

# Wonford Methodist Church

## Contact Newsletter

August / September 2019

(No: 481)



## SEASON OF CREATION

SEPTEMBER 1- OCTOBER 4

Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)



Wonford is a  
Fairtrade church

The **Methodist Church** 

[www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk)



@WonfordMethodistChurch



# A Message From The Minister

**Dear Friends,**

Henry VIII, having heard reports of the outstanding beauty of a particular German princess, allowed himself to be talked into accepting her as his next wife. The reality, however, failed to match Henry's expectations and his marriage to the 'Flanders Mare' Anne of Cleves was not a success (but then were any of Henry's marriages?). We too, live in an age of advertising and the effects are not good.

People see through façades eventually and disillusionment sets in when they do. We live in a culture that often has scepticism as its default position. We are reluctant to take anything at face value, and tragically, this is all too often a sensible way to be. There are those however, who have been applying such scepticism to the Bible for a very long time. The Bible, they say, may have an aura of divine grandeur and holiness, sanctified by tradition and the ages, but it is actually a collection of human documents. In these documents, we may detect echoes of God's voice, and in fact some of these critics are even generous enough to credit God with part-authorship. However, at the end of the day, we're told, we are left with the task of weeding out of the Bible what was simply of the time it was written and deciding what is still relevant today. Do you see what this approach does? It leaves us in the position of being to cherry pick our way through scripture, leaving behind what is uncongenial whilst keeping our favourite verses. What could be better?!

Others will argue that there can be myriad different ways of interpreting one text, and no one 'approach' can be considered definitive. This sounds fair minded and sensible. I have noticed however, that nobody really believes it. Those who take this line are always, in the end, frustrated if those who hold to other perspectives fail to come round to their way of thinking. A nice idea then, but one which doesn't work in practice. Besides which, the meaning of some biblical texts is so clear, you have to work pretty hard to spin a new interpretation out of it. As for the bits of scripture which aren't so clear – we have scholars who have studied the historical background of the texts, the original languages, the social and cultural issues swirling around the words before us. Such people – provided they have no agenda beyond genuinely seeking to understand the Bible- are invaluable, and the fruits of their labours are there for us to use. Their wisdom, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit can together help us traverse scripture fruitfully and comprehendingly. The Bible doesn't exist simply to prop up anyone's pet project, however heartfelt.

A major issue in reading the Bible is the question of truth. Is what we read true? On being asked that question, many of us echo that of Pilate; 'What is truth?'. Aren't there different kinds of truth? If the Bible isn't factually accurate, can it still convey meaningful truths to us? The answer is 'yes' where the Bible consciously uses 'picture-language' to express what is too awesome for our limited minds to

grasp. The answer is 'no' when we come to, say, the gospels, which were written, as John tells us, 'so that we may believe'. The world God has given to us is one in which truth is communicated largely through facts and appeals to things in the real world around us. The gospel writers urgently desired their readers to put their faith in the Christ whose ministry they record. It was therefore essential that they recorded what Jesus said and did, and with eye witnesses to hand, and God's Spirit present, why should they not have done so?

**With every blessing**

**Ben Haslam**

## **Dates For August / September 2019**

### **Coffee**

#### **August**

4th Liz et al  
11th Margaret S  
18th TBA  
25th Eileen & Melanie

#### **September**

1st Rose & Paul  
8th Elaine & Graham  
15th TBA  
22nd Liz and Helen  
29th Melanie

### **Flowers**

#### **August**

4th Mandy  
11th Eileen  
18th Margretta  
25th TBA

#### **September**

1st Barbara J  
8th Margaret & Keith  
15th Helen  
22nd Karen  
29th Mandy

### **Home Group**

This group is now meeting fortnightly on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm in different members' homes, as our Sunday Screen Notices will tell each time. Anyone is welcome to come and join us as we explore the Bible together. Come with your questions or thoughts to help us, please!

