

THE MESSENGER

The magazine of Petts Wood Methodist Church



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The Church in Queensway

Minister: Revd. Duncan MacBean

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THE MESSENGER

Editor:

Distribution:

Quote

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.

Oswald Chambers

OUR MINISTER'S LETTER:

by Revd. Duncan MacBean



Integrity

The Bible has a lot to say about integrity, mainly in the Psalms and in Proverbs. Some examples are:

Proverbs 10:9

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever follows perverse ways will be found out.

Proverbs 11:3

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.

Proverbs 14:32

The wicked are overthrown by their evildoing, but the righteous find a refuge in their integrity.

The Oxford dictionary defines integrity as:
the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

It will not surprise anyone if I admit that this has been at the forefront of my mind in relation to the actions of some members of our current government. This is, however, not a political commentary, but an exhortation to hold to the higher calling of God - to have integrity of self in all aspects of our lives.

For me, this begins with being honest about who we are, and about who we are in relation to God and others. There is a fine line to be drawn between trying to live a life of integrity and honesty, versus not bothering to try, but simply calling our failures 'honesty'. One of the elements of integrity is accountability. This infers that there are consequences for our failure to live in an honest way. What we try to hide, as Proverbs reminds us, will be laid bare for all to see. For the person trying to live a life of integrity, this is shameful but manageable, because their honest attempt to live this life will be acknowledged. For the one who doesn't care to try for integrity, this will be shameful because their lack of honesty will be shown for what it is.

I believe we are called to be true to ourselves, without descending into some form of puritanism. We are called to strive to be holy (to have integrity of character) without disengaging from the reality of the world around us. If our faith and our integrity of character cannot survive intact upon contact with the realities of the world, then the

issue lies with our character, not our faith. We are, to quote Paul, "In the world, but not of the world".

Let us each strive to be honest, to be true to who we are, but to strive for the integrity of character which matches that of the character of our God. In the eternity that it will take us to achieve that, let us cherish the value of honesty in our respective struggles and to allow for growth in ourselves and one another.

Shalom,

Duncan



WE GATHER TO OFFER WORSHIP TO THE GLORY & PRAISE OF GOD

For the moment we will still have to observe any regulations regarding social distancing, mask wearing and will provide hand sanitiser.

June

Sunday	19th	10:30 am	D. Spinks /Family Service/Parade
Sunday	26th	10:30 am	Revd. Duncan MacBean - Holy Comm.

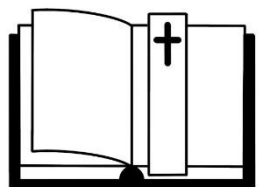
July

Sunday	3rd	10:30 am	Deacon Maureen Spinks
Sunday	10th	10:30 am	M. Ayres
Sunday	17th	10:30 am	Revd. Duncan MacBean - Holy Comm.
Sunday	24th	10:30 am	S. Cope
Sunday	31st	10:30 am	J. Mayes

August

Sunday	7th	10:30 am	D. Spinks
Sunday	14th	10:30 am	Deacon Maureen Spinks
Sunday	21st	10:30 am	Own arrangement
Sunday	28th	10:30 am	Revd. Duncan MacBean

The church is open for private prayer on Saturdays from 10-12 noon.
Please enter through the front glass doors.



FAMILY NEWS:

- **Farewell to the Ayerteys**

PWMC bid farewell to the Ayerteys following their move to Chatham and the transfer of their Church membership to the Gillingham Methodist Church.

The Ayerteys were presented with a farewell gift and a bunch of flowers during the Easter Sunday service (17th April 2022)



The Ayertey's and Revd. Duncan MacBean

THANK YOU:

- **Thanks from Liz Sewell**

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who so generously sponsored me on St. Christopher's Bluebell Walk at the beginning of May. With your help I raised £495.

Thank you so much, Liz

- **Christian Aid**

I would like to convey my thanks to everyone who supported the Christian Aid coffee mornings which I held recently and for all the donations from the congregation for Christian Aid week. The total raised was a brilliant £549.10.

Thank you, Karen Jordan

- **Thanks from Florence Causton and family**

Florence and family would like to thank members of the Petts Wood Methodist Church family for their kindness, thoughts, help and love over the past months of Roger's illness and passing.

