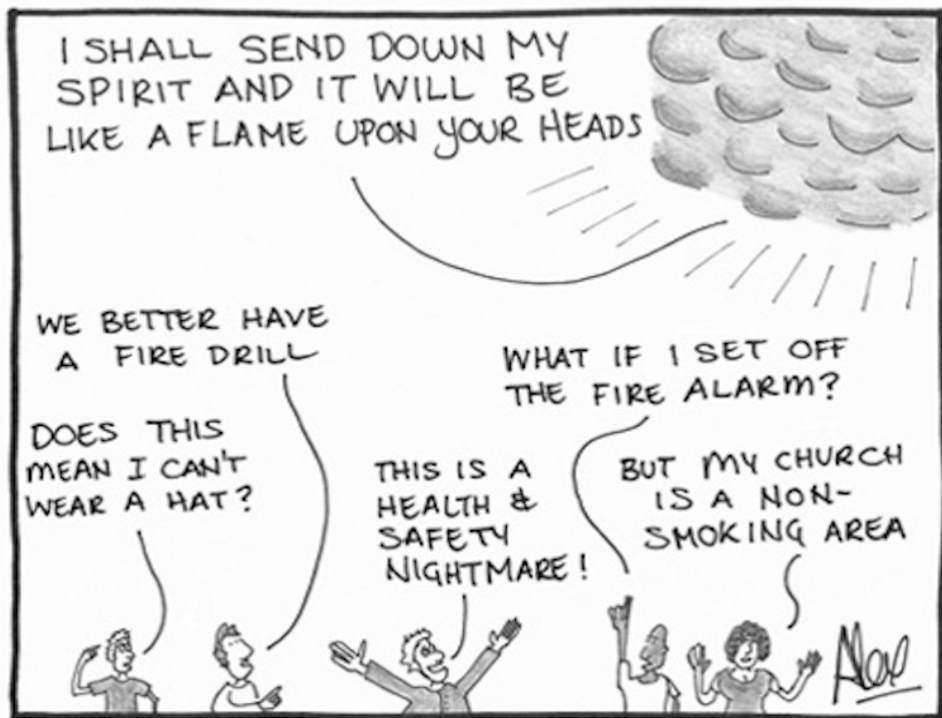


INSIGHT

MAY 2024



WHAT IF PENTECOST HAPPENED TODAY?

INSIDE
Insight

- Easter offering service moved to Lealholm
- 6 things you might not know about Wesley
- Methodist Way of Life Update
- Kevin's monthly musings + much more

THE MAGAZINE OF GUISBOROUGH METHODIST CHURCH

KEVIN WRITES

Monthly Musings From Our Minister



“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”

(Matthew 6:21)

It was in autumn, the day God convinced me to enter training to be ordained as a presbyter, I was on a retreat in Maryland near Washington D.C., and walking through the forest on a “fruit of the Spirit” trail.

I was pondering where God was leading me. I had a very successful consultancy job with the US Army, access to the halls of power in the Pentagon, and sometimes the White House or Capitol Hill, at a salary that would put me in the top 10% of all in the US.

I came across a tree in front of me that was standing tall and strong, it looked like a perfect tree except for one thing, there was not a leaf on the tree. It was bare, probably dead.

I looked down and right next to it was another tree lying on the ground, decaying. It did not look good; its bark was falling off.

Yet something caught my eye...

It was a small green shoot growing out of the dead tree.

I was struck with the thought, that I could continue on my path, standing tall with wealth and power, but not really providing a life-giving presence to the world like the standing tree in front of me, or I could die to the life I knew and allow God to use me to give new life a chance, perhaps only a small green shoot.

Until that moment, I wasn't sure I could change my life so radically, but I realised God would work it out if I allowed the Spirit of God to use me. I enrolled in seminary the next day, and a few months later giving notice to the US Army.

If my goal in life was to be wealthy, powerful or famous, my decisions in life would have been very different.

Often we hope and desire that we can be faithful to God and do God's will, and still get rich (status, power, wealth, fame, security) in the things of this world while serving Jesus.

But God will gently nudge us (sometimes not so gently) to ensure Jesus remains our #1 priority. Are we committed to him still? Is he still Lord of our lives even if it means radical change?

In light of the resurrection, the first disciples made radical changes to their lives, many selling all their possessions, so there was nothing to distract them from their love and service to Jesus and to others. Is Jesus Lord of your heart? Where is your treasure? Is it in agreement with your heart?

