

**St Paul's Methodist Church,
Woodfield Road, Northgate, Crawley**

Ministers:

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St Paul's Newsletter *1/8 May 2022*

Dear Friends,

At the start of the Easter holidays, I was pleased to finally see my grandchildren again. Their names are unusual for different reasons. The youngest is named Lowen, which is a traditional Cornish name. The eldest is called John; his name has not been a popular choice of name for several years but now it seems to be increasing in popularity again. It recently re-entered the top 100 popular names for boys. I love names but I am very glad to have the name Jennifer. I was very nearly named Endellienter, after St Endellion. Our names mark us out, don't they? They identify us as unique individuals, each made in the image and likeness of God but gloriously ourselves.

Names are important in the Bible too. Sometimes God give people new names. When he chose a couple called Abram and Sarai to be the founders of a family through whom God's blessing would flow to the whole world, he changed their names (Genesis 17). 'Abram' means 'exalted father' – 'Abraham' means 'Father of a multitude. Sarai and Sarah both mean 'Princess', or 'woman of strength' (I love that meaning!); but in Hebrew the second form, Sarah, emphasizes that she will be a woman of strength not just for her immediate family, but for the world.

Jesus also changed the name of one of his closest friends - from 'Simon' (which means 'listen' or 'hearing') to 'Peter' (which means 'rock'). The change in name showed the part that Peter was going to play as the leader of the disciples. Jesus said: 'On this rock I will build my church' (Matthew 16 verse 18), and Peter was to become the leader of the early Christian Church. Another apparent famous name change is when the zealous Pharisee Saul becomes the apostle, Paul. But the story there is somewhat different. Saul/Paul always possessed both names, as was not uncommon in those days.

It seems appropriate that when he first appears in the pages of the Bible, as a Pharisee keen to stamp out a fledgling movement perceived as a threat to the true people of God, he is known by his Hebrew name, Saul. This changes after his eyes have been opened to the amazing thing that God had done through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and he starts to share the good news with people outside his own faith community. From that moment on, he is referred to by his Roman name, Paul, as he travelled farther and farther into the world of the Gentiles (non-Jews).

Change is not always comfortable. Sometimes when we are called to change, it can threaten our identity. Who are we? What are we called to do? Where are we called to go, individually and as the Church?

Jeremiah 29: 11-13 says *11 For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. 12 Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. 13 When you search for me, you will find me, if you seek me with all your heart.*

We are in a season of change. We are gradually emerging from the pandemic and all that entailed. We are faced with new challenges and new opportunities. May we seek God's will for us as we move forward together to discover what God has planned for us here in Crawley and further afield.
Every blessing, *Jenny*

Worship at St Paul's

Sunday 1 May 10:30am Worship with Rev Melvyn Cooke
Followed immediately afterwards by our annual General Church Meeting.
Everyone is very welcome to attend, but only members of the Methodist Church are entitled to vote

Sunday 8 May 10:30am Communion with Rev Gillian Baalham

Sunday 15 May 10:30am Worship with Deacon Jenny Parnell

Sunday 22 May 10:30am **NB No service at St Paul's.** We are joining a united Communion service at Redhill Methodist Church with Rev Gillian and Deacon Jenny.

Sunday 29 May 10:30am Worship with Deacon Jenny Parnell

Unless otherwise stated, services are streamed on Facebook with videos available later

Fellowship at St Paul's

Tuesday Fellowship meets each week at 8.00pm via Zoom. All welcome. For the Zoom link contact Carol Ofield or email ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Wednesday Fellowship weekly, 11am at St Paul's. Everyone is welcome.

4 May Something beginning with L – What's this? Come and find out!

11 May TBC

For kids and young people

King's Kids 10:30am every Sunday

Young People's Singing Group meets on Friday evenings in term time, primary aged children from 6.30-7.00, secondary aged from 7.00-7.45. Would all adults and young people aged 11+ continue to wear face coverings, unless they are singing, and dress warmly as windows will be open to ensure good ventilation.

In your prayers

Pray for our circuit stewards in their planning and decision-making at this busy time for them in the church year.

Continue to pray for the people of Ukraine and all you know who are in need of our prayers.

Please send prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com and remember to obtain the permission of the person to be named

Loaves and Fishes will be closed

Spring Bank Holiday Monday, 2nd May,
School half-term week, Mon 30th May – Thursday 2 June



Church House to close

On Wednesday 25 May 2022, we will be marking the closing of Methodist Church House with an Act of Worship and a “pilgrimage journey” exhibition commemorating the building and the people who worked within it. These events are primarily aimed at those who work, or who have worked, in the building, or who have strong links with it. We will be giving thanks to God for all that Methodist Church House has facilitated over the years and look forward to the next part of the journey.

If you have any connection to Methodist Church House, more details and how to register for the event are at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8zcd54>

Statement on the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 from the Methodist Church, Baptists Together and the United Reformed Church

We lament the passing of the Nationality and Borders Bill into law. Compelled by the Biblical call to welcome the stranger, we were outspoken in our criticism of the Bill, arguing that it would unjustly remove the rights and threaten the dignity of people who are in need of our nation’s care and protection.

Over the last year, members of our churches have come together with a wide range of people to raise concerns about the government’s proposals, and to stand alongside refugees. Many have also signed up to host refugees from Ukraine, and continue to be involved in welcoming people seeking sanctuary in their own communities. This legislation will not diminish that spirit of compassion, hospitality and solidarity. We know that through such encounters we will learn more about ourselves, each other, and God.

