

# Wonford Methodist Church

## Contact Newsletter

August / September 2021  
(No: 502)

Growing Up In Your Faith



Isaiah 6:1-8



Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)



Wonford is a  
Fairtrade church

The **Methodist** Church 

[www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk)



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Wonford Methodist Church



# A Message From The Minister

**Dear Friends,**

First of all to pray for our Minister Ben that this time of sabbatical will be a time of 3Rs, Recovery, Renewal and Refreshment.

So by the time you read this article so called Freedom Day will be a few weeks past. This day would have been received in many different ways and emotions. My guess, is that the majority would have received it with mixed feelings, a sense of joy, but also a feeling of a need for caution.

When I was chaplain to Dartmoor Prison for the Methodist Church I saw many prisoners released and it was my job as one of the chaplains to advise them as they prepared themselves for their release. The majority feeling of those I chatted to, had mixed emotions ranging from fear, anxiety, to hope for a better future.

So as we as a church, along with all other Christians, emerge from this period of lockdowns and restrictions to a place of comparative freedom. How then do we go forward? Perhaps we can learn something from the biblical account of the returning exiles from Persia. We read of a determination in Ezra and Nehemiah of the people under their leadership to commit again to being the people of God. They committed themselves to worship, working together so that the Temple was restored and the walls rebuilt. There was the strong recognition of working together in whatever task they had to face.

Of course, we don't have to rebuild temples and walls but nevertheless there are great challenges ahead that is about rebuilding. We have to rebuild confidence that it will be safe to meet again with no restrictions. Rebuilding will have to be done in bringing back our programmes of House Groups, Roundabout Café, Toddlers, Green Team, Film Club, Café Church, Messy Church, Girls' Brigade, Bible Study and the Prayer Group. There will be challenges in bringing these back but it may be that some may not return in their previous form. I am confident though that we will face the challenges together and bring to our community around us the love of Jesus.

Finally, we must never forget, that our Lord is with us and He is the same yesterday today and forever. One of my favourite Hymns is 'Standing on The Promises of Christ My King'. His promises are secure and so we can move forward together in love and fellowship.

I pray then that you will all have a good summer. If you are having a holiday may you feel blessed and refreshed. So I end where I started that in September we will welcome back our Dear Minister Ben and we can go forward under his ministry

**God Bless**

**Alan Rothwell**

## ***Ben's Sabbatical***

*Rev Ben Haslam will be on sabbatical during the months of July and August. During this time Rev Alan Rothwell has agreed to assist with all pastoral matters.*

### **Save The Bees**

One thing that I find joy in is sitting on my patio and watching the bees go about their business. It may surprise you to learn that there are 250 species of bees in the UK, including 24 species of bumblebee. These species include social species that live in colonies as well as solitary ones. Have you ever noticed that delightful buzz that bumble bees make when they are inside flowers? The anthers in some flowers only release pollen when they are shaken. Bumble bees vibrate the upper part of their bodies to shake the pollen loose and this causes the fabulous buzzing sound. The humble bumble bee is therefore one of my favourites.

The diversity of God's creation fills me with awe. I endeavour to live my life to cause as little harm as possible to the creatures that we share this planet with. We owe a great deal to bees as they pollinate our crops and contribute to a third of the food that we consume. If honey is something you are partial to, did you know that on average a jar of honey requires 60,000 honeybees to travel 55,000 miles to visit 2,000,000 flowers, and that the average honeybee makes 1.5 teaspoons of honey in her lifetime? Bees are such fascinating and important creatures. The fact that we now have eight species of bee on the endangered list should be alarming. Climate change is in part responsible for this with temperature extremes pushing bees past what they can cope with. Some of the other factors include use of pesticides, drought, pollution, and habitat loss.

What can we do to help the bees? We could avoid the use of chemical pesticides in the garden and instead opt for natural alternatives for pest control. We could set aside wild areas in our garden and plant bee friendly flowers. Something that I have recently done is to provide bees with a water feeder. Adding stones to a bird bath or putting a few pebbles in a shallow container filled with water can provide bees with welcome refreshment in hot weather. If I find a bee that appears to be struggling on the ground, I carefully place it in some shade and give it a few drops of sugar water to drink. However, you should never feed bees honey as it can transfer pathogens to them. If you want to do something on a larger scale, you could



talk to your local councillor to ask what your local council is doing to protect bees and what more can be done.

Fostering an appreciation and respect for nature is so important for the future of endangered species. You could encourage younger family members to take part in the Great British Bee Count. You may find this an interesting activity yourself. Taking part will also aid scientists in their endeavours to protect bees. You can find out more on the Friends of the Earth website.

Whatever you choose to do, I hope you find as much joy as I do in watching our marvellous bees over the summer. How many species will you spot?

