

THE MESSENGER

The magazine of Petts Wood Methodist Church



Volume 66. No.1, September to November 2022

The Church in Queensway

Minister: Revd. Duncan MacBean

07432 093 353 | orpchissuper@gmail.com

www.pwmc.org.uk | www.orpchiscircuit.org.uk

THE MESSENGER

Editor:
Albert Wontumi

Distribution:
Elizabeth Gloin

Quote

We must give more in order to get more. It is the generous giving of ourselves that produces the generous harvest.

Orison Swett Marden

Church Council Secretary:	Harvey Moores	822992
Pastoral & Membership Secretary:	Elizabeth Gloin	837396
Baptism & Junior Church Secretary:	Ann Lockwood	600125
Booking of Premises/ Office:	Joanne Cummins	01689 639185 07835 809967 orpingtonchislehurst@gmail.com
Stewards:	Ann Lockwood	600215
	Elizabeth Gloin	837396
	Nana Ayisi	832183
	John Doddrell	605959
	Gill Tompkins	077930 53860

OUR MINISTER'S LETTER:

by Deacon Maureen Spinks



Dear Friends,

As we approach a new Methodist Year, everything begins again, including the opportunity to welcome a new minister to the Circuit and this Church. Given all the changes the past year or two have brought us, what might our attitude to the future? Are we looking forward to the year that lies ahead? Are we anxious about it? Do we have plans or are we cautious about making any? There has been so much uncertainty it is difficult sometimes to look forward positively, it is if our base or foundations have been shaken.

To help me to rediscover my foundations, I have always found it helpful to begin by considering where I am now and how I got here, to consider with gratitude all the good things in life and to practice expressing that out loud every opportunity.

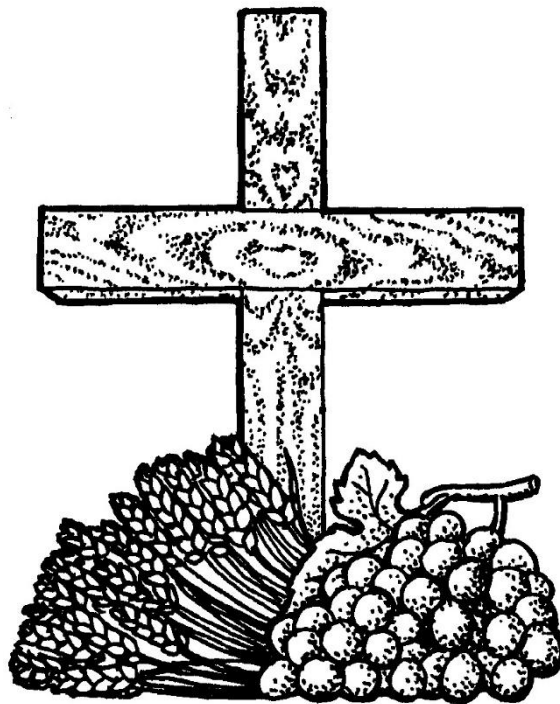
As children most of us have been brought up to express gratitude in our daily lives, we were encouraged to say please and thank you from an early age, some have been expected to write thank you notes for presents received at birthdays and Christmas, but more and more often these habits of formal gratitude seem to be sliding away. I find myself more often surprised (and delighted) when I occasionally receive a thank you note for things I do day by day in my ministry, (this is not a hint!) when in the past these things might have been regarded as common courtesy. I wonder about my own behaviour and how much my gratitude to God and to other people are more a matter of manners rather than deep appreciation.

I remember a few years ago another Deacon friend of mine, at the beginning of new year encouraged friends, neighbours and congregations to make for themselves a 'Jar of Joy' and to daily and weekly write down things they were grateful for and pop the notes in the jar. To record the simple things that brought them joy; for great days out, long conversations with friends, glorious sunsets, concerts, time spent in the garden, a hug by a grandchild, a helping hand by a neighbour and then at year end to open the jar and rediscover all the great things they had experienced in that year, however, she discovered (as did I) it had a much more profound impact than that. Those who joined in found in themselves, week in and week out, a much more positive and joyful attitude appearing as they share with one another the good things life was bringing them as they happened. The apostle Paul writes in Philippians

‘In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honourable. ⁹ Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you. ‘

Perhaps creating our own ‘Jar of Joy’ would be a good way to start a new Methodist or school year, a new beginning and would help to create a strong foundation for our shared life and ministry together.