It was lovely to see so many of you at Roger's funeral. It helped give me strength to know he was so well liked. I also give a big thank you for your wonderful donations to the British Heart Foundation. The sum raised came to over £1100.

My thanks also go out to Revd. Duncan MacBean for his help, guidance and the beautiful service which he gave many a feeling of warmth and comfort.

Thank you, Florence



God of love, Creator of the food chain, by Josie Smith

I observed my cat one recent morning ruining a newly-planted flower bed in the course of pursuing a frog near the adjacent pond in my garden. This is the nature of cats, I realise, but seeing her doing this raised questions in my mind, not for the first time. She often suggests questions to me which are also both simple and profound.

(We have had a few simple yet profound Monday morning questions of late in Theology Everywhere, where the only possible answer was 'both / and'.)

Can anyone tell me how to reconcile the concept 'loving God' with the predatory hierarchy, AKA food chain which appears to be a necessary part of the design of the created order?

I know about that rather charming word picture about lions lying down with lambs, but lions and lambs have different digestive arrangements and neither could be sustained by the other's diet. The whole of nature, it seems, is designed so that the stronger, faster, cleverer or more toxic beasts live by killing and eating those lower down the food chain. (Though there are enlightened cultures in which hunters will apologise to the animal they have just speared to death and ask its forgiveness, showing respect to their prey before consuming its strength to maintain and enhance their own.)

How do we differ? Genetically we, lions and lambs, cats and humans alike, are all made of the same stuff of life.

Are we in fact different from the rest of the natural world? My football team has to be capable of beating yours, our child needs to have better exam marks than yours, and so on. In international relations it would seem that the food-chain principle has always applied. A diplomat would put it more delicately perhaps, and a dictator in other terms, but recent world events have furnished many examples – one could express it as 'My tribe is stronger and better than yours so I propose to gobble up your land if I have to kill your population in the process.'

My generation was taught to believe that the human race (then known as 'Man') differed from all other created beings in having a soul, and more words have been written on this theme than ever angels have danced on pinheads. But we now know that trees can communicate with other trees, that all sorts of creatures have recognisable language, and only recently someone with very sensitive recording equipment has picked up sound communication from a living mushroom.

The more we learn about other living things – the close family relationships of elephants, communication systems of bees, design and construction skills of ants, birds and beavers, navigational skills of butterflies – the more we respect and marvel. I am a cat person, but dog lovers will tell you of the devotion a dog will give its owner. (Cats don't have owners – it is cats who have humans, but they too are capable of a genuine relationship with another species, often us.) And crows, for example, are very good at problem solving. As are some squirrels.

What is the soul, and why do we think we are alone in having it?

We have faith in a creator God, otherwise why are we reading – even writing for – *Theology Everywhere*? And our mythical ancestor whom we call Eve was born with a silver question mark in her mouth, thus giving rise to the sciences which grew alongside theology. Wondering 'What if?' leads to experiment, which may lead anywhere and sometimes in unexpected directions.

So I worship God, and (not 'but!') I also ask a lot of questions.

I am not able to answer – or find answers to – many of the questions I meet every day. The best questions don't have answers, but lead to deeper questions. A Catholic priest I used to know turned questions aside by using the word 'mystery', but I prefer to understand life by the both/and principle. My theology is not 'systematic', but proceeds by flashes of insight and by niggling doubts.

And perhaps especially by walking with those who have also encountered the God whose name and nature is *Love*.

Source: www.theologyeverywhere.org



FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART:

Word Search: Names in the Bible

All the names listed below are in the puzzle.

After you have found all the words, order the leftover letters in the correct order to form the mystery answer.

Mystery answer on page 10

J	E	S	S	E	E	O	S	B	N	J	A	R	E	D
N	L	N	R	Z	M	B	E	E	L	I	J	A	H	S
I	U	O	A	E	O	A	T	N	A	O	M	I	T	B
A	C	R	H	K	L	D	H	J	N	E	B	E	U	R
C	A	A	S	I	A	I	U	A	H	A	P	L	I	Z
C	S	A	I	E	S	A	T	M	R	H	A	C	I	M
I	P	I	L	L	I	H	P	I	O	B	O	C	A	J
T	J	O	E	L	O	T	A	N	M	J	A	M	E	S
H	O	G	I	N	H	I	S	O	A	O	J	D	N	L
S	N	E	R	E	H	B	L	E	N	O	T	E	E	A
A	A	K	B	C	E	A	U	H	S	O	J	H	D	S
V	H	U	A	E	S	T	H	E	R	O	C	A	Y	I
Z	Z	L	G	B	A	A	P	U	S	A	M	U	E	L
R	A	M	A	T	U	H	T	O	R	H	T	E	J	A
M	A	T	H	E	W	H	A	D	U	J	E	S	U	S

