

Wesley Memorial *news*

The magazine from Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford | Spring 2019



Mary meets the Risen Lord in the garden

John 20 vv 14-18

Upside-down world

The Manse, Upland Park Road, Oxford

Dear Friends

The theme chosen for this issue of Wesley Memorial News, 'upside-down world', may seem so self-evident and incontrovertible that further comment upon it is superfluous. After all, we live in a world where the richest twenty six people own as much as the poorest fifty per cent of the globe's entire population (read that again: it's hard to take in, isn't it!), and where uncomfortable realities, like global warming, can be branded as 'fake news' and then ignored. Honesty, integrity, commitment and self-sacrifice seem to be unfashionable, and even compassion and grieving are monetarised by the social media platforms. So, all in all, the world does seem to be topsy-turvy.

But the reason for choosing this theme wasn't to pronounce a jeremiad on modern society, but rather to offer a message of hope. When Paul and Silas brought the Good News of Jesus to Thessalonica, they provoked a riot. People accused them of 'turning the world upside down' (Acts 17, verse 6). Why was this? Let me suggest that it was partly to do with the contents of their message, and partly to do with its consequences.

The contents of the message are given in a very condensed form in Acts 17:3. There we read that the apostles spoke of the suffering of the Messiah, of his resurrection, and of the identification of the Messiah with Jesus. In other words, Paul and Silas spelled out that God's plan to forgive, heal and re-make the world was focussed in Jesus of Nazareth, a man recently executed for blasphemy and sedition. Even worse, they argued that the crucifixion of Jesus was part of God's way of putting the world right. And they affirmed that this amazing claim had been vindicated by Jesus' rising again on the third day. As Paul cheerfully admits to the Corinthians, this message of a crucified Messiah was a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23), but to those whom God has called, it is both the power and the wisdom of God. The Gospel, encapsulated in the story of Holy Week and Easter, stands the world's assumptions and expectations on their head. God is revealed not in status and power and worldly success, but in humility and self-giving love. Coercion and injustice do not have the last word. Even death is not the end. This message is startling, radical, unsettling. Surely it turns the world upside-down.

And the consequences of the Gospel are no less subversive. The authorities, religious and secular, who worked together to kill Jesus, are shown to be in league against God. The Christian claim that 'Jesus is Lord' (1 Corinthians 12:3) challenges the lordship of Caesar, the cement binding the disparate regions, religions and ethnicities of the Roman Empire. In Christ, argued the first Christians, distinctions of race, gender and social status take second place, so that there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female (Galatians 3:28). Moreover, the Good News that people are reconciled to God through trusting in God's welcoming love undercuts systems built on moral behaviour and respectability. A truly dangerous message!

Taking the Gospel seriously, for ourselves, our church and our society, turns the world upside-down. Many will share the Thessalonians' alarm, and we shouldn't be surprised if and when people find our faith and our proclamation hard to take. But this is the Good News we have to offer. And, given the state of our topsy-turvy world, can we doubt that it is needed?

Yours in Christ,

Martin Wellings

Editorial

Faced with an unequal and unfair world, do you hope for change? Alternatively, are you longing for respite in a world full of troubles, uncertainty and grief?

Well, welcome to the Spring issue of Wesley Memorial News, full of reflections on both possibilities. There are personal accounts of ministry amid change and challenge; stories of notable women who forged roles for themselves in Methodism in Oxford in the early part of the 20th century; and an introduction to books published by missionaries on the other side of the world over 100 years ago. There's also a

look back at the success of the *Jubilee 2000* campaign and a look forward to the changed planet our next generation expects to see in ten years' time.

As we near Holy Week and Easter, we remember a world turned upside down in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. His radical message — the good news of everlasting life and love for all — may help provide relief from suffering in a turbulent world; or challenge us to work towards a more just world.

A Happy Easter from
the Wesley Memorial News team.

