

OUTLOOK

The Magazine of Bethesda Methodist Church, Cheltenham

February 2024

No.148



Lower Slaughter

“all of them horse riding.”

Ezra 23 6:12

Bethesda Methodist Church Cheltenham

A community of hope

Rev'd Rachel Leather
Bethesda Methodist Church
Great Norwood Street
Cheltenham



Dear friends
I recently came across an article
posing a challenging question:
Is your church a thermostat or

a thermometer? The point the article was making was whether the church sets the temperature, or just measures the comfort of the people?

The early church is an example of a 'thermostatic' church – it transformed its surroundings, it set the tone, it initiated change. It was bold in seeking to alter people's lives as well as the socio-political world in which it existed. Now, the early church was not a single body; there were many divisions, differences of theology, petty disputes and some pretty dreadful behaviour. But through the strength of the community, an ability to take risks, the desire to see the end of suffering and a strong commitment to the gospel, the church became a force to reckon with. It destabilised the worst of those in power, it challenged the status quo and it

refused to accept that faith was a private matter. This was the church which would go on to reshape huge chunks of the globe and we continue to stand on the legacy of those past disciples.

In contrast, a 'thermometer' church is one which tests the temperature of its surroundings and reflects current values. It constantly adapts, is a hesitating witness for fear of causing offence, it seeks the comfort of the people rather than substantive transformation.

A thermometer church has watered down its influence and fits in with its socio-political environment.

An example of this type of church would be those churches which preach the prosperity gospel to congregations weighed down with wealth.

Whilst initially I am drawn to the concept of being a thermostatic church, especially being rooted within an activism for justice, it is not without its problems. It risks deepening divisions between the sacred and the secular, keeping apart from any life outside of the church. The thermometer church, on the other hand, is contextual and adapts to the needs of the locality. A modern example is how

the Methodist Church has sought to adapt its theology to remain relevant to society by allowing for the possibility of same sex weddings. The danger of contextual theology is an assimilation into the values of injustice, making the church indistinguishable from any other organisation.

Instead, I wonder whether we can take the best from both concepts; to turn the heat up when confronting the worst examples of injustice, and to cool things down and allow for graceful disagreement rather than heated arguments. To adapt to the changing needs of the people who are both within our church and our community, in recognition that we don't worship in the same way we did decades ago, as well as ensuring a radical inclusivity providing welcome and comfort. There is a balance to be sought in both comfort and challenge, responsive and counter-cultural.

Yours in Christ

Rachel

INTERVIEW

Barbara Turner answers questions about her life and links with Methodism



built in 1908 which had changed the lives of both of my parents' families. The hall was a 2000-seater church in the round. Both my grandfathers had independently gone to see this new church and been converted on their first visit, and had brought their families into the new communities. There were many converts and they were known as 'The Wigan Miracles'.

Because both families had many children, I had many relatives there when I went to church. Queens Hall was a long way from home, and there were no buses on a Sunday, so we all walked three times there and back every Sunday.

Where were you born?

I was born in Wigan in Lancashire, a mining and cotton mill town. It was famous for its pier which was actually the place where coal was loaded onto barges on the Leeds to Liverpool canal.

What was your first contact with Methodism?

I was the third child in the family, having a brother and a sister. My family were very involved in the Queens Hall, a Methodist mission



*Queens Hall Methodist Mission,
Wigan*

Have you had any special achievements or ambitions?

As I grew up, like many others, I collected JMA contributions which were for the work of the church overseas. My family were very interested in the overseas church and that led to many contacts with overseas students, mainly black, living in the Wigan area. We entertained them so often that one of our visitors, looking a little lost getting off the bus, was told where to go to get to the Beckett's home.

One of my ambitions was to work overseas and I went to Birmingham to study nursing. It was at a missionary anniversary in Birmingham where I met John who had just arrived at Handsworth College to train for the ministry and to work overseas. We struck up a friendship which led to 60 years of marriage and 7 years spent working in the Ivory Coast, West Africa.

What is your main form of activity these days?

My activity these days is very limited but I have many wonderful memories of camping, climbing mountains and enjoying worldwide travel.

What is your favourite piece of music?

I enjoy listening to music and going to concerts if possible. I enjoy opera. One memory I have is of going to a symphony concert in Birmingham Town Hall and hearing Ravel's Bolero for the first time.