## Alison Hobbs – Church Green Team



## **Autumn Theme Preaching - Starting September 2021**

### **Letters to the Seven Churches - Revelation 2 and 3**

Our Autumn Theme Preaching Series this year focuses on those wonderful Letters to seven young churches situated in Asia Minor (Turkey) at the end of the first century. The apostle John, in old age, is in exile in the island of Patmos and is described as being “in the Spirit” as he receives these great revelations of Jesus’ mind regarding these churches, their successes and their struggles. Maybe this series has something to say to our church in these later times. In fact, we know it has, as I’m sure we shall discover. Here’s the full series.

#### **Tony Wragg**

Sept 19	Introduction and background	
Sept 26	The Letter to Ephesus	Rev Ben Haslam
Oct 3	Harvest Festival - All Age	Monika Noronha
Oct 10	The Letter to Smyrna	Prof Tony Wragg
Oct 17	The Letter to Pergamon	Rev Terry Spencer
Oct 24	The Letter to Thyatira	Rev Ben Haslam
Oct 31	The Letter to Sardis	Dr Joan Wragg
Nov 7	All Age Worship	
Nov 14	The Letter to Philadelphia	Caroline Colin
Nov 21	The Letter to Laodicea	Rev Ben Haslam

#### **Community News - Local Litter Pick**

Wonford Community and Learning Centre is proud to be one of the lead partners in the Wonford Activity Days programme bringing taster sessions, events and courses to Wonford over the summer. See [www.wonfordclc.org.uk](http://www.wonfordclc.org.uk) for more details.

As part of the programme Exeter City Council have provided litter picking equipment to the Community Centre to lend to local groups, families and individuals who would like to clean up the Wonford area. This will be available until 14th August. Please contact Helen on 01392 217868 or [wclcentre@outlook.co.uk](mailto:wclcentre@outlook.co.uk) for more information.

#### **Ludwell View Cafe**

The Thursday morning café at the Community Centre is open with covid-safe measures in place (until at least the end of August) – why not come along for a cuppa?



## **Wonford Methodist Church After 19th July**

The Leadership Team have considered how and when we will return to more normal worship and have suggested a way forward now that all restrictions will have been removed. Church Council have approved these arrangements.

We understand that there will be several of our fellowship who will continue to be cautious for the next few months as we all learn to live with the virus. We will therefore continue to have hand sanitiser available at church and to ventilate the building as much as possible. Government guidance is that people continue to wear a face mask inside enclosed spaces so you may wish to continue to wear a face mask inside the building.

The biggest and most longed for change is that from 25th July is that we will be able to sing inside. (Again Government guidance is that people wear a mask while singing). We may even continue to sing the last song outside as an act of witness.

During the next 4 – 6 weeks we will gradually increase the number of chairs in the church meaning that we will slowly get used to sitting closer to one another. This will also free up space in the rest of the building.

Methodist Church guidance is that we do not share bibles or hymn books so for now please bring your own or read from the screen.

These arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis as the infection rate changes.

From 25th July and throughout August coffee will be served after the service in the hall. Melanie has agreed to run this on an informal basis but would appreciate some help if anyone would be willing. It is hoped that the coffee rota could be reintroduced from September.

Roundabout Café will resume on the third Tuesday in September (after its 20th July meeting).

August tends to be a quiet month in the Church calendar and the Prayer Meeting, Toddlers, Home Group and Away Group will resume in the autumn. Details and exact dates will follow.

It is likely that on the morning September 12th we will have a 'Back to Church' service when we hope that we could welcome all those we have missed over the last year and half. It will be an informal service with opportunity for everyone to meet together

Our evening worship will also begin in the autumn with a Harvest Prayer & Praise, some Café Church events and of course our Carol Service in December.

## **Walking with Micah**

Rachel Lampard, formerly leader of the Joint Public Issues Team, writes about the new Methodist project, Walking with Micah. I have always been stirred by the words of the prophet Micah. When asked how God wanted his people to worship, to respond to God's love, Micah replies:

***He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.***

As Methodists we find this response to God's love through acting justly present in our tradition. John Wesley, one of Methodism's founders, was a vocal opponent of the slave trade. The Tolpuddle Martyrs – many of whom were Methodist lay preachers - were early activists in the trade union movement. A disproportionate number of Methodists have served in Parliament. Sybil Phoenix OBE is one of many community activists and anti-racists. The work of All We Can, Action for Children and MHA speak powerfully of the commitment of Methodists to see justice for all people in God's world.