No meetings in August. Meetings start again in September where they will be continuing with 'The Kingdom of God'.

11th September  
25th September

39 Meyer Court      Matthew 13: 1-45  
14 Grainger Close      Matthew 20: 1-28

## **Minister's Bible Study**

This is led by Rev Ben Haslam each month and includes some discussion. It is usually held on the 3rd Thursday afternoon at 2pm in the church lounge, and lasts about an hour. Please check the monthly Dates or church Notices each month. All are welcome! No meeting in August. Meetings start again in September.

## **Young Church Anniversary Service – IT WAS BRILLIANT!!**

We had a most outstandingly good celebration with lots of talents shown as we all heard the story from Genesis' early chapters telling us about God's Wonderful World. It all was shown to us in so many ways by all the children as they added new pictures to the display on an easel, and as they brought out lots of animals and fish – and, finally, 2 humans: a man and a woman!! There were prayers that were spoken, or written by us all to hang on the Prayer Tree; the "unique" version by the older ones of Genesis chapter 1; the Offertory collected and dedicated; and a wonderful reflection with music especially composed and sung to a wonderful selection of photos on the screen of God's Wonderful World – and I mustn't forget to mention those children who ran around with colourful ribbons – all were so well involved all the Service.

Thank you especially to Sue Keatt & Pippa Wragg-Smith, and all their other Leaders, who so inspired all our children – and challenged us all to take even greater care of God's Wonderful World. The Church Green Team are greatly encouraged by it all – and will try even harder now – thanks to you!



The Season of Creation is the time of year when Christians are invited to pray and show their concern and care for the created world around them. It is an annual event that was first celebrated in 1989 when September 1st was first proclaimed as a day of prayer for creation.

It is now celebrated by a wider Christian community and runs annually from Creation Day (September 1st) to The Feast of St Francis on October 4th.

This year's theme is:

## **“The web of life: bio-diversity as God’s blessing”**

Bio-diversity is the prize of healthy and stable natural systems created and sustained by a loving God. It matters, not only because of what we derive from it, such as food, clean water and climate regulation, but firstly because God places a unique value on all creatures.

The theme reminds us of two facts about creation:

**creation comes from God, and we all have a role in it.**

During this season let us remember the harm that is being done to the fabric of God’s creation and how it is often the poor and marginalised who are worst affected by climate change and loss of productive soil, clean water and natural systems that sustain all life.

### **Church Green Team**

#### **Wynstream Visit**

The latest project of the Heavitree Squilometre is ‘The Great House and Wonford Village’. The Great House was a medieval moated house on the site of Birch Court. Interested residents have formed the Wonford Pod and are putting various ideas for recording and celebrating this into action.

One of the ideas was to involve the school children at Wynstream and there were two workshops at school to create medieval emblems. On July 11th Wonford Methodist Church was host to two classes of Year 5 children from Wynstream School plus their teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers and members of the Wonford Pod.

The children used spray chalk and stencils to put their emblems in the corner of the car park where the moat would have been. In the hall they were busy making bunting, medieval hats and stained glass windows and members of the Church supplied refreshments.

Everyone really enjoyed the morning and we have received a thank you from Wynstream School and also from the Wonford Pod.

As the children can’t show their friends and families the chalk emblems in the carpark their medieval emblems will be going up on the fence with description of the project and some photos from the morning.

#### **The Penny Pot and China**

We have been able to send another £33 to the Bible Society after the latest cashing in of the contents of the Penny Pot.

This supports a truly amazing work and I ask you to keep the cash flowing in. The latest issue of the Word in Action magazine is well worth a read.

The piece on the church in China is particularly inspiring. The church their faces restriction and monitoring by authorities but is undergoing amazing growth. The need for Bibles is huge. By 2020 there will be 100 million Christians in China. There are 500,000 Christian baptisms each year.

