

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 64 **June 27th 2021**

Same old, same old, just won't do!

"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, we are confronted by both urgent and unparalleled need all around us and once-in-a-generation opportunities for brand new and transformative connections to be made between faith and life. Intimations of this fresh engagement are becoming apparent across the life of the whole Connexion.

But might this vital activity be inhibited if it is not freed from the culturally tired structures and practices of bypassed religion? As a dual carriageway takes traffic away from an old market town, post-modernity has increasingly been a highway that has enabled people to move on through life without reference to the history and present-day possibilities of Christianity.

Churchgoing has been progressively bypassed by the communities in which we are set. But it would seem that 'spirituality' and openness to an experience of faith have not. So we are living through a time of profound disruption and uncertainty, with all the cultural fluidity that allows for step-changes in approach to bear fruit, for both society and the Church.

Whether we look to the climate emergency, the need for racial justice to be a lived reality, or the unfolding crisis in mental health, now is the time for radical shifts of commitment and approach. When women can't walk the streets knowing they are safe, the time has surely come for rapid action nationally.

In times such as these the 'same old same old' just won't do; just as it didn't do in the first century Holy Land, sixteenth-century Europe or eighteenth-century Britain. God's signature reforming activity in these epic times of transition shows us what to expect. Christ calls us to be a compelling part of this societal change and collective national reformation.

With a renewed vision of 'God for All', a passionate engagement with pressing public issues and a growing conviction that evangelism is for everyone, the Holy Spirit is stirring us up and moving us out once more. It is time to be bold.

Love and peace, *David Perry*

(editor of The Connection, the magazine of The Methodist Church. This article is from the Summer 2021 edition which you can see at

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22213/3535-connexion-magazine-issue-23.pdf>

Why is the Methodist Church called a Connexion?

In calling the Methodist Church in Britain 'the Connexion', Methodism reflects its historical and spiritual roots. In the 18th century a 'connexion' simply meant those connected to a person or a group – for instance, a politician's network of supporters. So, when people spoke of "Mr Wesley's Connexion" they meant followers of the movement led by John Wesley.

What's On

Sunday 27th 9:30am in the church spoken service with Mr John Starling
10:30am online worship with Mr John Starling

Sunday 4th July 10:30am back in church for worship and Holy Communion with Rev Ralph Ward. This service will be live-streamed on Facebook

Find all online services on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

For Kids and young people

Fridays 6-7pm Kids and Young People *Friday Funday*

Fridays 7pm Young Peoples' Singing Group

Good news about our services

Starting next Sunday, 4th July, the 9:30am spoken services will cease and we will return to having one service at 10:30am on Sundays in the sanctuary at St Paul's. This service will be live-streamed for those unable to attend. Songs will be pre-recorded and projected to the screen but the rules still prohibit congregational singing. We'll continue to sing together after the service outside the building until the rules allow us to sing inside.

The first of these 10:30 services will be conducted by Rev Ralph Ward, who will be newly returned from his sabbatical leave, and it will include Holy Communion. Sadly, it will be Ralph's last morning service with us before he moves to his new appointment in Cornwall.

As we must still limit attendance, if you intend coming, please let us know by email to ask.stpauls@gmail.com, or by phoning Joyce Jordan or Carol Ofield.

In your prayers

Pray for this year's Methodist Conference, meeting online and at the National Conference Centre in Birmingham, from Thursday 24 June to Thursday 1 July. The agenda covers crucial aspects of the mission and ministry of the Church and key decisions will be made in the areas of marriage and relationships; equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); and oversight and trusteeship. Conference will formally elect the Revd Sonia Hicks as President and Barbara Easton as Vice-President, who begin their year of office on 26 June.

Pray for all who will be ordained as presbyters in The Methodist Church during this year's Conference. Thank God for their commitment and ask for his blessing on their future ministry.

Pray for Rev Ralph as he returns to circuit duties after his 3-month sabbatical leave. Pray that he brings new strength and vision to St Paul's and Trinity churches in his remaining few weeks with us before he and Adele move to Cornwall.

Continue in prayer for all affected by the present rise in Covid cases due to the Delta variant, for those who are ill and for all medical and care workers.

Continue to pray for Lyn and Richard and for all others you know who need prayers at this time.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list

Have you visited Friday Funday?

Our children and young people get together from 6-7pm on Fridays for half an hour of Bible teaching and related activities followed by half an hour of play and socialising. They could do with a few more helpers, so do drop in any Friday evening, see what's going on and consider whether you might offer your help.

Young Christians' Relay to COP26

Young Christians are walking in relay from Cornwall to Glasgow. One young Methodist, Rachel Mander, explains the background to the initiative, its aims and how they are getting on a couple of weeks into their journey.

Just after the G7 in Cornwall, we set out to walk all the way to another set of talks - the international climate negotiations, COP26, being held in Glasgow in November. We're walking as an act of faith, hope and love. We have lots of days which we still don't have any offers of accommodation for, and where the route isn't finalised. Already though, we have seen provision. A beautiful send-out service from Truro Cathedral, offers to meet a mayor, accommodation with views of a sunset over the harbour, rope swings over rivers, and a WhatsApp group with people praying for the journey.