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Verdant

Everyone needs a green space to look at -
This is the policy I heard the other day.
In the inner city
Rather than knives and gangs
A flash of emerald
Would strike home to the heart,
Stabbing it with beauty
And replacing rivalry and violence.
A glimpse of blossom pink or white
Would offer a new skin
To the bruised and lonely,
A single flower opening
Might be enough
To overcome the closure of hope.

But not only there
Are excellent and lovely vistas needed -
Wherever there is the jungle,
Be it concrete or metaphorical,
The invitation to the garden
Must be spoken
Graciously, lovingly,
And on the Gardener's behalf.
And the green hill far away
Of which we used to sing at primary school
Would be brought close,
As close to us as breathing.

Joanna Tulloch

If I could change one thing, I'd...

... create green spaces for everyone.

...ban buying houses for investment.

...make every product repairable and recyclable.

... give everyone in the world free health care.

...demand tighter control over the Internet.

... provide clean energy immediately.

... demand reform of economic systems so that growth does not depend on endless expansion.

... ask for a change of heart on taxation, and fairer taxing of huge companies.

Christian Aid Staff, Oxford Office

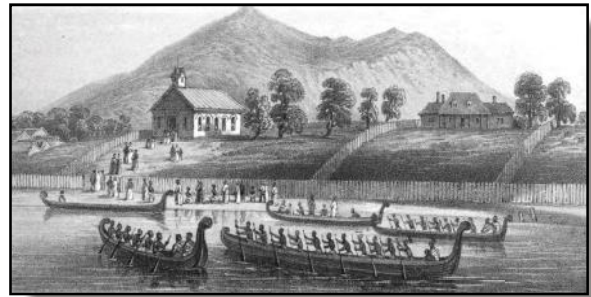
A matter of perspective

In the last issue, Merita wrote about the contemporary carol “upside-down Christmas”, a carol I’m very familiar with coming from that side of the world myself. For me it is not New Zealand which is Upside-Down, but the UK – it’s all a matter of perspective.

I’ve travelled far from home, to the other side of the world to pursue doctoral research but my travels pale in comparison with those of my research subjects: the numerous men and women who spread out across the globe as missionaries in the 19th century. I’m studying towards a PhD at the University of Canterbury, NZ, currently with the title: ‘Children, Race and Gender in 19th Century British Protestant Missionary Movements.’ Essentially, I’m studying the ideas about race and gender that were communicated through mission literature to British children between c1830 and 1910. I came to Oxford in September 2017 as the Wakefield Scholar at Christ Church and I found my year in Oxford so interesting and helpful for my research that I’ve stayed on!

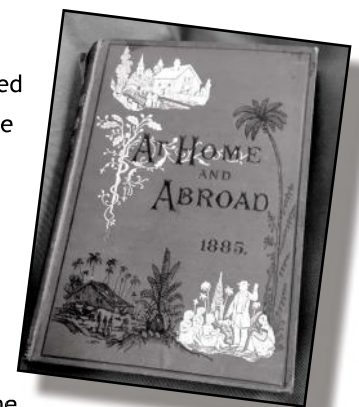
Everyone has a story of how they discovered their research topic – like a true Kiwi, mine involves rugby. I studied for my MA at Queen’s University Belfast in Northern Ireland, and while I was there I played in a brass band. One of our regular performances was at Kingspan Stadium entertaining the crowds during Ulster Rugby home games. On one such occasion our tenor horn player, Deborah, asked me if I could help her out at a Christian Aid conference she was running the following weekend. I said ‘Yes’, and found myself spending a day hearing amazing stories of mission work and discovering a network of people working to spread the Gospel that I hadn’t known much about previously. As a history student, I immediately questioned how it was that Northern Ireland with its relatively small population, seemed to have such large numbers of mission organisations and supporters. I researched the history of Northern Ireland mission movements (while I should have been writing an essay on the Qumran Community...) and was hooked! I wrote my MA thesis on Irish Presbyterian Women’s experiences of mission work and discovered a vast number of sources written for children. I searched in vain through libraries and archives for work specifically on children and mission, and upon discovering very little, I decided that this should be rectified at once, and embarked on a PhD!

