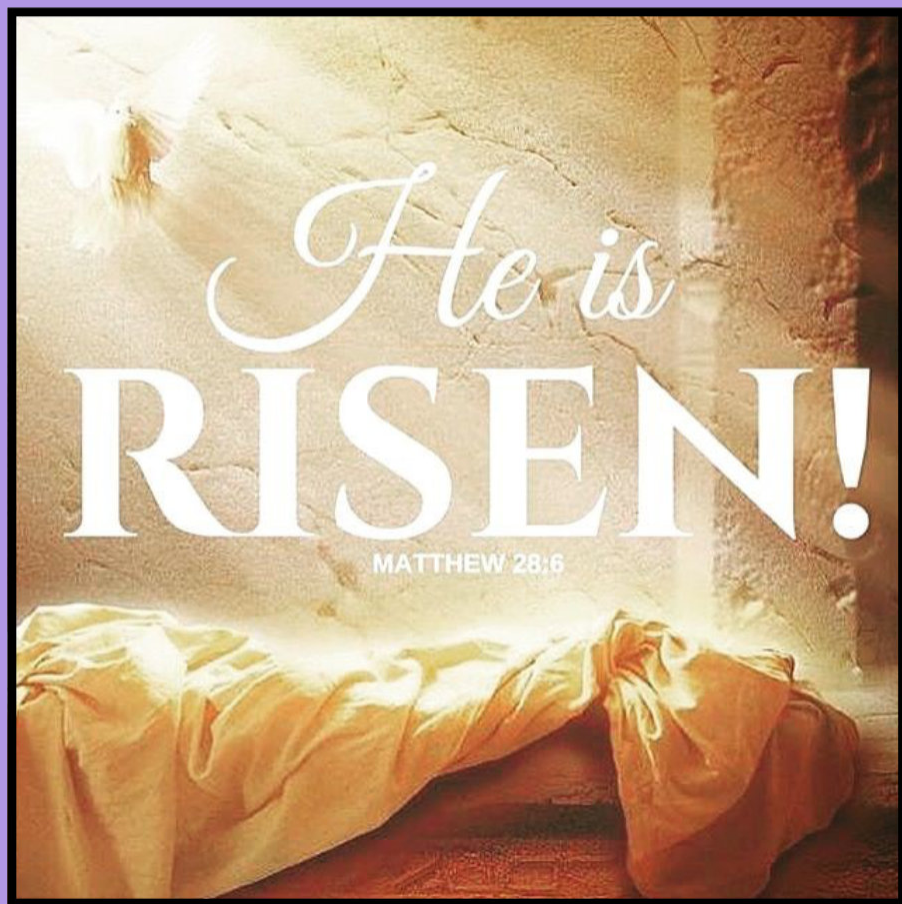


MEMO

Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Outburst

MARCH — MAY 2022



FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

This time last year the editorial started with something along the lines of ‘who would have thought we would still have Covid 19 around’. Yet here we are in the grip of the virus variants with Omicron transmitting quickly and BA2 in the offing. However, it is something we are learning to live with and adapt to.

It is good to be able to have church services again even if it is for a shorter length of time. It’s good to sing hymns again and catch up with others. It’s good that we have groups back in our church premises. Just that little bit more towards normality!

This quarter sees us ponder a variety of ‘events’ including the solemnity of Lent, the sadness and joy of Easter, Mother’s Day and various Saint’s days to name just a few. Memo also gives us a variety of articles. We have the regulars with Rev. David’s letter, Ruth’s insight into a well-known hymn and Dave’s Prayer Diary along with some poetry, thoughts, interesting information and reminiscences.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition, MEMO

would not happen without you. We would like to encourage more of you to bite the bullet, step out of your comfort zone, put pen to paper, get things off your chest or any other adage that comes to mind. What you have to give may be inspirational or just the thing that someone needs to read. If you have been thinking about it, why not send something in. It doesn’t matter whether it is by email or in writing but be assured that it will find its way into print!

With best wishes from the editorial team for a Happy Easter.

Anne,
on behalf of Elaine and Dave

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF MEMO

Please send all contributions
to the
Communications Team
C/O the Circuit office,
Nunthorpe Methodist Church,
Connaught Road, Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough TS7 0BS

Or email to
mbrocircuit@gmail.com
by **3rd April 2022**



The Superintendent's Letter

Dear Friends,

Easter falls on the 17th April and is therefore quite late this year. Every year some person or other complains about the date of Easter and asks why we can't simply fix it for the same time each year. "Why does the Church move it around so much?" they ask accusingly. In fact discussion of the dating of Easter has been the subject of intense debate among the Christian churches since the second century AD. These debates alone could fill several newsletters. However, a formula has been agreed and has operated for many years. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring Equinox (21st March). This means that Easter can fall as early as 22nd March or as late as 25th April. This year it falls on 17th April which is late. Easter will next fall on the latest possible date (25th April) in 2038. Easter is where the phrase "moveable feast" originated.

In truth there are many Easter customs and traditions that are little understood. Why, for example, do we feast on chocolate and why do we have eggs? The answer to this is to be found in the forty days of fasting which precedes Easter. This is a period known as Lent in which the church used to ban many foods including eggs. Easter marks the end of this period when luxuries like chocolate and eggs could come back on the menu. Eggs were, for obvious reasons, an early symbol of fertility and spring and in Christian thought they came to be associated with the tomb of Christ. Cold and dead on the outside, but with the new life of resurrection ready to burst forth from within.

Behind so many of our Easter traditions lies a story that is precious to the Church, but often forgotten in the wider world. The story we celebrate at Easter is that of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a 2000 year old mystery which we approach with faith and awe. It shows us that God is intimately involved in his world. In Christ he entered into the pain and trauma of the human experience. Christ's Resurrection gives us hope that suffering and death is not the end of human existence and evil never has the last word.

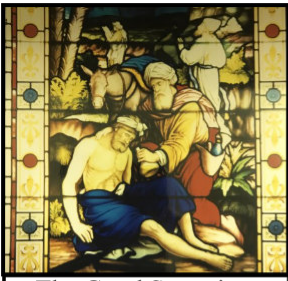
As we journey together through Lent and celebrate the story of Easter again this year, (with chocolate eggs and all its confusing customs) let us be mindful of the one who pioneered the way for us long ago, who gives us hope through his victory over death and who leads us to the very heart of God.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. David Godfrey

Eston Grange Methodist Church

1973—2021



The Good Samaritan

It is with regret and sadness that I write this article for MEMO. Eston Grange ceased to worship in December, our final service held on December 5th 2021.

