



## Focus on May 2025



*Bluebells at Swinsty by Matthew Webber*

## WELCOME TO WESLEY CHAPEL

Our Sunday Morning Worship is at 10.30am, see p3 for details of our services.

Circuit Morning Prayer Live runs every morning Monday to Friday at 8am on Facebook. This is available for watching again after the live broadcast/ <https://www.facebook.com/NiddValley/>

All links (and much more) can be accessed via our website <https://www.wesleychapelharrogate.org.uk>

or if you need more information leave a message:  
<https://www.wesleychapelharrogate.org.uk/contact>

### Wesley Chapel Contacts

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***The deadline for Wesley 'Focus on June is 24 May. Please send any notices, news, articles, photographs to Judith Yeats: 07733 064697 [judithyeats0@gmail.com](mailto:judithyeats0@gmail.com). Focus is also on the website. <https://www.wesleychapelharrogate.org.uk/our-focus>***

## WHAT'S ON AT WESLEY

**SUNDAY 4 MAY 10.30am.** Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Rev. Gordon Hay

**THURSDAY 8 MAY 2pm.** Wesley Fellowship. Name That Tune with Barbara and Lynne.

### **SUNDAY 11 MAY**

**10.30am** Morning Worship. Local Arrangement.

**6pm** Wesley Sunday Share via Zoom (Link will be sent out or contact Les or Judith).

**MONDAY 12 MAY 1pm** Lunchtime Recital. See p14 for details.

**FRIDAY 16 MAY 10am.** Friday Online Coffee morning via Zoom. (Link will be sent out or contact Les or Judith).

**SUNDAY 18 MAY 10.30am** Morning Worship led by Andrew Brown.

### **SUNDAY 25 MAY**

**10.30am.** Morning Worship led by Kath Jones. .

**6am** Wesley Sunday Share via Zoom. (Link will be sent out or contact Les or Judith).

**TUESDAYS. 10.30am to 1pm.** Wesley Wheelie Welcome Café. Come and join us for a tea or coffee, and a chat. Cuppa soup, sausage rolls and toasted teacakes served after 12.

### **A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**

The Annual Church Meeting will take place after the morning service on Sunday, 1st June, at 1 p.m., following a faith lunch.

## WESLEY FELLOWSHIP

### Programme for 2025

All meetings are on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm at Wesley Centre.

- 13 March *Welcome back with St.Peter's Handbells*
- 10 April *Homeless in Harrogate with Richard Cooper, CEO HHP. Talk and walk around the Springboard project downstairs.*
- 8 May Name that Tune with Barbara and Lynne.
- 12 June Back to Wesley with Rev. Shaun Swithenbank
- 10 July Fridge Magnets. Les Sudron. Bring your favourite magnet.
- 14 August Games Hour.
- 11 September Around the World in (rather more than) 80 Days. Nicholas Ross.
- 9 October Edward Elgar and Harrogate. Andrew Hitchen.
- 13 November Poetry and Prose led by Jenny, with your help.
- 11 December A Christmas Celebration. For us, by us. What can you contribute?



*Flowers don't worry about how they're going to bloom. They just open up and turn toward the light and that makes them beautiful.' — Jim Carrey*

## HARROGATE HOMELESS PROJECT VISIT

Richard Cooper CEO for Harrogate Homeless Project (HHP) was our guest speaker at a recent Wesley Fellowship Group meeting.

Richard updated us about the work of HHP and the importance of the long-standing association with Wesley, going back 30 years.

Today HHP provide accommodation with personal support:

- Hostel providing 8 hostel beds and 8 emergency beds on Bower Street.
- 'Move on housing' providing 8 flats adjacent to the hostel.
- Night shelter at rear of hostel providing 5 emergency beds as part of their 'No Second Night Out' provision.
- 'Move on housing' in 9 rooms as a final stage before tenancy on Sykes Grove and Strawberry Dale.