With love Maureen



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

August

Sunday	21st	10:30 am	Own arrangement
Sunday	28th	10:30 am	Revd. Duncan MacBean

September

Sunday	4th	10:30 am	J. Mayes
Sunday	11th	10:30 am	Circuit service at Orpington Methodist Ch.
Sunday	18th	10:30 am	Revd. Duncan MacBean - Parade
Sunday	25th	10:30 am	Revd. Robert Selvakumar

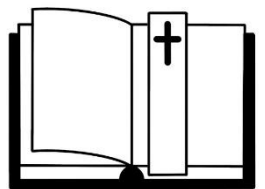
October

Sunday	2nd	10:30 am	M. Spinks
Sunday	9th	10:30 am	Revd. Robert Selvakumar - Holy Comm.
Sunday	16th	10:30 am	Deacon Maureen Spinks - Parade
Sunday	23rd	10:30 am	Revd. Robert Selvakumar
Sunday	30th	10:30 am	R. Brandhorst

November

Sunday	6th	10:30 am	P. Woodison
Sunday	13th	10:30 am	Revd. Robert Selvakumar - Holy Comm.
Sunday	20th	10:30 am	J. Gardner
Sunday	27th	10:30 am	D. Cope

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



FAMILY NEWS:

- **Condolences to the Fletcher Family**

On the passing of Revd. Geoffrey Fletcher, a former Minister of PWMC. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during these difficult times.

THANK YOU:

- **Thanks from Phillip and Elaine Reader**

Phillip and Elaine Reader warmly thank their many friends in the church who have supported them through their recent difficult time with their prayers, visits, gifts and many acts of loving kindness.

Elaine is now making a good recovery from her hip fracture and we are both adapting to life with Phillip now in care home.

- **Action for Children**

The Gloins would like to thank everyone who helped raise £500 for action for children.



Whither Mr. Wesley's Preachers?

by Gill Dascombe

As a local preacher, I was initially dismayed when the Methodist Conference of 2022 voted to revoke the Standing Order, in place since Methodist Union in 1932, that requires that candidates for the presbyteral ministry should first be fully accredited local preachers.¹

This seemed to me to represent the end, or the beginning of the end, of the symbiotic relationship between lay and ordained ministries, which is so characteristic of Methodism, by diminishing and dismissing the lay calling in favour of promoting and facilitating access to its more celebrated ordained counterpart.

Preaching is integral to Methodism, which actually began as a movement of lay preachers within the Church of England. John Wesley, though at first hesitant about their non-ordained status, nevertheless eventually admitted that 'I do tolerate lay preaching, because I conceive that there is an absolute necessity for it; inasmuch as, were it not, thousands of souls would perish everlastingly.'²

From the earliest days Mr Wesley's preachers fell into two related categories: 'exhorters', who preached in their own locality, supporting themselves by their daily occupation, and itinerant preachers, who were identified from amongst the body of exhorters, and employed and paid by Wesley.³ Over the course of time itinerant preachers became presbyters and exhorters became local preachers.

The 2022 decision will no doubt have a long-term effect on the nature of ordained ministry in Methodism, but what will be the effect on the ministry of local preachers? On reflection, I came to the realisation that it could in fact be a new and potentially exciting opportunity; local preaching, freed from being but a steppingstone to greater things, could now develop and grow as a vocation in its own right.

It was a couple of phrases in the Conference report which sparked off this train of thought: '...the preaching of a presbyter is not the same as that of a local preacher. The presbyter preaches from a different place.'⁴

The corollary of this, of course, is that the preaching of a local preacher is not the same as that of a presbyter, and that it too comes from its own distinctive place.

