



Methodist Post

Boston Spa • Clifford • Bramham

July/August 2017

Cover photo: The familiar picture is of Fountains Abbey near Ripon.

Founded by a group of disillusioned Benedictine monks from York who felt that life in their monastery was too slack, they arrived in the wild valley of the river Skell on Boxing Day 1132. A year later they applied successfully, to join the Cistercians from Burgundy and after great struggles, fortified by much prayer and hard work, they became one of the largest Abbeys in Europe where they followed the strict Rules of St Benedict. In 1539, the Abbott surrendered the now wealthy monastery to Henry VIII.

(For a potted history see Wikipedia.)

Arthur Faulkner



If your plans don't work out, don't worry, God has better ones...



Ideas and contributions for future issues of the Methodist Post always welcome.

For the September issue, please send copy to: jovernon1@gmail.com by 10th August. Thank you.



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REGISTERED GAS SAFE

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

The weekend prior to writing this newsletter I returned from holiday in Seahouses feeling relaxed and content, only to find myself just a few hours later reeling with horror and shock as the events in London played out on our television screens.

My thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected by the attacks over the past few months, both directly and indirectly, as we and they come to terms with such senseless acts of violence.

From my perspective, one of the most important things to remember is that these attacks are against our way of life and are totally indiscriminate in nature. They affect people of all faiths and of none, seeking to separate us from one another, and to cause friction and fear of the other in our communities;

It is concerning that following on from each of the attacks the rise in what can only be regarded as racist propaganda has been widely shared on social media, and indeed is reflected by certain politicians and other agencies. Blaming whole communities, or whole religions, or immigrants is not right. To treat people in this way flies in the face of our beliefs as Christians.

On the Sunday evening following the attack, I watched the concert organised by Ariane Grande to raise money for those effected by the Manchester terror attack; this was the complete antithesis to racial comments being promulgated.

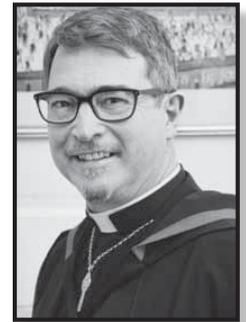
The whole concert was an outpouring of joy, healing and love, and, as one friend of mine pointed out, it was something more akin to worship than anything that goes on in some churches!

The songs and comments of those performing reflected the emotions of many of those there, asking them to stand together united against terrorism, not to be afraid and not to look back in anger.

In the middle of that concert Justin Bieber, choking back tears, reminded everyone in attendance those watching at home, and around the world, that God will never leave or forsake us, and that He is our protection – even when the world is not safe. “God is good in the midst of the darkness. God is good in the midst of evil. God is in the midst; no matter what is happening in the world God is in the midst. And he loves you, and He’s here for you.”

Co-incidentally that Sunday was also the celebration of Pentecost. A time when we celebrate the Holy Spirit being poured out upon God’s disciples and when, in an instant, they were changed people – no longer fearful, no longer timid and no longer hiding behind closed doors. They became bold and fearless; bearing witness and giving testimony to the wonderful things that God had done

The thing that strikes me most is how the Spirit drove those disciples out into the world, out into the market place to where the people were. That Pentecost event changed the world as well; it was not just for the disciples. We are reminded that the



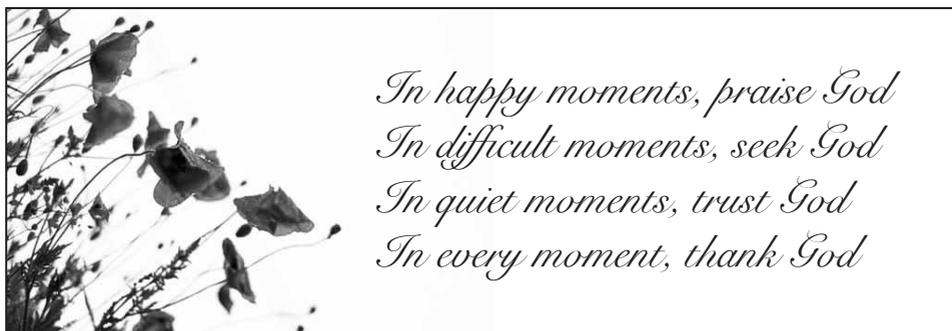
Spirit drives us out into the community; yes of course the Spirit is with us in church, constantly moulding us into God's people, but she is also very active outside of our churches' four walls, continuing to change the world.