Names:

Aaron, Abraham, Absalom, Adam, Angels, Benjamin, Cain, Elijah, Elisha, Esau, Esther, Ezekiel, Gabriel, Isaac, Jacob, James, Jared, Jesse, Jesus, Jethro, Joel, Jonah, Jonathon, Joseph, Joshua, Judah, Lucas, Luke, Malachi, Mathew, Micah, Moses, Naomi, Noah, Obadiah, Phillip, Rachel, Rueben, Ruth, Salome, Samuel, Seth, Silas, Stephon, Tabitha, Tamar, Timothy, Vashti, Zilpah

Questions & Answers (Q &A)

Q: Where do sheep go to get haircuts?

A: To the Baa Baa shop

Q: Where do bulls get their messages?

A: On a bull-etin board.

Q: Where does a tree store its stuff?

A: In its trunk.

Q: Why couldn't I catch some fog earlier?

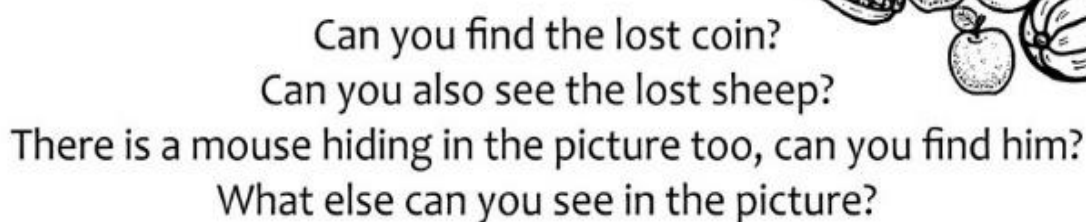
A: I mist it.

Q: I can run but not walk, have a mouth but can't talk, and a bed, but I don't sleep.
Who am I?

A: A River

Answers: NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Read Luke 15: 1-8



The Uniformed Organisations

General Liaison: Liz Sewell 020 8467 2568

Rainbow Guides 5-7 Years, Tues 4.30pm		Geraldine Avis	
		Pettswoodwestrainbows@gmail.com	
6th PW Brownies	7-10 Years, Fri 6pm	Vicki Kennedy	874723
1st PW Brownies	7-10 Years, Fri 5.30pm	Karen Jordan	829067
5th Petts Wood (Methodist) Scout Group- Group Scout Leader (GSL) – Liz Sewell Assistant GSL – Sue Steadman			
Beavers	6-8 Years, Tues 6.15pm	Sue Steadman	860446
Cub Scouts	8-10.5 Years, Tues 6.30pm	Ben Steadman	07941345504
Scouts	10.5 -14 Years, Fri 7pm	Andy Steadman	860446
Explorer Scouts	14-18 Years, Thurs 7.45pm	Jim Roffey	896193

Coffee, Biscuits and Cake Mornings

Saturdays 10 am -12pm

More information from Liz Sewell:

Tel: 020 8467 2568/ 07881 954 090

Email: lizsewell56@btinternet.com

Drop in any time before or after shopping etc. and meet your friends and those hosting the day.

June:

18th June: The Gloin's - Action for Children

25th June: The Gloin's - Action for Children

July:

2nd July: 5th Petts Wood Scouts

9th July: Friends of Crofton and Sparrow Woods

16th July: Liz Sewell – to include book and puzzle sale

23rd July: TBC

30th July: TBC

August: TBC

#Traidcraft goods on sale. For more information, please contact Mark Gill 020 8467 1260

An Introduction: A Servant of the Gospel!

Revd. Robert Selvakumar will be joining our circuit in September this year.

Dear Friends,

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NRSV) - "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this."