We are joining the campaign to end poverty in the UK. How can we do this? We already do a lot as a church to support those suffering from food poverty. Are there other things we can do together? Something radical perhaps? Would we dare? We can write our MPs, ask the candidates in the next election what they will do to end poverty, and find others ways to help those in need.

Previous Saviour, we praise your name above all other names, and we desire to serve you with all our hearts. Loving you with all our hearts may mean we give something up that is desired by our world, our culture, or our community. But as we unclench our hands, we open them to do your will, to be the love and grace originating in the risen Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Kevin

**Help shape the future of mission
and ministry in our churches**
Cluster Mission Meeting

**Wednesday 5th June at 7.00 pm at New Marske
Methodist Church with Helle Sewell, the District
Mission Enabler. Everyone Welcome!**

AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE

We think of ambassadors, as a rule, as people connected in some way with politics and diplomacy, but that is not necessarily the case. Political ambassadors have to work around laws and protocol, and can often find themselves misunderstood through difficulties of translation.

There are, thankfully, other ways of being an ambassador, and in ways not connected with politics, or with religion.



A few weeks ago, the death was announced of one of the 'Hairy Bikers'. Dave Myers had been diagnosed with cancer, and throughout his illness and treatment he maintained his dignity and good humour, along with his best friend, Simon King.

They travelled extensively, both in this country and abroad, discovering new ideas for food, not just for cooking, but also for growing crops, and enabling local farmers to link with their local restaurants. Latterly they took to using E-bikes because they cared about ecology as well. They were pioneers in a new form of diplomacy: they had found a way of uniting food with tradition, with ethnicity, with culture, and with love. They were both true ambassadors for peace.

Soon after his death was announced, the BBC offered a series of 15 programmes where the Bikers researched the history of local pubs and clubs, which had offered over the centuries a hub for the community. Moreover, at the end of each programme, an 'In Memoriam' page was shown, acknowledging Dave Myers, a gesture unprecedented, except maybe by royalty!

They were, thankfully, not alone. Those criteria are also being matched by another team: led by Jay Blades at the 'Repair Shop'.

People of all races and cultures are being supported, and heard, as they bring precious items for repair and regeneration. Support is given by all the members of this team as they encourage, listen, and lovingly use their traditional crafts.

They are truly ambassadors for peace and harmony.

Jenny Bolton



CIRCUIT EASTER OFFERING SERVICE

MWiB

Methodist Women in Britain's strap line is 'for women, for justice, for Christ'. The theme for this year's service, 'Let Justice Roll', is based on Amos 5:24:

*But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream (NIV).*

The Easter Offering tradition began in 1883, when women in Manchester collected £32 for missionary work overseas from 'Christmas pennies' at family gatherings on Christmas Day. The Women's Work Committee of the World Methodist Missionary Society thought that Easter would be a more appropriate time and asked women to raise 'a penny a head' which would be dedicated in a circuit service. In 1884, the London Districts distributed Easter envelopes and collecting bags asking for a penny a head, and collected around £100. The Easter offering collection has continued ever since.

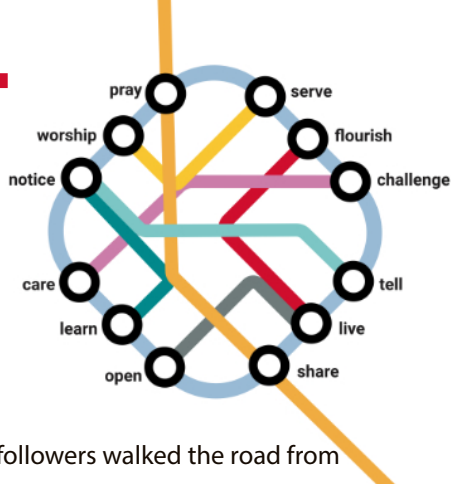
MWiB has been working closely with the 'Walking with Micah' project. We know that there are many instances of injustice in the world today, and that God calls us to ongoing awareness and action. Amos 5:24 reminds us that God's justice is not finite, but instead rolls forward, gathering momentum as people work for justice and their actions feed into communities and lives.

This year's service will now be held at

NEWCOMEN METHODIST CHURCH
Sunday May 12th @ 3.00 pm

This service will be streamed via the usual Zoom link

THE METHODIST WAY OF LIFE



On the evening of the first Easter Day, two of Jesus' followers walked the road from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus.