Who has influenced you?

I am sure that my family and friends have influenced me. I have been challenged by great preachers in the past but also by many ordinary Christians who have challenged me by their quiet Christian living and witness.

Do you have a favourite hymn?

For a long time I have loved 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' which is a great challenge. More recently I have come to love 'Lord of the Years', 704 in Singing the Faith, in thanksgiving that I have had such a long and wonderful life

COP 28 December 2023 - Fair COP or COP Out?



Whilst World Leaders and an army of delegates gathered in the air conditioned confines of the Dubai COP28 conference, a succession of different environmental groups shared a vigil in Cheltenham High Street. In contrast to the sweltering temperatures outside the conference centre, conditions in the High Street were either sub zero or extremely wet.

It was the turn of Green Christians* on Friday 8th December and local Methodists were involved. Engaging passers by on the issue of Climate Change and the goings on in Dubai was far from easy. Most were focused on their Christmas shopping or snatching a lunchtime bite. There were encouraging conversations with members of Greenpeace who

had come over from the Forest of Dean. Our Minister Rachel was pleased to make contact with a lady who was looking for help to plant 100 trees; a task that St Mark's Green Team are likely to take on to advance their Eco Church ambitions. There were some inevitable arguments. A retired Anglican priest was challenged by an aggressive fundamentalist who objected to the claim to be a Christian if you declare yourself to be actively 'Green'. His argument being that the rise in global temperatures and associated disasters were Biblical signs of End Times and to be welcomed. Did we have any impact? Hopefully those who see religion as a negative force on environmental issues will have cause to think again.

International COP28 outcomes? Sadly the interests of those nations most impacted by changing climate were sacrificed on the altar of big oil and coal; although there was progress in provided finance for adaptation. The fossil fuel producing nations could not bring themselves to undertake to phase out the stuff. A compromise was reached by the inclusion of the words "transition away from". One wonders if Rob Hopkins, the founder of the Transition move-

Just in case some readers are scratching their heads over the seeming COP hysteria, it might help to outline something of its 30 year history:

COP1 (Conference of Parties) took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and it was then that attention was drawn to the accelerating rise in world temperatures and the need for nations to act. 'Agenda 21' was the call to action, Here in the UK local authorities were encouraged to embrace 'Local Agenda 21'. Gloucestershire County Council did so but chose to work under the title of 'Vision 21'. At the same time Churches Together in Gloucestershire embraced the challenge and organised a Creation Festival in October of the following year. It was launched by Jonathon Porritt and culminated in a weekend of activity in and around Gloucester Cathedral.



Sadly, despite 27 subsequent COP gatherings, temperatures continue to rise at an unprecedented rate.

** Green Christians – formed in the 1980s to counter the accusation from environmental groups that the teaching of the church was responsible for environmental destruction.*

Jerry Barr

BETHESDA COFFEE SHOP{



Enjoy coffee or tea, scrumptious cakes and cheerful chat.

All donations go to charity.

Every Saturday morning from
10.30 - 12.00

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS of FAIRTRADE



In 2024 The Fairtrade Foundation will be celebrating 30 years of the Fairtrade Mark in the UK.

This year Fairtrade Fortnight will take place in September instead of the usual February. Farmers have been able to drive positive change in their communities by using the fairtrade premium and the help given by the setting up of co-operatives. The Foundation has put together 30 ways to get the ball rolling for 2024.

1. Sign up to get regular emails to hear how you can help to build a fairer future.
2. Sign your local Community Declaration on Climate Justice. (As an individual, school, group or any other organisation).

3. Say it with flowers-buy Fairtrade flowers to deliver a fairer deal for thousands of farm workers in East Africa and Central America.
4. Write a letter to important people in business, politics or the community to persuade them to join in to help build a fairer future.
5. Start a petition. A group of school children petitioned UK Govt. to start including Fairtrade bananas in their Free Fruit and Veg scheme.
6. Hold a Fairtrade quiz night.
7. Make a smoothie – many Fairtrade ingredients available.
8. Get creative in the kitchen- over 6000 Fairtrade products are now available across the country.
9. Hold a Fairtrade exhibition.
10. Spread Fairtrade news through social media.
11. Hold a Fairtrade coffee morning.
12. Host a Fairtrade film night.
13. Run a tasting session of Fairtrade foods.
14. Try some Fairtrade wines.
15. Hold a craft session and make some bunting from recycled material.