In 1971 Grangetown in certain areas was being demolished, numbers of worshipping members were low at the Methodist Church, Eston Urban District Council allocated a space for a church to be built on the present site. It was decided to accept the proposal to take the site offered. A pre-fabricated temporary building to be built for a six year test period. The scheme was described as a “unique experiment” to build up a congregation before making the decision to establish a permanent church. The vision to build a new church to serve Eston and Grangetown became a reality and fund raising by those early pioneers, in many different ways, resulting in the opening of the temporary building in 1973 and in 1977 a permanent church building. Over the years there are many individuals who have given great service to Eston Grange, unfortunately too numerous to mention. We give thanks for their dedication and sharing the good news of the gospel by word and deed.

We rejoice that our church became known as a warm welcoming church, a family fellowship dedicated to serving God and caring for the community.

Our vision for the future for those who have remained faithful, is to continue our journey of faith, hope and love, trusting God to walk with us as pilgrims on our spiritual journey. Some members have already chosen to join Normanby Methodist as their spiritual home and have been made welcome. We have of course over many years shared worship, special services, Sunday outings, holidays and fun evenings to mention a few, with them already.



“Why has Eston Grange ceased to worship” this is the question posed by so many: loved ones, families, acquaintances, residents living in the area who call it their church because of past connections i.e. births, marriages and deaths. Special Events - Luncheon Clubs, Concerts, Messy Church to name a few of our outreach. I can only say that closing would never have been a consideration. Unfortunately our members, the remaining faithful due to age and infirmity could no longer continue with the responsibilities of being true stewards of a beautiful church which holds so many wonderful memories.

I also feel sad, because I recognise a church presence is as much relevant in these challenging times in the east of the Middlesbrough and Eston Circuit, as was nearly fifty years ago.

Please remember your friends of Eston Grange in your prayers as they take up the challenge of moving on.

Every Blessing,
Maureen Borley

**‘We’ll praise Him for all that is past,
and trust Him for all that’s to come’**

Church Family.

I once made a mistake when preaching at Grove Hill, of saying 'our children are the church of the future'. One older member of the congregation saw me after the service and said that the children are the church of the present. He had a point, but we do need to see children as being the people who will carry our church forward but also that they are an important part of the church today.

We are fortunate at Grove Hill in having a few younger children in what we call our 'Steps' group and some older children in 'Strides' group. We have excellent leaders in both groups, who have really moved our Sunday School forward since we re opened in September.



As a Church family we were very moved by their Nativity presentations the Sunday before Christmas, they showed such confidence and such joy at sharing with us and also the hard work of their leaders shone through.

We have a small singing group now made up of the 'Steps' children who sang a selection of Christmas songs with such confidence and who asked if they could sing again on Christmas morning. They did and once more moved all of us with their rendition of 'Starry night'

I feel now very confident in the presence of the children week by week and in the wonderful leaders we have, helping the children to grow in faith.

Our Church family may not be large in numbers, but all our people seem to be renewed and are showing so much desire to make our Church special and to be a place where God is worshipped and hopefully we try to do his work.

I am sure we all feel the same about our various churches and we long to see more children joining us to be the church of the present and the future.

It will be good in future editions of 'Memo' to see people sharing the good news about your churches. Please think and pray about this, and maybe send something for us all to share. Thank you.

Dave Elliott

SADNESS AND JOY.

Well, it's happened!! Linthorpe Road Methodist Church has had it's final Sunday morning service on November 21st 2021. This church has been a big part of my life for as long as I can remember and will be sadly missed to say the least.

From being a very young child, my parents took myself and my two sisters every Sunday. That's what Sundays were for way back then....no debate or arguing!!

There was so much activity and fun in the church then... Sunday worship, morning and evening, Boy's Brigade, Life boys, Girl's Brigade, Cadets, Sunday School, Youth Club, Women's Guild, Men's Fireside, Minister's Vestry Hour....

So much fellowship and so many memories for many people including annual BB and GB camps at Windy Hill and Scalby.

So what happened to them all???

Well, times have changed massively and 'church' as we know it, just isn't fashionable any more.BUT... 'church' is still happening but in a different way to how we knew it.

We can be sad that 'our church' has closed it's doors to regular worship, or we can be glad that 'church' is happening in a different way. The Resource Centre at Linthorpe Road is very much alive and active in serving the community and offering support to vulnerable groups of people, and we can rejoice in the work and witness of the church for so long. (1882-2021).

One of the greatest memories of the church was the annual 'Tableau'. This was created in the early 1950's to witness the Christmas message to the people of Middlesbrough.

When you mention Linthorpe Road Church to anyone, they usually say 'Oh that's where the Nativity was'. Each year, collectors stood outside and collected money for various charities.

Taking part in the Tableau was, indeed a privilege and many tales could be told about it!! But, I know from experience that it was Oh so cold sitting there. We had to be still for 5minutes and then the lights were dimmed for 1 minute for us to shake our hands and feet, and then the lights would come on again and we had to resume the 'statue position' ...At lunch time, we went into the Sunday School rooms and had hot soup... through a straw...so that we didn't mark our make up!! Oh I could talk for ever on the memories...



My parents, and my husband's parents were married at Linthorpe Road. My husband

and I were baptised and married there after meeting at Youth Club when I was 14 years old.

Our daughter and grandson were both baptised there.

So then...we can be sad that Linthorpe Road Methodist Church has closed it's doors each Sunday.....or...we can rejoice in the 139 years of witness.

We thank God for those years and give thanks for all the ministers who served there. We pray that all the congregation will find 'a new home' and will feel a new sense of belonging.

Sheila Wallace.

Ash Wednesday- the start of Lent

Wednesday 2nd March sees the start of Lent, the season of penitence, self-examination and fasting running up to Easter. Fasting can be a neglected discipline, but it plays an important part in the Christian life. Jesus began His earthly ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and He taught His disciples to fast (i.e. **not if but 'when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen.'** (Matthew 6:17,18).