We're walking because at the moment, many countries are being pushed further into debt because of the impacts of climate change. The existing international commitments to provide financial support to the countries most vulnerable to climate change, are being broken by our own government.

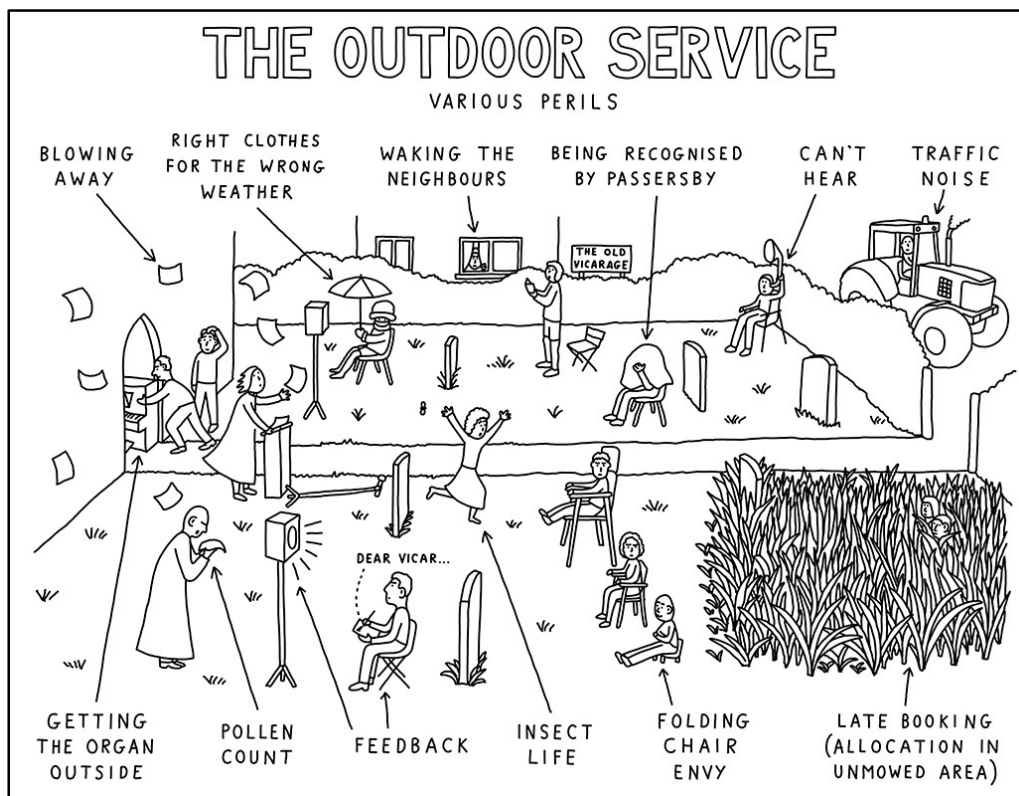
We want to pressure the UK government to prepare for COP26. As a global financial player, we should be reversing the recent cuts to aid, delivering on existing climate finance, and ensuring that no country gets pushed into debt because of climate change (the technical part of the UN negotiations for this is ensuring provision for a loss and damage financial mechanism).



A boat is accompanying us on our journey, with sails made from material from around the world. It's part of our acknowledgement that "We are in the same storm, but not the same boat" - just like we have seen with the Covid-19 pandemic. As young Christians organising this Relay, we know that the story of our adult lives will be witnessing the effects of climate change, which will hit our neighbours around the world first and foremost.

Many churches around the world have been calling for climate action for decades. A 2004 World Council of Churches statement calls "on our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the world to act in solidarity with us to reduce the causes of human-induced climate change... and to pay for the costs of adaptation to anticipated the impacts". I personally was just 7 years old when this call was issued. In faith, we ask churches in the UK to respond by joining us in this Relay to COP26.

We have over 100 days of walking ahead of us, and events in 10 major cities across the UK. We would love you to join us: walk with us, host us in church halls, hold Climate Sunday services as we pass through, campaign with us to ask the UK government to act to ensure no country gets pushed into debt because of climate change. *Rachel Mander*



And finally – some thoughts about rain

"I always like walking in the rain, so no one can see me crying." *Charlie Chaplin*

"The sun did not shine. It was too wet to play. So we sat in the house. All that cold, cold, wet day." *Dr Seuss, The Cat in the Hat*

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return to it without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower
and bread for the eater. *Isaiah 55:10*

The nicest thing about the rain is that it always stops. Eventually.
A A Milne, Winnie the Pooh

The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.
Dolly Parton

I'm singin' in the rain, just singin' in the rain,
What a glorious feeling, and I'm happy again.
I'm laughing at clouds, so dark up above,
The sun's in my heart and I'm ready for love.
Song by Arthur Freed

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