

Wonford Methodist Church

Contact Newsletter

March 2022

(No: 507)



Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)



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Fairtrade church

The **Methodist** Church 

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A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends,

There is a glorious old hymn (not in Singing the Faith sadly) called 'How Firm a Foundation'. The hymn is all about what it means to be held in the palm of God's hand in an unpredictable and often tempestuous world. The hymn ends with the rousing words;

*"The soul that on Jesus has leant for repose
He will not, He will not, desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
He'll never, He'll no never, no never forsake!"*

The reality of hardship is nowhere denied, but the hymn does remind us that we will not be overcome and that 'nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8.39). This reminder is all the more important because, as Paul writes, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6.12). When we give our lives to Christ, there may be rejoicing in heaven, but this rejoicing is not shared by those forces which stand opposed to God and his purposes. This is not a reason for fear. We simply need to pray God's protection over ourselves and all that we do, because if we seek to live as a disciple of Christ, and align our lives with His will, there is going to be opposition. This often expresses itself in the form of discouragement.

Nehemiah certainly encountered discouragement – and that's putting it mildly. In chapter 4, a motley crew of malcontents led by Sanballat, on hearing that the walls of Jerusalem are being repaired become, for whatever reason, 'incensed' and begin a campaign of intimidation and harassment, and are prepared to kill the Jews rather than let them complete their building work. What's Nehemiah's response to all this? Well, he certainly doesn't give in and go home. Instead, he does three things. Firstly, he prays. We already know that Nehemiah has the sense to realise that there is little point undertaking anything unless you first saturate it in prayer. He needs the kind of help that only God can provide, so prayer is his first resort, as it should be ours. Secondly, he takes the practical, but brave, step of setting a watch around Jerusalem. I'm certain that the courage to stand firm came from God and was granted because it was prayed for. The third thing he does is to boost his people's morale. Discouragement leads to

defeatism, so Nehemiah seeks to fortify the Jews against the frightening, but ultimately rather pathetic aggression of their opponents.

Nehemiah, far from being blown off-course, seems to recognise that when God is at work, there is always opposition, and he realises too, that what his people need is encouragement, not doom mongering. This is as relevant now as it was then. For many, doom mongering comes more naturally than being encouraging and we must guard against this tendency. There's enough discouragement coming from outside the church without joining in the deathly chorus! Encouraging and strengthening the faltering, reassuring the fearful, proclaiming the faithfulness and steadfastness of God, these are the things we should be about. This is even more crucial as we restore the work of the church following the pandemic. As the hymn I quoted at the beginning makes clear, God won't always clear away our difficulties overnight, but He will help us to get through them and emerge stronger at the other side.

With every blessing
Ben Haslam

Dates For March 2022

Coffee

6th	Linda & Mervyn
13th	Terry L & Margaret D
20th	Elaine & Graham
27th	Melanie



Bible Study Group

This group *usually* meets once a fortnight in the Church of an afternoon from 3pm to 4.30pm. Newcomers will be very welcome to join us. The fortnightly dates for March are Friday 4th and 18th. They are continuing to study and discuss Paul's letter to the Ephesians, of course helped by our Spring theme of Sunday sermons.

Sunday Church Notices will remind you and everyone will be welcome!

The Away Group

This group meets on a Monday evening every fortnight at 7.30 pm. Dates and venues will be given out each Sunday in the notices. Currently the group are studying the book of Isaiah.

Saturday Morning Fellowship (10.30 am – 12.00 pm)

The church hall is open for anyone who wants to drop in for a cuppa with cake, relax and have a chat and perhaps join in with a creative activity, games or something different we will be planning each week. We would also like to make use of the snooker and table tennis tables that are hidden away in the hall as well as the wealth of interests and talents that members of our church can share with us. There will be prayer support available in the church and at the end of the morning a time in the hall for us to focus together on the Lord.



Everyone is welcome to join us for all or even part of the morning and if you would like to help in any way please do contact one of us.