Why Fast?

Firstly, giving up something in my life underlines my desire to put God first in my life. Secondly, fasting shows me how much I depend on things other than God in my life, so I can surrender my idols to Him. Thirdly, fasting encourages me to have a deeper hunger and dependency for God in my life. Therefore, fasting gives me space to humbly focus on God for His strength, provision, and wisdom and results in a more intimate relationship with Christ. It also enables the Holy Spirit to reveal my true spiritual condition, leading to brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life, with a heart more attentive to God.



How can I fast?

Usually fasting involves missing one or two meals during the day, although some can't abstain from food for medical reasons. It might also include abstaining or limiting the time I give to television, alcohol or social media. However, Lent can also be a time to embrace new spiritual disciplines e.g. joining a study group, 'random acts of kindness', or giving more time to prayer and Bible study. Whatever you do, make Lent count this year! **'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'** (Matthew 5:6).

The Parish Pump

Mothering Sunday or Mother's Day?

Surprisingly, or not as the case may be, these two days are not the same. They have different celebration dates and signify different things.



Traditionally Mothering Sunday is an old Christian holiday that is commonly celebrated in parts of Europe on the fourth Sunday of Lent. These days we give cards and gifts to our Mams to thank them for looking after us but the term 'mothering' refers to the 'Mother Church'. At that time, thought to be as far back as the Middle Ages, when children reached a certain age they would leave their parents and go into service if they were girls or go off to be an apprentice for a master craftsman if they were boys. On one Sunday each year they were given the day off to return home often bringing with them sweets, presents and treats for their mothers and families and process to their home church. The girls often came home bearing a gift of Simnel cake. Lenten rules were put to one side for the day so that the family could enjoy a good meal together. It is not known when this was first celebrated or established.

Nowadays, as this holiday has become more commercialised, it is very similar to Mother's Day in the USA. Their Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of May and was created in the early 1900s by Anna Jarvis 'to honour mothers and their continuous service to the house and children'. Anna was born into a Methodist Episcopal church in West Virginia. Three years after her mother's death in 1905, Anna held a memorial service to honour her mother and all mothers at her home church, marking the first Mother's Day. Today it is observed in over seventy countries around the world with mothers often pampered and showered with presents, sweets, Spa days, flowers and the like.

Happy Mothering Sunday on 27th March

Anne Smith

Silent Help!

If you're in a situation where you can't speak

**Choking, Heart Attack
Intruder, Domestic Violence**

Ring 999

When they answer, press 55

This tells them you need help but can't speak.

They will dispatch police to you.



EASTER THOUGHTS

As you read this Memo thoughts will be very much about Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent, starting us on our journey to Easter.

Easter and Christmas are both very important celebrations of the foundations of our faith. The Incarnation reminds us of God, human and divine, coming to earth in our human form. Easter also emphasises the humanity and divinity of Jesus. In his journey to the cross he expresses his fear; 'Lord if it is your will take this cup away from me, but not my will but yours be done'

Here we see the human side of Jesus, in this example and indeed in his anger with the disciples at not staying awake to be there for him in his hour of need.

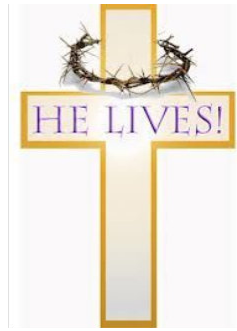
Easter is also about the divinity of Jesus, going to the cross and rising from it in resurrection glory, showing his divine self conquering the most difficult and painful time of his human life on this earth. When we look to Easter there is a sense of renewal, Spring is a great time for moving forward and Easter this year is late so maybe we will see some of the glory of God's creation waking to new life. This is synonymous with the Easter hope travelling from death to life. Easter also helps us to face up to the human condition, that we too are guilty of sin in all kinds of ways, yet in his death on the cross Jesus takes away our sin, he suffers in our place. Not always an easy concept, yet very reassuring to know as the hymn says; 'He died that we might be forgiven, he died to make us good'

Easter is the contrast between the journey of Lent with the sense of sadness as we see Jesus treated so badly, but then the sense of triumph as we see him go through all those terrible times, not running away from them, but facing them, even death on a cross, so we might also have that victory. Easter gives us that hope that even in the darkest of times, Jesus is with us, he has been where we are, and he rose above it. Death may be, for many of us, a taboo subject but Easter gives a sense of hope that maybe it isn't the end.

If we look at the Gospel story then we see how even the disciples were not convinced Jesus had risen, even though he had promised this would happen. It was only when they met the risen Jesus that they were truly able to believe he had come back to them. We know the story so well, even in the sadness of Holy Week, we know the outcome. But there is a difference between knowing and believing. Just as the disciples doubted, then maybe we too might sometimes doubt the story of the Resurrection. Hopefully this coming Easter, may be for us a sense of being convinced that Jesus is risen as we feel his presence in our lives, in ways that sometimes are difficult to explain, but we just know it is true.

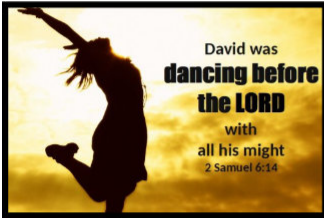
I pray that as we look to Easter, we too may meet again the risen Jesus, offering us hope and everlasting life.

Dave Elliott



Lord of the Dance StF 247

In 1912 my grandfather made a proposal of marriage to my grandmother, which she accepted. Next this young rather earnest Calvinistic Methodist pastor asked her to promise him that as his wife she would never dance again! To her credit, [she liked dancing] she refused: she never danced again but would not make him such a promise. No pushover my grandma! Even so, from the age of 4 I had dancing lessons until I was 14, when the ballet teacher took me aside and shattered my illusions suggesting that maybe my talents would be better displayed through drama rather than dance! About the same time, as my dancing days were over, 1963, this “carol” by Quaker Sydney Carter first came out. It jarred. We didn’t sing it in chapel. Jesus isn’t even mentioned by name. There was no evidence in the gospels that Jesus danced, so why



suggest He is the Lord of the Dance? Only David is said to have danced before the Lord. And, remembering my rather puritan grandfather, wasn’t dance a trivial worldly thing, directly in opposition to the serious spiritual matter of salvation? Its release coincided with the protest songs of the 60s, like *Where have all the flowers gone?* Or Dylan’s *Blowin in the wind*, so was seen as a breath of modern fresh air into a stultified arid worship. It was sung to death in schools, with other Carter songs

When I Needed a Neighbour and especially *One More Step*, which has since become a good wedding and funeral favourite. It’s what people know.

