

THE RECORD

AUTUMN 2020



CHURCH ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

The **Methodist** Church South Fylde Circuit
Making Disciples: Transforming Lives and Communities

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A word from Stephen....



Dear Friends

Over the last few months many of us have appreciated our gardens more than ever. In some instances time on people's hands has provided the motivation to mow the grass, take up forks and garden shears and rediscover the garden hidden within the undergrowth behind the house.

There are so many approaches to gardening these days from employing a landscape gardener to painting fencing panels terracotta and arranging pots creatively in a concreted back yard to create the Mediterranean garden.

Over 40 years ago a young couple joined our church in East London. I lived in a small flat above the church surrounded by a concrete jungle with two tiny beds for a garden. They had a large neglected, overgrown garden. As their hedge reduced the path alongside it by half, I remember asking them if they were going to cut it. "Oh no," said Donald, "I prefer the natural look". To this day I wonder if he was truthful or his way of ignoring what needed to be done. People visiting Chelsea Flower Show often comment, "I would love a garden like that." I am tempted to say "You could if you invest the time and money".

As we approach the Harvest Season, I have to admit I have not picked one strawberry or potato, not cut a lettuce or pulled a bean because I never planted any! Our garden is all about flowers and shrubs, colour all the year round, it feeds our souls rather than our bodies and we have eaten very well again this year.

I find it fascinating looking over 20 years of photographs of our garden from a bare plot to today. Each season the garden is different. Planting is both long term and short term and if you are planting trees it could be generations before the "design" matures. It is more about those who follow me, than me.

We are in a period of re-opening churches, buildings that have never stood empty for so long in their long history. It is tempting to see them as a room closed for a season, all we need to do is remove the dustsheets and carry on but the church is more than a building, it lives. We are learning the season has changed and is changing, we need designers and workers, hard landscaping and planting schemes, flowers and vegetables, annuals, perennials and trees. We are not reopening the church we are replanting the church for the years to come!

Peace - Stephen

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday worship resumes at Church Road on Sunday 27 September and will then take place every Sunday at 10.30 a.m. For the time being, if you wish to attend it will be necessary to register in advance by email or phone. Various measures will be in place in accordance with Government and Methodist Church guidelines to help keep everyone safe.



When arriving at church you will be welcomed by the stewards in the usual way and your temperature will be taken. You will be asked to confirm your name and number in your household/bubble attending and sitting together.

It will be necessary to wear a mask during the service. Although hymns will be included in the order of service, we are asked not to sing but just to follow the words on the screen.

Whilst some of this will feel strange to start with, experience from the resumption of services at The Drive suggests that people quickly become accustomed to the 'new normal' and feel reassured by the measures in place.

Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household.

Details about procedures and how to register are on the church website
www.churchroadmethodist.org.uk

For general enquiries, please contact Janette Farley on 01253 729849.

FLOWER DEDICATIONS

We are grateful to those who have continued to contribute to the displays of flowers in church each week in memory of family members or someone special to them. Although there have been no flowers whilst the church has been closed, it is still important for us to recall these special memories and to remember these people in our prayers.



MARCH

- 1st Birthday memories of Gordon Porter
- 8th Loving birthday memories of Ross Wells
Audrey Porter, Wedding Day memories of Gordon
- 15th Birthday memories of Michael from Valerie
- 22nd Loving memories of Muriel Maddox
Birthday memories of Arthur Nicholson.
Loving memories of Margaret Richmond, Wilfred &
Dorothy Lowe
- 29th Treasured memories of Vera Pate

APRIL

- 5th Pauline, Tony and Rachel, treasured birthday memories
of Claire
In loving memory of Eric and Jean Currie
- 19th Treasured memories of Conrad Pate
- 26th Treasured Wedding Anniversary and birthday memories of Derek
Rigby

MAY

3rd Diana Thompson, birthday memories of a dear Mummy & Daddy

24th Fond memories of Hannah Nicholson
Rosemary Wells – Wedding Anniversary memories
Sylvia Dibble in loving memory of her parents
The birthday of Margaret Joyce Knight



JUNE

7th Cherished birthday memories of Ross Wells
Loving memories of my parents, Kay and Cedric Eyre,
from Catherine