The results of the General Election have created an instability in this country that we have not seen for many years. All this has exacerbated the concerns over the impending 'Brexit' negotiations and all the change that will bring about, whilst on the world stage we are facing more major issues and complex situations. But let us not despair, for we have good news for all and the power and presence of God's Spirit. As we allow the Spirit to change us within church, let us also allow the Spirit to send us out into the wider world.

For the sake of our communities and all people, in the power of the Holy Spirit, may we not be afraid – may we bring love light, healing, hope and peace to all.

Every Blessing

Steve



Boston Spa Methodist Church – Regular Bookings

(Events in italics are outside groups)



Monday	3.15pm	Ping Pong Club
	5.00pm	Senior Table Tennis
	7.00pm	Yoga
Tuesday	4.45pm	<i>Rainbows; 6pm Brownies; 7.30pm Senior Section</i>
Wednesday	9.30-11.00	Busy Bees for pre-school children and their carers
	1.00pm	<i>Upholstery Group</i>
	7.30pm	Yoga
Thursday	9.15am	<i>Pilates</i>
	11.00am	Yoga
	1.00pm	<i>Upholstery Group</i>
Saturday	10am-Noon	'Drop In' for Tea or Coffee



Diary Dates

July

Sunday 2nd	10.30am	Morning Worship, led by Mrs Heather Shipman
	6.00pm	United Communion Service, Revd Steve Jakeman
Tuesday 4th	7.30pm	MWiB – Tadcaster Circuit AGM, East Keswick
Sunday 9th	10.30am	Communion Service, led by Revd Ken Marshall
Fri 14th/Sun 16th		Boston Spa Festival Weekend (see pp.13-15)
Friday 14th	12 noon	Light lunches to be served prior to...
	1.00pm	Lunchtime Concert (see p.11)
	2.00pm	Official opening of the Festival Weekend
Saturday 15th	10am-5.30pm	'Talented Boston' Exhibition and Sale
	11.45-2pm	Literary Lunch
Sunday 16th	10.30am	Festival Songs of Praise, led by Mrs Molly Fowler
	3.00pm	All Creatures Great and Small Pet Service, led by Revd Steve Jakeman
Tuesday 18th	10.30am	Evergreens Luncheon Club
Sunday 23rd	10.30am	Morning Worship, led by Revd Uell Kennedy
Sunday 30th	10.30am	Morning Worship, led by Dr Alan Bell

August

Sunday 6th	10.30am	Morning Worship, led by Revd Steve Jakeman with Mrs Jean Walne as Worship Leader
	6.00pm	Communion Service, led by Revd Mark Stennett
Wednesday 9th	7.00pm	Sacred Space (see p.16)
Sunday 13th	10.30am	Communion Service, led by Revd Gordon Shaw
Sunday 20th	10.30am	Morning Worship, led by Mr Dennis Ashton with Mrs Molly Fowler as Worship Leader
	6.00pm	United Service at Wetherby, led by Revd Steve Jakeman
Wednesday 23rd	7.00pm	Sacred Space (see p.16)
Sunday 27th	10.30am	Jazz Service, led by Revd Steve Jakeman with Jeff and Anne Barnhart, from the USA
	4.00pm	Ashville College Harrogate – Afternoon tea prior to...
	5.00pm	New District Inauguration Service + Induction Service for Revd Leslie Newton as Chair of the Yorkshire North & East District

Boston Spa Church Rotas – July

	Door Stewards	Flowers	Church Stewards
2nd	Ken & Judith Grimditch	Jackie Marsden	Barbara Hudson Jean Walne
9th	Chris & Diana Mellor	Eve Goodison	Pauline O'Melia Joan Dyer
16th	Carmen & Dennis Ashton	Judith Grimditch	Bob Hutchinson Barbara Hudson
23rd	Jo & Iain Vernon	Mary Ibbotson	Heather Grant Bob Hutchinson
30th	Gordon & Shirley Hurren	Frank Holliday	Joan Dyer Pauline O'Melia

Saturday Coffee	
1st	Mike & Jean Walne
8th	Angela Coleman Barbara Hudson
15th	Heather Grant
22nd	Brian & Jackie Marsden
29th	Mike & Jean Walne

Sunday Coffee	
2nd	Men's Group
9th	Julie Thompson, Val Woodhams
16th	Bob & Wendy Wade
23rd	Ursula Turner, Eva Mills
30th	David & Barbara Parrott

Busy Bees	
5th	Jackie Faulkner
12th	Judith Grimditch
19th	Wendy Wade
26th	Christine Mitchell

Cleaning	
19 June-2 July	Les Kellett Sheila Anderson
3-16 July	Anne & David Hovell
17-30 July	Jo & Iain Vernon