Greetings in the matchless name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Here below is a humble introduction of God's working in my life that I wish to briefly share with you today:

My name is Robert Selvakumar and I am an Indian Malaysian. My wife Ng Yee Lin (aka Elaine) is a Chinese Malaysian. We are blessed with a daughter, Shannon Ern, who is a mix of Indian & Chinese Malaysian. Thus, we have a rich cultural-mix, and we speak several languages between us, but most importantly, we love all cultures and people-groups, who are created by God. I was born in a Christian family, who attended the Methodist Church. As such, the Methodist Church was instrumental in teaching me about God and the scriptures. It was there that I learnt about serving God in various roles, after having received Christ as my Lord and Saviour in my early teens (e.g. as Sunday School teacher, Secretary in the Youth Fellowship, Mission Committee member, Christian Education Committee member, Choir member, etc.). These exposures in the ministries of the church further flamed within me the desire to study the scriptures more deeply and share them at prayer gatherings, home meetings, Friday evening worship services, outreach points (church planting), youth programs, etc. In due time, in my late teens, God mercifully called me into the full-time ministry of a minister. In obedience to His call, right after high-school, I left to equip myself in theological education. I have been a student of theology ever since then. Currently, I am pursuing my theological education (MPhil/PhD) at the London School of Theology (part-time), with Middlesex University, England.

My pastoral ministry started in 1997, after graduating from the Seminary. Today, it has been many faithful and fruitful years of ordained presbyteral ministry, serving the Body of Christ, together with my devoted wife, who is also theologically trained. Life in the ministry has been a meaningful journey of faith and trust in God. Together with me, my family is dedicated to serve the kingdom of God, with what God has entrusted us with. I am driven by the love and compassion of God, to help whoever needs my services. My family and I love meeting people, we don't mind spending time visiting them at their homes, hospitals, or anywhere the request for a pastoral or friendly visit is made. People's needs always take priority, every individual is unique, therefore they are precious and priceless in the eyes of God. I am very passionate about valuing the good in the old ways of life, but at the same time, I am

very prayerfully and patiently looking to make improvements on them (only if necessary), for the sake of the spiritual enrichment of the members of the church. It is always a delight to be in worship with the members of the church, and it is equally a joy to engage in ministry and mission with them. I enjoy preaching and teaching from the scriptures. Added to that, spending time at church meetings is a delight for me, especially when it's held for the purpose of evaluation and planning, whereby, I do participate and contribute in all of them respectfully and enthusiastically.

As a family, we are ready to bring our rich inter-cultural heritage and the many years of my pastoral ministry experience, to the churches that we are appointed to by the British Methodist Church. We strongly believe, as God being our creator, Christ being our redeemer, and the Holy Spirit being our motivator, we will be steadfast to the ministry and mission of the church, by the grace that is extended to us daily! Therefore, please pray with me for the work that is ahead of us. May the grace of God be all sufficient in equipping the members and expanding the mission of the church for His ultimate glory. In closing, let us draw some inspiration from the words of our beloved Rev. John Wesley, who said; *"One of the principal rules of religion is to lose no occasion of serving God. And, since he is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve him in our neighbour, which he receives as if done to himself in person, standing visibly before us."*

Thank you for your time and have a blessed day!

Grace + Peace,

Rev. Robert Selvakumar, Elaine and Shannon



Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting held after the service on Sunday 22nd May

Members present:

Rev'd Duncan MacBean (Chair)
Gill Tompkins (Secretary)

Nana Ayisi	Alan Lockwood
Don Beckman	Ann Lockwood
Gill Beckman	Harvey Moores
Florence Causton	Heather Neville
Pamella Ellis	Guy Taylor
John Francis	Nancy Taylor
Debra Freedman	Christine Till
Elizabeth Gloin	Thomas Till
Karen Jordan	Carol Trinick
	Elizabeth Watts
	Dorothy Weller

Apologies received from:

Dilsa Doddrell	Jim Jefferies
John Doddrell	Sharon Jefferies
David Gloin	Liz Sewell
Janet Gloin	

The meeting opened with a prayer from Duncan.

Reports from groups

Pastoral Committee

We currently have a membership of 68
I am looking for additional pastoral visitors.

Elizabeth Gloin

Tuesday House Fellowship

This friendly group was led for many years by our sadly missed friend Alan Tompkins. Then different members took turns to organise a topic for discussion. Three years ago we moved meetings from evenings to afternoons, which suited our mostly retired members better. But then of course along came Covid and we have not met for two years now.