14th Loving birthday memories of John, from Barbara,
Caroline & Samantha

Loving anniversary memories of Michael Ball

21st Loving anniversary memories of Muriel and John Watts

JULY

12th In memory of Jean and Herbert Mayes

19th In loving memory of Nancy and Harry Wrigley

26th Loving memories of Jean Biddulph from John
Loving birthday memories of Edwina Frodsham from Ryan and
Sylvia

AUGUST

- 16th Loving anniversary memories of Fred and Marion Holland
Fond memories of Arthur and Hannah Nicholson
- 23rd Loving birthday memories of Jessie from Barbara and
all the family.

SEPTEMBER

- 6th Loving memories of Doreen and Scottie from Betty
- 13th Fond memories of Hilary Cardwell
Loving birthday memories of my brother,
Philip, from Sylvia
- 27th Loving birthday memories of Fred Holland



Any contributions to church flowers should be sent to the Flower Secretary, Elaine Watts, with cheques payable to Church Road Methodist Church Flower Fund. After Sunday Morning service the flowers are given to the sick, bereaved or someone who might appreciate them. If you know of anyone who might appreciate some flowers one week, please have a word with Elaine Watts

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

MATTHEW 6; 28-29



RITA COULBY
MILLIE DALTON
PETER HALL
BETTY KERSHAW
PAUL RAMSDEN

“I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord:
he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

Do not stand at my grave and weep:
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there, I did not die.

Mary Elizabeth Frye (1905-2004)

OUR NEW SUPERINTENDENT REVEREND STUART WILD



“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present.”

So wrote the American cartoonist Bill Keane and I find it a useful way to begin this introduction to myself. It sets out something about my approach (I like quotes) and my understanding of life. We can learn from the past but we should not try to live there. So my promise is to try not to say too often when I was in...

I have served as a minister in a variety of places, districts and settings. I have been a circuit minister, a synod secretary and a superintendent. I began as a probationer in the then Accrington and Haslingden circuit but my most recent appointment was in Farnworth and Worsley. In between I have had pastoral charge of small chapels, large churches, Local Ecumenical Partnerships and city centre missions. I don't want to list them all or it will read like my obituary.

Today is God's gift and that is shaped by my family. My wife Jane is Superintendent of Preston Ribble circuit and at the moment all three of our daughters-Grace, Hope and Verity reside with us in Preston. It means I shall be commuting. I am used to that. I will just need to head north rather than south. I don't have any exciting hobbies. I enjoy reading, writing and theatre (those of you who thought I was going to say arithmetic should talk to Verity who is studying maths at York University.)

Tomorrow is a mystery. In the midst of the pandemic today is something of a mystery as well. I don't have a masterplan for the South Fylde Circuit. I hope to listen with you to God's still small voice guiding us so that we can care for each other, feed each other and speak to the world through what we say and what we do. If for now that involves masks and zoom, then so be it. John Wesley had no desire to preach in the open air but...

I mentioned that I like reading and I rather enjoy whodunnits-attempting, not always successfully, to solve the mystery set by the author. Together I hope we can turn tomorrow's mystery into a relevant gift of God.

God bless you
Stuart Wild

OUR NEW CIRCUIT LAY WORKER DEACON KIM GABBATISS



Hello from Yorkshire!

As I write, there are just a few days to go, before I leave York to make my way to what will become my new home in Freckleton, ready to continue my journey of faith with you in the South Fylde Circuit.

A brief snapshot!

I am married to Brian and we have two grown up sons, Jack and Tom. I came to faith as an adult, on Easter Day 1997, when God placed me into a wider family. Heworth Methodist Church is where my faith has been nurtured. I have been loved and cared for in so many different ways and trusted with various roles and responsibilities within the life of the church and community, enabling me to learn and grow. For example, pastoral visiting, being part of a Housegroup, leading children's groups, starting Messy Church, becoming a Worship Leader and much later, a Local Preacher.

I had the privilege of being the Children and Families Worker in the York Circuit, developing links between schools, the community and the Church. Most recently, I have responded to the call to ordained Diaconal Ministry and my journey continues...God is sending me to live, to worship, to serve and to witness alongside you, in the Lancashire District and the South Fylde Circuit.

