

WINDOW ON WESLEY'S



FEBRUARY 2024

STAFF

Ministers: The Revd Canon Dr Jennifer H Smith BA PhD

M.Phil (Superintendent)

The Revd Steven Cooper BTh MA(Cantab)

MA(Winton)

Associate Ministers: The Revd John Cooke MA (Supernumerary)

The Revd Paul Hulme BA (Supernumerary)

The Revd Dr John Lampard BA M.Th

(Supernumerary)

The Revd Stephen Penrose (Supernumerary)

The Revd Ian Yates (Supernumerary)

Lay workers: Miss Jessy Mhone (Global Mission Fellow)

Mr Thomas Smith (Leysian Missioner)

Museum: Mr Christian Dettlaff MA (Curator)

Administration: Mrs Ling Arzeian (Finance Officer)

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Dear Friends.

Welcome to the February edition of Window on Wesley's. In this season we are working on our welcome, our worship, and our care: as we begin Lent on Ash Wednesday on 14 February there are many chances for you to deepen and grow your faith in a way that fits your lifestyle and situation. Have a look: could you join a one-hour discussion group on Saturday mornings around our different neighbourhood churches, culminating in a visit to the shrine of Julian of Norwich on 9 March? Is it better for you to receive a daily reflective email, or would you want to come Wednesday evenings at 6 for a short communion service?

Choose what works for you in this season of penitence and preparation: Holy Week is coming, and we will look forward to celebrating Easter together on Sunday 31 March. But do not deprive yourself of spiritual food this Spring, your wellbeing is worth the effort.

This month we say hello to two new members of staff, both living on site at City Road:

Jessy Mhone is a Global Mission Fellow and joins us from Malawi; she is with us until June 2025 and is working particularly for 'Community Mobilisation' in our engagement with children and young people, and with refugees and asylum seekers.

The Revd Myeong-Nam Kang (it is ok to call him Pastor Kang) joins us from the Kwanglim Church in Seoul, South Korea as an intern learning about John Wesley and British Methodism, and helping to support Korean speakers here. He is with us until December 2024, and has a wife and two children we hope will visit.

Welcome to both Jessy and Pastor Kang! It is a testament to the nature of this community that people from all across global Methodism each bring gifts into the life of the church. Get to know Jessy and Pastor Kang, they are keen to know you. We are very blessed as well to have a new Learning and Community

Engagement Officer beginning later this Spring, in addition to a new caretaker and cleaning operative: it will be a delight to rebuild our team strength.

Friends, in December we announced the departure of the Revd Steven Cooper to become Connexional (national) Ecumenical Officer: he, with Ruth and Seraphina, will stay living in the same house and the connexion will be helping us to purchase a different local manse. We hope to have a new minister join us in September this year, but please keep this process in your prayers. Steven will finish 29 April 2024, and he is on a long-awaited sabbatical in the meantime. Pray for him and for the church as we bless him on his way.

And may I again give personal thanks for the outpouring of love and support as I have returned to work after the death of my husband, Bishop Keith Riglin, in the autumn. Many of us are acquainted with grief, and it has been a comfort to have this community's prayers and help as we work together. This next season will no doubt bring many blessings: as ever we know that God is faithful.

Best, Jen

Wanted: Articles for WoW

We are always on the lookout for interesting articles for Window on Wesley's. If this is something that interests you and you think you would like to submit an article, poem, prayer or item of interest for the magazine please email it to: manager@wesleyschapel.org.uk



I was listening to the late Cuban musician Compay Segundo and his group Buena Vista Social Club's "Chan Chan" on YouTube and I fell in love with it after my colleague introduced them to me.

I was so inspired by Compay's song "Chan Chan", which he wrote and I decided to write my own version called "Wesley's Chapel Is Where I got to Be"

Wesley's Chapel is where I got to be With my friends, It is where I really need to be (X3)

Here the ministers, Jen and Steven Looking fresh in their black cassocks Preaching sermons from the pulpit They are friends to everybody.