I was recently at a training event for new circuit stewards. In our buzz groups we were invited to discuss with each other what it was that we most valued about being Methodists. My group was in unison: it was local preachers, for the breadth, accessibility and variety of their preaching, and the way they weave together circuit relationships via their appointments on the plan.

Local preachers occupy a large proportion of Methodist pulpits every Sunday.⁵ Thus they represent the public face of the church to many congregations. Unlike their ordained colleagues, they are not 'set apart', and stationed to a circuit appointment, but 'set within' their home faith communities, serving sometimes for several decades in the same circuit. This can and does result in the establishing and maintaining of long-lasting relationships between preachers and the people they serve.

Like the worshippers sitting before them local preachers are, and have always been, a very diverse body, drawn from a wide range of educational, occupational and social backgrounds; the first women were admitted as preachers as early as the 1780's,⁶ and there is no official retirement age! Their preaching establishes the link between theology and everyday life by testifying to the gospel as it is experienced in the factory, kitchen, laboratory, supermarket, university, nursery, boardroom and bus stop (and so on), and bears witness to the important fact that the Kingdom of God extends far beyond the confines of the institutional Church.

These things form the 'place'⁴ from which the ministry of local preaching comes. The pastoral and missional possibilities are many and obvious....

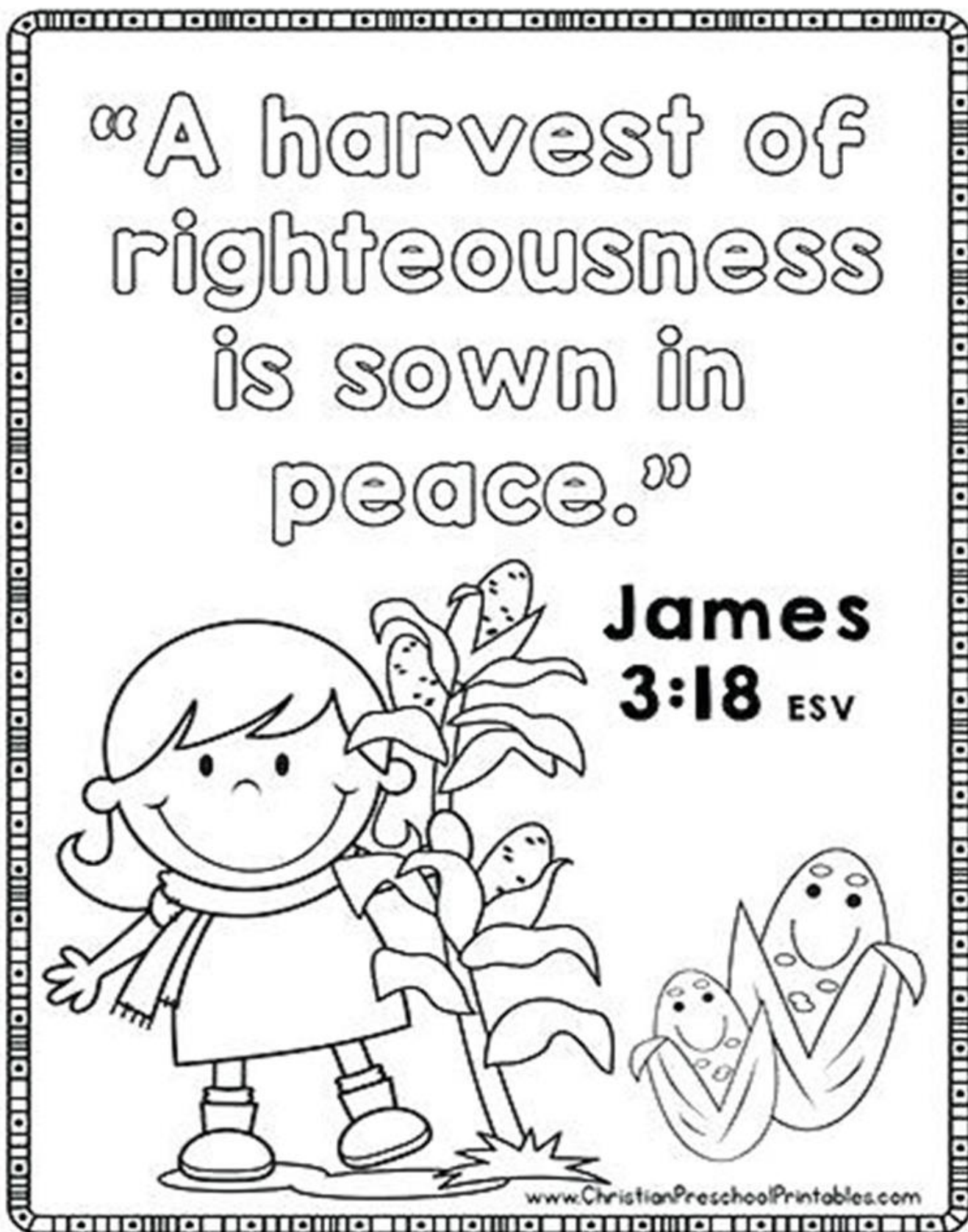
John Wesley conceded that lay preachers were essential to the spiritual wellbeing of the people of his time and place. Let us do the same for ours.

