



The **Methodist** Church

Wesley Focus on April



The Entry into Jerusalem by Giotto

Wesley Chapel Harrogate

April 2019

Welcome to Wesley Chapel

We really enjoy welcoming visitors to Wesley Chapel and we hope your time with us will be enjoyable and uplifting. If you are new to Harrogate or just new to Wesley Chapel, we would love to welcome you back and tell you a bit more about what we do here and hopefully get to know you a little more.

If you would like to remain in contact with us please speak to the minister, stewards or the person who welcomed you into the church and let us know your preferred method of contact.

Welcome again!

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The deadline for Wesley Focus on May is 25 April 2019

*Please send any notices, news, articles, photographs to Judith Yeats:
01423 506014, judithyeats0@gmail.com.*

Wesley Focus on April is also on the website.

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Recently I spotted a quotation, or motto, on the front of someone's notebook, which read "**Everything is impossible – until it's done!**", by Nelson Mandela.

How many times have we thought, 'this can't be done...we haven't much time...I can't do this...'? I know I'm guilty of such thoughts.

Nine times out of ten it works out in the end – and we wondered what we worried about!

How did we achieve it? With some perseverance? Management planning? or – Team Effort?

I like to think of 'problems' as 'challenges', as tasks that need to be done. We have plenty of those – in our daily lives, at work, personal challenges, and definitely at church!

But who's on your 'Team'? Who do you turn to for help? And how? I think it's only natural to try and deal with things ourselves, but sometimes you just can't, and you need to turn to others around you. That might be family, or close friends, or our church family.

First and foremost we have God!

Even the disciples struggled with Jesus' teaching at times, for instance on how to enter the kingdom of heaven - how can anyone be saved? But Jesus replied, "...**with God all things are possible**," Matthew 19: 26.

Isn't that a better motto? To have faith in God!

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Front cover illustration. *The Entry into Jerusalem* by Giotto di Bondone. based on the Gospel of Matthew 21:1-11 (TNIV). Giotto di Bondone (c1267-1337) known as Giotto, was an Italian painter and architect from Florence during the Late Middle Ages. Giotto revolutionised the art of Florence because of the way he drew all his figures 'according to nature', and for his narrative of his landscapes. He is acknowledged as the first Italian master to have achieved universal importance. *The Entry into Jerusalem* by Giotto appears in the Arena Chapel, also known as the Scrovegni Chapel, in Padua, Italy, ca. 1305. See page 14 for more about this painting.

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The Brigades remind us of their motto: '**Sure & Steadfast**' from Hebrews 6: 19, which reads 'We have this hope as an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary'.

These passages assure us that we can have faith in God's promises, which gives us hope, a hope which is securely 'anchored' in Jesus, particularly in his resurrection, ascension and glory in heaven.

The Psalms (among others) talk about God's promises, for instance Psalm 138: 8:

"The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands."

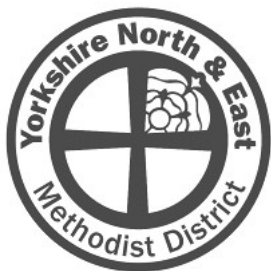
NRSV

See also the translation in the Good News Bible.

There are other passages in the Bible that we can turn to... 1 Corinthians 15: 58, Galatians 6: 9, 2 Thessalonians 2:15, to name just a few.

There is a moment when we become aware of our human limitations and need to depend on God. Then, other possibilities become open to us. Perhaps we should do more of that – I know I need to, how about you?