Wesley's Chapel is where I got to be With my friends, It is where I really need to be (X2)

When The Maestro plays the organ I can't help but stop and listen Vox Humana and the Tromba Can't resist the urge for singing.

Wesley's Chapel is where I got to be With my friends, It is where I really need to be (X2)

Come and see the congregation
All of them are my good buddies
They are all from every nation
Singing the hymns of dear Charles Wesley.

(INSTRUMENTAL SECTION)

Wesley's Chapel is where I got to be With my friends, It is where I really need to be (X8)

John Showmemimo: Church Member

A prayer for LGBT+ History Month 2024

As we celebrate LGBT+ History Month this February, Pam Gold, coordinator for the Methodist LGBT+ Solidarity Circle shares this prayer with us.

Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

We praise you creator God for creating all in your image, an image of pure love.

God of love, we pray for your forgiveness where we have fallen short of your call to mirror your love to others.

God of Love, as we prepare to celebrate LGBT History Month we hold before you those who bear the scars of rejection, isolation, and feelings of unworthiness.

We pray for your healing touch.

God of Love, we give thanks for all the work undertaken in "God, in love unites us." We give thanks for the courage of those from the LGBT community who have shared their stories, their lives, and their ministries within the Church.

We give thanks for those who have been open to change as the Church took the journey of discovery, culminating in the decision to be fully inclusive. We give you thanks for the grace shown by all.

God of love, we pray for the continuing work of the Church as we encourage all to fully embrace the diversity of our siblings.

God of all God for all God within all. We praise you. Amen

'ONLY IN THEE I HAVE ALL'

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH LENT WITH JULIAN OF NORWICH



A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS ON SATURDAY MORNINGS (10AM COFFEE, 10.30-11.30AM DISCUSSION), CULMINATING IN A DAY'S PILGRIMAGE TO JULIAN'S OWN CHURCH IN NORWICH.

17TH FEBRUARY, 10AM: 'JULIAN AND PRAYER'

JEWIN WELSH CHURCH (70 FANN ST, EC1Y OSA)

24TH FEBRUARY, 10AM: 'JULIAN AND SELF-DENIAL' WESLEY'S CHAPEL, (49 CITY RD, EC1Y 1AU)

2ND MARCH, 10AM: 'JULIAN AND CHARITY' ST GILES', CRIPPLEGATE (EC2Y 8DA)

9TH MARCH: PILGRIMAGE TO THE JULIAN SHRINE, NORWICH.

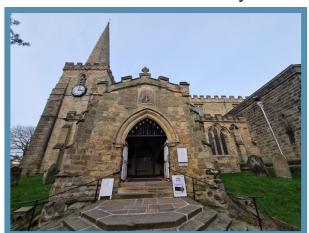
FOR MORE DETAILS, CONTACT FR EDWIN WILTON-MORGAN:
ASSISTANTPRIEST@STGILESCHURCH.COM

There's always a story

When Midwives in the 17th Century wished to petition the King for permission to establish a training college for midwives, they used the book of Exodus 1:15-22 to explain God was on their side!

There is always something in the Bible and the history of the church for the occasion. You just have to look for it.

I was reminded of this by the Medieval wall paintings in



Pickering's Church, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul.

In a part of the world where once the Vikings reigned, there was depicted, at the end of the nave closest to the Altar, the Martyrdom of St Edmund in 869AD...who was killed by the Vikings after refusing to give up

the Christian Faith. It has been suggested the painting marked 600 years of his martyrdom. He was King of East Anglia (this was before England was one country) and at one time he and Edward the Confessor were England's Patron Saints.

Whether it was painted as a patriotic loyalty sign, or a reminder that Vikings weren't nice people and THOSE WERE YOUR ANCESTORS Sigurd, you really shouldn't be so proud of them; to some unfortunate member of the congregation isn't something we could know now.

St Catherine is shown with her whole story depicted in a sort of cartoon strip. She converted hundreds to Christianity, and so

when the Emperor started a persecution she went and rebuked him! She debated the Roman Emperor Maxentius, his Empress and Philosophers. She won the debate, but those who converted during it were put to death at once. She also refused an offer of marriage saying she was happy to dedicate her life to Christ, thank you very much! For Catherine there was then torture, then prison. Even here she converted people, including the Empress who'd come to visit her. That got the Empress killed for her trouble.