In addition, they have a 'service hub' Day Centre called Springboard based within our own Wesley Centre building. At Springboard people can receive hot food, washing facilities, access to GP, physio, counselling, psychotherapy, life skill activities and access to other support agencies. HHP also use Wesley House (ex-caretaker house) as their administration centre and venue for one-to-one sessions with their clients. This move has significantly enabled more partnership agency work to be undertaken and today HHP work with over 20 different organisations, giving people the very best chance of a new life.

During 2024 occupancy rates were 92%, over 5,000 meals were served at Springboard, the number of nights accommodation have increased by 160% with 12,000 bed nights provided to vulnerable adults.

Richard shared with us HHP's Vision: 'To make sure nobody in the Harrogate District has to sleep rough and that those experiencing homelessness have all the support they need to move towards independent living'.

*Continued*

### *HHP Visit continued*

Following Richard's talk he invited everyone to go downstairs to Springboard and look at the rooms and he described all the various activities that take place each and every weekday.

Back upstairs many folk took the opportunity to continue asking questions and find out more about the support available and challenges faced by the people supported by Richard and his staff and volunteers.

We all agreed that as members of Wesley we were privileged and proud that Wesley could be a small part of HHP's important response to the needs of homeless people in our town.

*In the words of an ex-HHP client: During my time at HHP, I have experienced true kindness, the people that work here are just amazing, so much patience, nothing is too much trouble and if they don't have the answers straight away, they will find it out! I never felt judged, just supported and helped with housing applications, accessing universal credit and rebuilding my confidence. Thank HHP!"*

### **Les**



Photo from HHP website: <https://www.harrogate-homeless-project.org.uk/>

## Christian Aid Week 2025



This year, Christian Aid Week is from 11 to 17 May. For this reason we have a designated collection at church on Sunday, 11 May. Donation envelopes can also be handed in until the end of May.

Your support for this life-changing charity would be greatly appreciated. Your gift could help families in Guatemala which is severely hit by the climate crisis and a hunger hotspot. There, half of all children are chronically malnourished, leading to stunting that permanently affects both physical and mental development. With our help, Christian Aid will provide vital specialist agricultural training and tools so that farmers in Guatemala can protect their children from malnutrition.

Many thanks **Ulrike**

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### **The First of May by Annette Wynne**

If I could stay up late no doubt  
I'd catch the buds just bursting out;  
And up from every hidden root  
Would jump a tiny slender shoot;  
I wonder how seeds learn the way,  
They always know the very day—  
The pretty, happy first of May;  
If I could stay up then, no doubt  
I'd catch the buds just bursting out.



## CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

### Easter Visit

Joy and I spent Easter in Messingham with our family who live there. We had a great time. It was a happy and sad Easter, our first one without our two sisters who we have recently lost. On Easter Sunday our niece Andrea took us to the village Chapel where we enjoyed a lovely Easter service and received a very warm welcome. And we sat in a pew! I was thrilled to meet up with an old pal from Sunday School/Junior Church days in a different Church and place. It was many, many years since we met and it was great to have a catch up. Sue was pleased to have a copy of our FOCUS. I am attaching a couple of photographs. Of course, we missed our Wesley friends and hope you all had a happy Easter. **Lynne**



### On Holiday in Cyprus

Eileen and Ian are on holiday in Cyprus. This was taken on a beautiful morning at Agios Georgios. .





## Northumbria Sojourn

Christine and Les went to Northumberland for a few days over Easter and stayed at Warkworth.



'We were delighted that car parking was not going to be a problem!'



Warkworth Castle from across the river.



Inside Warkworth Castle.

*Continued*

## Northumbria Sojourn continued



After a five mile walk, we arrived at Alnmouth and after a hot chocolate caught the bus back to Warkworth.



On the way home we visited Cragside, a truly amazing place.

## Swinsty Bluebells

Pat and Matthew had a walk around the reservoir and it was lovely to see the bluebells (*see front cover*). Pat says: 'We had some rain so we did not have an ice cream when we got back to the car'.

## Apple Tree in Janet's garden



## DESERT ISLAND DISCS



*Our castaway this month is Mary Ann and here are her eclectic choices which I am sure you will enjoy.*

When Judith so kindly asked me to do this, I was sure I couldn't. I like such a lot of stuff, and I seldom think of anything in lists. But then Judith said I could get help, so I bring you variety, with help.