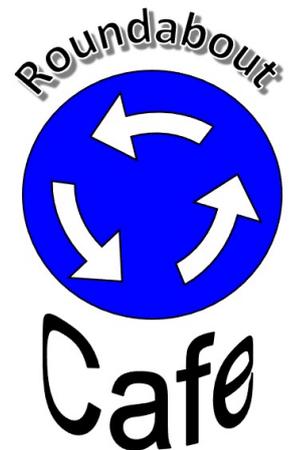
Mandy, Liz, Rose, Rev Ben and Sue K

Roundabout Café

The Roundabout Café will meet on Tuesday 15th March 2022 when we will have a talk entitled 'Ceramics That Speak'

Tony will tell us stories about a variety of different ceramics from his collection.

We meet from 10.00am until noon with coffee and nice things to eat. Everyone is welcome.



Green Team Article - Peat-Free Compost

As those of us who are lucky enough to have a garden, allotment or just a plant in a pot, start thinking about what we are going to grow this year, it is a good time to put resolutions in place to buy only peat-free compost. The Government has plans to ban the sale of peat in compost from 2024; but at last year's COP26 environmental groups worldwide are calling for a ban without delay.

Peat bogs are the world's largest carbon store, trapping twice as much of the carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming that forests do, plus digging up peat actually releases carbon into the air. Peat is dug out of wild places, damaging some of the last remaining peatland in the UK, and overseas in places like Eastern Europe and Canada. More than 94% of the UK's lowland peat bogs have been destroyed or damaged, and a wealth

of wildlife has disappeared along with it. This vital habitat takes millions of years to be replaced.

There are now a wide variety of peat free composts available as manufacturers start gearing up for the change. Many Garden Centres now stock a range, so switching to peat free is very easy.

I have not bought compost with peat for a few years now and had excellent results. I also grow as much from seed as possible, as plants from garden centre's are usually grown with a percentage of peat in the compost.

Work is being done to restore peat bogs and bring back the diverse wildlife that thrive there. Like Golden Plover, Skylark, Red Grouse, Sphagnum mosses, Bog Asphodel, frogs, lizard, adder and butterflies like Marsh Fritillary, Green Hairstreak and the Emperor moth.

When we replace the compost in our flowerbeds and the raised bed at the side of church, we will be making sure we only add peat free compost.

Alison Howell

Green Team (Alison Hobbs, Alison Howell, Helen Moore, Margretta Bowstead, Martin Lloyd, Sue Keatt)

Wonford Methodist Church - Themed Preaching Spring 2022

We continue to look at Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus during March.

Mar 6	All Age Worship	Leon Dundas	
Mar 13	Chapter 5 v22 - 6 v9	Mature Relationships	Rev Ben Haslam (S)
Mar 20	Chapter 6 v10 to end	Put Your Armour On	Prof Tony Wragg

Christmas Card Tree 2021 – Thank You

A Very Big Thank You to Everyone Who Supported The Christmas Card Tree at the back of the church this year. A total of £145.00 plus some Gift Aiding, was raised for, The Plymouth and Exeter District of The Methodist Church selected charity – The Christian Hospital, Berhampur, India. This Project is being promoted and supported by The Plymouth and Exeter, Methodist District, Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) for the two years (2021 – 2023). There is some information on The District website and more will be available in time.

Paul Violet



Gift Day

Since the building of our chapel in 2006 we have been looking at further ways to enhance our buildings both inside and out.

We have made a wonderful start by erecting a new fence which has made an enormous difference to the way our Church looks.

Further work is planned over the next two years and this will require considerable fundraising.

We will launch our fundraising by holding a Gift Day on Saturday 12th March 2022 with a coffee morning followed by a service on Sunday 13th March at 10.00am led by Rev Ben Haslam.

This is a wonderful opportunity to make some real improvements to our church and we all need to offer our generous financial support in order to achieve our aims.

Further details about our plans and about our fundraising will be available soon.

EXETER FOODBANK UPDATE

FIRSTLY, apologies I have not written in Wonford Methodist Church Contact Newsletter before now.

SECONDLY, thank you for your support for Exeter Foodbank over the years. it really is appreciated. When I have delivered food to young families struggling or isolating due to Covid in recent months the gratitude and relief on their faces is something to behold. Most are so very grateful that 'someone' is there to help.