The less-than-impressed Emperor, after having his wife killed, ordered Catherine put to death on a spiked wheel. At her touch, it shattered. Finally she was beheaded, and this she ordered herself to begin.

Or so the story goes.

Catherine's story may be a bit muddled and conflate several victims of Roman Imperial persecution, Maxentius ruled Italy and North Africa only during the "Tetrachy", and was beaten by Constantine at the famed battle of the Milvian Bridge, when Constantine had his army adorn their shields with the Chi-Rho, an early Christian symbol, after a vision from God. He won the battle which was on the edge of Rome, and Constantine went on to convert himself to Christianity. He had first been acclaimed Emperor at York, a few miles from Pickering, though he would go on to make a new capital at Constantinople, in the much warmer climate of the Bosphorus...but I've gone into another story now!

All of these stories are "we think that's what happened..." but working out the exact events of troubled times is hard enough now, never mind centuries ago.

The final paintings in the sequence are much safer ground, they show Christ's Passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. Christ is also shown popping to hell to free people from there, a common belief in the middle ages was that that's what Jesus was

up to on Easter Saturday. This is based on a couple of passages in 1 Peter 2:18-19 and 1 Peter 4:6, and a tradition that rather elaborated on this. The idea of giving Christ a moment's peace after the rest of Holy Week wasn't considered by many medieval theologians...

These were of course used to teach people some of the stories of the faith. In an age without universal literacy the people needed something visual. Inevitably we might then look about our own dear beloved Wesley's Chapel. We can see Mr Wesley preaching in some of the windows. In others, Christ's story is depicted. Some things don't change that much!

We tend not to use our stained glass for teaching on a Sunday, but we certainly do have pictures in the children's bibles in the Crèche Corner. We tell the children of the Wesleys too, with Wesley's life in several colouring pages always available in the drawers. No doubt many of us tell stories of the saints we may even have known personally too.

There is always a story to suit the occasion. Christ make great use of parables to get His point across. Ever since, we have not only retold them, but added to them. Sometimes with history (well-remembered like the Wesleys, or more vaguely recorded like Catherine) sometimes with updated parables (those of a certain age may remember "The parable of the punk rocker").

When we are young, we are told sometimes "the moral of the story is..." – but we'll keep on telling stories with morals all our lives. Until one day, we become a story ourselves. Be warned though, if the ending isn't Martyrdom, you might live to hear them!

Thomas Smith - Leysian Missioner



Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

We were delighted to host the annual local service of Prayer for Christian Unity on Thursday 18 January! Fr Edwin Wilton-Morgan - Assistant Priest, St Giles' Cripplegate, gave the following homily, worth reading. Pray for our continued working together, and mutual flourishing.

Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 13; Luke 10.25-37

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

During last year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, two things happened to me in quick succession.

The first was a complete lack of charity on my part: after a service of Evensong at the cathedral where I worked, a rather militant visitor came up to me, said what a beautiful service it was, and what a pity it was that 'you Anglicans' were so rubbish at ecumenical dialogue. I wasn't quite sure how to respond to this, so I made some non-committal pastoral noises. Then she got a bit louder and complained that 'you Anglicans' had shut the door on unification with her particular denomination because of various stupid decisions that we had made, which she recounted at length rather aggressively. I was a little annoyed by this and slightly archly suggested that, given that dialogue went both ways, perhaps the door had in some way also been shut from the other side. This was a foolish thing to say, and it was met with her bellowing 'ONLY BECAUSE YOU SHUT IT FIRST.' I retired to the vestry feeling rather cross, and convinced of the undesirability of unity with that particular Christian.

The second event happened to me only a few days later. I had spent a few days on a placement in a primary school, and on my final day I was escorting a little girl to the school gates to be collected by her parents. En route, she said, 'You know, Father Edwin, some kids here are not very nice to each other because of their religion. They say that they're wrong or that their religion is

mythical. That's not very kind. Like I'm a Muslim, and you're a Christian. It doesn't matter what you believe or who's right, we should treat each other with respect and love.' As I watched her run off to her parents, I thought back to how little respect and love that Christian lady and I had shown each other, and how a nine-year-old Muslim girl understood Christian charity better than I. Out of the mouths of babes.

