 - this date was picked because it is also the 70th anniversary of the transformation from a house into a church. We hope to be back worshipping well before then.

We have however begun work, the garden hosted an open advent retreat in December, with wooden symbols made by Paper Moon in Misterton, we can't measure how many came through the gate but the prayer tree grew many ribbons. During Lent the garden is being hung with stars which will be taken into chapel and the names remembered as part of Holy Week. On Good Friday we will have a vigil in the garden from 12-3pm with meditations on Jesus' words from the cross.

Just this last week our communion table arrived, designed and created by a local carpenter, it is stunningly beautiful and matches our beautiful new chairs so well. We look forward to launching a programme of retreats and please be in touch if you would like to use the space. Hopefully we will soon be able to open the building and welcome members of the circuit to see the work and imagine the new possibilities.



Rev. Louise

Opportunity knocks – the journey begins.

Second update 3Circuits Project

Quarter 1 – Beginning – information gathering and establishing relationships across each of the three circuits.

Quarter 2 -Mission and vision – developing a shared sense of purpose (mission) and direction (vision)

This update records how we are moving into the second phase of the project. As you read you are invited to engage with some of the themes.

Some fifty-five people from across the three circuits joined in two Saturday morning workshops during December to explore the introductory themes of “Missional God “and “Partnership people”.

The scriptural context was led by the Reverend Tim Peebles, who is accompanying us on our trek, and the perimeters of our Methodist world were laid out by the Reverend Angy Long.

Small working groups were invited to share their beliefs with two mythical friends, one a non-believer, the other a fellow church goer. Two questions, the first, “What is this church thing all about?”, the second “Who is God to you? “simple, but not easily answered. Take a moment to consider how you might answer.

Similarly, exploring what it is that distinguishes us as Methodists proved just as challenging. How would you respond?

Moving on, the whole group was offered frameworks to consider and contrast their church life cycle with our human life cycle. Almost a Shakespearean sonnet, seasons of life – the infant, the child, the adolescent, middle age, old age – decline and death.

A church’s life cycle might follow the seasons of the year – Spring, a new, vibrant church; Summer – a solvent, healthy church; Autumn - a declining church; Winter – a dying church.

Many saw their churches in seasons of decline, autumnal, perhaps even winter. Aging, dwindling congregations, church life changing, the future uncertain following the continuing impact of COVID19. Where would you place your church on this seasonal spectrum? Why?

However, before, dear reader, you fall off into a slough of despond, the group saw hope and the promise of springtime. Remember, autumn is a time for clearing out, for preparing, for protecting, returning the nutrient to the soil and anticipating. Before we can move on, we need to be realistic about where we are. All is not gloom. Group members saw this time as an opportunity to honestly take stock, rid ourselves of outmoded practices, look differently at the changes in our communities, share, foster and cherish new ideas and initiatives.

These first workshops left participants feeling the need for more times of spiritual reflection, discussion, and renewal. Enabling us to become more confident in sharing and discussing our faith with each other and thereby enabling us to reach out to others. Now is the moment, the very moment, to broaden and deepen our understanding of our values and begin to build our Godly vision for the future, as individuals, as churches, for our circuits and across the three circuits. Now is the time to act together on very practical issues of social justice, our work with young people, support for the elderly, support for those with mental health needs, to use our buildings in flexible, community orientated ways.

In practical terms our next steps will be to develop the route map as we explore the vision and mission phase of the project; by encouraging further discussion groups, DVD s of the workshops are available; identifying people to lead these groups; building networks, perhaps in the form of focus groups to explore different aspects of mission across the circuits.

The Lord wants us to be missional people in a post COVID world. We pray that the 3circuits Project will continue to support us on that journey.

For further information please contact - Glenda Taylor, Circuit Steward, Wolds and Trent



Beyond the virus...

Beyond the virus I can see...
Families meeting up again - yippee!
With hugs, kisses and so much more
Sharing good times with people we adore!

Beyond the virus I can see....
Our Chapel reopening, filling us with glee.
Meeting with friends for fellowship sweet,
Singing hymns with those we love to meet!

Beyond the virus I can see.....
Walks with friends - it's meant to be.
Chats with our neighbours over the wall
With coffee in hand and biscuits for all.

Beyond the virus I can see.....
Social groups gathering, with friends to see
Choir, W.I. bowls and keep fit
Parish meetings, all will be a hit!

Beyond the virus I can see.....
Shops reopening and setting us free.
Shopping on-line, well that will slow
As people get the signal to get out and go.

Beyond the virus I can see.....
Meeting for treats and a cup of tea.

Going to the pub, just down the lane ,
For Sunday lunch, or a quiz, in sunshine or rain!

Beyond the virus I can see...
A new world emerging for you and me.
A kinder place where people care
With time to talk, and with love to share!

Jenny Fotheringham, February 2021 - Upton

And Finally ...