God bless. Ann



District Event: Flourish. Scarborough

Friday 18 Oct 7.30pm to Sunday 20 October 1pm at Scarborough Spa YO11 2HD. 'To inspire and encourage local ministry and mission, developing the District Vision of growing 'Flourishing Missional Communities'

Tickets are free but you will need to book your own accommodation and organise your own transport. It is important that you book so that the organisers know how many people to expect. You can now make bookings for Flourish tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/flourish-the-yorkshire-north-east-district-weekend-tickets-55019533907>.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

New Circuit Steward from Wesley

It is a great pleasure to report that the Circuit Meeting agreed to Shelagh Outhwaite becoming a Circuit Steward as from 1 September 2019. The Circuit Leadership Team is very much looking forward to welcoming Shelagh who replaces Judith Yeats. Judith completes her six years on 31 August. Please remember Shelagh, in your prayers as she takes on this role in a particularly exciting period in the life of the circuit.

Congratulations

Many congratulations to Molly who added to her family on 12 March, with a great-granddaughter. Not only that, but she was born on Molly's birthday. Congratulations to all the family.



This is a picture of Molly's latest great-granddaughter, Josie Evelyn, aged 1 day, with her brothers Jude 9 and Joel 4. What a delight for Molly that Josie was born on her birthday. This is a double delight for Molly. Her middle granddaughter, Rachel, has had Mia since November and should become legally hers sometime in April. She is now 18 months old and they are extremely happy together.

Sad News

We were sad to hear the news that Doreen Jackson had died. We learned this week, due to some great detective work by Lynne Harvey, that Doreen had passed away on 10 February. There had been an obituary notice in the Harrogate Advertiser, but this may have been missed by many of us. We now know that her funeral was held in Bolton where she had moved to be near her daughter Annette. We have the address of the undertakers and they will pass on any messages and cards to Doreen's daughter Annette.

Doreen was a tireless supporter of Wesley Chapel and many of us will have very fond memories of her. When she was no longer able to attend services, we missed her lovely smile and her friendly approach to life. She and I were fellow Stokies, and we often shared a joke about our roots. Doreen's friend Gerry, also from Stoke, used to save the local paper for me, and there would often be a pile of *Sentinel's* in the corner cupboard in the kitchen, waiting for me to collect. Sadly Gerry died a few years ago.

The address of the undertakers is: Bromleys Funeral Services, 125 - 127 Tonge Moor Road, Bolton, BL2 2HR for anyone who wishes to send their condolences.

Thank you to Lynne (alias Miss Marples) for her good work in finding out about Doreen for us).



This photograph was taken by me in 2009. I was walking in the Valley Gardens looking for a photo-of-the-day when I spotted Doreen and Gerry enjoying the sunshine, Doreen in her customary red. It was one of those special moments that stays with you forever.

Judith Yeats

Network

This year of Network finishes on 29 April. The service on Sunday 28 April will be led by the Rev. Diane Hicks, and the Network weekend will close on Monday 29 April with a tea. Network will recommence in the autumn.

Wesley Guild

We started off our 2019 season on a joyful note in March when we were delighted to welcome back our good friend, David Wilberforce, who led us as we sang eight hymns which had been pre-chosen by the members. David gave us a potted history of the composers of the words and music which was very interesting - and gave us chance to draw breath. The members who had chosen the hymns also shared with us the reason why they had chosen them. The hymns were : *None other Lamb, None other Name; Blessed assurance Jesus is mine; When we walk with the Lord; And can it be; When morning gilds the skies, God is here as we his people; Stand up, stand up for Jesus and Son of God if Thy free grace.* David happened to mention that the Church he attended in his youth no longer existed. He asked for a show of hands as to how many other members could say the same and thirteen shot up! A very sad sign of the times.

Thank you David yet again and we look forward to our next hymnathon! We are always privileged to share your vast musical knowledge and the good humour which goes with it. Thank you also to the two Ann's who came along with you (Wilberforce and Francis) who helped to swell the throng.

Our meeting last March had to be cancelled because of snow but thankfully history did not repeat itself this year. We had lots of birthdays to celebrate including two special ones with an 'O' on the end - Florence and Vicky – but we just about had enough breath left to sing 'happy birthday everybody'.