Boston Spa Church Rotas – August

	Door Stewards	Flowers	Church Stewards
6th	Joy & Les Ackroyd	Norman Thomas	Barbara Hudson Bob Hutchinson
13th	Molly Fowler	Shirley Hurren	Jean Walne Heather Grant
20th	Jean Walne Sheila Anderson	Norma Davies	Bob Hutchinson Pauline O'Melia
27th	Les Kellett	Barbara Hudson	Joan Dyer Jean Walne

Saturday Coffee	
5th	Angela Coleman Barbara Hudson
12th	Heather Grant
19th	Brian & Jackie Marsden
26th	Mike & Jean Walne

Sunday Coffee	
6th	Ken & Judith Grimditch
13th	Mike & Jean Henzell
20th	John & Barbara Hudson, Joy Ackroyd
27th	Jean Walne, Sheila Anderson Jackie Marsden
3 Sep	Bob & Sheila Humphreys

Cleaning	
31 July-13 Aug	Heather & Claire Grant
14-27 Aug	Judith & Ken Grimditch
28 Aug-3 Sep	Bob Hutchinson, Wendy Wade

Birthday Greetings



Children

July: 30th Hugh Williams

August: 9th Hannah Kilvington, 28th Emma Williams

Women's Friendship Group

July: 3rd Heather Grant, 23rd Doreen Briggs,
24th Jean Henzell, 27th Marian Lord

(No August birthdays)

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A. J. Morgan, B.Sc., M.C.Optom.

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The church is a bit tucked away at the end of Nursery Way, or from the High Street, where a blue noticeboard points the way

Services

2nd July	10.30am	Revd Steve Barlow
9th July	10.30am	Revd Steve Jakeman – Contemporary Service, All Age
16th July	10.30am	Revd Gordon Shaw – Holy Communion
23rd July	10.30am	Mr Terry Smart
30th July	10.30am	Mr Dennis Ashton
6th August	10.30am	Revd Uell Kennedy
13th August	10.30am	Revd Steve Jakeman – Café style worship
20th August	10.30am	Revd Ken Marshall – Holy Communion
27th August	10.30am	Revd Dr Colin Cheeseman

July

	Door Stewards	Flowers	Vestry
2nd	Alison Smith	Carol Smith	Michael Whaley
9th	Catherine Catton/Ros McCall	Margaret Suggate	Carol Smith
16th	Carol Smith/Margaret Suggate	Mavis Rodgers	Alison Smith
23rd	Hazel Greenwood/Julie Norman	Hazel Greenwood	David Barrow
30th	Catherine Catton/Alison Smith	Catherine Catton	Jason Turner
Schoolroom cleaning – David Barrow			

August

	Door Stewards	Flowers	Vestry
6th	Julie Norman/Ros McCall	Ros McCall	David Mountain
13th	Hazel Greenwood/Alison Smith	Alison Smith	Carol Smith
20th	Catherine Catton	Joyce Forth	Michael Whaley
27th	Carol Smith/Margaret Suggate	Carol Smith	Alison Smith
Schoolroom cleaning – Carol Smith			



July birthdays
Catherine Catton, Sheila Kew, Gordon Shaw, Mike Suggate, David Ainstey, Irene Haigh

August birthdays
Joyce Forth, Mary Ford, Katy Biercamp, Julie Ainsty, Stuart Haigh

Songs from the Shows & Afternoon Tea

On Sunday 14 May we all got together for the singing of some fantastic songs from a variety of West End shows led by Kathryn, Steve and Sue. Thanks to Alena Panesenka (who plays for the Northern Ballet) for our musical accompaniment.



Michael Whaley enjoying the tea



Catherine Catton and Julie Norman preparing the Afternoon Tea

A fantastic afternoon tea was served – even with 'posh' china cups, saucers and plates. Grateful thanks to all our ladies who helped with preparation and serving on the day. A sum of £235 was raised for church funds.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ANNUAL STRAWBERRY TEA will be held on Sunday 2 July 3-5pm in the Schoolroom. This is always a lovely event (particularly if the sun shines) so you can obtain a ticket for £5 from any Steward or ring Carol on 842404.

HARVEST FESTIVAL SERVICE is on Sunday 10 September at 10.30am. Our preacher will be Revd Steve Barlow. Please bring along all the usual Harvest gifts.