Alongside the practical work of welcome, our Churches will not stop advocating for love to be shown to our neighbours through the policies and practices of our asylum system. We will continue to push the government to open up more safe and legal routes for people who are in need of the sanctuary we can offer here in the UK. Our denominations have also joined hundreds of other organisations and charities in pledging to work towards the repeal of the UK’s ‘anti-refugee’ laws. We remain committed to working with others towards a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion.

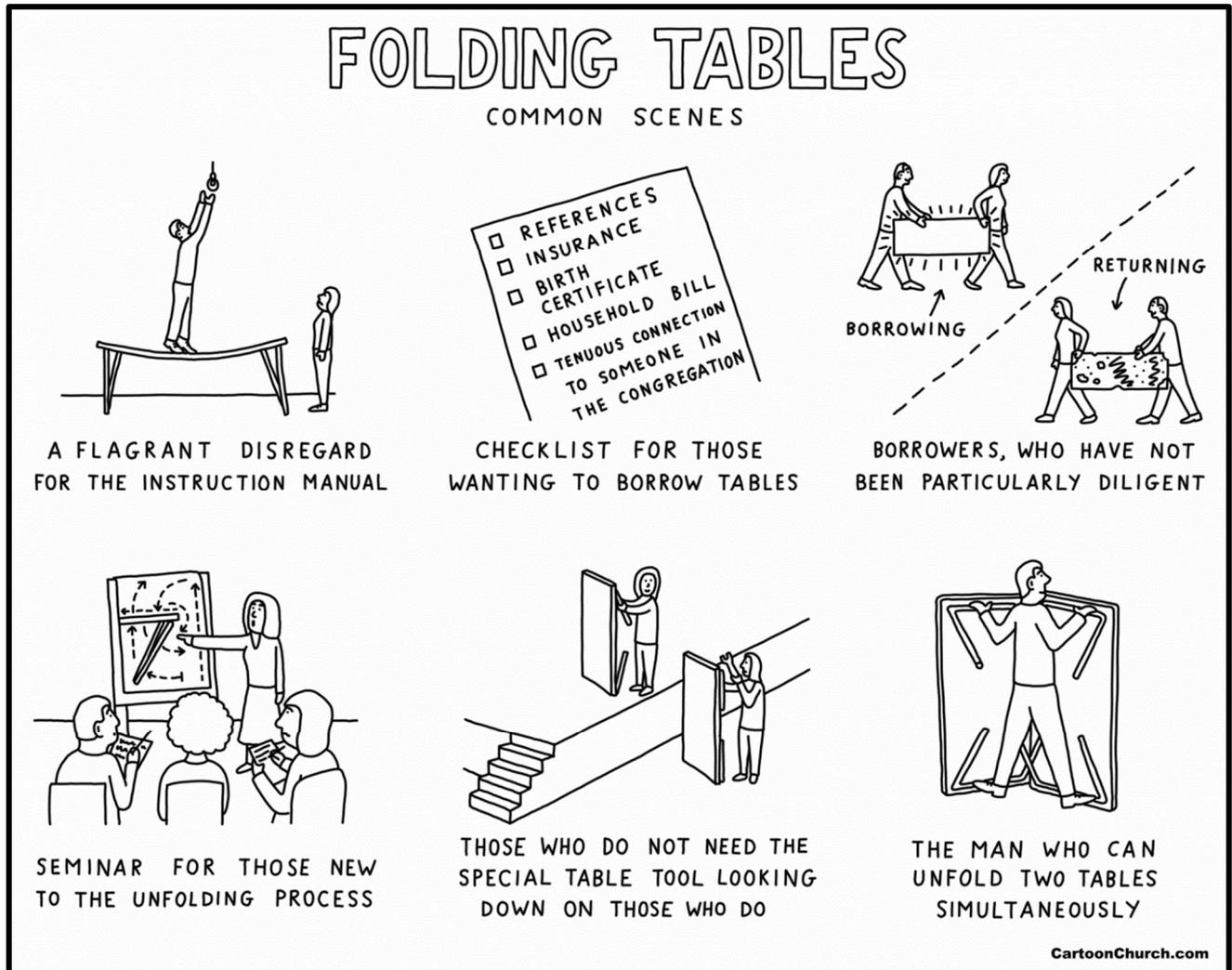
Thank you for your support for people in Ukraine

Our Easter offerings for the *All We Can* appeal for relief in Ukraine raised over £300. Julie Anscome returned safely from her journey to the Poland/Ukraine border with relief supplies for children and animals. Thank you for the wonderful amount of items you donated.

Plant sale at St Paul's for Christian Aid Week May 15-21 May

Can't get there? You can donate in our e-envelope, as we used successfully last year - here is the link. <https://tinyurl.com/yckss2up>

Thank you for your support, *Ruth Lewis*



Please note that Rev Melvyn is on leave (Honeymoon!) from 2-13 May and Deacon Jenny will be away, but working not holidaying, from 2-11 May. For urgent matters please contact Rev Gillian at gill.baalham@methodist.org.uk or Rev Clive McKie at clivewmckie@tiscali.co.uk or email ask.stpauls@gmail.com

The next newsletter will go out for 15th May. Please send me your items by Thursday 12th May *Joyce*

Contacts

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General enquiries, prayer requests and newsletter items

ask.stpauls@gmail.com

St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

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