*Skinty Fia by Fontaines DC.* Our son Chun Woo is an explorer of newer music as well as lover of music from previous centuries. From him, I have learned of a 'pretty new', 'pretty local' group called Fontaines D.C., out of Dublin but often performing in the north of England. I might choose the album *Romance*, but Chun Woo says sternly that it must be 'Skinty Fia'—which I do also like. They are young and not very finished, but they bring contemporary emphasis on rhythm and lyrics and a kind of tough vulnerability to their work that I enjoy.

(I would also recommend 'Bitch, Don't Kill my Vibe', Kendrick Lamar via Chun Woo, for the adventurous, and those who can put up with naughty language, which I know sounds terrible—and it's grimy but striving. This and so much of Kendrick's clever-rhyming work reminds me, in fact, of the songs of the Beggar's Opera, with Kendrick as a more rueful and church-trained Macheath).

On to less edgy territory.

*The Magic Flute by Mozart.* I love opera, but typically I love it in theatres and not on records so much. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is definitely an exception. Like Mozart in general, it's so perfectly balanced and delightful that I don't miss my ability to see the on-stage nonsense when I listen to it. (*Don Giovanni* is actually my favourite Mozart opera, though, and one of my favourite operas altogether). *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg, whose grinding narrative is all too familiar without watching the stage action. *Wozzeck* is an opera about a military bureaucracy ineluctably grinding the labour it coopts into madness. Another of my favourite operas, unlike all the others.

*Continued*

*Mary Ann's Desert Island Discs.*

*Graceland by Paul Simon.* one of my favourite pieces of music to play while driving long distances, and perhaps particularly the eponymous song. Simon seems like a rather ghastly person to the women in his life, but I think he's a genius of both lyrical and musical lyricism and significance.

*Ingenue by k.d.lang.* and perhaps particularly the song Miss Chatelaine. *k d lang* seems to have been rather in eclipse for three decades or so. She extends the country-and-western idiom into a wider-spectrum feminism than is usual, and both her composition within the idiom and her mezzo-soprano are melting, insidious, and compelling.

*Miss Otis Regrets by Ella Fitzgerald.* When we travelled with baby Chun Woo and he got restless in his travel pupa and wasn't easily soothed, 'Miss Otis Regrets' was bringing out the highly effective big guns. It's a great song. Fitzgerald sounds like a blend of sunshine and dark honey, and we very properly raised our son on politeness amid capital punishment. (That last is a wry and rueful US joke.)

*Sargent Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band by the Beatles.* When I was a teenager and enjoyed the Beatles, I had no idea what to make of most of the lyrics of the Sergeant Pepper album. Now, I appreciate it deeply as a tribute to a sort of English local life that was becoming scarcer even then. Out of that album I choose "For the Benefit of Mr.Kite," because I knew nothing about music hall and found it so mysterious in my teens.

*Entre la jeunesse et la Sagesse by Kate and Anna McGarrigle.* This for the nostalgic pleasures of the Quebecois and the French Canadian folk tradition. Their stuff with English lyrics is great, too.

*Adagio by Tomaso Albinoni.* I was trying to figure out what J.S. Bach to choose and stumbled into this and remembered how much I enjoy it. Let it serve for the vast palette of Baroque stuff I love and find so congenial.

*Thank you for your wonderful choices Mary Ann (and to your helper, Chun Woo). You have certainly introduced us to some new music, With your eight choices to take to the desert island and some recommendations for further listening, we have plenty to occupy us until next month when Jane Swithenbank will be our castaway.*

## The Real Desert Island Discs

Our version of Desert Island Discs has proved very popular both with our readers and our castaways who have enjoyed selecting eight records to take on a desert island. Though most have found it very hard to choose just eight favourites.

In the BBC radio version castaways are also allowed to pick a favourite book to take to the island, alongside the Bible and The Complete Works of Shakespeare. They are also allowed to take a luxury item, and to choose which one piece of music they would keep should everything else be swept away to sea. (The most requested luxury item has been the piano). We've kept it simple with just the eight records/cds/streamings.