16. Hold a Fairtrade fashion show.
17. Ask your local florists to stock Fairtrade flowers.
18. Join a Fairtrade Community Group.
19. Link up with a local sports team.
20. Make a Fairtrade treasure hunt trail.
21. Campaign using handmade crafts.
22. Make a Fairtrade display.
23. Encourage your school to become a Fairtrade School.
24. Sign up your faith group as a Fairtrade Place of Worship.
25. Talk to local businesses about stocking Fairtrade items.
26. Encourage people to make a Fairtrade pledge.
27. Celebrate World Fairtrade Day - 2nd Saturday in May.
28. Try a new Fairtrade product every day or week.
29. Have a bake-off.
30. Fundraise for Fairtrade.

*For further details and information
please see the Fairtrade
Foundation website.*

Helen Davies

JUST THE CEILING

It was reported that a cinema had shown a short film which began with a view of a ceiling in a room. Nothing more; just a white ceiling. The screen remained displayed for 6 minutes after which time the cinemagoers began to be on edge and dissatisfied. Some complained about the film wasting their time and others started to leave.

Suddenly the picture began to change and the camera lens started to pan down towards the floor. A small child who appeared to be disabled was lying on a bed, suffering from a spinal cord tear.

The camera then panned back up to the ceiling with the following announcement. "We showed you a total of 8 minutes of the scene which the disabled child watches all the time. You became impatient and complained. After 8 minutes you couldn't bear to watch it.

Sometimes we need to put ourselves in the shoes of others in order to realise the magnitude of the blessings we are given and to thank God for bestowing us with the blessings we take for granted.

Was it Shakespeare who wrote, 'I worried that I had no boots for my feet until I saw a man with no legs'?

ANNE GOES GREEN !

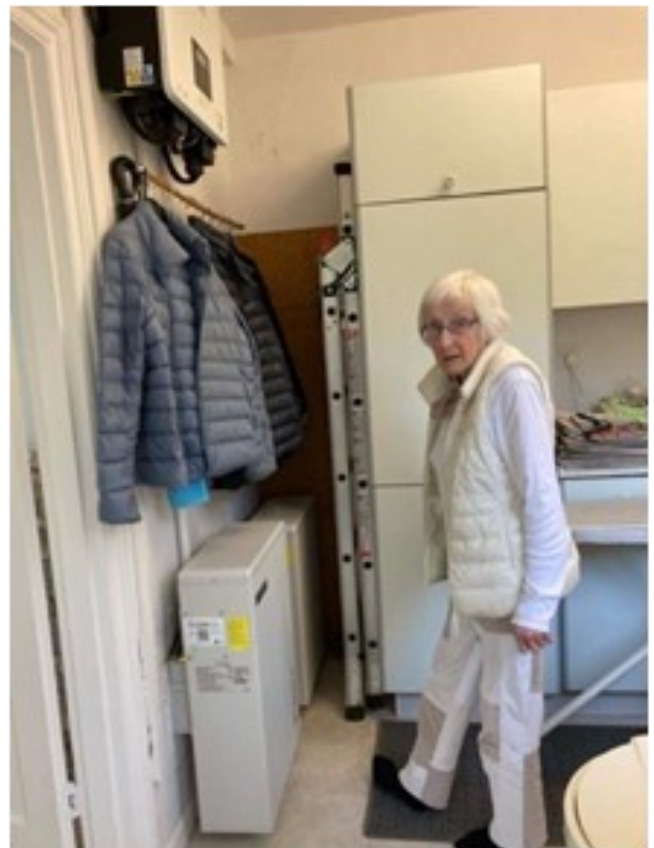


Many readers will have seen Anne Rawlinson's house as it is visible for miles, facing south on the side of Crane Hill overlooking Gotherington and Prestbury. It really attracts the sun, so last year Anne decided to embrace its carbon and money saving potential. The solar panels on the roof have roughly the same electricity-generating capacity as those on the church roof, but are smaller and were much cheaper reflecting 14 years technical progress.