Although at the time I didn’t rate *Lord of the Dance*, I have since changed my mind. First about its lilting Shaker tune [composed 1848] which to my teen ears contrasted unfavourably with what I had been brought up on: stirring but lugubrious Welsh hymn tunes like Cwm Rhondda. Aaron Copland first used this tune *Simple Gifts* in his ballet *Appalachian Spring* [1944]. He used the *Simple Gifts* song again in *Old American Songs* [1950]. It repeats the word **turn** as you do in a dance, and of course repentance is all about turning. Later Carter too adapted that Shaker tune. The more I heard it, the tune grew on me even without Michael Flatley flamboyantly claiming it as his own! Second, the words of *Lord of the Dance* deserve re-consideration. Although not

mentioned by name, the story it tells in the first three verses is obviously of the biblical Jesus, from Creation, through Bethlehem, scribes, Pharisees, fishermen and curing the lame. The other three verses deal with the passion and the Easter story. I find it particularly powerful in verse four when a sensitive organist/accompanist slows down the singing and encourages the congregation to sing quietly, for as the words put it: “...it’s hard to dance with the devil on your back”. Even the catchy chorus can be sung quietly and slowly at that point to dramatize the despair of the cross, so that we can truly feel it. If that is done, the last verse becomes particularly powerful when we gradually build up back to speed and volume. The hard consonant **c** in “They “cut” me down” is effective because what had been a regular six syllable first line has been shortened to four syllables. Paired with the contrast in direction, from “**down**” to “I leapt up **high**” that turn means the resurrection can be felt as you sing. The last verse too has repetition “never, never “die and “I’ll live” in you if you “live “in me. It is a remarkable statement of faith to sing it. But we don’t sing it often, preferring the lovely traditional hymns. In Ecclesiastes we are told, “There is a time to

*Dance, dance, wherever you may be
I am the Lord of the Dance, said He*

*And I’ll lead you all, wherever you may be
And I’ll lead you all in the Dance, said He*

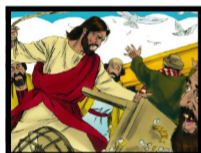
mourn and a time to dance,” implying that dancing is a good thing that takes place in our happiest moments at the polar opposite end from suffering. By calling Jesus “Lord of the Dance”, Carter teasingly explored the allegory of dance as a metaphor for humanity’s relationship with Christ. From BBC’s *Strictly* we better understand the narrative value of dance. I suppose for my reverend grandfather not dancing was a statement, a way to stand apart from the world. His own children, and grandchildren, however, were permitted to go dancing, after all he had married my grandmother.

Ruth Lewis

Palm Sunday and Holy Week

The events of Easter took place over a week, traditionally called Passion Week. It began on Palm Sunday. After all His teaching and healing, Jesus had built a following.

On the Sunday before He was to die, Jesus and His followers arrived at Jerusalem. The city was crowded. Jewish people were arriving from to celebrate Passover. This commemorates how they had escaped from slavery in Egypt nearly 1,500 year earlier. Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey. He was greeted like a conquering hero. Cheering crowds waved palm branches in tribute. He was hailed as the Messiah who had come to re-establish a Jewish kingdom.



The next day they returned to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple, the epicentre of the Jewish faith, and confronted the money-changers and merchants who were ripping off the people. He overturned their tables and accused them of being thieves. The religious authorities were alarmed and feared how He was stirring up the crowds.

On the Tuesday, they challenged Jesus, questioning His authority. He answered by challenging and condemning their hypocrisy. Later that day Jesus spoke to His disciples about future times. He warned them about fake religious leaders; the coming destruction of Jerusalem; wars, earthquakes and famines; and how His followers would face persecution.

By midweek the Jewish religious leaders and elders were so angry with Jesus that they began plotting to arrest and kill Him. One of Jesus’ disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Him to them.

Jesus and the twelve disciples gathered on the Thursday evening to celebrate the Passover meal. This is known as the Last Supper. During the evening, Jesus initiated a ritual still marked by Christians – Holy Communion – which commemorates His death. Jesus broke bread and shared it and a cup of wine with His disciples.

Judas then left to meet the other plotters. Jesus continued to teach the others and then went outside into an olive grove to pray. He even prayed for all future believers. He agonised over what was to come but chose the way of obedience. The Bible book, Luke, records Him praying, *‘Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done’*. Minutes later Judas arrived with soldiers and the chief priests and Jesus was arrested.

The Parish Pump

I was there that day..

I was there, that day, when he raised the dead.
I was filled with fear at the words he said.
He said with a shout "Lazarus, come out!"

And out he came from the cold and dark tomb
like a newborn child from its mother's womb.
We were all filled with awe at what we saw.
For Lazarus was dead, yet he lived once more.

Brought back to life by the one we adore.
The one we would love now for evermore.
And would follow gladly where-ever he led.
I was there that day when he raised the dead.

I was there that day when they raised the cross
and we stood stunned as we thought of our loss.
Without him to guide us how could we live?
We heard his voice saying "Father, forgive"

Forgive those who slaughtered our gracious Lord?
Flogged him, thorn- crowned him, and pierced him with sword?
Forgive betrayal, and triple denial?
Forgive those who mocked at his hurried trial?

I was there that day in the garden too.
At the open tomb and we wondered who
had done this, who had rolled back the stone?
then even more puzzling, where had he gone?

I was there that day in the upper room.
Puzzled and frightened, when into the gloom
came Jesus our Lord we saw with delight!
Jesus our Lord, what a glorious sight!

He said "Peace be with you", words oh so sweet.
He showed us his hands, his side and his feet.
Peace came upon us that wonderful day
and love will be ours now and always

I was there that day when the Spirit came.
Noisy and shining like wind and like flame.
Filling the room and our sad hearts as well,
giving us courage to go out and tell.