The BBC has been recording Desert Island Discs for more than 80 years and in 2019 a panel of broadcasting industry experts called it the greatest radio programme of all time. It was devised by Roy Plomley, who also presented the programme, which first aired on the BBC Forces Programme on 29 January in 1942. The first castaway was the Austrian musician and comedian Vic Oliver, who was a hugely popular figure, starring in a West End show *Get A Load of This*. Some of you may remember Vic Oliver. Most of the guests in those days were from the worlds of theatre, film radio and journalism, with the occasional military. The idea was for guests to enjoy themselves, and was not intended to extract deep psychological insights from the castaways, but just to say how that music had impacted on their lives. Roy Plomley would take his guests out for a slap-up lunch at the Garrick Club before the programme, presumably to put them at their ease and to loosen their tongues.

.After Plomley's death in 1985, the programme was presented by Michael Parkinson from 1986 to 1988, then from 1988 to 2006 by Sue Lawley, and from 2006 to 2018 by Kirsty Young. It is now presented by Lauren Laverne.

*Ian Gittins (2022) The Definitive Desert Island Discs*  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert\\_Island\\_Discs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert_Island_Discs)

*As his luxury item John Cleese was allowed to take Michael Palin with him, on the condition that he was dead and stuffed.*



## LUNCHTIME RECITALS 2024/2025 season

This season, we are pleased to be able to take card and contactless payments on the door (£12).

**12 May 2025 1pm.** Piano Recital by Clare Hammond, who will perform works by Mél Bonis, Debussy, Germaine Tailleferre and Ravel.

**2nd June 2025.** Mishka Rushdie Momen (piano)

*Schubert – Sonata in A minor, D784*

*Byrd – Prelude and Fantasia in A minor, MB. 12 and 13*

*Schubert – Sonata in C minor, D958*

**7th July 2025.** Jazz Concert – Richard Wetherall Trio

For more information about these concerts, please contact Andrew at [a.hitchen81@gmail.com](mailto:a.hitchen81@gmail.com) or on 01423-883618.

### HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY

3 June 2025 at 3pm St. Wilfrid's Church, Harrogate

#### Reflections

A concert featuring old favourites paired with modern takes on them.

Tickets £18 (students and under 16s £5) From Harrogate Box Office 01423 502116. or ask Judith to get tickets for you.



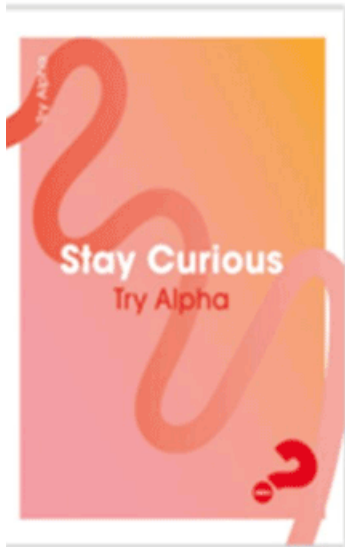
## AROUND THE CIRCUIT

**Bilton Methodist Amblers.** The next walk is Saturday 10 May.

All walks start on the car park of Bilton Area Methodist Church where we meet to arrange transport at 9.30. Summer walks generally about 5- 6 miles. We bring a packed lunch or go on to a pub or cafe at the end. All welcome. If interested please contact Janet Allen, T: 524634 E: janetallen09@btinternet.com.

Future walks, Sat 14 June, Sat 12 July, Sat 9 Aug  
Sat 13 Sept, Sat 11 Oct

### Gracious Street



**STAY CURIOUS, try ALPHA**

**Starts 1st May at 7.30pm**

Alpha is a place for you to explore the Christian faith on your terms. Each session unpacks a big question on life, faith and purpose and is designed to spark conversation. There's no pressure, follow up or charge.

For more information contact Rev Gordon Hay

07852 817475



Gracious Street  
Methodist Church  
KNARESBOROUGH

Every Monday 11:00am-12:00pm Fun & Games for Seniors, meet for coffee in Bridge. 10/30am.