We are hoping to begin again in the Summer. It may be necessary to change the day from a Tuesday to a Wednesday because of members other commitments. A start date will be announced as soon as possible. Anyone interested in joining this friendly group will be warmly welcomed.

Dorothy Weller

Finance Committee

Treasurer's report:-Looking at the first eight months of the financial year (September 2021 – April 2022) our finances have been boosted by a generous legacy from Jean Robertson, a former member of the church. This money has been placed in our Central Finance Board account where it will earn interest.

On the Property side, our revenue has picked up well following the easing of Covid restrictions and we are on track to exceed the £35k budgeted for rental incomes in the financial year, with a projected income of some £46k for the year. While energy prices have increased, leading to higher running costs, there are funds available to ensure that necessary repair and maintenance work is undertaken while still leaving an overall surplus for the Property Fund.

Turning to the General Fund, our collections are again slightly down on budget in the first eight months and do not cover the expenses arising from the Circuit Assessment and Mission Committee donations. We also made a one off payment of £7,500 to the Methodist Church Pensions Fund in response to the request from last year's Conference, as agreed at the Church Council meeting in September. The projected deficit on the General Fund is however more than offset by the legacy mentioned above.

Overall, and thanks largely to the legacy, we anticipate a surplus for the year of around £65,000 which is a much better position than the £19,000 deficit that we had budgeted for.

John Doddrell

Property Committee

Over the past year the Committee have been busy keeping the building up to standard. We have:-

- Repaired damage from the storm, luckily only one roof tile from the main roof.
- Repaired the fence in the alleyway to the shops.
- Repaired the ceiling panel in the church
- Replaced the over door heater in the Chapel.

We have been lucky to secure the majority of the funds to replace the Lakeswood Hall roof which is in need of replacement. We have secured the service of Bill Rixon to complete the work which will happen in the summer holidays.

We are also working on completing the electrical work the next stage being installing a new circuit board in the Vestry and then the rewiring of the Chapel which will complete the work our insurance insisted on us completing. Our final project will be to renovate the church kitchen damaged by the burglars.

Janet Gloin

At the meeting Gill mentioned the wish for the church toilets to be twinned with a toilet block in a third world country. This idea will be discussed further, it involves a cost of £420 (each toilet being £60 and we wish to twin 7)

Junior Church

We have three 'fishes' that come regularly with parents, who all participate fully in activities and communion washing up.

Elizabeth Gloin

Uniformed organisations

The scout group is celebrating its 60 years anniversary and have designed a badge that will be worn on the back of their scarves. We will also have some low-key activities as Covid got in the way of large scale celebrations.

The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers are all now back meeting regularly and planning or have already had their camps/overnight stays. The only section that suffered with numbers was the Scout section, but we are hoping that it will now pick up as more young people transfer up from Cubs. The Scout Group has not suffered too badly over the last two years, and I would like to thank all the Leaders, Helpers and Parents for their continued support of the Group.

Both Brownie packs have seen a change of leadership, as Karen Jordan left the 1st Brownies after 40 years' service and Vicki Kennedy left the 6th Brownies. We welcome Emma Zapple at the 1st Brownies and Rachel Corner at the 6th Brownies. Both packs are doing well, but would always welcome more Leaders. The Rainbows are also going well. There has been discussion that the Guide Company may reopen in the near future.

It has been lovely to see the Parade services reinstated and attendance improve each month, as people feel more comfortable with this. We would like to thank the Church for all the support they give the Uniformed Organisations.

Liz Sewell

Coffee mornings

The Coffee mornings restarted slowly in September 2021 and have a core number of people as regular attendees. It would be good if we could increase the numbers. I have advertised in the Petts Wood Gazette.

I have managed to encourage other Groups to run coffee mornings, but this has been slow. I only have mornings covered until the end of July and will be looking to find more people to cover after that. August is a difficult month as many Groups shut down, so if anyone would like to volunteer to run one please let me know. Also if you are involved in a charity, it is a good way to publicise yourselves and earn some money.

Many thanks go to everyone who support them, as I think it is a vital part of our Church's Outreach. Also thanks to Mark Gill for continuing to provide Traidcraft to us during all the lockdowns and now back with his monthly stall.