To make maximum use of the electricity from these panels Anne has a pair of batteries that can store 12 kWh of solar electricity – more than she usually uses in a day. Here they are fitted into a

corner of the utility room.

A particularly useful feature is that they allow the house to keep lights and heating going for a while if there is a power cut.



In summer the house tends to get very hot so Anne has fitted an air-to-air heat pump which can both cool and heat her living room and bedroom. It comprises quite a small external unit shown below with my gloves for scale, and fan units mounted near the ceiling that distribute cold or warm air in the two rooms. Anne has kept her gas boiler, but for much of the year it can be switched off because the solar electricity will provide hot water, and the heat pump can provide some heat in spring or autumn chilly spells.



This will considerably extend the life of the gas boiler.

This combination of a gas boiler and heat pump is known as a hybrid system. It is a great way to respond to the need to cut carbon emissions while retaining the comfort and security of a gas boiler in winter. The air conditioning provided in summer (solar powered by Anne's system) is potentially a life saver as our climate changes, resulting in dangerously hot summer heat waves.

Peter Boait

HEAD FIRST

It was the five year-old boy's first trip down to the communion rail at his parish church. Fascinated, he watched the vicar place a wafer in the palm of each person kneeling before him.

When the vicar reached the little boy, he ignored the little boy's outstretched palm and laid his hand on the child's head in a gentle blessing instead. The boy, utterly bewildered, whispered to his father in a piercing voice, "He's put it on my head!"



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

as at 21st January, 2024



We started the new year with very happy news – Margaret and Peter Allsopp were delighted to welcome their first grandchild on New Year's Day. Robert James, to be known as Bobby, is the son of their daughter Jenny and her husband Tom Dransfield. Congratulations all round.

Teresa had her operation and was back home for Christmas; more good news is that following investigation the tumour was found to be benign and no further treatment is needed.

The congratulations continue: Wendy wishes to thank everyone for their cards and good wishes on the occasion of her and John's Golden Wedding Anniversary at the end of December.

More good wishes went to Ann Parkin in January as she celebrated a special birthday; happy 90 years and many more to come Ann.

Meanwhile, Jo Reed reached her half century and Flora Reed has become a teenager!

Sadly two of our church family died recently – Lynne Young on 16th December and Wendy Jones on 19th December. We remember them and their families at this sad time.

The Backpackers held their Christmas party and Red Hat walk from which jolly events over £150 was raised for All We Can (the Methodist Relief and Development Fund). This has enabled them to support/buy:

1 goat, along with training, for a family in Zimbabwe to provide milk, and manure for improved crop production.

1 bicycle to enable a child to ride to school and thereby have time and energy to study at the end of the day.

The help needed to build toilets for 2 families to protect against diseases.

A safe water supply for 2 families in Zimbabwe.

And finally – 10 chickens each to 100 women in Ethiopia to help them start a business. Yes – that’s 1000 chickens!

Well done Backpackers.

It was good to see Christine Pringle back in church now that both cataracts have been removed and she is able to drive again.

The other Christine completed her training to be an Anna Chaplain and will shortly be commissioned in that role. She will continue to be a trustee of CaBiC which is the local Anna Chaplaincy for Cheltenham and Bishop’s Cleeve.

Thank you to everyone who has provided items of news. And finally we remember those friends who are unable to join us in person, whether at home or in hospital or elsewhere who are in special need of our prayers and support; our church family is founded on faith, joined in love and sustained by God.

Christine Wisdom

Ros Terry

AT LEAST HE TRIED

A man was sitting on the side of the bed watching his wife who was looking at herself in the mirror. As her birthday was not far off he asked what she would like as a gift. “I’d like to be eight again.”

On the morning of her birthday he rose early and made her a nice bowl of cereal and then took her to Alton Towers. What a day! they went on every ride in the park, every roller coaster, everything there was. Five hours later they staggered out of the park with her head still reeling and her stomach feeling upside down.

He then took her to McDonalds where he ordered her a happy meal with extra fries and a chocolate milk shake. Then it was off to the cinema with a carton of popcorn and favourite sweeties. What a fabulous day.

Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed exhausted.

He leaned over to her and with a big smile asked “Well dear, what was it like being eight again?”

Her eyes slowly opened and her expression changed.

“I meant my dress size you idiot!”