Every Tuesday 12:30-1:30pm Lunch Link

Every Wednesday 11:15-11:45am Pause For Thought and Prayer

Every Friday 8:00am-2:00pm Resurrected Bites Community Store

Every Friday 10:00am-2:00pm Resurrected Bites Café

Every Friday 10:00-11:30am Playbox Fortnightly Activities

*Around the Circuit continued.*

## **Harlow Hill**

Coffee Morning. Every Monday from 10am to 11.30am. Everybody welcome.

Little Beans Playgroup. Parents and toddlers playgroup. Every Wednesday Morning. Drop in between 10am and 11.30am for play, coffee and a chat. £3 per family.

## **Starbeck**



**1940s themed afternoon concert at  
Starbeck Methodist Church**

**Sunday 11May 2025 at 2.30pm**

Entry £10 pay at the door  
Concessions: teenagers £5, <12 yrs free

A community event hosted by:  
Starbeck Methodist Church, HG2 7LH  
Contact: [starbeckfff@gmail.com](mailto:starbeckfff@gmail.com)  
[Facebook@StarbeckMethodistChurch/events](https://www.facebook.com/StarbeckMethodistChurch/events)  
Charity number 1135028



*Around the Circuit continued*

### **Trinity.**

Each Tuesday in term time. Trinity Luncheon Club. A two-course meal and tea or coffee for £4.00.

Each Thursday in the hall from 10am for one hour. Prayer Space - A time of peace and connection with God.

### **Woodlands.**

Toast Community cafe every Friday morning in term time. Everyone welcome from 8.45-10.00am. We're a pay-as-you-feel café serving tea, coffee, toast and chat. Unplug, Reconnect, Refill.

Lunch Club Fridays in term time. Would you enjoy a home-cooked 3 course lunch in good company? Get in touch on 07966 715215. Book your place today.

Community Garden (behind the church) open to all every day.

The Easter Trail in the Community Garden will be available to enjoy from 12th—20th April.

## **SCOTTON METHODIST CHURCH**

**Saturday 17 May 6.30pm**

As part of the 200th year Celebrations

### **SONGS OF PRAISE**

Please join our friends at Scotton and help raise the roof in celebration.

There will be a voluntary collection for Action for Children.

**Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd June**

**FLOWER FESTIVAL WITH THE THEME 'CELEBRATION'.**

## CELEBRATING VE DAY

Commemorations to mark 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe, known as Victory in Europe (VE) Day, will begin on Monday 5 May with a military procession featuring 1,300 members of the Armed Forces and thousands of members of the public watching along the Mall.

The events will pay tribute to the millions of people across the UK and Commonwealth who served in the Second World War, telling the stories of those who fought, the children who were evacuated, and those who stepped into the essential roles on the Home Front.

The procession will begin in Parliament Square when Big Ben strikes midday, and an actor will recite extracts from the iconic Winston Churchill VE Day speech. A young person will then pass the Commonwealth War Graves Torch for Peace to Alan Kennett, 100, a Second World War veteran who served in the Normandy campaign. The Torch for Peace is an enduring symbol, honouring the contributions made by individuals, which will act as a baton to pass and share stories to future generations.

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment and The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery will then lead the procession from Parliament Square, down Whitehall and past the Cenotaph which will be dressed in Union Flags, through Admiralty Arch and up The Mall through to Buckingham Palace where the procession will finish.

They will be followed by a tri-service procession group featuring marching members of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the British Army and the Royal Air Force. Cadets from all three services and other uniformed youth groups will also take part in the procession to ensure the message of VE Day is handed down to a new generation. The Prime Minister and Second World War veterans supported by the Royal British Legion will watch the procession from a specially built dais on the Queen Victoria Memorial.

The procession will conclude with the Mall being filled with members of the public and a fly past featuring the Red Arrows and 23 current and historic military aircraft.