It was a seven-mile walk, so they had plenty of time to reflect and discuss "everything that had happened", as Luke neatly puts it. (Luke 24.13)

Along the way, a stranger draws alongside and falls into step with them. Somehow, they fail to recognise that it is Jesus. Even when Jesus quizzes them about what has happened and starts a bible study from the Old Testament with them, they still don't realise with whom they are speaking.

It's incredible, isn't it? How on earth did two devoted followers of Jesus fail to recognise Jesus when he was right there in front of them?

Bible scholars have long speculated about the reasons—but the plain fact is that we can't know what prevented them from "seeing." Nor why the scales fell from their eyes later—as he broke bread with them in the lodging place in Emmaus.

It reminds us about something fundamental to A Methodist Way of Life—namely, that the journey with Jesus is never as straightforward as it seems.

If there are some of you out there who have sailed through life with a rock-solid assurance of the presence of Jesus at every single moment of your life, then God bless you.

But the rest of us mere mortals—the overwhelming majority, I venture to suggest—have found the way of life to have twists and turns, ups and downs and more than a few roadblocks along the way.

One of my early observations, as I settle into the role of Methodist Way of Life Circuit Enabler, has been to dispel the notion that we are offering some kind of quick fix which will "solve" all the struggles and problems we have.

Recently, I was in one of our churches and mentioned that we must not fear messing up as we follow Jesus. After the service, one of the faithful folks thanked me profusely for daring to express that sentiment.

Indeed, they insisted it was the first time they'd been told that! I hope that wasn't literally true—after all, we see constant mess-ups from God's people throughout the Bible, not least from Jesus' chosen disciples.

I've started work on the first "station" in the Methodist Way of Life Journey: Prayer. We'll be digging into this theme in the Autumn, tackling some of those thorny and challenging questions about prayer that most Christians have but seldom discuss. You now, those questions such as:

- Does God hear my prayers?
- How do I find the words to pray?
- What's the point of praying when it seems like nothing happens?
- Is there a "right" way to pray?

I want our Methodist Way of Life journey to be "real." That means being honest about the questions, the struggles, the doubts and the "roadblocks" along the way.

I hope we can figure out things together!

Remember that there are multiple ways to connect with the Methodist Way of Life. Our dedicated Facebook Group is gradually gaining momentum, and I'm posting regular video content on our YouTube channel. If you haven't joined the Facebook Group yet, then what are you waiting for?

But the most effective way to stay connected is through our MWOl email list. You will receive an email about once per month with links to videos, resources, inspiration, prayers, and much more. Please note this is a different email list to the regular GMC email list that you may get periodic emails from Jenny or others. You will need to sign up for the MWOl list separately.

To sign up, go to bit.ly/methodistwayoflife. Your email is totally secure in our system, and you can unsubscribe at any time with one click—no questions asked. Or point your camera phone at the weird looking thing on the right to be taken directly to the sign up page.



Looking forward to the journey

Paul Walker

6 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT JOHN WESLEY

On the evening of May 24th 1738, a heavy-hearted John Wesley attended a prayer meeting at Aldersgate, London. It was at this meeting, as he listened to a reading of Paul's letter to the Romans, he had the spiritual experience he later described thus:

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Wesley had been wandering in a spiritual wilderness until this time. He had been an Anglican priest for many years but was still unsure of his calling. Wesley became an evangelist because of his "warmed heart." Here are seven intriguing facts about John Wesley to commemorate his life-changing experience.

1. He was born into a massive family.

Wesley was born at Epworth, near Lincoln, on June 28, 1703. His father was Samuel Wesley, a clergyman in the Church of England, and his mother was called Susanna.

Wesley was Samuel and Susanna's 15th out of 19 children. Families were large because of the high child mortality rate in the eighteenth century—children under ten accounted for around 70% of all fatalities in the region.

As a result, many children were born in preparedness for the worse. Susanna (John's mother) was the 25th child to be born. Susanna had 19 children. Nine died in infancy, and just eight survived her death in 1742.

2. He learned how to disagree agreeably.

Wesley and a well-known preacher called George Whitefield had profound theological conflicts. Despite their strong disagreements, Wesley reflected on their differences in a memorial speech for Whitefield:

There are many doctrines of a less essential nature. In these, we may think and let think; we may 'agree to disagree.' But, in the meantime, let us hold fast to the essentials.

This is the first recorded use of the term. It was a hallmark of Wesley's way of holding to his convictions while remaining in connection with those with whom he disagreed. If we could only learn one lesson from John Wesley in our current spiritual climate, then this would be the one.