Our next meeting is on 11 April when Mr Bernard Higgins will be speaking to us about the life of John Metcalf, a.k.a. Blind Jack of Knaresborough. All are welcome to attend.

Lynne Harvey

Guild Sunday will be on 9 June when there will be a Local Arrangement.

Wesley Chapel Regular Activities

Sunday Worship 10.30am every week.
Holy Communion included in the first Sunday of the month.

Network 2pm for 2.30pm fourth Monday in the month from October to April.

Bible Study at the home of Helen Evison, usually on the 3rd Monday of each month at 2 pm. Check with Helen to confirm and for further details, 01423 870725. (Please note that this will be held on the 2nd Monday in April (8th).

Tuesday Coffee 10am-12noon every Tuesday in the foyer.

Prayer Meeting every third Tuesday of the month at about 11am in the Green Room.

Book Club every alternate month. Contact Judith Yeats for details, 01423 506014.

Forward Together. Coffee served from 10.45 am, lunch at 12 noon.

Journey Group usually on the first Thursday in every month. Contact Philip Goodwin for details, 01423 563990.

Wesley Guild monthly on Thursday afternoons from March to December. Contact Lynne Harvey for more details, 01423 568968.

Wesley Welcome Café fortnightly on Fridays from 1pm to 3pm in the Lower Hall. Contact Les Sudron for more details, 01423 787406.

See pages 10 and 11 for more details of our activities this month.

Also visit www.wesleychapelharrogate.org.uk

Book Club Future Reading

Monday 10 June: *The Citadel* by A.J. Cronin.. (First published in 1937, a ground-breaking novel in its treatment of the contentious theme of medical ethics. It has been credited with laying the foundation in Great Britain for the introduction of the NHS a decade later). Meetings are at 2pm in the Foyer. You are welcome to join us.

Rotas

Sunday Morning Porch Duty

31 March	Nancy
07 April	Shelagh and Shirley
14 April	Sue
21 April	Katharine
28 April	Network Weekend
05 May	Janet and Shirley
12 May	Katharine

Sunday Worship Stewards

31 March	Ulrike & Andrew
07 April	Christine B & Judith
14 April	Jenny & Philip
19 April	Christine B (Good Friday)
21 April	Maureen and Mike
28 April	Ulrike & Andrew
05 May	Christine B & Les
12 May	Les & Christine S

Communion Stewards

07 April	Katharine & Judith
05 May	Les & Christine S

Organist

07 April	Graham
14 April	Philip
19 April	Judith (Good Friday)
21 April	Graham
28 April	Philip
05 May	Judith

Sunday Morning Coffee

31 March	Jenny
07 April	Shirley
14 April	Sue & Margaret
21 April	Katherine & Keith
28 April	Eileen

Tuesday Coffee

26 March	Helen & Keith
02 April	Jean & Wendy
09 April	Judith & Shirley
16 April	Jean & Wendy
23 April	Judith & Helen
30 April	Jean & Wendy
07 May	Judith & Shirley
14 May	Jean & Wendy

Forward Together

28 March

10.30am—1pm	Christine D & Judith D
11.50am-1.15pm	Ros & Jenny
12pm-2pm	Eileen

04 April

10.30am-1pm	Christine B & Pat
11.50am-1.15pm	Nancy
12pm-2pm	Hannah

11 April

10.30am-1pm	Jenny & Freda
11.50am-1.15pm	Janet & E Clayton
12pm-2pm	Eileen

18 April

10.30am-1pm	Jenny & Pat
11.50am-1.15pm	Philip
12pm-2pm	Hannah & Ann

25 April

10.30am-1pm	Christine D & Judith D
11.50am-1.15pm	Ros & Jenny
12pm-2pm	Eileen

02 May

10.30am-1pm	Christine B & Pat
11.50am-1.15pm	Nancy
12pm-2pm	

Wesley Activities

Worship

24 March	Morning Worship	Rev. Trevor Dixon
31 March	Morning Worship Mothering Sunday	Ms Sue Langley
07 April	Morning worship with Holy Communion. Passion Sunday	Rev. Ann Fox
14 April	Morning worship, dressing the cross Palm Sunday	Rev. Trevor Dixon

Our Annual General Meeting will be held after the service following a light buffet lunch. Agenda and minutes of the last meeting will be available in the foyer from 31 March.