GOD IN ALL THINGS, INCLUDING AGEING

There are many good things about being very old. One develops a recognition of one's own weakness, of the need for help, and (if one relaxes into it and stops being frustrated because things are not as they used to be) one is prepared not only to accept such help but to ask for it where appropriate.

There is a certain wry enjoyment, too, to be had when during a telephone call to some organisation one is asked for date of birth, as often happens. Supplying this, together with name, address, NHS number, hospital number and all the other necessary details, is no problem. (But never bank details, and I have my own polite but firm way of dealing with cold callers, who inevitably ring at meal times.) Reaction from the other end is usually incredulity that one is still *compos mentis*, living independently with no domestic help, and in charge of one's own financial affairs and general decision-making. Not to mention using a computer, though certainly with less skill than my older great-grandchildren who seem to have

been born hard-wired into their Devices.

I recognise that I am extremely fortunate in that my brain appears not to be as old as some of the rest of me. I gave up driving a year ago in the month of my 93rd birthday while awaiting serious surgery, and am effectively housebound. But inside, I am still ME. A friend in his forties said recently 'I can't imagine what it must be like to be in your nineties!' There I have the advantage. All the people I have ever been, at whatever age, are still in there as part of the 'me' I am now, as are all the people whose influence has contributed to what I have become, and I know well how it feels to be fortyish.

I have been an ecumenist 'from my youth up', realising that whatever my Wesleyan Circuit Steward grandpa had to say, my lovely Roman Catholic next door neighbours were not dangerous! I also recall incurring the displeasure of my Methodist Local Preacher and Son of the Manse husband once, by attending an interfaith service. This was many decades ago, and I insisted that we all needed to follow our own consciences, not that of others however dear. Not quite as long ago I had the privilege of presenting a series

of radio programmes in which I explored the beliefs and practice of local faith groups with their leaders and lay members. None of us has a monopoly of truth. I have felt closer to some open-minded friends of other faiths than I have ever felt to some fellow-Methodists who have closed minds. We can listen to those who experience life within different traditions, and we might learn from them – God’s thoughts are always higher than our thoughts.

I now attend (when a friend takes me) an Ecumenical Partnership which delivers both comfort and challenge, both learning and loving. We also have a close relationship, and, sometimes, shared worship with the Quakers along the road. An hour of mostly silence is a very different sort of worship from our usual pattern, as ours is for them, and both are appreciated.

And I believe increasingly in the unity of all things and all people. I still have a tattered cutting from the Guardian from the then science writer from many years ago, observing that as quantum physics had revealed the inseparability of all matter however far apart it has become

geographically, this could be a profound revelation for theology too.

Over the years I have come to understand (and the more I ponder it the more obvious it seems) that as God created all things ‘from nothing’, then all things come from the ‘God substance’, and we are all – trees, grass, whales, people, slugs and wasps and the very earth we walk on and eventually return to – not just made in God’s image, as we are assured, but eternally part of that very God who is our Father and Who is in us, whether we accept that or not, and however far we have moved away from the original pattern. And we can never ‘flee from God’s presence.’

So though I find world news unbearable, and weep with and for all those who suffer for whatever reason, I know in my bones that we remain children of God, not by adoption but because we are born in the image of God. Those who find God in nature are partly right too. But ‘partly right’ is all any of us can ever be.

And may we, like our friends the Quakers, look for and find ‘that which is of God in everyone.’

by Josie Smith
From ‘Theology Everywhere’
22/1/24

Lay Worker :Update for January 2024



Bethesda has for the past few months been full of activity and kept me busy with room bookings, the organising of heating for all planned activities, access keys being issued, and checking that the building is being cleaned and kept tidy and to this end I helped find a new cleaner to ensure this was happening.

I have issued New Licences for 2024 to our regular room users. I set up a 'Warm Space' again in October, providing free hot drinks, snacks, games, and a warm welcome for anyone who would like to save a bit of money on their heating which runs on Wednesdays.

I am very grateful to Bridget, Celia K, Peter B, Elaine, Liz, and Ann H, for helping to run it. I also have hosted the Thursday Al-Anon meeting which is a support group for friends and relatives of alcoholics (new members

welcome). I also helped with an afternoon tea for our 'Candles of Remembrance Service' with Bridget and Rev Rachel and organised goodie bags and a prayer walk on the Bath Road with Christine W. Businesses were having a tough time, but they appreciated us stopping by.