Liz Sewell

Craft Club

The club now has 15 members and most weeks we have about 9 – 12 members attending. You can bring any craft that is portable, mostly it is knitting but some patchwork and some embroidery, but not just limited to them. We may not be as large as before but the group feels comfortable at this size in the space we have.

Diane Carlson

Badminton Club

We meet at 8pm on Wednesday's and had five people last week, eight is really the maximum so that people feel they get enough time on the court.

Elizabeth Watts

World Service and Mission

We have not had a formal meeting during the last two years. We are grateful to the treasurer for his willingness to keep our donation figure the same amount £5,000. We try to choose Christian Charities to give our money to that people in the church recommend or have involvement with. We are pleased that the Property Committee are keen to set up the toilet twinning scheme with our church toilets. This is an opportunity to give people in the poorest countries of the world access to a latrine.

Gill Tompkins

Petts Wood Playgroup for Children with Special Needs

This is now the only provision in the borough of Bromley for children with Special Needs.

They cater for 15 children each morning. They have just gained Outstanding in all areas from their recent Ofsted. This is their 5th consecutive Outstanding result in a row! They still require more volunteers especially on a Tuesday or Wednesday morning if you know of anyone who might be interested

Janet Gloin

At the meeting Duncan urged us to write to our MP to try and get him and Bromley Council to increase the funding given to the Playgroup seeing as now it is the only place catering for children with Special Needs in Bromley.

Petts Wood Churches Together

PWCT did not meet for several months over the course of the pandemic but has started reconvening with Nadine Snyman from the URC taking over as the Chair from Father Stephen. Most of the churches have not seen the full return of congregation numbers and still have some social distancing measures in place. All churches featured online services during Covid with some also opting for streaming services live.

The Christmas Card was featured as a double page in the Gazette, saving considerable costs. The Christmas Carol Singing at the station was well received and raised £135.78 for St Christopher's.

The Bereavement Café (meeting at our church on a Tuesday afternoon) is going superbly well and since Covid has taken off. It is a place where people can come and talk, Those helping are not giving counselling but simply a listening ear. St Francis launched a series of successful workshops called "Shaping the Future" which looked at Climate change and what government, communities and individuals do to help. These were well attended and this initiative has spawned a follow-up course based on the Catholic theology of the Common Good and a group has formed facilitated by an organisation called *Together for the Common Good*. The idea is to bring people together to think about their communities. Three sessions have already run. There are three parts to the course and more people are welcome to join.

All churches shared a prayer for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Finally, it is sad to say that the Prayer Box in Morrisons has been lost by Morrisons who took it down during Covid. PWCT are in the process of trying to sort out a replacement.

Gill Tompkins taken from Sharon Jefferies report to the Church Council

Whitechapel

The bags of donations that we collect for Whitechapel are taken up monthly and great thanks go to John Black who undertakes to do this.

We have not been asked to go and cook breakfasts since Covid as they seem to have a larger number of paid staff there now and so the set up is a bit different. Hopefully more details can be obtained and reported back at a later date.

Gill Tompkins

Christian Aid

There have been two coffee mornings held this year for Christian Aid which raised a total of £311.20. The money from the envelope collection has now been counted up and the total paid into the bank was £549.10

Karen Jordan

Impact Group

Social media usage continues to grow with our Facebook page now being linked to St Francis and the Orpington and Chislehurst Circuit which has attracted greater sharing of posts and information sharing with the public. This has enabled our church's online presence to grow with 162 followers who benefit from the sharing of scriptures and Christian quotes which also serves as a source of comfort for the community.

Gill Tompkins taken from Sharon Jefferies report to the Church Council

Discussion on the Resolutions relating to conference decision re: Marriage of same sex couples in Methodist churches

Duncan explained that at the church council meeting the Resolutions were not finalised as the vote was equal and so it has been brought to the Annual Church Meeting for a wider representation to vote. Duncan recommended a booklet that he had been looking at called Working Towards a fully inclusive Methodist Church. He then went through the three resolutions that were to be voted on and explained what the vote would mean. A few questions were asked mostly for clarification.