19 April 10am. Good Friday Service of Reflection and Meditation.

A March of Witness will leave Wesley at 11.15am to arrive at the war memorial service at 11.30am.

21 April Morning worship with Holy Communion.
Easter Sunday Rev. Trevor Dixon

28 April Morning worship. Network Sunday
Rev. Diane Hicks

05 May Morning worship with Holy Communion.
Rev. Ben Clowes

We warmly welcome any visitors to our services and invite you to stay behind afterwards for tea or coffee and a chat.

Lunchtime Recitals

Refreshments will be available in the Lower Hall from 12 noon.

Monday 1 April. 1 - 2pm. Hanna Hipp (Mezzo-Soprano) and Emma Abbate (piano).

Monday 13 May. 1 - 2pm. Ida Pelliccioli (Italy), piano.

Book Club

Monday 8 April 2pm. In the Foyer. Discussing *Madame Bovary* by Gustav Flaubert. Come and join us, you will be very welcome.

Network

Monday 25 March. 2pm for 2.30pm. Annual General Meeting. There will also be a bring and buy stall.

Monday 29 April. 2pm for 2.30pm. As part of the Network weekend, afternoon tea.. This will be the last meeting of the 2018/19 season.

Bible Study Group

Monday 15 April. 2pm. At the home of Helen Evison. Please contact Helen for more details. Tel. 01423 870725.

Tuesday Coffee

Every Tuesday from 10am to 12 noon. Come and join us for a tea or coffee and a chat. **9 April:** Barbara will be playing the piano between 10.45pm and 11.15pm. There will be a prayer meeting in the Green Room at 11am.

Forward Together

Every Thursday. Coffee served from 10.45am in the Lower Hall
Lunch at 12 noon.

Journey Group

Thursday 4 April. 2.30pm in the Foyer.

Wesley Guild

Thursday 11 April. 2.00 pm in the Lower Hall. Speaker Mr. Bernard Higgins: The Life of John Metcalf, a.k.a. Blind Jack of Knaresborough. All are welcome to attend.

Wesley Welcome Café

Our next session is **Friday 5 April, then 26 April and 10 May.** We are open from 1pm until 3pm, just pop in any time and stay for as long as you wish. We serve tea, coffee, home baked cakes and biscuits. Come and join us for a chat or maybe join in a game of dominoes, do a jigsaw, read a book of poems, try a simple craft or just have a rest and a chat. Everything is informal and all are welcome especially people living with dementia and their families/carers. For more information ring Les on 797406 or just come along; you will be **VERY WELCOME!**

More dates for your diary p12

More events coming soon

Charity Coffee Mornings From 10am.

Saturday 30 April National Autistic Society
Saturday 06 April Starbeck Methodist Church
Saturday 13 April Pannal Methodist Church

Thursday 28 March at Wesley. A special concert by Margaret Fingerhut, (piano), *Far from the Home I Love*, a concert to raise awareness of refugee needs as well as to collect funds for City of Sanctuary refugee groups. Through music and words, Margaret tells the story of some of the many composers who were refugees because of war or persecution, including Chopin, Grieg, Handel, Haydn, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov.

Tuesday 2 April, 7.30pm at Wesley, Marriage and Relationship Issues.

Come and join the discussion on all aspects of marriage and relationships including cohabitation, same-sex marriage, divorce and so on. A number of District conversations have already taken place and have been well attended. Rev. Leslie Newton (Chair of District) along with others from the District team will enable an open and honest discussion to hear the views of the Methodist people.