1. *Methodist Conference Agenda* 2022, p178
2. *The Letters of John Wesley*, Epworth Press 1931, p186
3. Batty, M., in *Workaday Preachers: The Story of Methodist Local Preaching*, Methodist Publishing House, 1995, p14
4. *Methodist Conference Agenda* 2022, p178
5. *Ministry in the Methodist Church*, Methodist Conference 2020, Report 33, 7.3.1
6. Graham, E., in *Workaday Preachers: The Story of Methodist Local Preaching*, Methodist Publishing House, 1995, p165

Source: theologyeverywhere.org

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART:

Harvest Festival Colouring Sheet



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

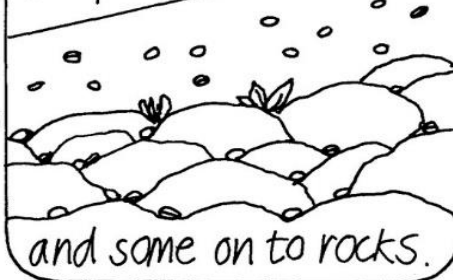
It can be read in the Bible in
Mt. 13:3-8, Mk 4:1-9, Lk 8:4-8

Crowds of people now came to hear Jesus, so he used stories to teach them; those who really wanted to learn would work out the meaning.

A farmer went out to sow a field of corn.



Some seed fell on the path

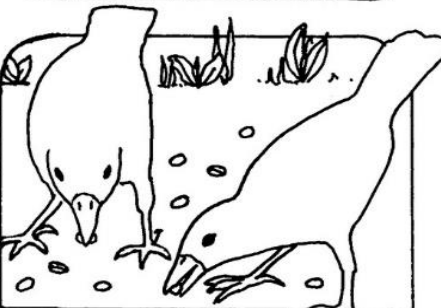


and some on to rocks.

Some fell among thorn plants and

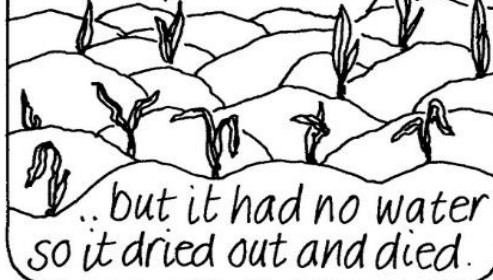


some fell on good soil.



The seed on the path was eaten by birds

The seed that fell on the rocks sprouted...



...but it had no water so it dried out and died.

The seed that fell among the thorns grew well to start with,



then it was outgrown by the thorn plants.



But in the good soil the seed grew well and gave a fantastic harvest!

Jesus explained to his disciples what it meant.



Some people don't even listen to what he says.