Tell all the world of this great mystery
And we did, and the rest is History
We told of his love for you and for me.
The love which will last through eternity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ still calls us today.
Our hearts leap for joy when we hear him say,
“Come out of the dark to my glorious light.
Your sins are forgiven, I've made all things right”

Celia Shires 17.1.22

OBITUARY

Sheila Williamson - 15.7.33 - 20.11.21 Organist at Eston Grange



Music was a very important part of Sheila's life. She became a pianist in the primary Department of South Bank, Normanby Road Methodist Church Sunday School, at the age of fourteen. She continued to play for the Children's Youth Clubs and Wives Group. Finally taking her turn at the Organ.

Sheila came to Eston Grange in 1985 at the request of the Women's Wednesday Club, who wanted to sing a Roger Jones Musical and required someone to play the piano for them.

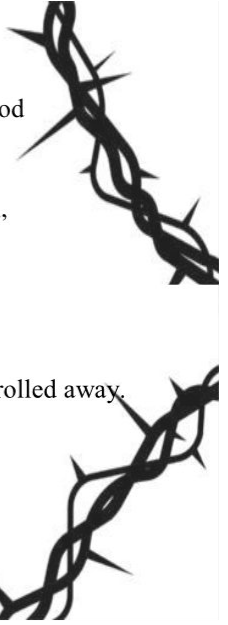
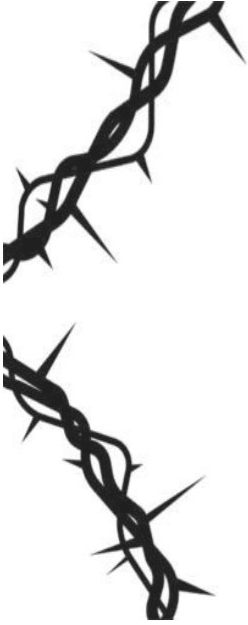
In 2001 when South Bank Church closed, she transferred her membership to Eston Grange and continued along with Elsie Dodds to share playing the organ for services, weddings and funerals. She continued until the pandemic started and Sheila became poorly.

The Women's Wednesday Club were indebted to her for her musical knowledge, dedication, determination to bring out the best in the ladies for their celebratory musical renditions for anniversary and special services.

Sheila will be greatly missed by our church family, for her faith, desire to serve, using her musical talents to give pleasure to others, and also by the ministers and local preachers.

Whatever Sheila accomplished she did with the support of her loving husband Harry, to whom we offer our love, support and prayers.

Eston Grange Methodist Church.



Every head was bowed in grief.
Looking on in disbelief,
As Jesus, their Saviour, so kind and good
Was nailed on to a cross of wood.
Suffering, Dying, but forgiving too,
“Father, they know not what they do.”
The King of the Jews, the notice said,
A crown of thorns upon his head.
Empy was the tomb that Easter Day
When they found the stone had been rolled away.
Risen Lord, you conquered death
So let us now with every breath,
Sing **“ALLELUIA”**

I wrote this poem at a Methodist Women
in Britain Quiet Day,
Beryl Haggath

Methodist Women in Britain

Incorporating Women’s Network and British unit
of the World Federation of Methodist and
Uniting Church Women



Circuit Network Meetings

There are no meetings planned at the time of writing in early January but it is hoped to plan for a committee meeting and possibly a Friday afternoon meeting in the Spring. More details later.

MWiB Darlington District Events

Monday April 11th

Easter Reflection Day at Stokesley Methodist Church. TS9 5AD.
Refreshments from 10am, event to start at 10.45am.
Please bring a packed lunch, drinks provided.

Advance Notice

Wednesday June 8th

Afternoon Tea at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church at 2pm. More details later.

Kath Smithies

Circuit Methodist Women in Britain (Network) Secretary



...rumours that we would be giving out easter eggs are unfounded - er, there aren't any left!

Do the maths

A teacher posed the following problem to one of her maths classes: "A wealthy man dies and leaves ten million pounds. One-fifth is to go to his wife, one-fifth is to go to his son, one-sixth to his butler, and the rest to charity. Now, what does each get?"

After a very long silence in the classroom, one little boy raised his hand and suggested: "A solicitor?"

Expensive boat

A minister was planning an Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and was aghast when he found it would cost him £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. 'That might be true,' replied the travel agent, 'but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked.' 'Well, at £50 an hour for a boat,' he replied, 'I am not surprised!'

Bend

I got a package envelope in the mail the other day that had written on the front, 'Photographs: Do Not Bend.'

Underneath the postman had written: "Oh yes they do."

Peace

After a very long and boring sermon the parishioners glumly filed out of the church past the minister. Towards the end of the queue was a thoughtful person who always commented on the sermons. "Vicar, today your sermon reminded me of the peace and love of God."

The vicar was thrilled. "Nobody has ever said anything like that about my preaching before. Tell me why." The man sighed. "Because it endured forever."

Knock Knock

A conscientious minister decided to get acquainted with a new family in his church and so he visited them one Spring evening. After his knock on the door, a lilting voice from within called out, "Is that you, Angel?" "No," replied the minister. "But I'm from the same department."

Nice

The nice thing about becoming forgetful is that you can hide your own Easter eggs.

Finding

The shin bone is a device for finding furniture in the dark.

The Parish Pump

Methodist Conference President and Vice President Visit

Revd. Sonia Hicks (President) and Mrs Barbara Easton (Vice President) made a special visit to our circuit between 4th and 6th February this year. They began by visiting the Methodist Asylum Project's 'Come and Chat' session at Linthorpe Road on Friday



Sonia Hicks at MAP

morning. This is a project which helps asylum seekers learn English. They discussed with Ailsa Adamson (project leader) some of the difficult issues facing those who seek asylum in the UK and praised the work of MAP as it seeks to provide a help and welcome to some of the most vulnerable people in society. They were also able to meet some of the volunteers and users of the service and went away greatly encouraged by the work.