Saturday 6 April. 2.30 to 4pm. MHA Berwick Grange. *Spring Fling*. Tombola, Raffle, Tea and Hot Cross Buns. Please come. All Welcome.

Saturday 13 April. Bilton Amblers. All walks start at 9.30 am on Bilton Methodist Church car park where we meet to arrange transport. Summer walks usually about 5-7 miles. Please bring a packed lunch. Contact Janet Allen, 01423 524634, e-mail, janetallen09@btinternet.com or turn up on the day.

Spring Harvest 13 - 17 April. Harrogate Convention Centre. Day tickets are available and can be bought online. <http://www.springhavest.org/> Harrogate, or pick up a brochure from one of the display racks in church.

Saturday 13 April. 9.30am to 12 noon. Harrogate School of Theology and Mission. Bibletrack Seminar at Mowbray Community Church. Andrew Emerton, Dean of st. Mellitus College, London. *The Prophets* part 2.

Saturday 13 April 7.30pm. At Starbeck Methodist Church. *The Harrogate Band in Concert*. 'Musical Director: Leigh Baker. Seriously entertaining brass band music. Come and listen to a great selection of classic brass band, fun, sacred and beautiful pieces of music, played by Harrogate's only championship brass band. Admission £8 Children Free - Pay at the door In aid of church funds - Light refreshments - Everyone is most welcome.

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Sunday 14 April (Palm Sunday) at 3pm as part of Spring Harvest at the Harrogate Convention Centre: *The People's Passion*'. Everyone is invited to join in a powerful piece of theatre and worship in which a chorus of voices tell the Easter story. All can take part (including children, so long as they can read). The event is led by the renowned Riding Lights Theatre Company from York, who will be the resident drama tea for Spring Harvest. Tickets are free for this afternoon as a way of marking Palm Sunday together, and are available on the booking site at www.springharvest.org.uk.

Wednesday 17 April at 7pm at St. Peter's Church. Vocalis and Harrogate Bach Choir join St. Peter's choir to sing Bach's St. Matthew Passion. Tickets £12, from St. Peter's Office, or see Christine Bunting, or on the door.

Saturday 27 April 2pm at Wesley. An Afternoon of Opera. Enjoy an afternoon of fabulous music with professional singers and musicians of Curious Creations and Stage Struck. . Tickets £20. Can be purchased by visiting <https://thelittleboxoffice.com/stagestruck>.

Saturday 27 April 7.30pm at Wesley. An Evening of Classical Music. Enjoy a stunning evening of classical music performed by the Curious Creations and Stage Struck company 4 piece orchestra. Tickets £20, as above.

Nidd Valley Circuit

Save the date

Saturday 22 June. Rev. Grace Caudwell's Testimony Service will be held on at Wesley. Afternoon tea will be served from 4pm and the service is at 5pm.

Grace's Ordination will be in Coventry Central Hall on 30 June. More details later. Her Welcome (back to the circuit) service will be a Hampsthwaite on Sunday 7 July.

On Saturday 6th July 2019, *The Call*. The Nidd Valley Circuit will host *The Call* tour at Wesley. An evening of music and celebration led by musician, composer and worship leader, Matt Beekingham. Please put this date in your diary. More details to follow.

Saturday 14 July Farewell service for Rev. Gillian Houghton. Tea and scones at 4pm followed by a songs of praise service at 5pm.

Saturday 31 August Welcome Service for Rev. Moses John, at Woodlands. Time to be announced.

Commentary on Entry into Jerusalem painting by Giotto.

Giotto has told the story as written in Matthew's Gospel and has included all the key elements. It is part of a fresco covering the walls of the Arena chapel in Padua, Italy, portraying the life of Christ. In this painting Jesus is in the centre of the composition and the largest figure in the painting. The disciples on the left, depicted with golden halos, look on anxiously wondering what is going to happen. The crowd are clearly shouting their praises whilst they are pouring out of the city gates to meet Him. With careful examination you can just about decipher that the donkey has a colt beside her. Matthew is the only gospel writer to mention a colt. The olive trees behind are signs of peace and the figures in the trees are dressed in white, a sign of purity and perhaps suggesting that they are angels.

