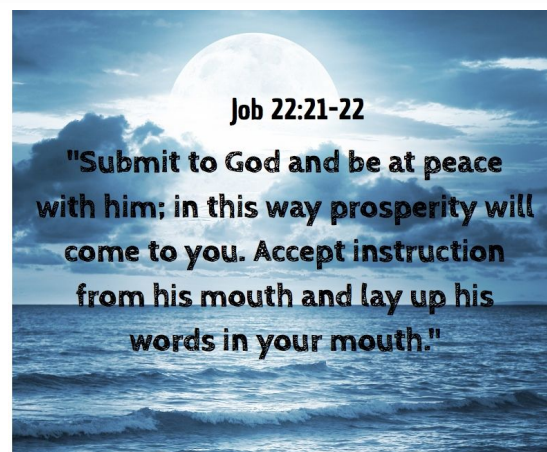


Wonford Methodist Church

Contact Newsletter

February 2021
(No: 496)



Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)



Wonford is a
Fairtrade church

The **Methodist Church** 

www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk



@WonfordMethodistChurch



A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends,

I own a commentary on the Book of Job in which the author makes three statements. Firstly, Job is one of the world's great works of literature. Secondly, it is one of the most difficult books of the Old Testament. Thirdly, it was written in a culture which was very different from ours. These three things make Job a formidable and daunting book to grapple with. At its heart however, it is a profound and often beautiful reflection on suffering and God. It challenges any simplistic connection between sin and suffering by acknowledging that yes, bad things do happen to good people and it doesn't necessarily mean that they must have 'deserved it' in some way. The idea is introduced that some things can have a spiritual, as well as a physical origin (Satan attempts to pull Job away from the path of devotion to God through torment and hardship). This is an area which has been neglected by most of the church in our time and left us on the back foot. I recommend 'The Screwtape Letters' by C.S. Lewis is a good place to start for a better understanding in this area.

The book of Job contains some pointed swipes at those who try to counsel Job with pat answers and trite solutions to the calamities he faces. A sympathetic ear and a willingness to listen would have been far better. Finally, God Himself appears and delivers some stunning, thundering and beautiful verse which outlines His power, glory and majesty. God, interestingly, does not give Job any answers as to why he's suffered as he has. He simply reveals His glory. That, in the end is the definitive answer. God is God, in all His unfathomable majesty and mystery and it is in devotion and worship, that we find, not answers but meaning and fulfilment in our lives.

Job may have a reputation as a gloomy read, but it is a powerful one, and speaks to us with an added relevance at a time when so many people are asking questions with a greater urgency. Many of those questions are perennial: suffering, good and evil, where is God active in the world and what is going on when He seems to be absent? Job tackles these questions head on, not shying away from the biggest question of all: where is God? He is there all right, discovers Job, and love and care for His creation are far greater than we usually realise. With Him, ultimately, all is well.

With every blessing
Ben Haslam

Themed Preaching Series on Holy Habits Spring 2021

The theme topics are taken from the book Holy Habits by Rev Andrew Roberts (Malcolm Down Publishing 2016).

Feb 14th	Rev Terry Spencer	Serving
Feb 21st	Rev Ben Haslam	Breaking Bread (Communion)
Feb 28th	Dr Joan Wragg	Sharing and Generosity
Mar 14th	Rev Ben Haslam	Worship (with Communion)
Mar 21st	Rev Paul Smith	Making Disciples (Passion Sunday)

All the above dates are for 10am services only.

Covenant Service Update

Following a recent meeting, the leadership team decided that the first Sunday of being allowed back in the Church building, and which Ben is able to be with us, will be our Covenant service. It was decided not to hold it on the original date so as not to exclude those who do not have internet access.

Nature and Wellbeing

We all know what we need to do to be physically healthy (sometimes we even do it!) but what do we need to do be mentally healthy? Wellbeing (being mentally healthy) seems to be a bit of buzzword at the moment and experts have decided there are five ways to wellbeing – connecting, giving, being active, learning and taking notice.

Emma Hoerning, one of the GPs at Wonford Green Surgery, has written a booklet about 'The Five ways to Wellbeing'. In the section on 'Connecting' I was pleased to see that connecting with God and with nature were mentioned as well as connecting with friends, family and neighbours.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place people have found walking in the parks and spending time in their gardens really beneficial and apparently exercising outdoors (yoga on your lawn rather than in your living room) is much better for you because of the added connection with nature -though perhaps not in the current weather! For those who haven't been able to get out just watching birds or noticing the changing colour of leaves from a window can help with mood.

Ideas from the Mental Health Foundation suggest growing food – salad leaves and herbs can be grown indoors - and bringing nature inside with

house plants, collecting cones, pebbles or feathers, and with photos or drawings of your favourite natural places

Nature has really helped many of us cope with the pandemic and with buds on trees and bulbs peeping through the soil is continuing to do so. But how can we help nature? Unfortunately the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. As stewards of God's creation what can we do?

I am going to plant pollinator - friendly plants in my garden and at work and am going to join Devon Wildlife Trust who are doing great work nationally with the Nature Recovery Network and locally in the Ludwell Valley Park. Perhaps there is something we could do as a Church?

Helen

The Green Team

Devon Wildlife Trust www.devonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Five ways to Wellbeing www.dpt.nhs.uk

Thriving in Nature www.mentalhealthfounation.org.uk

Church Council Meeting

Our next church council will be held on Tuesday 9 February at 7.30pm on Zoom. At the February Church Council we agree our Church Appointments. Please let me or Rev Ben Haslam know if you wish to stand down from your appointment.

Property Steward Needed

Wonford desperately needs a Property Steward to help look after our church and to undertake regular checks of the building and equipment. It includes arranging an annual check for safety of building, arranging any workmen to do repairs, etc and joining the Church council.