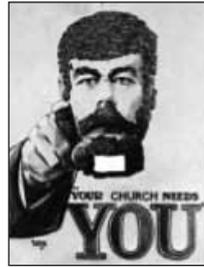
HARVEST SUPPER is the following evening, Monday 11 September, 6pm for 6.30pm start. This takes the form of a Faith Meal so please let Kathryn Whaley know what you are able to bring along. There is no charge for this evening but a donation is requested and this will be sent to the Circuit charity – details to follow. There will also be some entertainment on the evening but this is still being finalised.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Faith gives you an inner strength and a sense of balance and perspective in life.
Gregory Peck

Your Church Needs You!

On Sunday 11th June, Boston Spa Methodist Church held its Annual Church Meeting. This was the yearly opportunity for those connected with the church, and indeed for those not connected in any particular way, to meet together and to talk about our church – what you like, what you dislike, where you would like to see the church going, what you would like to see the church doing – a chance to have your say.



It is also the time when the Stewards and congregational representatives to the Church Council are elected.

Apart from those who have an interest because they let the premises for community use, there are over 200 people who are either members of Boston Spa Methodist Church or have close connections with the church. It was therefore very disappointing that only 30 people considered it important to attend and show an interest in their church.

Understandably some of the 200 were either on holiday, or unwell, or for other reasons unable to attend; but it is discouraging that only a small percentage showed an interest in how their church is faring.

We have come through a period when the focus has been inwards on the building project which, understandably, has required energies to be focussed on it. We now come to a point where we, as a church, need to start looking outward, to build relationships with, and to spread the message of the love of God out to, the wider community. But to do this we need people to commit to their church; both in terms of stepping up to help organise events etc. and financially.

We have a good number of people who readily offer their services to help with church activities but it always falls on the same few to actually organise things – the few who, to be frank, are tired and weary but still forge on. So, we need people not only with the ideas and vision but also who are willing to organise and run an event or initiative; not necessarily on their own but willing to join with others in the organisation i.e. not just turning up on the day to help (although that, of course, is still very much appreciated).

One particular position for which we are looking for someone to fulfil is that of Bookings/Lettings Secretary. Anne Hovell has been in this role now for several decades and feels that it is time for someone else to take this on. With the advent of the new facilities this role has taken on a particular importance as we seek to increase the community use of the building. Anne is very happy to talk to anyone who is interested in this key post and to show them what it entails. If you feel that God is calling you to consider this, please pray about it and speak to Anne.

Financially our church is not in a good place – and yes, some of this has not been helped by fundraising energies being focussed on the building project (for which we still



need to find around £20,000). However, fundraising aside, the general, weekly, giving has fallen in real terms. Our church costs around £55,000 per year to run and is not able to pay its way as things stand; indeed, there was a shortfall of some £6500 which required us to cut into our reserves leaving them somewhat depleted. Your church cannot survive at this rate. Something has to be done in order to fulfil the vision that God has given us for the building to be a place where Church and community meet and from where the message of God's grace can be taken out to our community.

Yes, there are things that can be done by the Church Council to improve the income for our church, such as sorting out the letting or sale of the cottage and looking at ways to increase the letting income from our church building; but we also need to look at our giving, where we are able. Of the 200 people with close connections there will be, of course, those who are already giving all they can financially, but it is a fact that our church would be brought back 'into the black' as it were if each of us could see our way to increase our giving by, say, just £5 per month.

For the future of our church, you are urged to consider how you might be able to contribute either using your talents, your time, or increasing your giving financially, or all of these. Thank you.



The Lunchtime Concert will take place
on Friday, 14th July at 1 pm.

Light lunches will be served from noon.

Concert admission is £5.

The much-loved singer, Emma James, will entertain us. Emma's professionalism and her warm personality make her a firm favourite with our audiences and, whatever the weather, she will brighten the day.

Please come and join us for this special concert to celebrate the Boston Spa Festival.



Our next lunchtime concert will be held on Friday 8th September, when we welcome Sarah Ridy – baroque harp.

Check our website for further details of all of our concerts:

www.bostonspamethodistchurch.org.uk

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Boston Spa Festival (including Open Gardens)

Friday 14th to Sunday 16th July

This year the 2nd Boston Spa Festival will take place on the above dates, building on last year's success.

The scarecrow trail, which was a great hit last year, will appear again and the theme this year is 'Characters in Children's Stories'. It would be great to have a scarecrow in the competition this year, and therefore if you are interested in creating a scarecrow please see me by 12th June as entries must be in by the 23rd June. Scarecrows will go on display on 7th July.

For us, the Festival proper starts on the Friday with the Methodist Church Lunchtime Concert, featuring Emma James, taking place at the usual time of 1pm. Prior to that, of course, our famous lunches will be served from mid-day in the Wesley Room. Tickets for the concert £5 on the door.