Brian and I are both very much looking forward to meeting you, in what are very challenging times for us all. We look forward to hearing your stories and to how God is working in your lives, as well as being open to where we can continue to witness and serve God together, in the coming weeks and months.

With much love and continued prayers.

Deacon Kim

I DELIGHT IN YOU

I delight in You my Father God
Of nothing of mine I can boast
Only riches from You Lord
As I walk on Your glory road
Wisdom You have given me
Strength in You I stand
Riches not of gold or silver
But riches that flow from Your realms
Kindness justice and righteousness
Riches that cannot be seen
I boast not what I see in me Lord
But what I see in Thee
And as I bow down before You
And pick up Your blood stained cross
To walk with You for eternity
And boast of my Lord my God.

(Jeremiah 9:23-24)

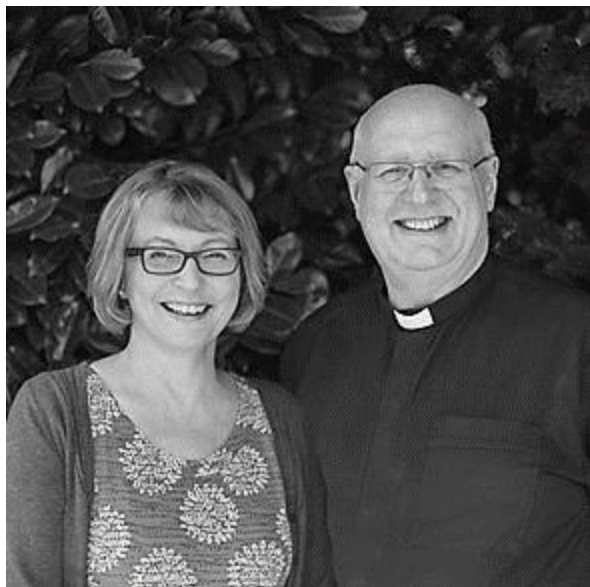
Written by Kath Kay
By the grace of God

AMEN



The Methodist Church

New President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference elected and inducted online



The Revd Richard Teal and Carolyn Lawrence were inducted as President and Vice-President at the Methodist Conference (conducted online) on Saturday 27 June 2020.

During his lifetime John Wesley chaired the Methodist Conference but after his death the Conference determined to elect a President annually. This year, the Revd Richard Teal has been elected and inducted as the new President of the

Methodist Conference, taking over from the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson. The induction took place on Saturday 27 June at Cliff College in Derbyshire, as part of the Methodist Conference conducted online.

Richard Teal comes from a farming background, having grown up in the Yorkshire Dales. He has spent the majority of his ministry in rural areas, including 11 years as Chair of the Cumbria District. He is now Superintendent of the Beverley Circuit in East Yorkshire.

In his Conference address Richard Teal focused on how the last few months of coronavirus and lockdown had affected the Church:

“Who would ever have thought a few months ago we would have had to close our doors and lock them, even at Easter! Many of our congregations are feeling totally disorientated, fearful and cut off from the fellowship we enjoy with each other.”

Looking ahead at how the world can adapt to the impact of the pandemic, the President said:

“Not a return to the same old same old but a church which has the reputation for transformation, for recreation and for empowerment of what we are living through in the present in response to a faithful God who redeems history and promises the brightest of futures.”

The President chose the final words of John Wesley as his theme for this year, *‘The best of all is, God is with us’*.

Richard is a Methodist presbyter and was brought up in a small Yorkshire Dales village, where his father was a farmer. After leaving school, Richard worked in textile management and during that time he candidated for the Methodist ministry. He attended Wesley College, Bristol, and left a year early due to the shortage of presbyters at that time.

His first circuit was Blaydon in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne District and he was then sent as Superintendent to what in those days was a priority appointment in Berwick-upon-Tweed on the English-Scottish border.

Nine years later, Richard returned to East Yorkshire and served as Superintendent of the Beverley Circuit. After circuit ministry, Richard served for 11 years as Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District and his experience of rural ministry came to the fore. His understanding and appreciation of rural issues helped considerably when Cumbria was devastated by two county-wide floods.