I find the mission literature written for children fascinating.



Wesleyan Mission-Station at Waingaroa, New Zealand

It was certainly arresting at first to read descriptions of other parts of the world in what we would now consider racist language, with an incredibly patronising tone, but between the lines I could see a belief system quite liberal and modern in its outlook. These missionaries were motivated to travel to relatively inaccessible places across the globe, spreading the Gospel message because they truly believed in that verse from Mark: ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation.’ Mission literature displays a very real belief in the potential redemption of all souls. At a time when racial distinctions were rife and categorisations based on race were deemed to be scientific fact, these missionaries preached the idea that no matter a person’s race, culture or skin tone, they were all loved by God and could be saved through the knowledge of His word. While the language used is questionable, to the extent that I need disclaimers in my thesis and conference presentations, and while I acknowledge that mission work was intrinsically linked to Imperialism and that the effects of this are complicated, I love being able to delve into writing from 100-150 years ago that demonstrates that so many people were committed to spreading the redeeming power of God’s love to those who knew it not, and sparking tiny, individual revolutions in people’s lives through the hope that the Resurrection offers.



Above: Cover of the MMS annual ‘At Home and Abroad’ 1885

Alannah Jeune

“Don’t get too set in your ways”

At my first Welcome Service twenty years ago as a new probationer minister, the then Chair of the Southampton District, Revd Tom Stuckey, spoke in his address of the hope that I was beginning to feel settled in my new appointment, but that I should not feel too settled! He went on to say that ministry within the Methodist Church was tied to a calling to itinerant ministry, i.e. one in which a commitment to move at the direction of the church was part of that call. Hence his words that, as a minister, one should never feel too settled in any one place.

Those words have stayed with me during ministry which has taken my wife Angela and me to three different Circuits and four different Districts (work that one out!), before arriving in Oxford last summer.

Some of you will know that in this latest appointment there has been a sense of returning home. Having grown up locally, I moved away to University in Scotland where Angela and I met, before returning to study for a PGCE at Westminster College. We were then married, and began our married lives in a village the other side of Abingdon. After that, we moved to different locations for further training and then my work within education. As a result, our children grew up in Newcastle, Peterborough and Guernsey before my first ministerial appointment took us to Hampshire. Returning here is, therefore, coming back to somewhere which is as much ‘home’ as anywhere can be for a fairly nomadic couple.

With these things in mind, I am conscious of the theme of this edition of the Wesley Memorial News. Whilst ministry has certainly brought change and challenge as well as joy and fulfillment, it would be too strong to say that the call to ministry and the travelling that ensued turned my world, or Angela’s world, upside-down. Even our three children seem to have survived relatively unscathed, although they might say differently!

Responding to an upside-down world is, however, part of the Christian calling for all disciples. Most of us, at times,

can feel as if our worlds are turned on their heads.

Through illness or bereavement, through redundancy or eviction, a world which was stable and predictable can very suddenly find itself over-turned with no discernible way forward. These experiences may be ours at particular moments of life, and the accompanying care and love of others matters hugely at such times. Thus the quiet day-by-day pastoral love shown within our churches is so important.

Stephen and Angela



In the different places where I have been stationed, I can also reflect upon the loving action of the Church being demonstrated within charities and institutions. I think, for example, of a colleague’s chaplaincy in an immigration removal-centre in Hampshire, volunteers in a night-shelter in Hastings, and the establishment of food banks in Greenwich during my last appointment. In each of these, as in similar examples present in Oxford, the Church has played a significant part. Indeed, I might want to say that the Church has shown itself to be at its best when it hears Christ’s call to care for those whose worlds have been turned on their heads.