One Bible is printed every second at the Bible Society's China factory. You can be a partner in this amazing work simply by putting all you can into our little Penny Pot. Keep the pennies and the pounds flowing. Thank you.

**Tony Wragg**



## **Growing the Church**

You may remember that at our General Church Meeting earlier this year we discussed the topic of church growth. How can we, in partnership with God,

help the church to grow in these days of general church decline. So what have you actually done

about it? How many people have you spoken to about Jesus and the Christian faith? How many people have you actually invited to church? Or are you leaving the task to other people? We may all be leaving it to the "other person". Are you still praying for your 5 people to come to faith or have needs met? Are you praying that our church will grow?

Very often we have meetings and "talking shops" about vital issues - and that's where it all ends. So this is just a reminder that we ALL need to be in the business of seeking to grow the church and the Kingdom of God in Wonford and in our various area of life. Go to it everyone! "Be bold, be strong for the Lord your God is with you".

**Tony Wragg**



## **The Marriage and Relationships Debate - 11th July 2019**

For those of you who came along to this debate (or couldn't make it) a recording was made. A link to this is now at the bottom of the front page of our website - [www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk) or I have created it as a podcast on the podcast page - <http://wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk/podcasts.htm> The direct link to the podcast is <https://wonfordmethodistchurch.sermon.net/main/main/21418593>

## **Creating Safer Space**

As you know, the church is rightly committed to safeguarding everyone we come into contact with. As part of this commitment we require all of us who exercise a role within the church to sign certain forms and declarations which have been authorised and provided by the Methodist Connexion.

These are in response to the church's desire and requirement to meet charity, legal and moral obligations. There have been significant changes, nationally and in the Church over the last few years, to our understanding of the nature of safeguarding and our need to have robust policies and procedures in place. Because of these changes there have been subtle changes to the forms and some of the information required.

In the light of these requirements, and to ensure we at Wonford are meeting this commitment, under the leadership of our Circuit Safeguarding Officer, I am trying to keep abreast of any changes – so do bear with me! This will then allow us to meet the annual Connexional and District safeguarding audit, all of our legal and moral obligations, and help in our Creating Safer Space for everyone.

Thank you in anticipation for your co-operation and compliance in this matter.

**Margretta Bowstead**

## **Prayer Focus**

### **August**

***Pray until something happens!***

As usual please pray each day for all who are leading worship each Sunday, Messy church and Girls' Brigade and Mum's and Tots. August is a very quiet month in the church but it is the month that sees GCSE and A level results are released. Pray for our young people as they prepare to take the next step in their lives. Some will be leaving us to go to university. Pray particularly for them as they leave the security of their family home and step out into the wider world. Pray that they would find a church to continue their walk with our Lord. Remember to Thank our Lord for those who have completed their time at university and are now stepping out into the world of work.

At the time of writing we still don't know who will be our new Prime Minister. By the time you read this we will know who has won the vote. Pray for him to lead the Country in a fair and just way.

In recent days, the Bishop of Truro has revealed the numbers of Christians who have been killed because of their Christian faith. He also revealed that that of all faiths Christianity faces the highest proportion of persecution in the world. Jeremy Hunt MP has acknowledged this and has written letters of support to several persecuted Christians. Remember those groups working to help those facing persecution.

## September

As we begin a new Methodist year please pray for all the work at Wonford and the wider world of Methodists. Pray for all who are lead worship each Sunday, Messy church and Girl's Brigade and Mum's and Tots.

This month please pray for our young people. Some will be starting nursery for the first time, others will begin school and older young people will go on to college or university. For each age group it can be an unsettling time. Pray that they will soon settle and make good friends.

Pray for our new Prime Minister. Pray for him to make the right decisions regarding the NHS, Social Care, Education and Security whatever happens over Brexit.

In the wider world pray for all who have been imprisoned on false charges or because of their faith. Pray for children who have been forced to watch as their family members have been killed.