Creative Age is still going from strength to strength, with seven volunteer helpers, six professional artists and eighteen participants. I am very pleased to say that we have been granted a further £5,000 from the Cheltenham Health & Wellbeing Fund and £7,500 from Thriving Communities Fund and a generous donation from a couple who used to attend Bethesda: this gives us funding till 2025.

My Bible study group at New Court continues, as does Pastoral Visiting and attending various meetings. I have been on the following Training courses in the last quarter; Advanced Safeguarding and Mental Health First Aid. I am looking forward to what the new year brings.

Happy New Year!

Rachel Simpson
Lay Worker for Hospitality,
Pastoral Care & Administration

. GRUMPY

. How not to be a Grumpy Old Man (or Woman)



Marvel. Marvel every time you see a child learning to walk and speak at the same time. Share in their delight. Wonder at the dawn of each new season: sunshine and shadows, falling leaves, frost, sudden new growth. You are still alive to take it all in. That's an unexpected bonus.

Appreciation. Have a look around your living room and concentrate on items designed for your comfort and entertainment, which your forbears never had. Think of someone you don't like; now ponder a couple of their good points. Try to desire their welfare more than their downfall.

Forgive. (That's a condition for being forgiven). You may have to do it over and over again for the same person. Unearth grudges which have been lying under the surface. Are they worth preserving that much? Think of the damage they are doing you.

Don't envy. The grass on the other side of the street isn't often greener, it's just different. Count your blessings – some will be uniquely yours. Be concerned for the welfare of someone whose circumstances are unlike yours.

Deal with disappointment. If you have become grumpy it's probably caused by a deep-down dissatisfaction with yourself. Stop raking over past failures. Each morning when you wake up, say with the Psalmist, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Change. No, it isn't too late. It will only be too late to change when you are in a coffin. In the meantime, there's still room for manoeuvre. Remember John Henry Newman's words, "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

From 'Cornerstone', the magazine of Chessington Methodist Church

Children's

Page



PEAR SHAPED

Peter's football team began the season well. They won their first two games and then they started to lose.

Their teacher got them together and said, "It's all gone pear shaped." What did he mean?

They looked at the ball. It was still round. They looked at their feet. They were still feet-shaped. They looked at each other. They were still boy-shaped.

'Pear shape' is what people say when something has gone wrong. It's unfair to pears. It means it has lost its shape and has started to sag.

Pear shape is what pears are supposed to be. Other things were made to have their own special

shape and purpose, but for all kinds of reasons lose their shape and meaning.

God made the world the way he wanted it to be, but something went wrong. People got greedy and became selfish.. They started hating rather than loving each other. You could say the world went pear shaped. How do we get it back into shape?

There is a way to get people back to the way God intended for them before they 'lost the plot', which means the same thing. We just say a prayer in the name of Jesus: "Please God, I don't like being pear-shaped. Keep me how you wanted me to be when you made me."

By the way, Peter's football team decided to work harder and practice more, and they got into shape and started to win again.

With thanks to "Children's stories for grown ups" by Rev Ian Gregory

THE EDEN PROJECT

Thanks to all at Bethesda who deposit corks in the receptacle in the Hall. These continue to be sent to The Eden Project, where they are used as a mulching for Mediterranean plants.

Approximately 1 million corks are recycled there per year offsetting the equivalent of 309 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

The Eden Project, an educational charity, attracts many visitors and is particularly famous for its Biomes, the world's largest greenhouses which nestle in a deep crater. and form the centrepiece of a spectacular global garden.



Biomes, Eden Project

Cork is one of the worlds most important renewable forest products. The cork bark is stripped off the tree in a thick cylindrical layer. Each tree is harvested every nine years.

A single tree can cork 4,000 bottles. Fine wines can develop through the happy marriage between cork and a bottle made tall enough to lie on its side. The wine 'breathes' through the cork as it ages.



Cork Tree

* * * *

Divine Intervention

Everybody knew the roof was leaking, but the church kept putting off replacing it. Finally, some areas of the ceiling in the sanctuary began to sag.