The vote was recorded as follows:

Resolution 1 – in favour 17 against 2

Resolution 2 – in favour 16 against 3

Resolution 3 – in favour 17 against 2

Resolution 1- That means that Petts Wood Methodist Church has voted to consent to the solemnization of marriages of same-sex couples and resolves to apply to register the building for the solemnization of such marriages under section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949 and resolves that the consent in above may be extended to

cover situations where members of the congregation are unable to marry in the church building (for example due to being housebound, detained or seriously ill and therefore unable to be moved) and authorises a Trustee to sign and submit to the Superintendent Registrar of the Bromley Registration District the required application and certificate.

Resolution 2 – Petts Wood Methodist Church consents to services of blessing of a marriage of a same-sex couple which has already been solemnised being conducted in the building.

Resolution 3 – Petts Wood Methodist Church resolves that Rev. Duncan MacBean be certified to the Registrar General and the Superintendent Registrar as an Authorised Person to be present at the marriages of same-sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 solemnized in the building and authorises 2 trustees to sign and submit this certification.

The meeting closed with the saying of the Grace



"It's not as picturesque as the old steeple
but it's saving a fortune in electricity bills!"

Mabomboh Education Project (UK Charity number 1197537)

26th April 2022

Dear friends,

Please excuse this blanket request, but this is a project close to my heart.

Mabomboh is a rural village in Sierra Leone. It is quite isolated, and children have to travel about 2½ miles each way through rough bush to their nearest school. This is a dangerous and arduous journey, so many of the children only start school at about the age of 8, by which time they have lost years of valuable formal education.

Mabomboh Education Project (MEP) has built a school in the village and now offer quality, local pre-school and Primary education for the 100 or so local children.

Teachers have been appointed and the school successfully opened in January of this year. The issue that is now faced is that of accommodation for the teachers. The teachers are not local and have been renting rooms in local homes. Sadly, this is not a long-term solution. Daily commuting is out of the question as the trip is nearly 2 hours each way and the roads are very poor.

MEP has decided that, in order to retain the teachers, we will build 3 blocks of 2 units each to provide accommodation to the teachers at the school. These will be rented to the teachers, but the income (in UK terms) is not enough to pay for the buildings. It will, however, serve to maintain and repair the buildings as needed.

MEP can pay for the building of 2 of these blocks, providing accommodation for 4 teachers.

MEP is looking to raise £8000 towards the building of the third block. If you can make any contribution towards this project, it would be most gratefully received.

Please look at the links below for more information on the project and on how you can donate to this worthy cause.

www.Gofundme.com (Search for Mabomboh Community Project)
Facebook (Search for Ma Bomboh)

The pictures and videos on the Facebook page will do more to persuade you than my words ever could. Please feel free to ask me any questions in this regard.

Yours,
Duncan MacBean
Email: orpchissuper@gmail.com

Walking with Micah along the road of institutional injustices! by Paul Nzacahayo

I smiled to myself the other day when I heard the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby in conversation with Stephen King, referring to one of his predecessors, Michael Ramsey, who used to start his day by banging his head on his desk repeating 'I hate the Church of England'. I couldn't help it but ask: 'What had the Church of England done to him? If he hated the church that much, why didn't he resign and leave the church?'

Justin Welby was speaking about his predecessor in the context of a conversation about the church being a flawed institution. This coincided with something I had been grappling with since my colleague, Dr Carlton Turner, presented a paper in which he spoke about Christianity being toxic. This was in reference to its entanglement with abhorrent systems such as slavery, and colonialism which have left indelible and torturous mark on human history. My colleague referred to the colonial Christianity and its impact on both the colonizers and colonized; and argued that missionary Christianity served and continues to serve the interests of the colonizers with terrible consequences on the lives of the colonized, who were marginalized and dehumanized by the process.

It has been argued that Christianity spread through the world as part of the colonial agenda, and there is ample evidence to support this. At the same time, I would want to recognize the good that many Christian missionaries sought to do. The church is able to share God's love with people across the globe: educational facilities from primary schools all the way up to university, and health care facilities from small local medical centres to big hospitals, are good examples of this. For some of us, without missionary education we wouldn't be where we are. I attended church primary and secondary schools; the cost of my theological training for ministry was paid by the church; and when I came to Edinburgh University for my master's and doctoral studies I was funded by a German Christian organisation. On the other hand, I also know that within church institutions harmful or toxic attitudes, traditions and beliefs have become entrenched. Over a long period of time, such beliefs and practices have become accepted as 'common sense' or 'normal behaviour' even though they might marginalize and demonize certain groups of people.