If you feel you have the time and skills please contact Rev Ben Haslam or Alison Howell who can give you more details.

Please consider this as it is an important part of keeping our church running smoothly and safely.

God bless

Alison

“Trust in God and Trust in the Scientists”

A nurse, professors of health protection and theology and a minister whose church hall is a vaccination hub, speak about the role of faith in supporting the vaccination programme.

Following the announcement that over 100,000 people have now died in the UK as a result of Covid-19, in a special edition of the Methodist podcast, four Methodists speak about the vaccination programme.

The podcast looks at the disproportionate impact that Covid-19 has had on people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, the history of racial inequality in healthcare provision and the impact of misinformation around the vaccine.

Grace Penn-Timothy, a Methodist nurse who works in Accident and Emergency medicine speaks about the racial inequality that Covid-19 has exposed, the reluctance of some to take up the vaccine and how she urges friends to get vaccinated:

“I talk to my fellow ethnic minority people...you know how difficult it is to lose somebody. To die on your own with no friends or family around, it’s even worse”.

Prof Paul Hunter, a Methodist who is Professor of Health Protection at the University of East Anglia, specialising in outreach response, speaks about the science behind the vaccination and the role of the Church in supporting communities during this time of decision making:

“We need to ensure that all sections of society have access to adequate information and education and support to make the right decision.”

The theology behind caring for our neighbours in prayer and action focuses on a Methodist Church in Wolverhampton that is acting as a vaccination hub with 1000 people coming through the doors each day to be inoculated and we speak to a physicist turned theology Professor on the Christian duty to accept the gift of a vaccine.

The Revd Dr Jo Cox-Darling, Minister of Trinity Methodist Church in Codsall near Wolverhampton, which is a vaccination hub, speaking on the chaplaincy service offered during the vaccination roll out at her church hall:

“We are having conversations with people who have not left their home for a year. We can start to enable those people to be part of a community again.”

The Revd Prof David Wilkinson, Principal of St John’s College, Durham and Methodist minister, reflects on our duty to take the offer of a vaccine:

“For me it’s my discipleship, my love of God that leads me to say ‘this is a gift, I’m going to use it for other people’s benefit”

Podcast link - <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/podcasts/the-methodist-podcast-episode-50/>

Job Word Search

R N S Y E K N O D C A M E L S
O H O T R A E B L E S S I N G
S O R I G H T E O U S N O I L
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Affliction, Angels, Attacked, Bear, Behemoth, Bildad, Blameless, Blessing, Camels, Clouds, Counselor, Daughters, Dominion, Donkeys, Fire, Glory, Honor, Horse, House, Integrity, Leviathan, Lightning, Lions, Locust, Obedience, Orion, Prosperity, Provision, Questions, Raiders, Righteous, Ruin, Servants, Sores, Suffering, Testing, Wisdom

Dial-a-Prayer



FREEPHONE numbers for prayers, reflections and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

**Listen to a pastoral message from the
President and**

Vice President: 0808 281 2695

Listen to our Podcast: 0808 281 2478

Prayer updated every Thursday, Presidential message updated every Monday, Methodist Podcast updated fortnightly on Thursday.

Prayer Focus for February

Prayer - Our Strongest Weapon - Pray Without Ceasing

Here we are in the 2nd month of 2021. So what has changed? Well the USA have a new President. We are no longer part of the EU and we now have a vaccine against COVID 19. At this time though we are in a 3rd lockdown as we fight against the new faster spreading strain of the virus. Please pray that as people are invited to get their jab, they will take up the offer. Pray for our NHS as they are being swamped by the high numbers needing hospital treatment, especially intensive care wards. Pray that everyone will obey the rules in order to reduce the spread. Praise God for giving knowledge to those who are developing the vaccines.

Pray for the new President of the USA, that he would govern with wisdom & fairness. Pray for the outgoing President also.

Pray for our own government for wisdom now that we are no longer part of the EU, that fair trade link will be sourced.

Pray for those in our church family who are unwell, at home or in hospital & for those unable to access the internet & may be feeling isolated, especially during lockdown.

Pray for those affected by war or disasters all over the world.

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

If you have anything that you would like included please let Julie Rothwell know so that she can include it here.

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)

Various prayers and services from the Methodist Church are available to listen to via free-phone telephone numbers:

To listen to a short prayer – 0808 281 2514

To listen to a selection of Methodist related news stories: 0808 281 2478
(Content for both is updated weekly on a Thursday afternoon)

The Prayer Team

Services in February

Services at 10am are listed below and will be on Zoom/Facebook until the Church reopens.

7th	Mary Hext - All-Age Worship
14th	Rev Terry Spencer - 'Holy Habits' Themed Preaching **
21st	Rev Ben Haslam - 'Holy Habits' Themed Preaching **
28th	Dr Joan Wragg - 'Holy Habits' Themed Preaching **

Presidency Calls for Prayers of Lament and Hope

Statement from the Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference and Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference:

“We know that many millions of people across the country have taken refuge in prayer during the pandemic. We join with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in **their call** to set aside time each evening at 6pm to pray. There is a very great need amongst us to be able to lament the horrific loss of life and to find solace and hope during these dark days. Our prayer is that each of you will know that God is with us, sustaining us through our grief.”

Carolyn Lawrence has recorded **a prayer** following the announcement of 100, 000 deaths in the UK due to Covid-19.

Join Richard and Carolyn each Monday on Facebook where they reflect on some issues that we are all feeling at the moment including **loss and anxiety**.

You can listen to short reflections from the President and Vice-President here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/presidency-calls-for-prayers-of-lament-and-hope/>

The deadline for items for the March 2021 Newsletter will be Sunday 14th February 2021. 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