When it comes to the business of Christian unity, I think it can be so tempting to look in the wrong direction. Because disunity is a human problem, we see it must consequently have a human solution. And so, rather than looking to Christ, we look at each other. We look at each other and think 'I'm like this and you're like that so one of must be wrong; either I need to become like you or more likely you need to become like me.'

This, of course, is where that lady and I both went wrong, each side blaming the other for the problem of disunity without seeing the irony. Perceiving that there's no division in the Body of Christ, it can be tempting to think that the distinctions between believers are something to be regretted, and to be conquered. In other words, the temptation is to conflate unity with uniformity.

In a few moments' time, we'll hear that great hymn to love from 1 Corinthians 13, a hymn that's written with some urgency to a greatly divided Christian community, where even the celebration of the Eucharist has become a point of division between the rich and the poor.

Yet, as we hear in the chapter before this, chapter 12, St Paul's advice is not to homogenise this community, not to sweep aside individuality, but to celebrate the diversity of the members of the Body of Christ. 'As it is,' he says, 'God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be?' It is precisely in your diversity, he is saying, that you form the Body of Christ. Each of you individuals is individually loved, and so joined to one another and to Christ, the head. Stop looking at each other, and look at

Christ. Or to change the image slightly, the Church Fathers gave us the example of a spoked wheel.

Each of us spokes might feel the division between us and our neighbouring spokes, and forget to look at the centre of the wheel, which is Christ. And a wheel with only one spoke is a fairly rubbish wheel. St Paul tells us, diversity does not mean division.

I think the risks of confusing unity and uniformity are manifold. First, it can lead to a bitter and cynical faith. If we proudly take on the task of uniting Christ's Church ourselves, without bringing him into the conversation, if we hang our entire faith solely on the necessity of singular church polity, then we will inevitably be defeated. 'See how these Christians love one another' we might say bitterly, forgetting that love does not mean agreement. And second, an absolute insistence on uniformity leads, as St Paul knew, to a church that belongs to the powerful, with no room for the marginalised or dissenting. 'The members of the body that seem to be weaker,' he says, 'are indispensable.' The strength of the Body depends on its diversity. A uniform church, a church that insists upon a doctrinal, ecclesial and liturgical monoculture, is one that forgets that Christ came to us as an outsider, a dissenting voice, a weak member.

I think something of this sits at the heart of Christ's Parable of the Good Samaritan, around which much of our service today is shaped. Christ deliberately chooses a Samaritan for his story, someone from a different cult, whose beliefs would have been deemed wrong by Jesus' audience. And he does so primarily to remind his followers that true neighbourliness, true Christlikeness is not about the doctrinal uniformity of mind, but about a deeper charitable unity of heart. And, secondly, to remind his listeners that God's love and will and activity are often most chiefly known in those society and institutions may wish to 'other' or to silence. Christ's command to 'go and do likewise' I think challenges us to a more generous understanding of love and unity, one that doesn't trample and squish and conform others, but one in which disagreement can in fact deepen our love and our unity.

One of my favourite passages in Scripture comes earlier in Luke's Gospel, when Christ stands up in the synagogue and reads from the scroll. In that moment, when he reads that great prophecy of Isaiah, when he tells the gathered congregation about the proclamation of good news to the poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed, when with the eyes of all upon him he says, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing,' he declares the manifesto of the new community he is establishing in himself. A community in which all are welcome, a community composed of the strong and the weak, a community that is broad enough to encompass differences in belief, allegiance and practice, a community of many members, but one head.

This is the Church, expressing itself in a myriad of ways, places, and institutions, but made one in Christ, in whom we now live and move and have our being. The quest for unity is as simple, and as challenging, as looking to Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faltering faith.

'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.' We are the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church: diverse, but united. Amen.