3. He wrote a best-selling medical textbook

Wesley wrote a medical text titled Primitive Physick. Check out Global Ministries'. This went through 32 editions, making it one of England's most widely read books.

He boldly questioned modern doctors — how they sometimes treated humans like machines and how their treatments lacked scientific merit.

By the same token, we would consider some of Wesley's beliefs quackery today. For instance, Wesley recommended holding a puppy against the stomach to cure stomach pain. He offered dried and powdered toad pills for asthma. He also promoted regular dips in cold bathwater as a cure-all for his readers.

4. He circled the earth ten times on his horse

Well, not literally, of course...Wesley rode 250,000 miles—the equivalent of ten circumnavigations of the globe.

His Aldersgate experience convinced him that it was vital for him to spread the gospel through relationships and to grow closer to God because of those connections. This entailed riding around, preaching to whatever crowds gathered in fields, marketplaces, and gathering places during the pre-industrial era.

Asked if he would consider walking instead of riding, he replied, “Neigh” (I made that last one up...)

5. He narrowly escaped a severe fire as a child

... And used it as a sermon illustration as an adult. Throughout his life, he referred to himself as “a brand plucked out of the fire”—a quotation from Zechariah 3:2.

When he was just five years old, a fire broke out in his father's rectory. Rescuers grabbed the other children—but John was inside with the stairs on fire and the rectory roof threatening to collapse. A parishioner who stood on another man's shoulders and lifted him out of the window saved John.

He believed his was a unique destiny and was called for extraordinary work.

6. He never intended to form the Methodist Church

Wesley was an ordained Anglican priest right until his death—the Methodist Church did not officially form until five years after Wesley's death. He himself declared, *“I live and die a member of the Church of England.”*

After Wesley died in 1791, the glue holding together the Methodist movement and the Church of England cracked. The Plan of Pacification in 1795, which permitted their clergy to administer the sacraments to their members, became the Methodists' formal break from the Church of England.

*God of mercy,
who inspired John and Charles Wesley with zeal for your gospel:
grant to all people boldness to proclaim your word
and a heart ever to rejoice in singing your praises;
through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.*

There are names of sixteen books of the Bible hidden in the paragraph below.

Lets see how many you can find. HAVE FUN! Answers are below

"I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. A certain fluke, kept people looking so hard for facts, and for others, it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers. To others it was a job. We want it to be a most fascinating little moment for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help find them. I will quickly admit it usually takes the preacher to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how you will compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible in this paragraph."

2024 PLANT SALE

@ 55, Hutton Lane in aid of church funds

Monday 6th May until Friday 10th May, all day and early evening. Plants will be 50p or £ 1

Everyone is welcome to call round the side to the back garden, but please ring the bell at the front door first. We hope to have herbaceous plants, bedding plants, and tomato plants.



"I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. A certain fluke, kept people looking so hard for facts, and for others, it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of our readers. To others it was a job. We want it to be a most fascinating little moment for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help find them. I will quickly admit it usually takes the preacher to find one of them, and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how you will compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen books of the Bible in this paragraph."



MWiB
Ascension Day
of Praise and Reflection

Held at Peter Lee
Methodist Church
4 Broadclose Court, Peterlee

on Thursday, 9th May

at 11am



Service led by Rev. Sally Coleman
(Refreshments available from 10:15am)

Please bring your packed lunch with you.

Afternoon session

'Hymns and Hers' led by

District President: Mrs Pamela Stenson

Items gratefully received for the Cake and Bring & Buy stalls
and all funds raised will go towards our project

'Bake for Ukraine'

MAY



Worship

5th

10.30 MORNING WORSHIP

Local Arrangement

12th

10.30 CAFE SERVICE

Led by Brian Stephenson

10.30 Hinton Court Led by Revd Paul and Mrs Sandy Walker

10.30 Circuit Easter Offering Service

@ Newcomen Methodist (also will be streamed live on Zoom)

19th

10.30 PENTECOST SUNDAY HOLY COMMUNION

Led by The Reverend Kevin Highfield

26th

10.30 CAFE SERVICE for Trinity Sunday

Led by Sandie Dixon

Hinton Court Holy Communion led by Revd Betty Bell

The NEXT Issue of **INSIGHT** will be the June issue, available on Sunday June 23rd. Please submit ALL your contributions to Jenny Tyrie no later than June 9th. Also big thanks to Peter Crabb for stepping into the breach and will be compiling **Insight** again from July