What does "challenging injustice" look like in your own life? Methodists are involved in responding to needs in our communities or the world, through running debt advice centres, giving to foodbanks, raising money for charities, writing to political prisoners. Sometimes we use our consumer power, through buying Fairtrade bananas or avoiding excess plastic wrapping. And through our protesting, writing letters to MPs or community organising we try to change problems at their source.

Justice is present in the bible, in our tradition, often in our lives, and yet we sometimes find it hard to see where it fits in our Church, especially when we disagree. The Methodist Church has set up – Walking with Micah: Methodist Principles for Social Justice – to explore what it means to be a justice-seeking church and people. Over the next two years, we will listen and learn together, focusing on our principles and priorities for justice. Through this, I hope we can increase our practical ability to seek God's justice, as a Church and in our own Christian lives.

I'm looking forward to a big conversation about justice this year. If you're interested in getting involved visit <https://www.methodist.org.uk/walking-with-micah/>

*As a church it would be good if we focused on these points - perhaps in our Church Council, Bible study groups and certainly in our Prayer times. Please tell me if you are interested - Margretta Bowstead.*

# **Prayer Focus - August**

## **Prayer - Our Strongest Weapon - Pray Without Ceasing**

It's August already and restrictions have been lifted. Our Government are relying on the general public to be responsible. As cases of the virus are still rising at the time of writing we need to pray that people will act responsibly. During this month our Sunday morning services will continue and we will at last be able to sing indoors. I would ask that you would remember how it felt during the time of no singing and continue to pray for the persecuted church for whom there is no release date causing them to worship in secret or silence.

August sees the Nevin beach mission so please pray for those involved in leading and for people to come along. Pray that hearts will be ready to hear of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and many will come to accept Him into their lives.

Keep praying for our fellow members of Wonford during this holiday time. If you are going away on holiday I pray you will be kept safe and return refreshed to begin a new Methodist year. Pray for Rev Graham Thompson as he prepares this year to take up the position of President of Conference next year.

# **Prayer Focus - September**

## **Prayer - Our Strongest Weapon - Pray Without Ceasing**

Here we are at the start of a new Methodist year. We welcome our Minister Ben back from his sabbatical. We pray he is coming back refreshed and ready for whatever lies ahead.

Because I am writing this in July, before restrictions were lifted, it is impossible to know how things will be in September but we hope and pray we are able to worship as normal.

So we have our normal Sunday services as they are set out at the end of the Contact. Pray for our special 'Return to Church Day' to be held on Sunday 12th September. This is to encourage those who have joined from home via the internet to come along to our church building. This service will include the commissioning of our pastoral visitors and will be led by our Minister Rev Ben Haslam.

The 21st September sees the return of The Roundabout Café so please pray for that.



On 26th September we see the return of our Café Church held in the evening. Please pray for Dr Jon Curtis as he speaks about Exeter food distribution.

Please pray for the 'Home' and 'Away' groups as they decide how to proceed.

Continue to pray for world issues and for one another as we have been before.

*May you all be richly blessed as you pray for all the activities at Wonford, surrounding area and the wider world.*

***If you have anything that you would like included please let Julie Rothwell know so that she can include it here.***

### **Our Prayer Phone Link**

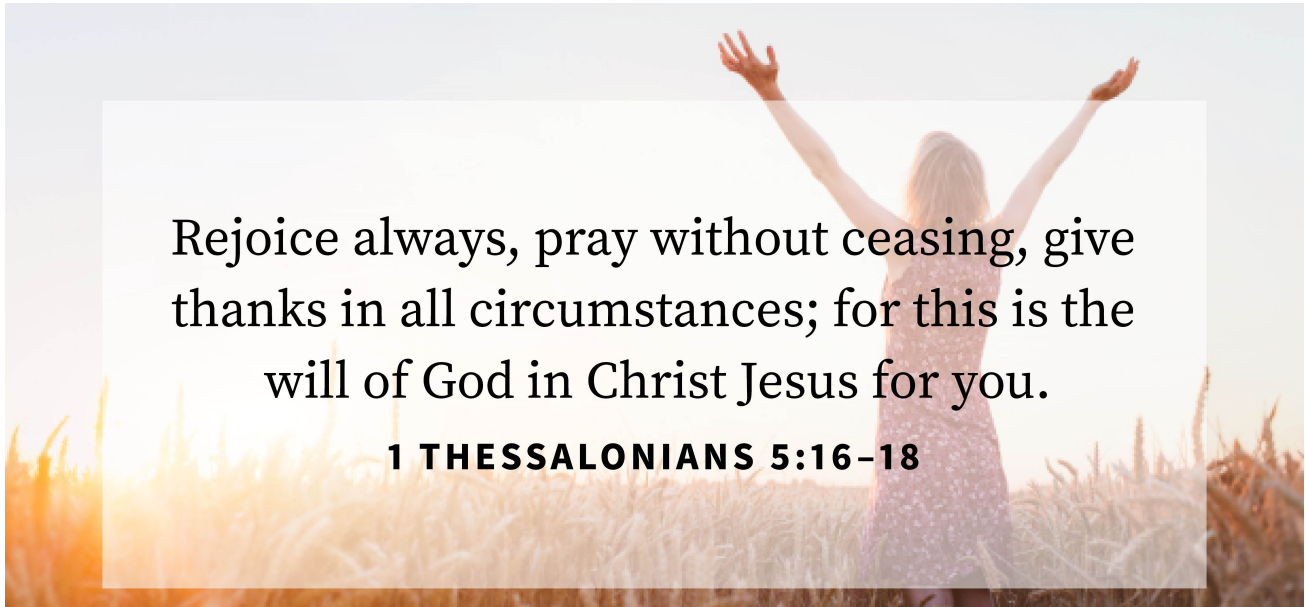
Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rev Alan Rothwell (01392 926840). Your request will then be passed to members of the Prayer Link who will pray for your need. If the first contact is unavailable, please contact Margretta Bowstead (01392 437329) or Rose Smith (01404 510853)