***May you all be richly blessed as you pray for all the activities at Wonford, surrounding area & the wider world.***



### **Our Prayer Phone Link**

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rev Alan Rothwell (01392 926840). Your request will then be passed to members of the Prayer Link who will pray for your need. If the first contact is unavailable, please contact Margretta Bowstead (01392 437329) or Rose Smith (01404 510853)

### **After Service Prayer Support**

This is available in the Quiet Room on Sunday mornings. Two members of the Prayer Team will be available to pray with you.



## **New President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference elected for 2020/21**

The Methodist Conference has elected the Revd Richard Teal to serve as President and Carolyn Lawrence to serve as Vice-President, starting their year of office when the Representative Session of the Methodist Conference opens in Telford in June 2020.



Revd Teal has particular experience in rural ministry and has pioneered a county-wide ecumenical project as Chair of the Cumbria District.

Following his election, Richard said: "I feel honoured, humbled, privileged and amazed to have been elected the President Designate. During the year of office, I hope to give particular emphasis to the rural church and community alongside an affirmation of our ecumenical relationships as forms of mission and outreach."

Carolyn Lawrence, a former mission partner in Guyana, has most recently been working with the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church.

On hearing of her election, Carolyn said: "I feel deeply humbled and honoured to have been elected as Vice-President for 2020/21. I am grateful to all who voted for me and have prayed for me and I trust God will equip me to fulfil this awesome call. I will seek to bring honour to the name of Jesus and to encourage people wherever they are on their Christian journey. "

The role of President of the Methodist Conference is reserved for presbyters and that of Vice-President for lay people or deacons.

## **New President of the Conference calls for confidence in telling the story of God to a fractured world**

In an address on Saturday to the Conference outlining the theme for her Presidential year, 'So what's the story...?', the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson used stories from her own life and ministry to reveal how we can find a "fragile strength" and from being present in difficult places we can, "surprise ourselves once again with the way of Jesus".

She said: "We are called to tell stories, to listen to stories and to wrestle with stories, to search for truth not fake news, to challenge the malicious stories we tell about each other and to go on believing that as people of creation, exodus, crucifixion, wilderness wandering and even in exile we can still claim the hope of resurrection and the gracious promise of life in all its fullness."

Dr Glasson's ministry has been with the Bread Church in Liverpool, Touchstone, a Methodist interfaith project in Bradford, and with people who have experienced abuse following the Past Cases Review. She arrived at the Conference, being held this year in Birmingham, on foot having walked 133 miles from Huddersfield, stopping frequently en route to share and listen to the stories of communities along the way.

On a trip to China in 2017, Dr Glasson heard of the story of nineteenth century Cornish missionary, Samuel Pollard, brought up to date in a country with the fastest growing Christian population on earth. On another journey to Myanmar she encountered Shanti Kana, or safe space, a project run by All We Can for women, so that they can feel safe and cool and rest, away from the cramped, claustrophobic and often violent shacks of the nearby refugee camp.

The people of these stories she said, "live the Jesus story and so can we, we who are Methodist and Methodish, we who are marinated in faith or just dipping a tentative toe, Conference buffs and Conference rookies, big wigs and small fry, gay or straight or trans or undefined, broken, diffident or downright scared, all of us, each of us is called to this simple, costly way, living out our stories within the eternal, challenging, costly, glorious stories of God - because nothing in all creation can separate us from it."

In her address, Dr Glasson called for more than just telling of stories but to push for change and to listen: "We will need to be people of reconciliation and peace in an increasingly angry and divided Britain. We will need to commit ourselves to not only making the church inclusive but allowing those who we might think 'on the edge' to challenge and transform us. We need to listen in three dimensions to what is told and what lies in the dark spaces between the words."