For some it is the best thing ever!



But soon they move onto another 'best thing'.

Some listen gladly...



but then worries and busyness take over.

But some hear what Jesus says and learn from it,



and that makes all the difference!

Harvest Prayer

Father, as we celebrate this season of thanksgiving We give thanks for the blessings of food, provision and nourishment.

Please grow in us a harvest for the world.

Come sow a seed of hope within our souls Lord, that we might yield goodness, patience and kindness in abundance.

Sow a seed of peace in our lives Lord, that we might bear the fruits of forgiveness, compassion and righteousness.

Come sow a seed of love in our hearts Lord, that others would reap the blessings of family, friendship and community.

May each seed of hope, peace and love grow within us into a harvest that can be feasted on by all. Amen.

Prayer by Julie Palmer © 2018 www.prayerscapes.com



The Uniformed Organisations

General Liaison: Liz Sewell 020 8467 2568

Rainbow Guides 5-7 Yrs Tues 4.30pm Geraldine Avis
Pettswoodwestrainbows@gmail.com

6th PW Brownies 7-10 Years Fri 6pm Rachel Corner 07773 473 129

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 Yrs	Tues 6.15pm	Sue Steadman	860446
Cub Scouts	8-10.5 Yrs	Tues 6.30pm	Ben Steadman	07941345504
Scouts	10.5-14 Yrs	Fri 7pm	Andy Steadman	860446
Explorer Scouts	14-18 Yrs	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.

August - Nov
TBC

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

Proclamation, by James Blackhall

One of the sessions we lead at the St Philip's Centre for Methodist Churches is 'Hospitality, Service and Proclamation'. The title is taken from Revd Dr Tom Wilson's book of the same name.^[i] This session raises interesting questions about what we do when we do interfaith work that also has wider application for everything else we do as Christians. One question I particularly enjoy exploring as I lead this session is around when proclamation is appropriate. This to me is not just a question of good interfaith relations, although in the context in which I work that is the primary discussion, but it is also a discussion about the core of the Christian faith. We are called to make disciples and to spread the message- yet there are times when direct proclamation is not appropriate. One of the questions that often comes up as people think about this is about the ethical implications of proclamation in settings of providing service such as "is it appropriate to share our faith when running a foodbank?"

The Methodist Church is committed to being a 'a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, inclusive Church of gospel people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of God so that more people become disciples of Jesus Christ, and already committed Methodists experience a deepening of their faith'^[ii]. This gives a broad definition of evangelism that includes social action, hearing others as well as directly proclaiming the faith. Yet, without proclaiming the faith we could end up answering Paul's questions, 'how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?' (Romans 10:14) ... with a blank look.

Whatever our view of interfaith relations and whether we should call people to believe in Jesus or celebrate their own faith we can all agree that 'Christianity is a faith that has a message of good news to share, which includes speaking out the good news of Jesus Christ, sharing what he has done in our lives'^[iii] This is something I am passionate about- this is why I am a Local Preacher. I believe that 'The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced' (Psalm 126:3) and I want to share that with others. Yet, when I'm in an interfaith setting learning about others' faith, and celebrating what can be seen of God in their lives, it can be very inappropriate to proclaim a message in any great detail.

I do believe that we are constantly proclaiming when we speak of our faith. When I join dialogues with people of other faiths, just as they proclaim what is good from their faith, so too I naturally proclaim my faith that Jesus is Lord. I also naturally proclaim what my faith means to me and why being a Christian is such an important part of my life- just as their faith is an important part of theirs. Yet true Christian proclamation should never come from a place of 'superiority'^[iv] as it is important that there is mutual respect and sharing which is foundational to being able to share faith together. For the Christian this proclamation will always point to Jesus.^[v]

I often ask groups if proclamation in an interfaith setting is acceptable and many will often say no. This is because of a wish to avoid offence, wanting to show respect and a reluctance. When I discuss what proclamation is to me, and how we can share our faith in a way that is mutual, then some groups review their response and agree that we do often proclaim even if we would not consider ourselves evangelising. Perhaps that is why Nkuna concludes that 'evangelism and interfaith dialogue are distinct but interrelated as authentic evangelism takes place within the context of the dialogue of life'^[vi]. This evangelism is recognised to include words and proclamation.