That 'someone' includes those who donate food, (YOU), those who collect it, those who sort and store it, those who restock the distribution centres at the Mint and Beacon Heath and those who 'man' the distribution centres.

There are also the employed staff, Mark, our manager, Summer, our new admin person and Ali, our support worker.

There are also Trustees and a Management Committee both made up of volunteers who generously give of their time.

Exeter Foodbank is one of the best in the country (well I would say that wouldn't I!) and its new purpose-built store (generously donated) on the outskirts of Exeter the envy of other Foodbanks.

THIRDLY, donations keep coming in because Exeter is a caring and open-handed community. Thank you all.

However, we still need donations, please - a PRIORITY LIST of items most needed is posted on the donations box at the church.

Presently we need:- 110g jars of Coffee; Green UHT Milk, Noodle Snacks, Sugar, Soft Drinks and Squash, Sweet Treats.

(We do NOT need:- Pasta, Baked Beans, Soup, Bottled Water)

Thanks again, everyone.

Terry Spencer

World Day of Prayer 2022 - "I know the plans I have for you"

On Friday 4th March 2022 there will be a Service for everyone at St Stephen's Church on Exeter High Street at 11:00 a.m. , with refreshments from 10.30 am. Do come and join others in prayer for our country.

Prayer Focus for March

Prayer – Our Strongest Weapon – Pray Without Ceasing

As we move into March, and the season of Lent, most of us will have plenty to be thinking and praying about. St. Paul often reminded the readers of his letters about the importance of prayer. We should always remember his advice and the example of Jesus when it comes to prayer.

The Bible Readings mentioned are taken from The Lectionary Readings as listed in The Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021/2022. Along side this we have the closing Chapters of Ephesians, that we have been using for Our Themed Preaching Series, on Sunday mornings. Throughout the month pray for the people of the Ukraine as they face the Russian invasion of their country.

Week beginning 6th March 2022 – 1st Sunday in Lent - Luke 4:1 – 13. In this reading, Luke shares his version of the Temptation of Jesus. We can read how Jesus went out into the wilderness and was tempted by the devil. Jesus used Scripture to fend off these temptations. Pray for all those who will be tempted in many different ways over the following week. Pray especially for yourself, family and friends, asking God to help resist temptations that can mar his relationship with people. March 2nd was Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent. Pray for guidance on how best you and we as a Church can prepare ourselves for Easter. Pray for Leon as he prepares and leads our All-Age Service this Sunday.

Week beginning 13th March 2022 – 2nd Sunday in Lent - Luke 13:31 – 35. In this passage we can read of Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem. Jesus explains to his listeners how he longs to gather the children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Pray for all those people today whom Jesus longs to gather under his wings to protect and care for them. Pray for Ben as he leads our Communion Service today and continues with our series on St. Paul's Letter to The Ephesians. Pray for all the people who will be using our church this week for whatever reason. Pray that they will feel God's Presence and even encounter the love He has for them.

Week beginning 20th March 2022 – 3rd Sunday in Lent - Luke 13: 1 - 9. These are some hard verses, as Luke records, how Jesus tells his listeners to Repent or Perish. This is part of the process each one of us must go through to become a Christian. Pray for those known to you, who you would like to see become a Christian. Pray for Tony as he leads our service today and closes our series on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Pray for our Circuit Ministers, Deacon, and Circuit Stewards as they seek God's vision for Our Circuit. Pray that God will reveal to us Mission opportunities in Our Church and Circuit.

Week beginning 27th March 2022 – 4th Sunday in Lent – Mothering Sunday - Luke 2:33 – 35. In these few verses Luke shares with us some of the blessings Simeon gives to Jesus' parents, especially Mary. He then gives a prophecy about what Jesus will go on to do. Pray for Rev Malcolm Carter and assistants as they lead our Mothering Sunday Service. Pray for all mothers today, especially remembering those who are facing hard times because a child of theirs is unwell. Pray for all those mothers who have lost a child and still find it painful and are struggling to cope with their loss. Pray for all those women who long to be a mother, but for some reason they are not. Pray for all those who have lost their mother over the past year. Praise and thank God for your mother, even if your relationship with them is/was not very good.