That is my dilemma; and I wonder whether Archbishop Michael Ramsey faced that dilemma every morning when he sat down at his desk. Perhaps he had in his office something that reminded him of where the church as an institution had fallen short. I am sure there was something there or within him that reminded him of the beauty of the gospel imperatives and the ideal of God's kingdom that the church is called to live out. It is this capacity for the church to be a curse to some and a blessing to

others; to be unjust to a group of people and to be fair and just to another, which calls for a dynamic theological discourse.

Micah asks the question: 'what does God require?'; and he answers his own question saying: 'to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God'. I like the image of 'walking with God' which assumes a constant movement in which new insights and understanding lead to deeper faith and growth. In the context of my colleague's paper, walking with Micah might mean being aware of how much colonial thinking has impacted us as both colonized and colonizers, has shaped our behavior today, and will continue to shape our thinking in the years to come. This is what some scholars have called inherited coloniality in which the former colonized continues to unconsciously feel psychologically bound to the colonizer with behavioral signs to prove this.

Inherited Christianity or inherited church or even inherited theology is flawed and toxic with potential to damage as well as potential to be a blessing which can heal and bring new life. Therefore, Micah's focus on doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly is a challenging call for the church. How do you walk humbly as an institution? Methodists have been criticized for being obsessed with committees; but I happen to think sometimes that is the only way an issue can be considered in its angles and facets. I am thinking of the Methodist Church's Faith and Order committee for instance, which scrutinizes established practices and beliefs to make sure they still stand up to the principles of God's kingdom. If new insights and understandings are translated into action and not left to gather dust in minutes and reports, or hidden in the cloud of online storage, then this is also doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly. For leaders, if doing justice and walking humbly means you daily face the failings of the church in way that makes you bang your head on your desk, that is a price worth paying for institutional injustices to be dealt with.

Source: theologyeverywhere.org

MISCELLANEOUS:

- **Donation of books and puzzles**

I will be holding a Book and Puzzle Sale during the coffee morning on Saturday 16th July. If anyone has any books or puzzles they would like to donate , then please contact Liz on 020 8467 2568 or lizsewell56@btinternet.com

- **Volunteers required for coffee mornings**

I am looking for people to volunteer to run coffee mornings for the second half of this year. Please contact Liz on 020 8467 2568 or lizsewell56@btinternet.com to volunteer for one. You can choose a charity to support if you wish, or donate the procedures to the Church. They are good outreach to the community.

- **Methodist Church of Britain's response to the Government's plans to offshore asylum seekers in Rwanda**

The Government's plans to offshore asylum seekers in Rwanda gives yet another insight into its hostile, uncompassionate and ineffective response to asylum seekers and refugees.

People are not a problem to be dealt with, but are individuals with inherent value and dignity made in the image of God. Sending some of the most vulnerable people in the world thousands of miles away to be imprisoned does not respect this dignity.

The factors which push people out of their homes and into displacement will always be much stronger than those which motivate them to claim asylum in a certain place. As we have seen in Ukraine, conflict and persecution can become a daily reality at a distressingly rapid pace.

Whilst it is important to address the dangerous trade of people smuggling across the channel, the lack of safe and accessible routes by which people can claim asylum in the UK will ultimately contribute significantly to increased small boat crossings. The government have shied away from committing to a resettlement target, and the Nationality and Borders Bill lacks detail of new or expanded resettlement routes. Now, the government is passing the issue onto another country, which the UK has previously criticised for holding a poor record on human rights.

Offshore processing is a distraction from the real work which needs to be done to establish workable, safe and welcoming routes through which the UK can play its part in responding to need.

We urge the government to reconsider their approach, and accept proposed amendments to the Nationality and Borders Bill to uphold a practice of welcome.

Source: [Methodist.org.uk](https://www.methodist.org.uk)

DIARY DATES SELECTION:

July

Saturday 16th Coffee morning: puzzle and book sale

August

Thursday 4th Deadline for contributions for Sep-Nov Messenger

TAILPIECE

Nothing paralyzes our lives like the attitude that things can never change. We need to remind ourselves that God can change things. Outlook determines outcome. If we see only the problems, we will be defeated; but if we see the possibilities in the problems, we can have victory.

Warren Wiersbe