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-invited-to-line-mall-for-ve-day-80-procession-and-fly-past#:>*

## VE DAY CELEBRATIONS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

There are lots of activities going on in our county to celebrate VE Day, including:

On 8 May, Ripon Cathedral will be hosting a VE Day anniversary proms, with children from a local school giving readings. Tickets are £15.

Ripon City Council will host a free event in the market square from 18:00 to 21:30 BST, with live music, a climbing wall, vintage games and family friendly activities.

On Sunday 11 May, there will be a traditional parade through Ripon for the Installation of the new Mayor of Ripon at Ripon Cathedral.

There will also be a performance of stories of Yorkshire Normandy veterans, as told by Ripon Theatre Festival and the Ripon Community Poppy Project, at Lister House.

On 8 May, York Minster will host a special Evensong commemorating the 80th anniversary of VE Day, starting at 17:30 BST.

On 8 May at 18:00 BST, Knaresborough Castle will host themed entertainment including performances from local musicians, bands and dance groups.

Members of the Knaresborough Branch of The Royal British Legion, Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps will parade in the castle grounds and lead attendees to gather at the War Memorial for prayers of remembrance.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgjl04v4702o>

*I was too young to remember VE Day (I was just 2), but there may be some of our church family that do have memories, albeit they would have been very young at the time. Let us know your memories for our next edition of Focus—we would love to hear them. Judith*

## ASCENSION DAY 29 MAY 2025

We are familiar with Ascension Day, the 40th day after Easter, the final day when Jesus was last seen by his disciples and ascended into heaven. However, we may be less familiar with some other Customs and Traditions which take place across Britain, which are associated with Ascension Day, with various water festivals ranging from Well Dressing in Derbyshire to the Planting of the 'Penny Hedge' (or 'Horngarth') in the harbour at Whitby, Yorkshire.

**Planting of Penny Hedge / Horngarth.** Every year, on the Eve of Ascension Day, a 'Penny (penance) Hedge has to be erected on the beach at Boyes Staithe, near Whitby, Yorkshire. This commemorates a medieval penance imposed by the Abbot of Whitby on some local noblemen who disturbed a holy hermit at his prayers and beat him up. The stakes and the woven twigs for the hedge have to be cut in a local wood at sunrise on Ascension Eve, carried to Whitby Harbour at low tide and made into a hedge strong enough to withstand three full tides.

**Beating of the Bounds.** Ascension Day is also the day for Beating the Bounds, or Boundaries, of the church's parish. The custom was once found in almost every English parish, but now is only carried out only in a few places.

The ceremony of Beating the Bounds custom has existed in Britain for well over 2000 years. It involves people in the locality walking around their farm, manorial, church or civil boundaries pausing as they pass certain trees, walls and hedges that denote the extent of the boundary to exclaim, pray and ritually 'beat' particular landmarks with sticks. In some places it was quite normal to bump on the boundary marker a child so that locations would be 'sorely remembered'. In London, a school boy is held upside down by his feet from a boat in the river Thames where there is a boundary!

### **History of Ascension Day**

Ascension Day has been a significant event in Christian liturgical history, celebrated since the early centuries of the Church. The earliest documented observances of Ascension Day trace back to the 4th century, marking it as a key event in the Christian calendar alongside other major feasts like Easter and Pentecost.

*Continued*



*History of Ascension Day continued.*

Initially, the Ascension was commemorated as part of Pentecost, but by the 4th century, it had become a distinct celebration occurring 40 days after Easter. This period of 40 days is reflective of the time Jesus spent with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them before he ascended into heaven.

In the Middle Ages, the observance of Ascension Day included elaborate liturgical processions which evolved over time.

By the 8th and 9th centuries, these processions became a universal rite in the Latin Church. The processions would often involve the community walking through fields and pastures, symbolizing a journey towards heavenly ascent, with priests blessing the land. During the High Middle Ages, liturgical observances began to be replaced by non-liturgical pageants and dramatic representations of Jesus' ascent.

This change reflected a shift towards more theatrical and communal expressions of religious events. The Church did not officially sanction these dramatic pageants but became popular folk customs, particularly in parts of Central and Western Europe.