Various prayers and services from the Methodist Church are available to listen to via free-phone telephone numbers:

To listen to a short prayer – 0808 281 2514

To listen to a selection of Methodist related news stories: 0808 281 2478  
(Content for both is updated weekly on a Thursday afternoon)

### **The Prayer Team**



Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18**

## **New President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference elected for 2022/23**

The Methodist Conference has elected the Rev Graham Thompson to serve as President and Anthony Boateng to serve as Vice-President, starting their year of office when the Representative Session of the Methodist Conference opens in Telford in June 2022.



Graham Thompson, said:

“I am overwhelmed by the designation and humbled by the belief that Conference has in me. I will do all I can to serve God and the Church as we discern our path, emerging from the pandemic.”

Graham Thompson serves as Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District, a role which he assumed following his service as Chair of the East Anglia District. Before offering for Methodist ministry, Graham worked as an accountant. He has served in a variety of Circuits, urban and rural, both as Presbyter and Superintendent as well as serving on variety of Methodist trusts, boards and Connexional committees. He has broad ecumenical experience and is an ecumenical Canon of Exeter Cathedral.

Anthony Boateng is a Local Preacher from the London District, with a passion for social action, politics, church unity, spiritual revival and creative ways of worship. He has been a member of the Conference since 2014. Anthony serves on several committees across the Church including as a convenor of the London District Social Responsibility Commission and member of Church Action for Tax Justice management committee. In his ‘day job’ Anthony is a caseworker for Ingeus - a government Work and Health Programme.

Anthony Boateng said:

“As a young Ghanaian immigrant who has spent all his life in the Methodist Church, it is an honour and privilege to be given this opportunity by my siblings to serve the church at such a challenging time. I am enthusiastic about stepping into this leadership role, and working alongside the whole Church to discern and move towards God's vision for us in the year ahead.” The role of President of the Methodist Conference is reserved for presbyters and that of Vice-President for lay people or deacons.



# Some Photos from the Past - Guess the Year and Event (Thanks to Kath Parsons)





## Services in August and September

Services at 10am and others are listed below. These will be in the Church and live streamed on Zoom and YouTube

### August

1st	10.00 am	Prof Tony Wragg - All Age Worship
8th	10.00 am	Monika Noronha
15th	10.00 am	Rev Alan Rothwell - Communion Service
22nd	10.00 am	Paul Violet
29th	10.00 am	Rev Preb Norman Wallwork

### September

5th	10.00 am	Ann Skinner - All Age Worship
12th	10.00 am	Rev Ben Haslam - Pastoral Visitors Dedication Service Communion
19th	10.00 am	Local Arrangements - Start of Themed Preaching ** (Change of Plan)
26th	10.00 am	Rev Terry Spencer - Themed Preaching **
	6.30 pm	Dr Jon Curtis - Café Church



**Climate  
Sunday**

On Sunday 5th September after Church in the hall we will have a display & information about how we, as a church and individuals, can commit to greater action to address climate change and to

use our voices to tell politicians we want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans agreed during COP26 in Glasgow in November.

### The Church Green Team

### October 2021 Edition

Hopefully, with weekly meetings starting again in September, the Contact Newsletter will return to its normal 'non-COVID' format.

The deadline for items for the October 2021 Newsletter will be Sunday 12th September 2021. There is no guarantee of inclusion, but they may be given to:

**Andrew Jackson - 19 Hills Orchard, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6DF.**  
Tel: 01935 826072 or e-mailed to [andrew.m.jackson@me.com](mailto:andrew.m.jackson@me.com)