Watch the service here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=msE1rO-Ct_I

The Inclusive Language Guide

We are proud of our <u>Inclusive Language Guide</u>. This helps the Church hold conversations without making assumptions or inadvertently causing upset.

In her blog, the Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Michaela Youngson, explains why words are important and how the guide affirms traditional terms such as husband and wife while allowing people to express themselves using the language that is right for them.

Words in general are powerful and important and, of course, human language is changing all the time. The Methodist Church, as part of our calling to be an inclusive Church, is paying attention to the language that we use and is encouraging everyone to be careful in the words used when we are talking with and about people. We should never use offensive, racist, sexist or homophobic language but also part of loving our neighbor is to consider how they might want to be addressed or described.

Those in the life of the Church who help prepare people for special events such as baptisms, funerals and marriages will want to use language that is inclusive and reflects for those involved the language that they would choose to use for themselves. So, as well as traditional language such as 'husband and wife' it might be appropriate to use words such as 'partner' or 'spouse'. This is not a discarding of particular terms but an opening up of our language in a way that reflects the gracious and inclusive nature of God's love.

As the world's understanding of each person's identity changes, the Church is learning more about what it means to be created in God's image – our language about God is limited by our human understanding – as that understanding grows, so does our knowledge of the God who created us. In our guide to inclusive language we offer practical advice about how our language might be used in ways that do not exclude people, whatever their identity. We are called to love in the way that Christ loves, recognising, as St Paul's Letter to the Galatians, that in Christ Jesus we are all children of God in faith.

https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/31380/ilg-designed-update-december-2023.pdf



A statement in support for King Charles after the announcement of his cancer diagnosis

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton, and the Vice President, Deacon Kerry Scarlett, share their support for King Charles after the announcement of his cancer diagnosis:

"On behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain, we offer our thoughts and prayers for King Charles and his family after he was diagnosed with cancer. We appreciate his openness and willingness to share news of his health and hope that it will encourage more people to attend routine screening and health checks when invited by their GP surgery."

As we have just marked World Cancer Day (4 February 2024), we are also praying for everyone who has just been diagnosed or is suffering from a life-changing illness, their families and everyone working for the NHS who helps and cares for patients."



Supporting those in need on Church Action on Poverty Sunday

This year Church Action on Poverty Sunday is on 11th February, when Christians around the country are urged to remember those in real need.

Perhaps one of the most serious impacts of poverty is the dire state of homelessness. The numbers are staggering. More than 300,000 people are homeless in the UK; 119 families in England are made homeless every single day; and 140,000 children are currently without a home. The figures are the highest on record.

When you picture a homeless person, he or she will probably be a rough sleeper; but rough sleeping is only one manifestation of homelessness, and not the most frequent one.

Homelessness ranges from living on the streets, to living in emergency accommodation, in women's shelters, and in other temporary accommodation.

Homelessness is not always a visible problem. But the cost-ofliving crisis, record rents hikes, stretched local services and withdrawal of emergency Covid measures have led to more people falling into desperate positions than ever before this past year.

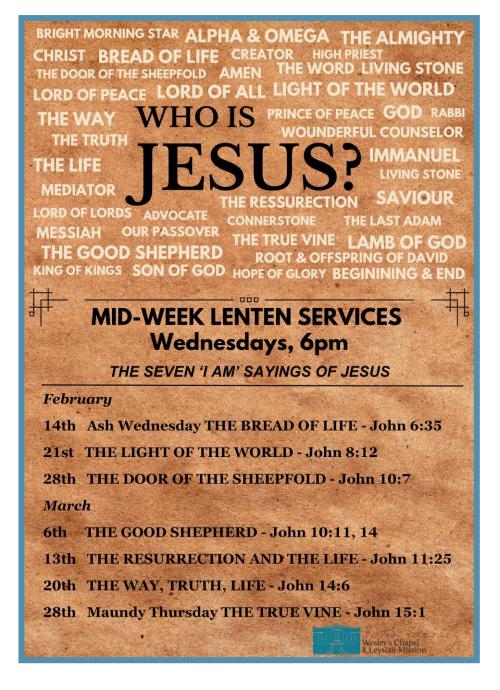
Green Pastures is one organisation who is working to enable Christians to make a difference. It has been housing the homeless for 25 years, and it exists to help Christians do their bit to tackle the growing homelessness crisis.