This year's theme for our church, is 'Talented Boston'; this event will open at 2pm, as the concert ends, so please pop in and have a look, enjoy a cuppa and a piece of cake. We shall also have a cake stall, and perhaps some plants will be available on the Friday and the Saturday. If you can't make it Friday, we will be open Saturday all day. We are looking for individuals to display their talents, artwork, knitting, wood carving, dressmaking, homemade marmalade and chutneys etc. So, if you are interested please speak to me and we can discuss where and how you can put up a display, and sell items if you wish.

At lunchtime on the Saturday we are hosting a 'Literary Lunch', tickets cost £7 to include your lunch; tickets available through Yeadon's, or speak to me to book a place. The authors present will be: Richard Newman, (A Nun's Story), Ken Melber, (A Brush with Chaos), and Gill Belchetz, (A Game of Consequences). Tickets will be limited so please book early.

On Sunday, we will be celebrating with a special Songs of Praise at 10:30am, and in the afternoon, we will be holding our very first Pet Service, at 3pm. All creatures, great and small, are welcome!

There are lots going on over the three days of the Festival; something to suit everyone from Open Gardens on the Sunday to a conducted Heritage Walk, and classic cars. A variety of music is being performed throughout the weekend and there will be a wide variety of food on offer.

Look out for the programme, and come and sample the delights on offer; looking forward to seeing you there.

See following pages for further information

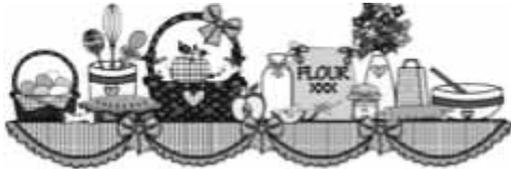


Sue Jakeman

'Talented Boston'

Saturday 15th July, 10am - 5.30pm

an exhibition displaying the work of local artists and artisans



Refreshments served throughout the day

Come and meet our Scarecrow
(and maybe take a 'selfie' with him?)

FESTIVAL EVENTS AT BOSTON SPA METHODIST CHURCH

LITERARY LUNCH

Saturday 15th July, 11.45am - 2.00pm

Tickets £7 to include lunch

available from:

Yeadon's or Sue Jakeman (01937 842156)

Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Our authors are:

Gill Belchetz: A Game of Consequences

Ken Melber: A Brush with Chaos

Richard Newman: A Nun's Story



'Songs of Praise'

Sunday 16th July at 10.30am

a celebration of your favourite hymns and songs



Everyone is welcome to join in!

FESTIVAL EVENTS AT BOSTON SPA METHODIST CHURCH

'All Creatures Great and Small'

Sunday 16th July at 3pm

a worship service of celebration and blessing for our animal friends



Everyone is welcome to bring their pet dogs on a lead, please – other pets in suitable cages, baskets or another receptacle
Owners are responsible for keeping their pet under control at all times and for clearing up any little messes which may happen.



Wednesday Evening Reflective Worship – ‘Sacred Space’

What will it be like?

A quiet, reflective service in the heart of your busy week

When is it?

Second and fourth Wednesdays, 7pm for half an hour.

Starting on 9th August

Perhaps it would be best described as a quiet time or a gentle act of worship, rather than a ‘service’. There’s no sermon and no singing. Usually there will be two or three pieces of music – these will vary from soothing instrumentals to sacred songs; Henry Purcell or John Rutter for example, or maybe something Celtic/folky; there might even be a bit of Mozart in there.

There will be prayer, a Bible reading, sometimes a meditation or a poem; and always a few minutes of silence.

We will meet in the Sanctuary; although we could meet in a smaller room, the sense of God’s presence in the Sanctuary adds to the reflective nature of the service.

Go on, find that half hour to come along. It’s a breathing space in the week and, more importantly, it’s another way to encounter God.

Sue Jakeman



Spring Fayre held on 3rd June

First time in Wetherby and our ladies rallied round to the call (supported by our gentlemen, of course).

The hall looked inviting with garlands. All the stalls were well-stocked with goodies, and oh! the fantastic array of cakes (Mary Berry eat your heart out).

If only more people knew of our ladies waiting to serve those inviting light lunches followed by scones or cakes. I think we can say this was a success, and once we are renowned for our know-how, people will be queuing out of the door!! Well done to everyone who helped to raise our “banner” high.

A welcome £500+ for church funds and charities.

Congratulations are in order.

Joy Ackroyd



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Development Fund and Church Finances

As we approach the end of the church’s financial year on 31st August it is appropriate to review our finances.

We have completed the building development and we can feel proud of what we have achieved.