In Cumbria, he formed a strong agricultural chaplaincy team to bring pastoral support to the agricultural community and beyond. Richard greatly values rural communities and encourages rural churches to take risks and do new and exciting faith activities. For Richard, a small rural chapel is not a failed large church. He believes that small communities are important and significant in building the kingdom of God.

NEW VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice-President, Carolyn Lawrence, was also elected and inducted at the Conference. A teacher by training, Carolyn was an educational mission partner in Guyana and has worked in a voluntary capacity within the Methodist Church as a preacher and leader. More recently she has worked with the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church helping to engage people with our worldwide network of Partner Churches. She is also part of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.

Carolyn spoke of her passion for the world church in her address to the Conference:

“One thing that I find awe inspiring about the church is that you can be anywhere in the country or the world and know that you can find family.”
“I have had the experience of worshipping with Christians in lots of different places in the world, most recently on my visit to the Methodist Church in Brazil. Here the church is growing at an amazing rate and I was blown away by their passion for God’s word, their commitment to prayer, their systematic and strategic approach to evangelism, theological training and pastoral care and the exuberance and joy of their worship. During the year to come I hope to share some of the key principles of church growth that I have learned from the church in Brazil as I believe they can also be applied to our church here in Britain.”

In the UK, she has worked in a voluntary capacity within the Methodist Church as a preacher and leader. More recently she has worked with the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church helping to engage people with our worldwide network of Partner Churches. She is also part of the ‘World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women’, serving as the Area Officer for Great Britain.

Carolyn has a heart for sharing the love of Jesus through preaching, teaching, pastoral care and social action. Wherever people are on their spiritual journey, she enjoys helping them to grow in their faith and she encourages them to become ‘disciple-making disciples’.

I look to the mountains; where will my help come from?

My help will come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let you fall; your protector is always awake.

The protector of Israel never dozes or sleeps.

The Lord will guard you; he is by your side to protect you.

The sun will not hurt you during the day, nor the moon during the night.

The Lord will protect you from all danger; he will keep you safe.

He will protect you as you come and go now and forever.

PSALM 121

EYAM



The village of Eyam in Derbyshire is synonymous with an outbreak of the plague in August 1665. It came in a parcel of cloth sent from London to the village tailor and when his assistant spread the cloth out by the fire to air, he found it was infested with rat fleas. He died a few days later with his burial being recorded in the parish registers on 7 September 1665.

The local vicar, Reverend William Mompesson quickly realised that the villagers needed to agree a plan to contain the outbreak and to avoid it spreading beyond the village. The most important part of this was the setting up of a cordon around the outskirts of the village and no Eyam resident was allowed to pass it. Signs were erected along the line to warn travellers not to enter. During the time of the quarantine there were almost no attempts to cross the line, even at the height of the disease in the summer of 1666.

To keep the village going, food and essentials were brought by neighbouring villagers, which were left at the boundary. To pay for these supplies the villagers left money in water troughs that were filled with vinegar, because the villagers realised that vinegar would help to disinfect the coins before they were picked up.

In this heroic attempt to contain the infection, the villagers isolated themselves for fourteen months. Even so, deaths in the village reached a peak of six a day, with one woman losing six children and a husband in just over a week. The graveyard was shut and bodies were dragged into fields for burial. By the end of the outbreak, more than a quarter of the village's population of almost 1,000 were dead. The plague, however, was contained by the selfless actions of the villagers.

While the events at Eyam did little to change attitudes initially, it did offer a unique opportunity to study how epidemics work. Over the years, scientists, doctors and the medical world have used Eyam as a case study in the prevention of disease. Doctors realised that the use of an enforced quarantine zone could limit or prevent the spread of disease. Florence Nightingale pioneered the use of isolation wards to limit the spread of infectious diseases in hospitals during the Crimean War.

Once again, we are seeing restrictions on our movements and our normal activities, but as shown at Eyam, such measures are necessary to contain the spread of the virus.

REFLECTIONS IN LOCKDOWN

from Chris Jones

The sudden lockdown in March has been difficult for us all, but even more so for those whose vulnerabilities have required them to isolate completely. One of our members, church steward Chris Jones, has found himself in this situation. He has spoken of how his faith has sustained him through this difficult time. He has noted some of his thoughts and reflections each Sunday, which he has shared with a few members of the church family. With his permission, here are a few edited extracts from his weeks in isolation. Thank you to Chris for his thoughts.