There are many other symbols in this painting: The donkey plays a special role, relatively large and in the middle of the painting, boldly walking ahead, with one ear cocked towards her master and the other on the crowd as if she knows exactly what is going on and a reference to the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 1 v.3) *'The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.'*

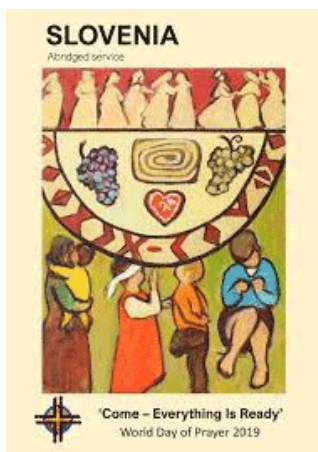
There is blue sky above the figure of Jesus, but there is an eerie grey blob underneath the angel in the right-hand tree, as if portraying the impending gloom. The angel's arms are outstretched as if on a cross – a foresight of things to come?

Matthew's gospel contains a reference to Zechariah 'Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey.' Zechariah 9:9.

The entire scene takes place in the foreground, making us part of the picture. Jesus sits in the middle of it all, two fingers pointing upwards, and offering a gesture of peace and blessing.

There is so much in Giotto's painting that would have been portrayed and understood by the people of the fourteenth century looking at the frescos, and if we look carefully enough, still tells the story today.

Judith Yeats



World Day of Prayer

This year the weather was more pleasant than the Beast of the East last year. It was held at St. Mark's Church, and was written by the women of Slovenia, who are relatively new to the World Day of Prayer. The service was based on an open invitation for all to come to the table. The table was set with a vase containing red carnations and Rosemary which were given to everyone at the end of the service. Grapes were on the table, significant as Slovenia produces wine. Two items were national speciality: potica, which is similar to a Chelsea bun with a nut filling; the second a

heart shaped biscuit called litsitar, which is made with honey from carnival bees and decorated with a carnation which is a common flower in Slovenia. The biscuits are given as gifts as an expression of love, often at weddings. The artist that produced the front cover had put these items in her painting, based on the reading Luke 14 verses 15-24.

A series of questions were asked after God's invitation 'Come, for everything is ready'. God offers an abundant celebration, offered in love. At the top of the picture are people in national dress, could they represent those originally invited? Who are these people at the bottom of the picture? Could they be on the edge? A single parent and child; a blind person and two others. They are at the bottom of the picture under the table. Are these people 'unseen' ignored, vulnerable, least likely to receive an invitation; a homeless person? an alcoholic;? a disability which makes communication difficult? The service ended with the hymn, 'The day Thou gavest Lord is ended'.

Shelagh Outhwaite

Nidd Valley Prayer Diary

The Circuit has produced a prayer diary which you will find in the racks in the foyer. We are asked to pray for a different church in the circuit each day of the month. Please take one and pray for our churches.

Circuit Day of Prayer

Sunday 2 June will be a circuit day of prayer. All services in the circuit on that day will be focused on prayer.

Notes from Church Council Meeting 19 February 2019

Below are selection notes of the discussions that took place.

Mission at Wesley. It was acknowledged that a great deal of mission happens at Wesley, due both to our own input and that of other groups.

Pastoral. Due to data protection issues, the pastoral list of members and adherents, with addresses and contact details will only be available to those who need them for pastoral visiting purposes.

Treasurer: We are on target for this year. The Town Pastors, who used Wesley on a Friday night for some years, have ceased to meet and have given Wesley Centre and Wesley Chapel each £500. Wesley Chapel has handed its portion to the Centre, which is in greater need of funds.

