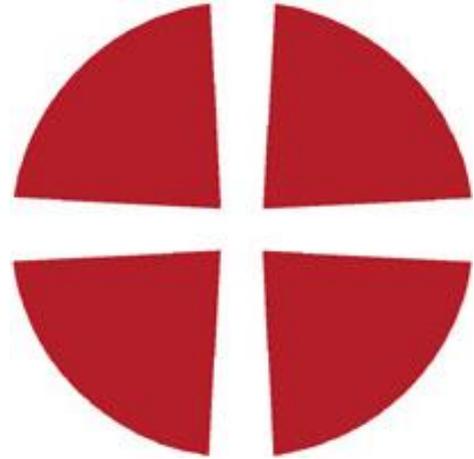


Section News

01 JULY 2021

The **Methodist** Church 



Reflection

Notices

**Global
Hunger**

Superintendent's Thoughts

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS



As some of you will be aware, last week the Methodist Conference met in Birmingham. There was a packed agenda, running to three volumes which covered items such as Oversight and Trusteeship and the ongoing work about "God for All" which explores how we can all share the good news about faith in Jesus Christ. There were the inevitable conversations about property and resources and the decision-making around the *God in Love Unites Us* report.

Last Sunday I was privileged to be invited to attend one of the ordination services to support the Revd Tracey Darling, who was a student minister in this Circuit a couple of years ago. It was a wonderful occasion, despite the necessary social distancing. As a presbyter, when I attend such services, I am always reminded of my own ordination in 2000 and the words that are read out in the course of the liturgy. While those words have a particular resonance with those of us who are ordained, this year I heard words in the sermon delivered by the Revd Leo Osborn that I hope would touch all of us.

The Revd Osborn spoke of surprise, grace, and gift.

Surprise: Isaiah (6:1-8) and Thomas (John 20:19-29) were both surprised by an encounter with God that neither of them expected. The passage from Paul read in the Ordination Service (Romans 12:1-18) begins "therefore, brothers and sisters..." One can imagine the Christians in Rome hearing the words of Paul from chapters 1-11 and nodding along in agreement. And then comes the surprise... "therefore"!! I wonder what the reaction in Rome was at that point...? "Oh gosh!! You mean there are consequences for US? We thought you were referring to a different group... I have been left wondering whether we still look for the surprises that God delights us with?"

Grace: So often we judge ourselves to be unworthy – Isaiah describes his unclean lips and his woe at his lack of worth. Thomas seems to feel inadequate in the face of Jesus' risen presence and is less eloquent than he is recorded as being in other places in the gospel. In the Ordination Service, the congregation are asked whether those to be ordained are worthy "by God's grace". They are three significant words for ordinands, but also for everyone who loves God. We still have a tendency to read things selectively!! In the passage from Romans, after giving his correspondents a surprise, Paul explains "by the grace given to [him]" some of the practical ways in which grace can be expressed both within the body of Christ and beyond its boundaries.

Gift: We are all accustomed to receiving gifts to mark significant occasions. Isaiah received forgiveness of sin in the action of the seraph and the gift of the spirit as he responded to the call of God; Thomas received the gift of the spirit breathed on him as it had been breathed on others bringing the gift of new life. The letter to the church in Rome reminds the people that there are varieties of gifts given across the people of God which are to be used widely with wisdom and to encourage others to experience them.

May you continue to be surprised, grace-filled and aware of your God-given gifts,
Rachel.

Notices

Dates for the Diary				
Week beginning	July 4 th	July 11 th	July 18 th	July 25 th
Sunday 4.00 pm <i>Reflection – a short 30-minute gathering using images, music and words led by Revd Rachel Borgars.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monday 7:30 pm <i>Discussion Group – originally called the ‘Hot Potatoes’ group, this is an opportunity to discuss current issues with some theology as part of the mix.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119	✓		✓	
Tuesday 7:30 pm <i>Midweek Evening Prayer – based on the Methodist Worship Book led by Hungerford Methodist Church</i> https://us05web.zoom.us/j/87344877369?pwd=YnYwQU50K1JuYzhkanBtQit3OU9XZz09 (Passcode: x3a55r)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thursday 7:30 pm <i>Circuit Bible Study – a more formal Bible study which usually meets monthly on the last Thursday in the month. During June we shall meet weekly following the Bible Month material.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988				✓
Friday 9:15 am (based around Whitchurch & Kingsclere) <i>Prayer Group – an opportunity to pray together, bringing both joys and concerns in prayer.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82103846709	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>If you would like to join in with any of these gatherings via telephone, please do ring me on 01256 895878 and I will give you the details to dial in via any telephone. I do hope you will join us, even if you haven't felt Zoom is for you up until now!!</p>				

GLOBAL HUNGER APPEAL

Christian Aid is on the ground in some of the most vulnerable countries across the world, in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Afghanistan.

With the help of our local partners, your support can make a world of difference. Our partners work with communities to prevent famine and build resilience by delivering life-saving food and support to people who need them most.

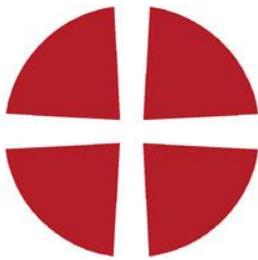
- £15 could provide water hygiene kits to give three households clean drinking water
- £30 could buy assorted seeds and tools to grow vegetables for two
- £50 could buy food for a family for over a month



Further Information can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3yb2iRA>

Pastoral News

Please remember the following people and circumstances:



For members of all our congregations and the communities we serve who remain anxious about the easing of restrictions and who are trying to work out new rhythms of life that are sustainable and life-giving.

For members of the Methodist Conference as they conclude their conferring and for the Connexional Team and the wider leadership within the church as the decisions reached are taken forward.

For all those who have yet to be vaccinated against COVID-19 that they will come forward and receive the vaccination, thus supporting the most vulnerable members of society as well as the NHS, SCAS and the other caring organisations.

“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

Shoemakers

CHRISTIAN BOOKS & COFFEE SHOP

Shoemakers is having a make-over. Please be advised that Shoemakers Christian bookshop will be closed from Monday 12th – Monday 26th July inclusive. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, but we are taking advantage of the summer to refresh the paintwork in the shop. Please visit www.christophershoemaker.org.uk or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/shoemakersbooks) for more information.

AND FINALLY...

“Inspired by the life and influence of the seventh-century monk Cuthbert, Sheridan travelled on foot from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to Durham. Taking his friend DJ along for the journey, and keeping a journal by his side, Sheridan discovered not resolution but peace. Not ambition but purpose. Not shouts of convictions but whispers of the presence of God.

In The Making of Us, Sheridan invites us to join him as he walks along England’s shores and we trace the borders of our own hearts. Part pilgrim’s journal, part call to reflection, The Making of Us eloquently reminds us of the beauty of journeying into uncertainty, the freedom of letting go, and the wonder of losing our identity only to discover who we really are.”

The reason for Sheridan’s journey may not resonate with all of us, but the “*journeying into uncertainty, the freedom of letting go*” may be something for us all to think about as we head past 19th July.

You can read more here: <https://www.sheridanvoysey.com/themakingofus>