Ascension Day has also seen changes in its date of observance. Traditionally held on a Thursday, some churches have moved the celebration to the following Sunday to allow more worshippers to participate, a practice that started gaining popularity in the late 20th century.

Thus, Ascension Day's history reflects its importance as a celebration of Jesus' ascension and his promise of the Holy Spirit. It is a much-anticipated theme in various traditions and customs that have evolved over centuries.

*<https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/ascension-day/>*

*<https://www.projectbritain.stjohnssevenoaks.com/ascension.htm>*

*<https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/ascension-day/>*

## When our futures are uncertain

This is the first verse of a hymn that Mike chose for our service on the Sunday after Easter and when the liturgy was about the disciple Thomas, the doubter.

When our futures are uncertain,  
when our Christian life is tough,  
when our worries fill our thinking,  
when our hope is not enough –  
then the rallying cry of Thomas  
rises high above the crowd:  
'Give your lives, your all, for Jesus.  
Join him on this narrow road.'

You can read the full version of the hymn on the website below.

Adrian Low wrote this hymn for St. Thomas' Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas, after he had written a hymn about Saint Andrew for another church in the States and The Methodist Resource Hub gives us a bit of background into the author of this hymn.

*An emeritus professor of Computing Education at Staffordshire University, Adrian is both a Methodist local preacher in the Cannock Chase circuit and also a priest in the Church of England, currently in the benefice of Abbots Bromley, Blithfield, Colton, Colwich and Great Haywood, all in Staffordshire. This makes him, he says, "49.9 per cent Methodist and 50.1 per cent Anglican". He adds: "I love writing hymns that have a more modern language, context and culture and have a small collection of 60-plus so far." As he says, that leaves him "only another 5,940 to go to beat Charles [Wesley]"*

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/resources/hymns/when-our-futures-are-uncertain-website-only/>

## THE QUIET REVIVAL

The 2021 census results showed that Christianity is now a minority religion in Britain. We often are told church attendance is on its way down.

The Bible Society have found something surprising. Church attendance is in fact increasing, especially among young people. Adults aged from 18 into their 40s are going to church in much higher numbers than any other age group, except those over 65. Apparently in the age group 18 to 24 regular church attendance has quadrupled since 2018. Significant growth amongst most expressions of the church particularly in Roman Catholicism and Pentecostalism with now over 2 million more people attending church than there were six years ago.

The church is becoming ethnically diverse, with one in five people (19% ) coming from an ethnic minority. Men ( 13% ) are more likely to attend church than women (10%) Bible reading and confidence in the Bible has increased with 67% of Church going Christians reading the Bible at least weekly outside church. These changes have impacted society, as church goers are more likely to participate in things that benefit the local community.

If you would like to read the report go to  
<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/research/quiet-revival>  
**Shelagh Outhwaite**

### Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours. *Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)*

**Where can we find you, Lord Jesus our Master**  
*Singing the Faith No. 672*

Where can we find you, Lord Jesus our Master?  
We want to serve you, to answer your call.  
Where do you lead us and ask us to follow?  
What should we do in our service for all?

Go to the hungry, to those who have nothing;  
Go where the farmlands are empty and bare.  
I broke the bread for the people around me;  
Out of my plenty, think what you can share.

Go to the homeless, to those who have nowhere  
Go where my people sleep out in the rain.  
I had no comforts but what others gave me;  
Offer them shelter, give ease to their pain.

Go to the outcast, to those who have noone;  
Go where my sheep are rejected and lost.  
I dined with sinners and reached out to lepers;  
Go and do likewise, and don't count the cost".

Where will we find you, Lord Jesus our Master?  
We are your servants who answer your call.  
You go before us, and there we will follow,  
Taking our cross in the service of all  
Andrew Charles Dickinson (b. 1954)

**John 20:24-29** ' Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.'

**The Methodist Church in Britain receives with deep sadness the news of the death of His Holiness Pope Francis, and gives thanks for his life and Christian witness.**

Even to the final days of his long life, by his actions and his words, Pope Francis continued to set forth the gospel of God's love in Christ. He spoke plainly of the hope that is to be found in Jesus Christ, showed profound compassion for those who are poor and marginalised, and gave particular emphasis to God's demand for global justice. Through his papacy, Francis has fostered an openness to Christians sharing together in the Church's life and mission, in ways which have broken new ground for the Catholic Church. In all these ways, for many Methodists Pope Francis's witness to the Christian faith holds a special resonance, and his loss is deeply felt.