SUNDAY 19 APRIL

Lord, send a beam on me.

Another excellent and most encouraging service from St David's Cathedral this morning on BBC TV. We were reminded of the trepidation of the disciples behind closed doors following the crucifixion which drew a parallel with today. But also the last words of David to his followers to be joyful and keep the faith.

The isolation can be daunting, all the more frustrating given the weeks of dry and fine weather over the last month or so. But perhaps the most discomfoting thought is the uncertainty. How and when will it all end?

I also watched the TV programme called Britain at Easter on Good Friday afternoon which featured a mountain called The Skirrid, (or Ysgyryd if you would like to give it a go) near Abergavenny. The word may be translated as fracture, shake or tremble and it is believed to have been created by the Archangel Michael at the moment Christ died on the cross. As a seven-year-old, I climbed the mountain, which was also called the Holy Mountain, with my mother when we lived in the town. Spent a lot of time out of doors then.

SUNDAY 26 APRIL

We do not travel alone

I am unashamedly biased towards the hymns of our great composers, and today's BBC TV broadcasts were a real joy. To start the Sunday Service with the greatest hymn ever written, 'And can it be' by Charles Wesley, placed me front and centre spiritually. Then the beautiful 'It is well with my soul' which I find impossible to sing or listen to without considering the heart-breaking circumstance in which it was written.

The hymn 'Just As I Am' was the favourite of Dora Wordsworth, William's daughter, and the last line, 'O Lamb of God, I Come!' is inscribed on her tombstone in St Oswald's Church, Grasmere, which my wife and I visited early in March. Songs of Praise included 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty', 'When I Survey the Wondrous

Cross' and last, but by no means least, 'Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah' - sung from St Asaph's Cathedral, North Wales - where else!

Next door to my secondary school was a beautiful Baptist Chapel with steps and columns at the front door, much like Lytham Methodist. On the steps an old man stood day after day, from morning to night, wearing a sandwich board that read 'The End of the World is Nigh'. He never said a word and never answered any questions. What was written on the board was his message. I have been reminded of the End of the World this week after hearing all the dire predictions on TV from a veritable deluge of experts, advisers, pundits, commentators and similar. Many of these commentators and experts describe this lockdown period as a 'journey.' I am not sure I am particularly keen on the analogy, but, as Bishop Ruth's sermon reminded us this morning, just like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, we do not travel alone.

I received two letters a few days ago, one from my GP and the other from the NHS instructing me to stay indoors until the end of June. This may be a long journey. Nevertheless, although I may not always be aware that He is there, today's encouragement added to our prayers and readings remind me that I do not travel alone and He is at my side.

SUNDAY 17 MAY

Be joyful, keep the faith and do the little things

Like everybody else, I believe I am showing a degree of fortitude during this time of isolation. But a few years ago a friend of mine recommended a book entitled "Tortured for Christ" by Richard Wurmbrand, who was mentioned in today's service.

My experience fades into insignificance compared with the torture, starvation, brain washing and suffering he experienced during 14 years of imprisonment and hospitalisation under the Communist regime in Romania after the war. His 'crime' had been to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Advocate abiding within provided him with fortitude on an unimaginable scale. I believe it would have been inconceivable to have survived his ordeal otherwise. And he lived to the age of 91! A lesson on perspective and faith for me.

The gifts of knowledge, counsel, fear of the Lord, wisdom, understanding and piety are all received with gratitude, but it is fortitude I need most of just now.

*O mighty God, when I behold the wonder
Of nature's beauty, wrought by words of thine,
Enough said. Be joyful, keep the faith and do the little things.*

SUNDAY 14 JUNE

Great is thy faithfulness

Day 78 and I suspect I am becoming institutionalised. And since I haven't used much of this year, I'm thinking of not adding it to my age! I have my own bedroom, bathroom and one other room, but do not enter the other rooms in the house. My wife is my shielder, but she and I are nevertheless required to keep a social distance which occasionally leads to some awkward dodging and dancing at doorways. In addition to welcome and reassuring telephone calls from Judith, my GP practice and the Fylde Council Community Officer, I am fortunate to have shopping and medication delivered to the door. So, as far as the practical aspects of getting through this time are concerned, I am blessed.