I wonder whether as Methodists we are good at hospitality and service but perhaps not always as good at confidently proclaiming our faith? As our *God for All* strategy takes its place it is hoped that we will become more confident at sharing our faith and what that means for us- whatever our theological positions. Sometimes we will need to think seriously about the appropriateness – interfaith dialogue has taught me to think about when it is right to make certain truth claims and when it is right to listen; thinking about foodbanks has helped me to think through when it is right to serve and when is it right to speak. Thinking about hospitality, and especially being a guest, has made me think about when is it rude and counterproductive to proclaim. Yet, we do 'have a gospel to proclaim' as the hymn said and I hope that all Christians will feel confident enough in their identity to be able to share it.

^[i] Wilson, T., 2019. *Hospitality, Service, Proclamation*. Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.

^[ii] The God for All Strategy found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/19181/conf-2020-4-evangelism-and-growth.pdf>

^[iii] Wilson, T., 2019. *Hospitality, Service, Proclamation*. Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd. Pg. 2

^[iv] Nkuna, V G. " Convergence of Evangelism and Interfaith Dialogue: A Missional Refection." *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS)* 7, 10 October 2010: pp178-179, available at https://www.academia.edu/67664475/Convergence_of_Evangelism_and_Interfaith_Dialogue_A_Missional_Refection, pg182

^[v] Ibid pg182

^[vi] Ibid pg. 187

Source: theologyeverywhere.org



Orpington & Chislehurst

Circuit Service

Sunday 11th September
10:30am

All are warmly invited to come and meet our new minister Rev Robert Selvakumar at our Circuit Service.

Joint worship followed by refreshments. A chance to meet friends, both old and new.

Hosted by Orpington Methodist Church,
Sevenoaks Road, BR6 9JH



MISCELLANEOUS:

- **Our Organists**, Contributed by David Gloin

We may overlook the hard work and real contribution those who play and have played our organ make to our worship; which brings me to two quotes I found:

"... playing a church organ is a difficult task - like trying to rub your belly, pat your head and land a Boeing 737 at the same time"

Caitlin Moran in The Times newspaper

"Organ playing ... is the manifestation of a will filled with a vision of eternity"

C.W. Widor quoted in "Music in the Life of Albert Schweitzer" ed. Charles R. Joy.

- **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.

- **Call for urgent action on the cost of living crisis**

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown has joined with 56 faith groups, charities and politicians to call on the government to take urgent action to bridge the cost of living gap faced by the lowest income families.

The call responds to a report, written by poverty expert and Loughborough University Professor Donald Hirsch which reveals the gap between the support the government is currently offering to households and the anticipated rise in living costs. The report concludes that the current flat-rate payments offered by the government will fall at least £1,600 short of making up for recent changes to living costs and benefits faced by a couple with two children.

The report assesses the extent to which cost of living measures announced in May will compensate for three blows experienced by millions of low income families: cuts in Universal Credit, inadequate uprating of benefits with accelerating inflation in April and the further rise in the energy cap anticipated in October. It shows that the package of support measures falls well short of making up for these losses, even with the October increase in the cap.

The groups, supported by Gordon Brown, are urging the Government to consider appropriate measures to bridge the shortfall in family finances, which is only anticipated to rise into the winter months. Some charities are calling for benefits to be uprated in line with inflation, and for debt deductions from Universal Credit to be paused.

The report is endorsed by 56 charities, faith groups and politicians, many of whom are providing front-line support for families hit by rising costs, including the Trussell Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Child Poverty Action Group as well as the Methodist Church, the Bishop of Durham, the Hindu Council UK and the Muslim Council of Britain. It has also been endorsed by Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford, Metro Mayors, Tracy Brabin of West Yorkshire, Andy Burnham of Greater Manchester, Jamie Driscoll of North Tyne Combined Authority, Sadiq Khan of Greater London, Dan Norris of West of England, Steve Rotherham of Liverpool City Region and Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees.