The church called a congregational meeting. A wealthy member rose and pledged £500 toward fixing the roof. Just then, a small piece of the ceiling fell and hit him on the head. Somebody at the back of the church said, "Hit him again, Lord!"

PARADISE LOST

I often dream of Wildness lost
Of no more birds and count the cost
Of favourite places, favourite sights
Peter, Paul and final flights.

Today I found my feeder gone
No more food to feast upon.
Your need must be more than mine
To steal from me at Christmastime.

But, Hey, I shall not be deterred
From fighting hard for every bird.
The Wagtails, Grey and also Pied
5 in all on food relied.

Mealworms such a tasty treat
Now part of their usual beat
And water, where they truly thrive,
Food and drink to stay alive.

The fields may go at Oakley Farm
Controversy and so much Harm
But 'Famous Five' will prosper still
At the foot of Our Green Hill!

John D. Wilcock, Sunday 17th December, 2023



A SUMMER SHOWER

by Vanessa Mae

A rapid shower had cooled the air,
Bringing a freshness everywhere.
From leaves the drips fell to the ground,
Sweet echoes of the shower's sound.
And soon across the woods I heard
First one and then a second bird.
Still more joined in - a joyous throng
Blessing the shower with their song.
Then as once more the sun's hot ray
Shone out to warm this summer's day
I saw the mist-like vapours rise,
And butterflies, blue as the skies,
Flitting across the flowery dell,
As still the last few droplets fell.
The clouds had passed me by, but still
They lingered o'er a nearby hill,
Pouring down their waters grey
Before they moved and went their way.
Yet through the rain across the sky
The sunbeams shot, and there on high
The beauteous colours curved to form
A rainbow from that summer storm.



Contributed by John Wilcock

PICK 'n' MIX

One of the choices offered to those attending the Pick 'n' Mix Service Preparation on 26th November was a Poetry Workshop conducted by Christine Wisdom. Arising from this the following two poems were read as part of the service:

God is making bread and smelling it develop,
Friends and spending time chatting;
God is making something new from used materials.
I am travel and watching others' stories developing,
Mist and breath hanging in the air;
I am walking and discovering what's round the next corner.
I am God's new creation.

Morning Thoughts

God is like the sea holding me up.
God is like flowers which brighten the Earth.
God is like reading, opening my eyes to the world.
Trees are a joy in the sun or the rain.
I like the countryside, to walk and to roam.
I like stars, each a different world.
God is always there, however near or far.

*Gloria
to God*



OUTLOOK

The April issue of 'Outlook' should appear on 24th March, 2024.

Contributions are invited by no later than 10th March by email:

bernard_stradling_1980@btinternet.com

or in any format via the 'E for Editor' pigeonhole.

'Outlook' can also be found on the Bethesda website:

<https://wp.bethesda-church.org.uk/>

Please note that articles reflect the views of the writer and not necessarily those of Bethesda Methodist Church.

The cover photograph was taken last year in Lower Slaughter.

Spell Checkers Unite

Weave got a knew spell chequer.

Write their on hour PC.

It marques the plaice four hour revue,

Off miss takes weed knot scene

Weave past this poem threw it,

And Yule bee glad two no.

That its awl write inn every weigh,

Hour chequer tolled us sew!

If Mary is the mother of Jesus and Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Does that mean that Mary had a little lamb?

I tried blindfold archery.

You should try it, you don't know what you're missing.

People say eating cheese before going to bed gives you nightmares. It's worse if you eat liquorice. If you do that you'll dream of allsorts.

A PRAYER for ISRAEL-PALESTINE

In a world that God made good
let us pray
for people seeing things
 no human being should see,
for people seized by terror
 no human being should experience,
for people whose depths of suffering
 no human being should know.
God of unquenchable hope
Confirm our belief that
this is not how things should be;
Affirm our belief that
things can and will be different;
Strengthen our belief in
Jesus
who opens the way from
death to resurrection, and
Help us, as his disciples
to be your
agents for change
in our broken world.

Amen .

Methodist Liaison Office Weekly Update and Prayer Meeting

Join Methodists from around the world to pray together for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land. Every Wednesday from 6pm (UK time) for 40 minutes. Each week there will be updates and theological reflections from local voices and MLO staff members followed by the opportunity to pray together. To join please email office@mlojerusalem.org and you will be sent joining instructions.