Green Pastures has grown to now house more than 1500 formerly homeless people across the UK, in more than 100 towns and cities. To fund property purchases, Green Pastures has raised more than £47 million in funding, through everyday people who lend them some of their savings and receive interest in return. This model enables the organisation to buy property and

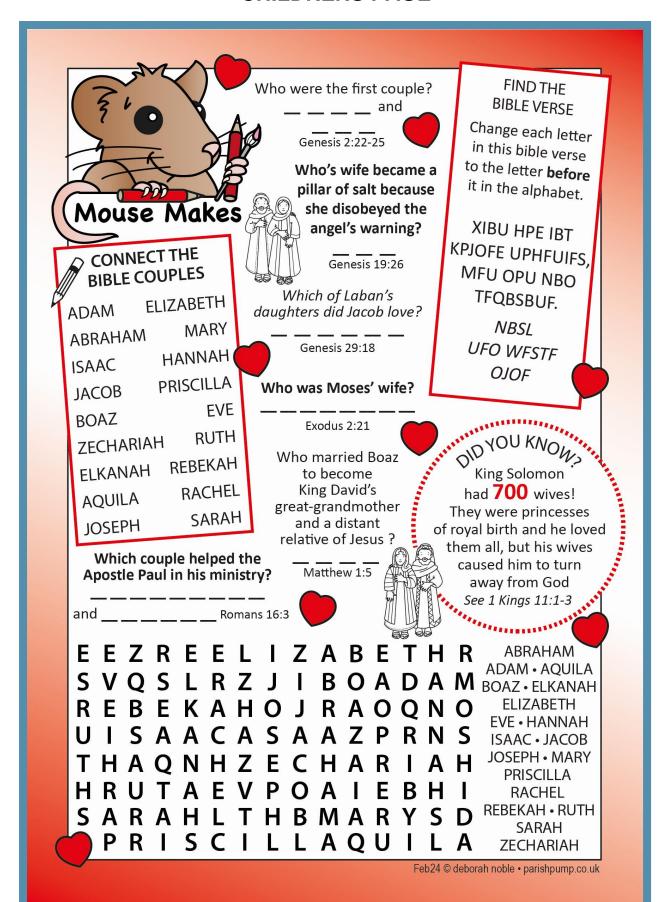
work in partnership with local ministries to directly impact the lives of people in need.

For those facing homelessness, it starts with the life change of a safe and secure home. Tenants are also offered compassionate wraparound support, pathways towards recovery and independence, and the opportunity to know Christ for themselves.

With many more people in need waiting for help, this month is a great time to consider how the Church can make a significant impact. You can find out more about Green Pastures' work, and how you might get involved, at https://www.greenpastures.co.uk



CHILDRENS PAGE



Worship at Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission

Monday – Saturday

10.00am Morning Prayer from the Methodist Worship Book

Wednesday

12.45pm Service of Holy Communion

Sunday

9.45am Service of Holy Communion (except first Sunday of the month)

11.00am Morning Worship

7.00pm Service in the style of Taize (first Sunday of the month)

All services except the Wednesday Lunchtime Communion Service are also live streamed

(<u>www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming</u>) and remain viewable afterwards at: <u>www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/previous-services</u>

Worship via Phone

You can also share in most of our services by telephone. Call 020 3880 0873 just before they begin and, when instructed, enter the following 'Conference ID' number on your 'phone keypad: 135 491 69 followed by #. You will hear the person leading, and you will be able to share with all others who are on the line in saying the responses together—or simply listening if you prefer. If you are willing and able to mute your end of the call this will increase the quality of audio for those using this function by reducing background noise.

We also have a dedicated email address for prayer requests which will be received directly by our ministers Jen and Steven, and will be prayed during the course of the Daily Morning Prayer service. Please send all prayer requests to: prayer@wesleyschapel.org.uk