The report contains stories of first-hand experience of the impact of the rise in cost of living. Lowri receives Universal Credit and cares for her father and daughter. Her food and fuel bills have doubled, and she's had to sell her daughter's bike to make ends meet: "I have spent the last 5 years living in survival mode, just about surviving each day, worrying about money constantly. I am emotionally and mentally exhausted living like this. It is not living, merely existing. There is just no way people can manage to pay all their bills, and all we are doing is existing to pay bills. Terrified is an understatement."

Professor Hirsch said: "The shortfall families are facing between skyrocketing costs and the support government have offered continues to grow. Families were falling behind with the anticipated rise in costs even when the measures were announced, and since then the food and energy costs forecast for this winter have continued to rise sharply.

The flat rate emergency payments announced so far leave families with children particularly far behind, because they are not sensitive to the extra costs that children bring. A new package needs to address the fact that by the autumn, living costs could have risen by as much as 14% for low income families, who have received only a 3% increase in benefits. An additional across-the-board uprating to Universal Credit and other benefits would address family need far more effectively than further flat rate payments."

The former Prime Minister Gordon Brown commissioned the report, after facing the realities of rising costs alongside churches and charities in the UK:

"This is a crisis that Britain hasn't seen in decades. The most urgent and immediate challenge for the incoming Prime Minister is to ensure that families with children and disabled people aren't neglected to struggle through the challenges ahead. We need targeted support for families on the lowest-incomes, not just cuts in taxes or flat rate

payments which don't account for the specific needs of people on the brink of poverty. There should be no argument that a permanent increase in Universal Credit is the only way to take a sure step towards a solution.

"This crisis goes far beyond politics; this is a moral issue - our responsibilities to our neighbours and in particular to those who have the least and whose needs are the greatest. The incoming Prime Minister has a moral responsibility to ensure that everyone has enough to live on, through this crisis and beyond. We cannot be at ease when millions are ill at ease and cannot rest content as long as there is so much discontent. Our society will be stronger when we help the weak and will be richer when we help the poor."

Revd Graham Thompson, President of the Methodist Church in Britain, who have endorsed the report, said:

"Churches and other faith groups are on the front line of offering support to families who are already being swept under by rising costs. We know that millions of families aren't simply making hard choices between heating and eating, but are having to go without both completely. If people aren't given enough support to live, we don't dare to imagine what will happen this winter. The government now have a duty to step up and take firm and long-lasting action to ensure not only that this crisis doesn't deepen, but that it doesn't happen again."

Source: www.methodist.org.uk



Just for fun:

s	f	i	e	l	d	z	t	b	f	e	e
p	a	t	h	m	o	i	l	i	w	q	c
r	n	b	m	s	m	i	e	r	a	u	w
o	t	c	e	y	o	a	g	d	t	w	r
u	a	q	z	s	u	w	r	s	e	e	d
t	s	m	i	a	t	e	e	n	r	s	j
e	t	n	b	l	g	v	w	r	k	r	s
d	i	f	f	e	r	e	n	c	e	t	f
c	c	z	z	a	o	r	o	m	n	h	d
b	u	e	h	r	w	r	r	a	h	o	z
e	a	t	e	n	n	a	l	c	o	r	n
s	w	p	u	k	f	p	d	g	r	n	g

seed

ever

corn

difference

thorn

sprouted

soil

water

outgrown

farmer

learn

rocks

birds

good

harvest

best

field

fantastic

path

sower

plants

grew

eaten

died

DIARY DATES SELECTION:

September

Sunday 11th 10.30 am Circuit service at Orpington Methodist Church

November

Thursday 3rd Deadline for contributions for Dec - Mar Messenger

TAILPIECE

~~With every deed you are sowing a seed, though the harvest you may not see.~~
With every deed you are sowing a seed,
though the harvest you may not see.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