The first lesson I learned was that I do not need to hurry, finish what I am doing or worry about what time it is, because I have got all the time in the world. I have become more like a Mary and less like a Martha. I have time to stop, think, meditate and feel the presence of God alongside and sharing this time with me. He has also got all the time in the world. But I expect you knew that! I talk with Him, ask Him why, what and how, but above all tell Him that it is all in His hands now; at the moment I will best serve Him by standing and waiting. Because, as Corrie ten Boom said:

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”

SUNDAY 5 JULY

He will my shield and portion be

Today's excellent radio, TV and YouTube broadcasts led me to believe that now that technology is becoming ever more a feature of church communication and fellowship, it may, by default, inspire all of us to think outside the building. Well deserved tributes to all who have worked and are currently working in the NHS. Week 16 coming up - God Bless you and may the forces of evil become confused on their way to your house.

SUNDAY 26 JULY

If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up somewhere else.

Although there are some 'hit by a train days' I remain positive as the days, weeks and months go by and stay confident that there will be a future of consequence. I trust God will protect and support us through this season and in the words of St Augustine:

'O Holy Spirit, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams.'

I never met St Augustine but I wish I'd had the chance, he seemed that glorious combination of somebody with his heart and soul already in heaven but his feet firmly on the ground

'If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don't like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.'

'Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.'

'O Lord, help me to be pure, but not yet.'

(Did you know that St Augustine is the patron saint of theologians. And brewers.)

It has been reported that engagement with churches and faith has increased significantly since the doors of our buildings were closed. A quarter of adults in the UK have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown began, many of whom had never gone inside a church building before. Support networks have all found a new life online. This is remarkable and most encouraging. It is also a challenge. In line with this new technology, I need to get my Zoomface on. Coming to church seemed straightforward, but now I have to consider wallpaper, matching clothing, lighting, camera angle and microphone volume. Do I need makeup? Cosmetic surgery even! You may not recognise me the next time you see me. So until then -

God Bless you and keep safe.

SUNDAY 16 AUGUST

Reflections from Day 176

Last Sunday's Radio 4 Sunday Service was entitled *The Cross and Black Liberation*. Although the service was presented purely from a black person's perspective, I was struck by the proposition that 'A certain man from Cyrene, Simon', who was compelled to help Jesus carry the cross towards Golgotha, was so compelled, not because he was sympathetic to the words of Jesus, but because he was black. Whatever may be the case, Simon was one of the last people to serve Jesus before His death.

The service was a bitter reminder of the oppression of black people worldwide that has lasted for centuries. Is this time truly when society stops and takes stock to eradicate injustice, inequality, violence and racism?

Included in the service was the spiritual '*Were You There*', almost unrecognisable as sung by a young Sam Cook, and, as I fondly recall from 1950s black and white BBC TV interludes, the magnificent Mahalia Jackson, who sang '*The Old Rugged Cross*.' Once again, a very moving and profound 45 minutes on Radio 4.

John Wesley, who lived when white supremacy was taken for granted, wrote in 1774, "The African is in no respect inferior to the European". He believed that the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly and unequivocally affirms human equality. And so it does.

SUNDAY 23 AUGUST

What a world!

This morning's Radio 4 Sunday Worship reflected upon the joy of quiet, the peace of stillness and of listening. There is too much noise in the world. Not just the noise of the streets, but the electronic noise of a thousand TV channels, 24-hour news with endless experts, pundits, commentators, politicians, so-called celebrities. Social media has increased the babble a thousand-fold. So much is spoken, but how much is listened to.

Psalm 46:10. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;

When everything overwhelms, this verse crystallises all we need to know. Ezekiel listened to God in the stillness of the desert. May He breathe His peace into our hearts.

SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

I am having a reasonably easy time of it at the moment, so a thought for those in work in different or difficult circumstances and for those working in various ways to make our church services available. Most encouraging congregation/Zoom participant attendance at both the Welcome Service for Superintendent Rev. Stuart Wild and Deacon Kim Gabbatiss which was held in Lytham on Thursday evening and Reverend Wild's and Deacon Gabbatiss' first service at The Drive this morning. I pray that their ministry in the circuit will be both happy and blessed.