After visiting MAP Sonia and Barbara made the very short journey across the road to share in a lunch hosted at 131 The Venue. This is one of the social enterprise businesses run by 'Recovery Connections Enterprise', whose mission is to help people across the Tees Valley to get back into employment through work experience, training and volunteering. Sonia and Barbara met the Mayor of Middlesbrough and representatives from Junction 42, a Christian Charity which helps those recovering from addiction. (They also use our premises at Linthorpe Road.) Both Sonia and Barbara were visibly moved by some of the stories they heard over lunch and went away inspired and encouraged by the hope that had been expressed.

After lunch Sonia and Barbara paid a visit to the Teesside University where they met with members of the chaplaincy team and had a guided tour of the facilities. They also spent time in Hartlepool on the Friday evening before visiting the Stockton circuit the next day to look at their work and mission activities.

While Sonia preached in the Stockton Circuit on Sunday morning, we were privileged to have Barbara preach for us at our Circuit Service at Trinity. Her text was Luke 5:1-11 where Jesus teaches and calls his first disciples. She shared the experiences of Methodist Congregations from around the Connexion and gave us all a word of encouragement as she preached on the call of Christ. It was good to have members of 'Young Sunday' read the Scriptures for us and members from Trinity Methodist lead the prayers. After the service Barbara was given a guided tour of the community garden at Trinity and had the work of Trinity Family Friendly Centre explained to her.



The Circuit Service

The presidential theme for the year is "God's Table: An Invitation for All". Sonia and Barbara were particularly interested in exploring with us the mission of the church with those who are often not welcomed or who stand on the edge of normal society. They returned to their homes at the end of the weekend encouraged by the work we are doing in this area through our various projects. They in turn encouraged us with their reassuring words, that God is with us always.

Revd. David Godfrey.

Never Give Up

In 1962, four nervous young musicians played their first record audition for the executives of the Decca Recording company. The executives were not impressed. While turning down this group of musicians, one executive said, "We don't like their sound. Groups of guitars are on the way out." The group was called The Beatles.

In 1944, Emmeline Snively, director of the Blue Book Modelling Agency, told modelling hopeful Norma Jean Baker, "You'd better learn secretarial work or else get married." She went on and became Marilyn Monroe.



In 1954, Jimmy Denny, manager of the Grand Ole Opry fired a singer after one performance. He told him, "You ain't goin' nowhere son. You ought to go back to drivin' a truck." He went on to become the most popular singer in America, named Elvis Presley.

When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, it did not ring off the hook with calls from potential backers. After making a demonstration call, President Rutherford Hayes said, "That's an amazing invention, but who would ever want to use one of them?"



When Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, he tried over 2000 experiments before he got it to work. A young reporter asked him how it felt to fail so many times. He said, "I never failed once. I invented the light bulb. It just happened to be a 2000-step process."

In the 1940's, another young inventor named Chester Carlson took his idea to twenty corporations, including some of the biggest in the country. They all turned him down. Then in 1947 after seven long years of rejections he finally got a tiny company in Rochester, New York, to purchase the rights to his invention, an electrostatic paper-copying process. The Haloid Company became Xerox Corporation we know today.

Wilma Rudolph was the 20th of twenty two children. She was born prematurely and her survival was doubtful. When she was four years old, she contacted double pneumonia and scarlet fever, which left her with a paralysed left leg. At age nine, she removed the metal leg brace she had been dependent on and began to walk without it. By thirteen she had developed a rhythmic walk, which doctors said was a miracle. That same year she decided to become a runner. She entered a race and came in last. For the next few years every race she entered, she came in last. Everyone told her to quit, but she kept on running. One day she actually won a race. And then another. From then on she won every race she entered. Eventually this little girl, who was told she would never walk again, went on to win three Olympic gold medals.



The moral of the above Stories: Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved. You gain strength, experience and

confidence by every experience where you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you cannot do. And remember, the finest steel gets sent through the hottest furnace. A winner is not one who never fails, but one who **NEVER QUILTS!** In LIFE, remember that you pass this way only once! Let's live life to the fullest and give it our best.

Author Unknown

ASCENSION

The time spread of this 'Memo' is important because of the many special festivals we experience. They are all important to make us think more about what they are saying about Jesus and also what they say about our faith.

I was speaking to one of our Sunday School teachers the other day and she said her scheme of teaching over the next few weeks was to help her group to learn more about who Jesus was and who he is to us today. She said she will look at the evidence we have, of which those special events are of importance.

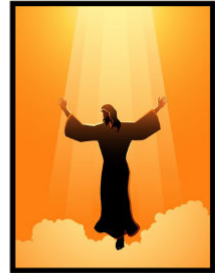
So, what does Ascension tell us about Jesus and about our faith? For me one important aspect of Ascension is the fact that Jesus makes a point of telling his disciples to go into the world and preach and baptise and bring people to Jesus. If we look at the Gospels, then we have different stories of the Ascension.

In Matthew's gospel there are the Resurrection appearances followed by the Great Commission, ending the Gospel. Here Jesus reminds his disciples he is with them always. No specific Ascension story here. In Mark in the final verses, there is a command for the Disciples to go and preach the Good News, and many signs and miracles will happen. Then we read that Jesus was taken into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God. The disciples then go out and preach and the Lord worked with them. In Luke in the final verses, we are told the story of the Ascension. The disciples have received the promise of receiving the Holy Spirit. In the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, in chapter one verse v 9 and 10 we read of the Ascension.

So, for me there are two important aspects of this event, one is to help us realise who Jesus is, and what he can do. The second is the effect of this event and the need for us to do something about it. Part of the Ascension is in our need to preach and baptise and bring people to Jesus.

To understand the divinity of Jesus is important for our faith. We can see Jesus as a man who is aware of our needs and our emotions. He does become annoyed, he does show loneliness, and also frustration. Maybe you can look at aspects of the Gospel where we see this very 'down to earth' Jesus. After all the miracle of the Incarnation at the heart of our faith is that God took upon himself our human image.

However, there is also the Divine, this is sometimes where I have some difficulty. Jesus going to the cross in very human form, then raising to life in divine form, appearing to



his Disciples and enabling many miracles to happen.

It is not that I don't believe, but more that the divine Jesus may take more explaining either from my preaching or in my conversations with other people.

For me the essential part of my faith is that Jesus is divine and that he can perform miracles, even if today I sometimes may doubt that he can perform them as I would like them to be performed!!

But if I am to have a faith then I have to understand Jesus the Divine.