Tom Stuckey was, of course, correct in advising me to not feel too settled in ministry, and we have been fortunate in enjoying moving from place to place, and benefitting from the security as well as the challenges of itinerant ministry.

Such journeying has brought with it the joys of experiencing different congregations in different places, and the privilege of seeing the Church in active ministry as love and care is shown for others whose worlds have been turned upside-down.

Stephen Maunder

In the steps of Susanna Wesley

2019 is the 350th anniversary of the birth of Susanna Annesley, better known as Susanna Wesley, mother of John and Charles. Although ultimately fruitless, it is legitimate to ponder the legacy of the two brothers had Susanna been a very different sort of person. Undeniably her personal piety and domestic regime profoundly influenced all her children, perhaps most clearly her favoured son John.

This anniversary gives us the opportunity to look back at our own church's history and to think about the influence of women both in the life of the church and in the wider world, as well as their role in passing on the faith to succeeding generations. However this is not a straightforward task. Most of the official records were generally written by men and are about men. Reading between the lines and using more anecdotal memories, we are building up colourful threads of stories and biographies, which we intend to weave together into an exhibition later in the year, and add to our new heritage website in time.

In the Centenary Issue of the Wesley Memorial News (1978) Lilian Wood records, "It was probably as early as 1912 that two leading members of Wesley Memorial church, Mrs George Salter and Mrs Genner, realised a need for evangelical work outside the church. They decided to hold weekly women's meetings for members and, specially, non-members drawn from poor housing areas such as St Ebbe's. Both women were of strong Christian faith and their constant house-to-house visits resulted almost at once in well-attended meetings with a religious basis, usually addressed by speakers of a high standard. A great deal of help and advice was given to women in need. These Monday meetings flourished and, at Christmas, parties of about 100 were given high tea."

Who were these women? Alice Eleanor Clifford had married George Salter, the youngest of the three boat-building Salter brothers in 1894.

Their move from Folly Bridge to the more fashionable Banbury Road allowed their daughters to walk to Oxford High School at its newly opened premises just along the road. During the First World War, their house was thrown open in welcome to incoming preachers, undergraduates, men in khaki from all over the British Empire as well as to their extensive extended families. Alfred B. Sackett who had come up to Oxford from Kingswood Methodist School just before the war, married their daughter Dorothy. He later recalled that his in-laws provided open house on Sunday evenings, where members of the Chapel could congregate. He described their home as "a very social centre that linked university with town, opened doors to the magic of the Thames and boats, and enabled Methodist people to foster a network of human contact."

Margaret Jane Fryer's family came from Yorkshire but settled in Bladon at Manor Farm when she was a young child. Margaret gained a BA at the University of London and became a lecturer at Southlands College.



Margaret Fryer BA!

Following her marriage to Ernest Genner (Oriol College) in 1911, she settled in Oxford. She led the Women's Meeting at Wesley Memorial, and the University Women's Society Class, and was on the committee of the local YWCA and the British Women's Temperance Association. After her husband's death she was invited to succeed him on the City's Public Assistance Committee (PAC). The *Oxford Times* (24 November 1933) says, quoting L.R. Phelps, former Provost of Oriol, and chair of the PAC: 'She set herself to learn the work of the committee, and she brought with her a very wide and sympathetic knowledge of large numbers of the poor of the city'.

Another good friend of Margaret's was Mabel Tod (née Byrom). They were not only close neighbours in North Oxford; their husbands were colleagues at Oriel College. Mabel came from a well-to-do Northern family who were known for their public service and success in business. She had been educated at Manchester High School for Girls and Somerville College. Mabel married Marcus Niebuhr Tod, a specialist in Greek Epigraphy in 1909. Their daughter Sheila, was Clare Matthews' mother! The Tods regularly held Open House for Methodist undergraduates at Sunday tea-time.