The Revd Matthew Laferty, Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome, said: *Pope Francis was a man of deep Christian faith, clear conviction, and prayer. His ministry extended beyond the Catholic Church as he sought to pray and work for the unity of all Christians. Pope Francis challenged and inspired Methodists and Catholics to move beyond ecumenical dialogue to be a pilgrim people walking and working together, particularly in care of creation, migration, and human fraternity. He called the Church universal and all the world to live as Jesus Christ—in holiness and in loving the poor and the marginalised.*

The Revd Ruth Gee, former President of the Methodist Conference and current Co-Chair of the British Methodist-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission, shares the following reflection:

*When Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope on 13 March 2013 he chose Francis as his Papal name. This was a clear indication of the emphases on service of people living in poverty, humility, and concern for creation, that would characterise his papacy. There was a further indication of these emphases on his first appearance as Pope on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica. He wore a simple white cassock and the iron pectoral cross he had worn as archbishop.*

*In the years following his election Pope Francis wrote and spoke about the Christian vocation to serve. He challenged world leaders when they did not recognise the obligation to serve*

*Methodist Church on the death of Pope France continued.*

These among many characteristics of his papacy endeared Pope Francis to people around the world including those of other Christian churches and other faiths. His commitment to ecumenism and to interreligious dialogue has been evident, not least in the good relationship with the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome (MEOR). Pope Francis has often been pictured talking and laughing with the Revd Matthew Laferty, Director of MEOR, representing the world-wide Methodist Church on official occasions in the Vatican.

There are many reasons to thank God for the ministry of Pope Francis, not because he has been perfect, but because he has seen himself as a servant of God and a servant of those with whom he has sought to share God's love.

The humility which was evident in his inauguration will also be evident in his funeral which has been simplified at his request. Pope Francis will be buried in a simple wooden casket in a location outside the Vatican. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.



2014 Pastoral Visit of Pope Francis to Korea Closing Mass for Asian Youth Day. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope\\_Francis\\_Korea\\_Haemi\\_Castle\\_19.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pope_Francis_Korea_Haemi_Castle_19.jpg)



## PRAYER CORNER

A prayer following the death of Pope Francis..

Almighty God, we thank you that you continue to call disciples to represent you on earth. We recognise this call in the life, faith and ministry of Pope Francis.

We give thanks for the unique gifts with which you blessed him for this task, and for his obedience in fulfilling all that you asked of him.

Thank you for receiving Francis into the eternal home that you have been preparing for him.

We pray that all who mourn his loss will be comforted and for the Conclave that will elect his successor.

We hold before you the Roman Catholic Church and pray that we might continue to work together for the unity of your Church and for peace, justice and compassion in your world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/news/a-statement-on-the-death-of-his-holiness-pope-francis/>*

God of all understanding,  
the more I learn about your holy justice  
the more I realise that even my prayers can be  
riddled with sin.

In praying for other people  
I have thought that I know best what they need. I have taken the seat  
of judgement and found others wanting.

I have not challenged the ground  
of my own understanding, allowing prejudice and stereotypes  
to flourish unchecked.

Forgive me.

Help me to kneel before your throne of grace with both confidence  
and humility.

Remind me to leave the judging and directing to you.

Enable me to pray for others not by way of the gulfs that divide us  
but via the love in which you hold us all in common, revealed to us in  
Jesus. Amen.

*Rachel Parkinson, District Chair, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District*

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## TICKETS LAUNCH MONDAY 21 APRIL

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**SUBSIDISED - £25**

**GENERAL ADMISSION FOR UNDER 18 - £10**  
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(residential and non-residential)  
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*Flourish*  
a diverse all-age festival



*\*plus online booking fee*