Forward Together: Attended by about 20 and much appreciated by those who attend. We now have extra help in the kitchen from former helpers at the Save the Children shop.

Wesley Welcome Café. This is still evolving and meets once a fortnight on a Friday afternoon. The President of Conference visited recently and was impressed with the level of work regarding dementia within our Circuit.

Network: It was noted that there is no representation from Network on the Church Council. Shelagh Outhwaite (Network Secretary) will be invited to be a member of the Council.

Journey Group: Regularly attended by up to 20 people, only 5 or 6 being from Wesley. Others include retired ministers/vicars and members of various denominations. The discussions are open, wide-ranging and radical.

Christmas Day lunch: This had been very successful once again, with over 100 meals being provided, a dozen of which had been taken out to people who could not attend due to illness, etc. There are always plenty of volunteers (cooking, serving, driving). Help has been offered again for next Christmas from a number of people. We also receive very generous sponsorship from various sources.

Wesley Centre: We have about 2 years' worth of reserves left. A development plan is in progress. Money is particularly needed for the kitchen redevelopment and replacement of the carpets in the Foyer and Lower Hall. The World Cycling Championship will be taking place in Harrogate from 21 to 29 September. Due to numbers of visitors and closure of various parts of the town, no meetings will take place in any of the Circuit churches during that time (apart from Sunday services)..

Local Arrangement. The number of Local Arrangements to fill the plan will be likely to increase across the Circuit for the summer following the recent departure of Rev. Christine Gillespie, until Rev. Moses John arrives in September. It is hoped to then return to one Local Arrangement per church per quarter.

Circuit Treasurer. From 1 April Ed Walton from Gracious Street Church will take over from Peter Gambles as Circuit Treasurer.

The members stood in silence to remember Brian Blakey.

Jenny Goodwin, CC Secretary

Our Calling

This was the theme at the local arrangement service organised recently by the stewards of Wesley Chapel with no ministers or local preachers allocated by the Circuit team. The morning worship service included a video about Our Calling that illustrated the core purpose of the Methodist Church. For many our calling is viewed as the Methodist Way of Life and is printed on every membership card of the Methodist family. It was suggested that we shared some of the reflections from this service in Focus on April.

Call to Worship: We are here to worship the living God, to offer our heartfelt thanks and praise; not because we are holy, not because we are good, but because we are loved, forgiven and free. Journeying together we pray that our individual worship and reflections will capture some of our calling in response to the Love of God. Amen.

The four key reasons for the existence of the Methodist Church the four key responses that we can each offer as part of our own individual Calling; Worship – Learning and Caring -Service – Evangelism.

Mark Twain wrote 'The two most important days in your life are the day you were born, and the day you find out why.'

The grace of God is dangerous. It's lavish, excessive, outrageous, and scandalous. God's grace is ridiculously inclusive. Apparently God doesn't care who He loves. He is not very careful about the people He calls His friends or the people He calls His Church.

Jesus spoke with taxmen, lepers, gentiles, women of ill repute, Romans, the down trodden, the weak, the poor, homeless, the rich and wealthy, the people of power and authority. He had a special place in his heart for children. His message was always the same. Love your God and love each other.

As Christians we are all called to Christ, to follow and obey Him. He made that clear when He said to His disciples, 'If anyone would come after me he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me (Luke 9:23).'" The call to Jesus Himself is the ultimate call on our lives.

'Your career is what you are paid for, your calling is what you were made for' Steve Harvey.

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A calling is the place where your gifts, abilities, desires, and feelings of worth all meet. When you follow your calling, you feel at home, at peace - you feel as though you're where you're meant to be.

Be generous, offer a gift to the world that no one else can offer; offer yourself.

Offer your story... If we seek to build up relationships whenever and wherever we are, we will be offered chances to share our story and as we share our story we will be offered chances to share our faith. All are called, we all have the ability to talk about God in our lives to tell others why we do the things we do, why you make casseroles and cakes for others, why you speak out for others, why you have the values you have, why you go to church and pray. Many others will be able to share how they have been able to continually get through personal times of tragedy and despair.