With the sale of the land, a high level of grants received and our own fund raising and gifts we have raised over £700,000. However we still have a shortfall of £20,000.

In addition to the Development Fund shortfall of £20,000 our Church accounts will show a considerable deficit resulting in no reserves left at the end of the year.

We need to spend some money on the cottage in the short term to be able to re let and bring in some useful income.

We are kept afloat by a loan from the circuit which will need repaying.

Therefore we urgently need to seek increased collections, donations and fund raising efforts and we ask everyone who is able to help.

Ken Grimditch

Supporting Homeless and Itinerant Friends

There have been a number of conversations recently throughout the circuit about how best we can support homeless and itinerant people who visit our churches. We have been supported in those conversations by specialists in safeguarding and experts from organisations who support the homeless and have many years of experience and a wealth of knowledge and good advice. In discussing this topic we have realised that there are a number of different, and sometimes conflicting, issues involved, including reaching out in a way that is right for our Christian principles and beliefs, giving appropriate immediate support, giving long term advice and support and keeping ourselves and our church safe. The following advice has resulted from those discussions and is offered to all who use our church.

As Christians we want to do all that we can to help those people who are less fortunate than ourselves. An immediate first response is to show those who come to our church a Christian welcome, to love and respect them as individuals and to be prepared to listen to them in a non-judgemental way, probably over a cup of coffee.

There are many organisations to whom we can signpost people for the specific help that they need; your minister and stewards will have details and contacts for these. Such organisations can give the right help in the right way and are trained to deal with any other issues that might subsequently arise.

It is very tempting to give money to a hungry person, but we cannot be sure that the money will be used for the intended purpose. As a circuit, we strongly advise people NEVER to give money in any circumstances. Instead we could take them to a café and buy them a meal or buy them some food from the shop. It may be appropriate to give some clothing to a person who doesn't have enough, but we must take care that we do not give so much that it supports a lifestyle of dependence as this is not the best way to help in the longer term.

There may be an occasional case where this seems inadequate and there appears to be an immediate need for more material help. If this were to happen, refer the case to the circuit ministers or lay pastor who would be able to give additional support following agreed guidance on benevolence. They would be pleased to help.

Whilst we come across a number of people who benefit from our support, there have been occasions where the church has been seen as a "soft touch" and we have been given misinformation deliberately in order to receive gifts or money. We sometimes meet people who have such complex issues that what appears to be a simple act of kindness could lead us into a position of vulnerability either immediately or in the longer term. In order to keep yourself and your church family safe at all times, you are strongly advised:

- Never to be alone with a homeless or itinerant person;
- Never give your home address or the address of any other church family member (including the minister) to such a person;
- Never give an unknown person a lift in your car except in extreme circumstances and then only provided you have a friend or colleague as a passenger with you.

Your safety and that of fellow church users is important as we go about our outreach work.

Contact telephone numbers for advice and in case of need are:

Minister: **Steve Jakeman – 01937 842156**

Superintendent Minister: **Steve Barlow – 01937 582854**

Circuit Safeguarding Officer: **Marion Davies – 01937 583126**

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Change and decay?

Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost, is different from most other special Sundays in the church calendar because it doesn't mark the celebration of a particular event like Easter or Pentecost; rather it's a chance to reflect on how our experience of God in the church and in daily living is the solid foundation of our belief, the bringing together of a number of key pieces of our understanding about life. But more of that later.

The last few weeks have seen a number of unexpected events which have carried us into a new kind and a new level of uncertainty about important aspects of our life together in society. The terrorist attacks in Manchester and London could easily make us look over our shoulders in public, and question things we took for granted as normal aspects of living together with our neighbours, known and unknown. The General Election produced an unexpected result, in that we now have a minority government with an uncertain future and which must nevertheless begin Brexit negotiations with our European counterparts within days. Uncertainty can breed doubt, and doubt anxiety. By the time this item comes into print many things may have changed again. Where are the certainties?

On Trinity Sunday we celebrate what we know and believe about God. All of that is summed up in the blessing we know so well and use at the end of our services. We are alive in an incredible and inexplicable universe. How, when and why did it begin and what lies beyond it? We believe in a creator God who creates out of love and loves his creation. But he doesn't just create a world and leave it to go its own way; he came to us and still comes to us in Jesus. And the spirit of God – the Holy Spirit – still comes to live in everyone who trusts in Jesus and tries to live for him. So we meet God day by day in the circumstances of our own lives and in others. We meet him in the church and in the world. He is one God experienced in three ways.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

Dennis

A prayer following the General Election...

Lord of all,

Amid the uncertainty of these results,

We thank you for the democracy we have in this country.

