



Newsletter from the Bury St Edmunds Circuit
for Sunday 13th September 2020

Dear Friends,

At the start of this new Methodist Connexional year, my mind has been drawn to some other 'New Year' words, words used by King George VI on New Year's Day 1939:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.
And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

These words, from a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins entitled 'God knows' seem to resonate with us at this time as much as they did when used by the king in 1939.

As restrictions lift and we return to life, worship and routine in the 'new normal', there is a sense of relief that some level of daily life is being resumed. However things remain very different, face masks and distancing are the order of the day and there are many things which are still 'on hold'. We don't know what the future will be and the temptation is either to remain withdrawn at home where we feel safe or to fling caution to the winds and jump into everything that we can to make up for the last few months of isolation. We feel uncertain and we would like a light so show us the right way forward, much as the writer of the poem desires.

However, like the writer of the poem, we are offered something better. We cannot know what is to come, but we can know that whatever we face, God will face it with us and will carry us through, just as he has done for his people from the time Abraham set out from Hara.

So, as we venture out into the 'new normal', we remember Jesus' words to his disciples at the end of Matthew's Gospel; "Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
God bless.

Ruth, Rita and Debbie

Harvest Festival

Since Lockdown began we have shared the same service across the circuit and we will be doing the same for Harvest this year. We will celebrate Harvest on 4th October and will be using material from All We Can. This year instead of collecting goods we would ask you to make donations to All We Can – further details will follow.

Sunday Worship

A Circuit video recording of the Sunday Worship can be found at <http://trinitymethodistchurch.org.uk/summer2020.htm>

Zoom Sunday Worship: You are welcome to join Zoom Worship on a Sunday morning with Rev Debbie Borda or Rev Rita Carr. If you would like to join in worship in this way then please contact either of them and they will give you details of how to join a zoom meeting.

GDPR and new directories: many of you have completed the forms over the past 18 months. Now is the time of year to print new Directories – if any of your details have changed since you completed the form please let me know by 13th September

Thought for the day from Rev Vaughan Tong

New Beginnings? Yesterday should have been my first pay day as a Methodist Minister fifty-five years ago, but it wasn't! In those days ministers were paid every three months and it had to last, but in the Circuit to which we had gone they didn't pay of the first day of the Quarter but at the Circuit Meeting which was sometimes as much as three weeks later. It was, we were told, to save the Circuit Stewards the cost of a stamp! How things have changed and thank God that they have, but we still have a long way to go.

September is a time of new beginnings, especially in the life of the Church. In normal times we move from the "silly season" of July and August into the start of what we call the "Connexional Year". New ministers arrive in Circuits and new beginnings are shared by Church members and ministers alike. Meetings start up. The pace quickens as the Church wakes up to face another year.

But it's all going to be very strange this year. Things won't happen as they used to do. Some things will be the same and others will be strange. And the Church which will emerge from these strange times will not be the same as the Church that went down into lockdown.

So how are we going to cope? Yesterday Matt Stammers wrote of the PPE of God which we will need if we are to be faithful to our calling. Perhaps we need to remember that we as Christians are called to be the pilgrim people of God who are always called to follow him into the unknown. And perhaps we need to remember, even more, that God has never let his people down.

And so, I want to finish with the words of a hymn we all know, written by Joseph Addison and then a prayer sent out yesterday by Revd Jonathan Hustler, the Secretary of Conference, to help the Methodist people at the start of this year.

First, Joseph Addison's words of praise to the God who never lets us down:

When all thy mercies, O my God,
my rising soul surveys,
transported by the view,
I'm lost in wonder, love and praise.

And the prayer written by Jonathan Hustler and based on verse in Nehemiah:

"Gracious and compassionate God, who guided your people by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, bless and accompany, we pray, your covenant people, that in uncertain times we may witness to your love, perform to your holy will, and depend on your great faithfulness, In Christ our Lord.
Amen."

Every blessing, Vaughan

And from Dr Barbara Chipperfield

A Rainbow Covenant

We see a lot of rainbows, largely created by children, at the moment. I wonder how many of those who make them know that in the Bible the rainbow is a sign of a covenant between God and all living things.

God said, "for all generations to come, this is the sign which I am giving of the covenant between myself and you and all living creatures with you: my bow I set in the clouds to be a sign of the covenant between myself and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds. Genesis 9; 12-14.

Methodists remind themselves of our individual covenant with God in the Covenant Service, which John Wesley developed from a Puritan service. Many Churches are now holding their annual Covenant Service in September rather than in January. September is the start of the Methodist New Year-the time when ministers move and the new financial year. The weather is usually better in September than in January!

As a New Year Celebration we could join at this time of year and say:

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you;
let me have all things, let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant now made in earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

The last year has brought more suffering and being laid aside than we expected, and I have found being laid aside very difficult to accept, but in Charles Wesley's words:

His providence has brought us through another various year we all
with prayers and anthems new before our God appear
Our lips and lives shall gladly show the wonders of thy love
while on in Jesus' steps we go to see thy face above
Singing the Faith 127 HAPPY NEW YEAR Barbara Chipperfield