So here comes the Ascension, it is the conclusion, the link between heaven and earth, the link between Jesus in human form and Jesus as the Divine.

In the story of Jesus going to be with his Father, there is that final conclusion of the earthly story and the beginning of Heaven. There is the confirmation of Jesus being with his Father in the same place. He is no longer limited to our time, to our space, but is above all of those limitations. In the story of the Ascension Jesus shows the proof of who he always maintained he was and is. He now is available to us in the power of prayer and through the sending of the gift of the Holy Spirit, he is present in our lives.

For me the Ascension is so much about an ending but also a very important beginning. We cast our eyes to Heaven and see in Jesus the ultimate aspect of how we know and understand God.

I do find the hymn 'I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship' (Singing the Faith 350) offers a great deal in words and in the lovely tune of Londonderry Ayre, it says in all the verses, 'I cannot tell', but it also says 'But this I know'. In my understanding of my faith, there are quite a number of 'I cannot tells' but also even more, 'But this I know'. The story of the Ascension is about both. The 'I cannot tell' in verse four with the triumph of 'This I know, the skies will thrill with rapture, and myriad, myriad human voices sing, and earth to heaven and heaven to earth will answer, at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King (William Young Fullerton 1857-1932) We continue to search as we progress on our journey of faith and we look to so many parts of the life of Jesus, which help us on our way. The Ascension is a very powerful part of this revelation.

Dave Elliott



**British Summer Time starts on
Sunday 27th March**

*Don't forget to put your clocks
forward one hour.*

Going Forward.

Trinity Methodist Church had a vision 15 years ago about how they wanted to open up the church to reach the community. They a number of activities e.g. keep fit, badminton, carpet bowls and many more. The Scouting and Girl Guiding have served the community for decades, I regularly meet people, like the cashier in Tesco Coulby Newham yesterday who shared that he went to Scouts at Trinity. Community has been at the heart of everything at this church, serving, being a light shining in the darkness.



In 2014 God sent Nigel and Jane Perrot to Trinity to pioneer the outreach work. Bringing Foodbank and breakfast/afternoon clubs, they really made an impact and integrated into the community, even residing on the estate. Jane had the idea of a community café; this was something she had visualised, she thought this would be integral in bringing people to Christ. Jane's favourite line was 'Jesus loves ya!' Many people from the estate have told me this, she was very special to this community, and it was difficult for them to see her leave.

In 2018, I arrived and was totally determined to share the gospel with everyone. I had had a massive transformation since becoming a believer and read my bible daily, spent time with the Lord, I was on FIRE for God. I knew I was where God wanted me to be, so this should be easy....right?

In fact, when we stick our heads above the turrets, we will get shot! Remember we are soldiers in a spiritual war! However, if we start walking according to God's will for our lives then there will be opposition. John 10:10 states **"the thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"**. The enemy will try every way he can to block, stop, prevent, or delay our walk of furthering the kingdom of God. But as the latter part of that scripture states we shall have life to the full because Jesus Christ paid the price for our Salvation.

Covid 19 has been a time of despair, fear and grief for the families who have lost loved ones, but I also believe it has brought us to our knees, to realise what is important. Time is short and we need to wake up as a church to share the Good News, to disciple new believers and encourage them share their testimony of Gods unfailing love. This was what Jesus said **'Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'**. Are we doing this? These are the questions I have asked myself during lockdown. Playing church can take over, going through the motions but forgetting the commission of Christ Jesus. I feel that I have been in the wilderness the last few years, I have encountered many things lurking in the wilderness, it has been a tough period for me, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. While in the wilderness, I never thought I would get out. However, I feel I have turned a corner and am now out, can see the wilderness as a place of growth. Isaiah 43:19 **'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in wasteland'**. Jesus, Moses, and the Israelites all went into the wilderness, some of the Israelites never got out because it's tough, it lays everything bare, it exposes our weaknesses. It is a time of preparation being in the wilderness, this is where we become strong, and where God equips us!

I feel the scripture God has given to TFFC in 2022 is Isaiah 40:3-5 'A Voice is calling,

‘Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness, make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. ‘Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked and uneven shall be made straight and level, and the rough places plain’.

Wow! The wilderness is barren, the desert is dry, this is the period we have just been through but now we are making the Way for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This next season will be without opposition, the road ahead will be clear, Jesus will light our path.

Discipleship will be fundamental in everything we do at TFFC, we are called as Christians to extend the Kingdom of God and share His love with everyone. God spoke to me many years ago about using exercise and wellbeing as a tool to share the gospel. This will be the season to deliver this project, I am excited to share with everyone my journey as a Revelation Wellness Instructor.

Food poverty has always been an area close to my heart as I saw the struggle my family went through as a child on free school meals. We are hopefully going to introduce a Community Grocery or Eco Shop on site at TFFC, so please pray about this project.

TFFC Community Church Café is the heartbeat of everything we do, the community meets every Tuesday and Thursday. Foodbank deliver their service on Tuesday, which really compliments everything we are doing. We have regular groups of community members and new people are coming also, which really is fantastic as this is what we always had faith to believe would happen!



TFFC meets the needs of the community by offering Baby Mover classes for mother and child to come and have fun. There have been many mothers who have suffered loneliness and isolation in lockdown, this really benefits them.

TFFC is hopefully starting many more courses from sewing machine classes, flower arranging, family cooking classes and Christians Against Poverty. The garden project is going to be a focus for this spring and summer, and Richard Cooper will lead on this amazing project.

I am excited for what the future will bring for us all at Trinity and TFFC.

Sharon Sewell

Our great-grandfathers called it the holy Sabbath;
our grandfathers called it the Sabbath;
our fathers called it Sunday;
today it's known as the weekend.



The Queens Platinum Jubilee 2022

This royal extravaganza will include a variety of events, some London based and others country and world wide. Jubilees go back to biblical times and in the Old Testament a jubilee was marked every seven years. To begin with it was a measure for land management when every seventh year land was left to lie fallow. Over time the significance increased as it was believed that a jubilee year was a special one when God would be particularly bountiful. Today they are usually celebrated every 25 years

Here are some of the events planned:

The Platinum Pudding competition is a nationwide baking competition to find a brand new pudding dedicated to the Queen. UK residents, aged eight and above, are invited to create the perfect pudding. The winning pudding will be an important part of the Big Jubilee Lunches.