We ask that you grant to all those who have been elected the wisdom and compassion needed to govern.

May this become a society in which all people are enabled to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

Help us to play our part in building that society by holding those elected to account and by working with them towards the common good.

And Lord, today as always we pray for justice; justice in the here and now and justice in our shared future – oceans of justice.

Amen.

Methodist Joint Public Issues Team

Methodist President and Vice-President for 2017/18



The Methodist Conference has elected the Revd Loraine N Mellor to be President and Jill Baker to be Vice-President. Both will start their year of office when the Representative Session of the Methodist Conference meets in Birmingham in June 2017. They will succeed the current President and Vice-President, the Revd Dr Roger Walton and Rachel Lampard.

"I want to encourage and enable the Church to put God back on the agenda in our communities and enthuse people to share the Good News. The Church has reached a tipping point, the time has come for us to take some risks in our mission and in our discipleship in order to help us grow", said Mrs Mellor.

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Timothy Dudley-Smith

– exceptional hymnwriter with no ear for music!

This month I have selected hymns of Timothy Dudley-Smith, another well-known modern hymnwriter who has made an enormous impact to our church worship through his exceptional poetry. (There are nine of his hymns in StF.)

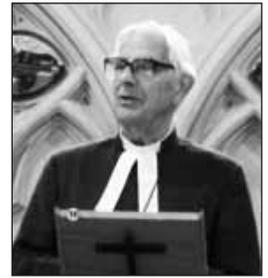
Timothy Dudley-Smith was born in 1926 in Manchester, educated at Tonbridge School and Pembroke College, Cambridge. He served as Archdeacon of Norwich (1973-81), and was Bishop of Thetford (1981-91), retiring in 1991, and now lives in Salisbury. He wrote many of his hymn texts during his holidays in Cornwall. [He has published over 300 hymn texts.]

Hymn writing came almost by accident, when he was reading a review copy of the New English Bible in 1961. The translators had begun the Magnificat, the song of Mary in St Luke's Gospel, with *'Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord'*. To Dudley-Smith's ear this line fell into a rhythm that he instinctively felt, and the result was a hymn that rang round the world. It still remains a favourite of many today. In researching his background I learned that Dudley-Smith has freely admitted that he has no ear for music, and so he thought that hymn writing would never be possible for that reason, but clearly a love of words (hope for me then!!).

For the past 50 years then, he has become, almost certainly, one of the best writers and in 1967, was invited to write a hymn for the centenary service of The Scripture Union. The hymn, *'Lord for the years your love has kept and guided'*, is often used as one of commemoration for the work of God in our own lives, but also reflecting on the word of God in the Bible, our land today, and our world in its pain. It is set to a lovely tune by Michael Baughen, also a retired Anglican Bishop and accomplished composer of hymn music. Another one of my favourites is *'I lift my eyes to the quiet hills'*, based on Psalm 121, was written in 1968, to the tune, Davos, also composed by Michael Baughen [note – this hymn is not in StF]. If you look closely at the words he has written, many of the hymns like the one quoted above are based on the Psalms. Another example, the hymn, *'Safe in the shadow of the Lord'* (StF 509) is based on Psalm 91. One of Dudley-Smith's own favourites, *'The stars declare his glory'*, based on Psalm 19 does not appear in many new hymn books but is included in The Church of Scotland Church Hymnary, 4th edition.

The Hymn Society of the United States and Canada has named him a 'Fellow', a rare accomplishment for a British hymn writer. In 2003 he was awarded an OBE 'for services to hymnody', and in 2009 an honorary Doctor of Divinity (DD) from the University of Durham.

His hymns, are constantly setting our faith into the context of our current situation, providing a Christian response to the difficulties of belief today. It is widely acknowledged by many of his contemporaries that his hymns are true to human nature and respond to human need, our imperfections, and speak to us of forgiveness and hope.



Jim Murison

Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan – Part 6

'Vanity all is vanity'

Despite the brave pair of inhabitants of the town, *Vanity* where Christian & Faithful were being wrongfully accused of causing a hubub at the fair, they were dragged through the town, beaten and thrust into the prison where they were put in the stocks. Here they received much abuse but remembering the words of Evangelist who had warned them that things were not going to be easy they, with great determination, resolved even more to accept the situation with fortitude.

In due course, they were brought before Judge *Hategood* to be condemned as *enemies to and disturbers of trade* contrary to the laws of the town sanctioned by their ruler Beelzebub. Witnesses were called for and three, Envy, Superstition and Pickthank stepped forward and were duly sworn in. Each made false and vile accusations after which Faithful asked that he might speak whereupon Judge *Hategood* offered to show leniency by having the pair executed immediately in order to demonstrate his own gentleness of spirit!