Our Prayer Phone Link

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rose Smith (01404 510853). 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 Lisa Thomas (01392 273220) or Margretta Bowstead (01392 437329).

After Service Prayer Support

This is available in the Quiet Room on Sunday mornings. Two members of the Prayer Team will be available to pray with you.

The Prayer Team

Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

Holy and Gracious God

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness.

We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine.

And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son.

Lord have mercy. Amen



News From The Methodist Church

Rural hope - share the small and beautiful things in life

Sarah Hulme, Rural Mission & Ministry Officer, shares some hopeful thoughts as we emerge from the dark winter months.

As I was sat on the sofa pondering the state of the rural church (as you do on a Sunday evening!) and longing for more signs of hope after a challenging week of wintery gloom, I was really challenged by the imagery from this scene from *The Green Planet*.



It shows the devastating effects of a forest fire; the aftermath, scorched earth, no apparent signs of life anywhere. This is sometimes our reality, especially in winter months where we can struggle to imagine warm sunshine and light-filled days. It can sometimes also feel like our church reality, with things having changed rapidly during the pandemic. And yet, from this place of death and desolation emerges the most beautiful new life, these fire lilies described quite aptly by Sir David Attenborough as ‘small & un-showy, but that’s all they need to be!’ What bright hope they offer into this charred landscape, rekindling colour, offering nectar to pollinators, pioneering the regrowth.

I see such delicate beauty in these fragile flowers, the first things to emerge after only four days. This is also what I see and hear as I’m privileged to listen to individuals speaking about their own local rural contexts – something fragile, yet beautiful is starting to emerge in some of our communities that may well have felt burnt out or written off. There’s something very relatable in the description of ‘small and un-showy.’ There’s also a real sense of this not being humanly possible. It’s not about more effort from exhausted and overwhelmed individuals, but a surrender of our hopes, a deep listening to what God is up to and a willingness to join in, being ‘all we need to be’ in these familiar yet changed places.

Hope and encouragement amidst death and despair, beauty from ashes.

Dates For Your Diary

March 2022

Fri 4th	11.00 a.m.	World Day of Prayer Service at St Stephen's Church in the High Street. **
	3.00 p.m.	Bible Group meets in the lounge **
Sat 5th	10.30 a.m.	Saturday Morning Fellowship (until 12.00 pm) **
Sun 6th	10.00 a.m.	All Age Worship with Leon Dundas
	6.30 p.m.	No Café Church as advertised in the circuit plan **
Sat 12th	10.00 a.m.	Gift Day **
Sun 13th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Ben Haslam - Themed Preaching and Sacrament **
Tue 15th	10.00 a.m.	Roundabout Café (until 12pm) **
Fri 18th		World Recycling Day
	3.00 p.m.	Bible Group meets in the lounge **
Sat 19th	10.30 a.m.	Saturday Morning Fellowship (until 12.00 pm) **
Sun 20th	10.00 a.m.	Prof Tony Wragg - Themed Preaching **
Sat 26th	10.30 a.m.	Saturday Morning Fellowship (until 12.00 pm) **
Sun 27th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Malcolm Carter
	6.30 p.m.	President of the Conference at The Mint MC
	6.30 p.m.	Vice-President of the Conference at Seaton MC

**** Details in this newsletter or on the notice board in the hall.**



Weekly Activities

Sunday

- 10.00 a.m. Morning Service and Young Church
(1st Sunday in each month is All-Age Worship)
6.30 p.m. Evening Service *(not every week)*

Monday

- 7.30 p.m. The Away Group meets *(Fortnightly)*

Tuesday

- 10.00 a.m. The Roundabout Café *(3rd Tuesday each month)*

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

- 9.30 a.m. Friday Toddlers Group ***A***
(Check with organisers before attending)

- 3.00 p.m. Bible Group at the Church *(Fortnightly)*

Saturday

- 10.30 a.m. Saturday Fellowship Meeting

To be sure these take place see Dates to Note or the Notice Board
(***A*** = No meeting during school holiday)

The deadline for items for the April 2022 Newsletter will be Sunday 13th March 2022. There is no guarantee of inclusion, but they may be given to:

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