A **Platinum Jubilee medal** will be awarded to people who work in public service including representatives of the Armed Forces, the emergency services and the prison services. It features an image of The Queen. This tradition stretches back to the reign of Queen Victoria when an official medal was designed to mark her 50th anniversary on the throne, on Thursday 2nd June.

The Queen's Green Canopy is about the planting of large, celebration trees, urban planting and new forests that will benefit future generations. Every planting is being recorded on a digital map which will be presented to Her Majesty at the end of the Jubilee year. The Queen's Green Canopy will continue throughout 2022 and into March 2023. Over 60,000 trees have already been planted in the UK through the project. Anyone can take part in this event

The Platinum Jubilee Celebration From 12th -15th May this event will see over 500 horses and 1,000 performers create an extravaganza that will include actors and artists, musicians, international military displays, dancers and global equestrian displays. The production will take the audience on a gallop through history

June Bank Holiday celebrations include The Trooping of the Colour, lighting the Beacons, a Thanksgiving Service in St. Paul's Cathedral, Party at the Palace, the Big Jubilee Lunch and a Jubilee Pageant around Buckingham palace.



Over 1,500 beacons will be lit on Thursday 2nd June throughout the United Kingdom and in UK Overseas Territories and for the first time, the Principal beacon will be lit in a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

You may already have started planning and applying for local funding for a community event or a neighbourhood shindig. We'd love to hear about your celebrations (with photographs if possible)

21st May – Helena: Protector of the Holy Places



Helena should be the patron saint of all mothers who help their sons achieve great things.

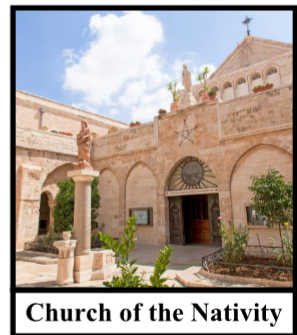
Helena was born at Drepanum in Bithynia about 250. Although only a stable-maid or innkeeper's daughter, she caught the eye and affections of a Roman general, Constantius Chlorus, while he was stationed in Asia Minor on a military campaign. She bore him a son, Constantine, in about 272.

But Constantius was ambitious, and when he became co-emperor (Caesar) in the West in 292, he abandoned Helena in order to marry the stepdaughter of his patron. Helena and her son were sent to live in the court of Diocletian at Nicomedia, where Constantine grew up as a member of the inner circle. Helena never remarried, and lived close to her son, who was devoted to her.

Then, in 306, Constantius died, and Constantine became Augustus of the Roman Empire. He brought his beloved mother to live at the imperial court.

When Constantine became the first Christian emperor of Rome, Helena also became a Christian. She was devout, dressing modestly, and giving generously to churches, the poor, and to prisoners. But soon Constantine had other plans for her, they agreed that she would help him locate the relics of Judeo-Christian tradition in Palestine. To aid her, Constantine gave her the title Augusta Imperatrix, and unlimited access to the imperial treasury.

And so, from 326-28, even though she was very old, Helena explored the Holy Land on behalf of her son, the Emperor. She went to Bethlehem and founded the Church of the Nativity, and the Church of Elona on the Mount of Olives. She also went to Calvary and tore down a temple built to Venus over the tomb of Jesus. Constantine then ordered the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Helena had a small chapel and a fortified refuge for local hermits built beside what was believed to be the burning bush from which God spoke to Moses.



Helena died in 330 in the Holy Land, with Constantine at her side. He brought her body back to Constantinople and buried her in the imperial vault in the Church of the Apostles.

We owe to this special mother and son the preservation and honouring of the most famous sites of Christianity.

Parish Pump

PRAYER DIARY

March 6th Pray today for our Circuit and for the Circuit meeting taking place this week. Pray for those who attend and who make important decisions for the lives of our churches. Pray for Rev David Godfrey and Marton

March 13th Pray today for all of us as we make our journey through Lent that we may learn more about our faith, in individual meditation and in any Lent groups. Pray for the Preachers' meeting this week. Pray for Rev Christopher Wood-Archer and for Grove Hill and Normanby.

March 20th Pray today for all of us as we witness to the presence of Jesus in our daily lives and to those we spend time with. Pray for Rev Charity Hamilton and for her Ministry to the University and the Town centre. Pray for Trinity church and for The Trinity Family Friendly Centre and Sharon Sewell.

March 27th On this Mothering Sunday, pray for all mothers and their role within their families. Pray for those who today remember mothers no longer with them. Pray for the work of MHA Communities Teesside and for all at Montpellier Manor. Pray for Rev Len Karn and Stainton.

April 3rd Today we pray for all who are ill at this time, physically, spiritually or mentally. Pray for those who care for the sick and especially those still fighting the Covid infections. Pray for Rev Charity Hamilton and for her Ministry to the University and the Town centre.

April 10th On this Palm Sunday we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem to face his persecutors. We pray for all who suffer for their faith. We pray for all special services during this Holy Week. Pray for Rev Mike Harland and Nunthorpe.

April 17th On this glorious day of resurrection we pray our hearts and lives may be filled with the joy of the Risen Jesus. Pray for the Chinese Church at Linthorpe Road.

April 24th We pray today for children and young people in our churches and for those who work with them. Pray for the Methodist Asylum Project, for Ailsa and her team.

May 1st We pray today for our several communities which surround our churches and for the work done in and for those people by our church families. Pray for the Avenue Team.

May 8th We pray today for all the different church meetings which take place and which help to support the mission of our churches. We pray too for those social events in the lives of our churches which help us to know each other better. Pray for Elaine at the Circuit Office and for David our Webmaster.

May 15th At the start of this Christian Aid week, we pray for all who will work to raise money for this organisation and those who work to save and enhance lives through this Charity.

May 22nd On this Aldersgate Sunday we remember how John Wesley had that great conversion experience, his heart strangely warmed. We pray for all our Preachers, Lay and Ordained and for all who in any way preach the good news of Jesus.

May 29th Today we pray for Rev Richard Andrew our Chair of District and for all the many and varied church families in our District as we commit to being Kingdom Builders.