# Dates For Your Diary

## August 2019

|          |            |   |
|----------|------------|---|
| Sun 4th  | 10.00 a.m. | Rev Ben Haslam - Sacrament Service            |
|          | 6.30 p.m.  | Jon Curtis                                    |
| Sun 11th | 10.00 a.m. | Monika Noronha                                |
|          | 6.30 p.m.  | Rev Paul Collings - United Service at Wonford |
| Sun 18th | 10.00 a.m. | Rev Alan Rothwell                             |
|          | 6.30 p.m.  | United Service at The Mint                    |
| Sun 25th | 10.00 a.m. | Stephen Haddad                                |
|          | 6.30 p.m.  | Rev Ann Varker - United Service at St Thomas  |

## September 2019

|                     |            |   |
|---------------------|------------|---|
| Sun 1st             | 10.00 a.m. | Ann Skinner - All Age Worship                 |
|                     | 6.30 p.m.  | Paul Violet                                   |
| Thu 5th             | 7.30 p.m.  | Wonford Worms Book Club in the lounge         |
| Sat 7th             | 10.00 a.m. | Plymouth & Exeter District Synod, Torquay LEP |
| Sun 8th             | 10.00 a.m. | Monika Noronha                                |
|                     | 6.30 p.m.  | Rev Alan Rothwell - Prayer & Praise           |
| Wed 11th            | 7.30 p.m.  | Home Group meets at 39 Meyer Court **         |
| Sun 15th            | 10.00 a.m. | Rev Julian Albrow                             |
|                     | 4.00 p.m.  | <b>Messy Church</b>                           |
|                     | 6.30 p.m.  | Circuit Service at Crediton MC                |
| Tue 17th            | 10.00 a.m. | Roundabout Café (until 12pm)                  |
| Wed 18th            | 7.30 p.m.  | Circuit Meeting at Crediton MC                |
| Thu 19th            | 2.00 p.m.  | Minister's Bible Study in the lounge          |
| <b>Peace Sunday</b> |            |   |
| Sun 22nd            | 10.00 a.m. | Rev Ben Haslam - Sacrament / Themed Preaching |
|                     | 6.30 p.m.  | Rev Brian Hadfield                            |
| Tue 24th            | 7.30 p.m.  | Wool & Craft Club meet in the lounge          |
| Wed 25th            | 7.30 p.m.  | Home Group meets at 14 Grainger Close **      |
| Sun 29th            | 10.00 a.m. | John Hogarth - Themed Preaching               |
|                     | 6.30 p.m.  | John Hogarth - Café Church                    |

**\*\* Details in this newsletter or on the notice board in the hall.**

## STOP PRESS

### **New Themed Preaching Series - Miracles of Jesus**

This series starts in September and continues into October and November.

**Autumn Alpha Course** - this starts on Tuesday 17th September and continues mostly weekly. More details in September.

# Weekly Activities

## Sunday

10.00 a.m. Morning Service and Young Church  
*(1st Sunday in each month is All-Age Worship)*

6.30 p.m. Evening Service  
*(2nd Sunday in each month is Prayer & Praise)*

## Monday

Girls' Brigade (4 - 16 year olds) 5.45 to 7pm **\*A\***  
7.30 p.m. Away Group Bible Study

## Tuesday

9.15 a.m. Weekly Prayers in the Quiet Room  
10.00 a.m. The Roundabout Café *(3rd Tuesday each month)*

## Wednesday

7.30 p.m. Home Group Bible Study *(fortnightly)*

## Thursday

2.00 p.m. Minister's Bible Study *(3rd Thursday each month)*

## Friday

9.30 a.m. Friday Toddlers Group **\*A\***

To be sure these take place see Dates to Note or the Notice Board  
( **\*A\*** = No meeting during school holiday)

The deadline for items for the October 2019 Newsletter will be Sunday 15th September 2019. There is no guarantee of inclusion, but they may be given to:

**Andrew Jackson - 19 Hills Orchard, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6DF.**  
Tel: 01935 826072 or e-mailed to [andrew.m.jackson@me.com](mailto:andrew.m.jackson@me.com)