We tell our stories in different ways, we talk in different ways, some get excited and offer personal songs of praise, others simply offer whispers of love. But as Christians we know a truth that is offered to all; the truth that we are loved by our God.

Through the Grace of God we can all be evangelists and story tellers. Wow!

Living a Methodist Way of Live is not something to be done in isolation. Living a Methodist Way of Life enables us to offer support to each other as we seek to fulfil **Our Calling** as Methodists in this place, at this time. And by each follower of Christ being continually transformed in the love of Christ, the Church will be able to live as a faithful, joyful and committed community. What could all this mean to you and what could it mean to Wesley Chapel? What is our response?

A final thought: **If your path is more difficult it may be because your Calling is higher.** We closed as we sang the Final Blessing together.

*'All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.*

*He bids us build each other up;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.'*

Focus on Prayer

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

James Montgomery StF 529

Prayers for Lent and Easter

A prayer for the third week in Lent. Living God, Your wisdom is peace-loving, considerate, impartial and sincere. Before time began Your plan was in action. A plan to reveal Your glory and accomplish what is good for all people, through Jesus, Your son. In this time of Lent may we understand you more; why You have put us here, what You would have us do, who You would have us be, how You would have us live and where You would have us go to serve You more fully. Amen'.

A prayer for the fourth week in Lent. Powerful, almighty God, we come to worship You with awe and wonder. You are higher than we can ever think, greater than we can ever imagine, yet Jesus has made You known. You can change what seems unchangeable, bringing healing where all seems impossible. Help us to know You more fully in our hearts so that we may show Your greatness and power in our lives as we live them for You. Amen'.

A prayer for the fifth week in Lent. 'You spoke of heavenly kingdoms, justice, fairness, forgiveness and tolerance. Healing broken lives with compassion. You overturned the values of this world showing Your care for the 'have-nots'. Teach us to reach out in love, in Your power and strength. Inspire us to show that we care, and help us to make a difference. Amen.'

A prayer for the sixth week in Lent. 'Jesus, You came on a donkey, not a war horse. Yet people bowed before You, putting branches and garments on the road. But the praise was superficial and short-lived. We ask that You will accept what we offer, small as it may be, but transformed through Your Holy Spirit so that we may live and work for You in our world today, Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna to the King of Kings! Amen.'

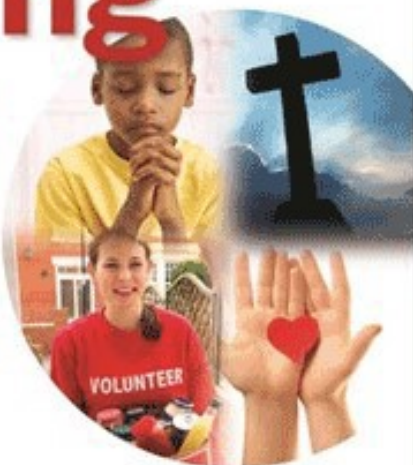
A prayer for Easter. 'It had all gone wrong, Jesus. Were You supposed to suffer so much? Abandonment, betrayal, arrest, flogging, humiliation and the carrying of a cross to a criminal's death? May we never forget what You did for us. Dying so that we might live. New beginnings, forgiveness and renewal. Send Your Holy Spirit into our lives, hearts and souls so that we might live for You and in You, knowing that Your love continues and your power is sovereign over all and that You are with us through Your Holy Spirit, forever and ever. To God be the glory, great things He has done. Amen'.

Prayers are taken from *Consider Jesus. A journey through Lent*, by COGS Creative Writers. Available from Gracious Street Methodist Church. £2.

Our Calling

The **calling** of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in **Christ** and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

It does this through



Worship



Learning and Caring



Service



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