Faithful then turned faced the judge and in a gentle manner offered their defence, denying the accusations and saying that the rulers of the town operated in a manner directly opposed to Christian conduct, that they showed no signs of being faithful to God and that the Prince of the town was fit only to rule over Hell.

At this the judge, without any further discussion called for the jury and with obvious prejudice instructed them to make their decision as to whether to hang or save Faithful. Each spoke in turn making vile comment and when the last, a *Mr Implacable* had spoken the Judge ordered that Faithful be put to death in the cruelest manner ever devised. And so it was that in his dream, Faithful was cruelly slashed, beaten, stoned and burned whilst tied to a pole, but in his dream Bunyan, the author of this narrative, saw that Faithful was taken up to heaven in a chariot and in great triumph. Christian was remanded in the jail but was miraculously rescued by God and sent on his way singing praises to the Lord.

As he walked Christian was joined by one called Hopeful who having seen the fortitude with which Christian and the martyred Faithful had borne their trial, felt that they were worthy and that Christian would be an excellent companion as he too journeyed towards the Celestial City. Another who said his name was *Byends* asked to join them and on being warned by Christian that the route would not be easy and demanded obedience to the 'way of the Lord' said that he was confident that the way which he had always followed was quite sufficient in itself and that he intended to stay with it. Upon hearing this, the two declined his offer to join them.

The departure of Hopeful, was marked by the arrival of the elderly *Mr Hold-The-World* who wished to ask Christian a question which had previously been asked of Mr *Byends* and two of his companions called *Moneylove* and *Saveall* and to which Mr *Moneylove* had answered thus: 'If a man sees the prospect of great advantage to him but which demands that he adopt, at least in appearance, some tenet of religious

belief which is quite foreign to him, can he not engage himself zealously in pursuit of this aim and still remain a righteous person? And, said *Moneylove*, if a poor tradesman sees an opportunity to gain wealth by adopting religion, is this not acceptable within the true faith? For instance, if by becoming religious he should marry a rich wife, I see that this would be quite acceptable for, he hastened to say, becoming religious and marrying wealth are not evil in themselves, so surely the man is justified even if he takes interest in the faith for this purpose alone'.

This argument Mr *Hold-the-world* put before Christian who pointed out that to follow Christ for bread was *unlawful* in God's eyes (John VI), then to pretend to follow simply for monetary gain was a complete *abomination*. 'Did not Hamor and Sechem lust over the daughter and cattle of Jacob so much that they underwent circumcision?' continued Christian (Genesis XXXIV vv20-23) and 'did not the Pharisees pray in public just to be seen'? By these and further examples did Christian draw upon from the scriptures to conclude that to act falsely by whatever means is both '*heathenish, hypocritical and devilish* and will be rewarded according to what you have done'.

Hopeful was delighted at Christian's answer to the conundrum but *Byends* and his friends were speechless which caused Christian to remark that they were silenced and would in due course be rebuked. Leaving them standing there, the two Pilgrims set off towards the gentle plain called *Ease* where one named *Demas* called them aside and offered to take them to a mine where they might dig and find great quantities of silver. But Christian called back that he would not stray from the right path as he knew that it was the way of destruction and shortly after speaking thus, there came along *Byend* and his friends who, in predictable fashion, turned off and hastily made for the mine and its anticipated wealth.

Continuing on their journey the two companions came upon a strange sight just beyond the plain for there, upon a rock, stood a monument, a column which took the form of a woman. Hopeful gazed at it in wonderment and espied writing which he could not read but knowing his friend to be learned he asked of him as to what was the meaning thereof. Christian gazed at the wording and proclaimed that it said "*Remember Lot's wife*". 'This must be the Pillar of Salt referred to in Genesis,' they said, 'and is surely a warning to us not to look back nor aside but to keep our eyes fixed upon our ultimate goal, the Celestial City.'

Presently they came upon a tranquil river where they drank of its refreshing waters reminding themselves that in the Psalms this was the *River of God* and in Revelation, the *water of life*. The waters, being flanked by many trees which carried not only fruit but also leaves to act as salvers both of which they did eat in order to regain their strength and to guard against ills that might otherwise beset them. Here they did rest for a few days and when fully refreshed and with joyful and thankful hearts did continue on their way until they came to a meadow called *Bypath* and at which point they had to make a decision as to whether or not to step over the stile and into the lush pasture.

*Condensed from an 1851 copy of the original (Pub: David Bogue. London)
Arthur Faulkner*

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