Indeed, there is so much to pray for at the moment, but I feel a special need to pray for thousands who contracted the virus many months ago but still have the symptoms. I read of a young lady for whom the past few months have profoundly changed her life. She was extrovert and active but now has a list on her bedroom wall reminding her to save enough energy each day to brush her teeth.

A brutal reminder of the very serious nature of the virus. So keep safe.

'One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful.'

Sigmund Freud

We shall see Siggy, we shall see.

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Songs of Praise celebrates the Mayflower

It was 400 years ago this week that the Mayflower set sail from Plymouth on a dangerous journey over the sea to escape persecution and create a new life. There is a parallel to our own times with so many taking perilous journeys to find freedom, crossing seas and whole continents. I hope they find the peace and security they search for so desperately. In so many parts of the world there seems to be no lessening of religious intolerance, oppression, racial discrimination, hunger and enforced relocation. May we not be of one heart though we are not of one opinion?

HOW GREAT THOU ART

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, My God, how great thou art!

Stuart Hine (1899 – 1989) based on words by Carl Gustav Boberg (1859-1940)

This well-known hymn was originally written by a Swedish preacher and Member of the Swedish Parliament, Carl Gustav Boberg. He was the son of a carpenter and attended school in Kristinehamn, a coastal city in the south of Sweden. He started out as a sailor, later becoming a lay preacher and then a member of the Swedish parliament from 1912 to 1931. During his life he wrote several volumes of poetry and many hymns and he helped to compile the first two hymn books of the Swedish Covenant Church.

He wrote the original words, *O Store Gud*, as a poem at the age of 26. The story goes that he was caught in a thunderstorm after church one Sunday afternoon and watched in astonishment as a storm swept in from the sea with bolts of lightning and deafening claps of thunder. The storm reverberated across the

countryside, but as it abated, a rainbow spread across the sky, the birds started singing and he could hear the church bells still softly tolling. Carl Gustav so was overwhelmed by God's power and majesty that he was inspired to write these words as an act of adoration. Several years later, he attended a meeting and was surprised to hear his poem being sung to an old Swedish melody.

In the early 1920s, an English missionary Stuart Hine and his wife were working in Poland when they first heard the Russian version of Carl Gustav's poem coupled with the original Swedish melody. Stuart later expanded it and wrote an English version of the words as well as a variation on the Swedish melody to create the hymn that is in our hymnbook today – Singing the Faith No 82.

SWEDISH CHURCH TOWNS

After the break with the Catholic Church in 1527, the Swedish clergy were determined to teach their parishioners the Lutheran fundamentals, with the result that, by 1681, attendance at church services had become compulsory for all citizens. Unfortunately however, there was just one problem – in the north of the country, the population was so spread out that distances to the nearest churches were simply too far to make weekly attendance possible. To make sure that everyone was able to comply with the government directive, the clergy and the parishes agreed a compromise: those living within 10km of a church should attend every Sunday; those between 10km and 20km away, every fortnight and those further away, every three weeks.



The scheme worked well and to make it even more successful, several dedicated church towns were established to provide the travelling churchgoers with somewhere to spend the night after a day of praying and listening to lengthy sermons.

At the height of this religious fervour, there were 71 church towns spread across the north of Sweden. Today, just eighteen have been restored, each town consisting of rows of simple wooden houses grouped tightly around their local church. The biggest and most

impressive of these preserved towns lies outside present day Luleå, a coastal city close to the Arctic Circle near the border with Finland, where the church town has been included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Today, of course, these towns are no longer used in the traditional way, but are very well preserved as desirable summer residences and in many cases, available to rent by tourists.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

In these challenging times, we cannot entirely foresee when our usual activities can resume at Church Road. We will need to proceed with caution to make sure that we can gradually reopen safely. To keep up to date and to hear about future activities, please look out on our website:

www.churchroadmethodist.org



We are also on Facebook. If you are too, “Like” our page and receive updates each week of activities taking place here. Don’t forget to share our news with your friends as well.