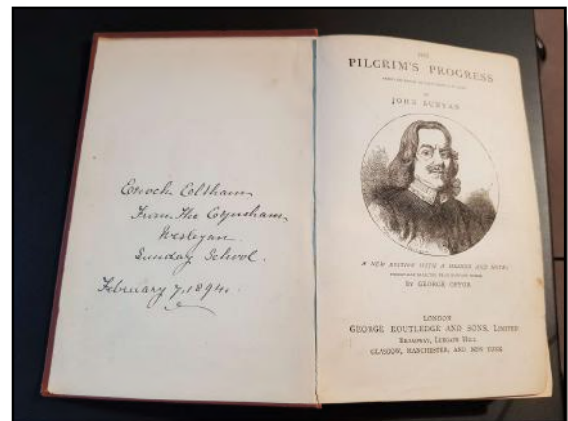
Mabel was also very involved with the Monday afternoon women's meeting and the pastoral care of its members, and for many years ran a weekly evening class for shop assistants and others. In the early 1930s she took over the University class for female undergraduates from Margaret Genner.



Mabel Tod (with thanks to Clare Matthews)

Both Margaret and Mabel's husbands appear on Circuit preaching plans from the 1920s; Genner as a hard-working local preacher and Marcus Tod as a preacher 'from other churches'. Marcus had Scottish/German ancestry, so by amicable agreement with his Methodist wife the family worshipped at St Columba's Presbyterian Chaplaincy in the morning during university term-time and at Wesley Memorial during the vacations. He used to cycle considerable distances to take preaching appointments at far-flung chapels around the Oxford Wesleyan Circuit.

A lone woman, Miss Jessie Eltham, is listed as an accredited local preacher on the Wesleyan Circuit Preaching Plan for Oct 1920 - Jan 1921. Jessie was born in humble circumstances in 1880 at Cogges near Witney. She almost



certainly attended the Wesleyan Sunday School in Eynsham (where we know her brother received a prize for attendance — this inscribed copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*).

Her parents' marriage was probably not legal, her mother still being married to an African, who, she claimed, was dead, when she married Jessie's father. (Jessie had three mixed race older half-brothers as well as several full siblings.) Jessie trained as a Local Preacher in the Banbury Circuit during the First World War. Her recognition service took place in August 1919 shortly before she moved to Henry Road in Oxford. Although Jessie's name is on the list of Oxford Local Preachers she did not actually preach in that quarter. She transferred her membership to the United Methodist Church shortly afterwards and preached in several rural churches in that Circuit before the various Methodist denominations joined together in 1932.

In these four brief sketches we see lives shaped by class, education and social connections. Smaller families or childlessness, domestic help and the limitations for educated women once they married funnelled the energies of extremely capable women into supporting the church's mission and helping those in need. In doing so, they carried on Susanna's legacy of 'mothering' Methodism. Today, women's career horizons are rightly much wider, but the greatest vocation; to love God, each other and to share that love in the world is a calling we all share.

Alison Butler

Turning the world upside-down : Jubilee 2000

As we approached the end of the twentieth century, the word ‘jubilee’ was not often heard. The Queen had had a silver jubilee in 1977, after reigning 25 years. Some people had Silver Jubilee mugs at the back of their cupboard. In Oxford, there was - still is - a Jubilee 77 Community Centre on Blackbird Leys, and a Jubilee Brass band. But it wasn’t a word in common use.

It actually comes from Leviticus 25: “You shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property.”

In that jubilee year, debts are to be wiped out, servants freed, and the land redistributed. It is unclear whether this ever actually happened. But the Bible recognises that human systems go wrong, and need to be corrected every 50 years.

And so ‘jubilee’ was the word that a small group of Christians reached for, as they considered the levels of debt burdening African countries. The year 2000 saw the end of not just 50 years, but of a millennium. African countries were paying, or were unable to pay, greater sums on servicing their debt than on health or education. It was time to turn this world upside-down.

So it was that the Jubilee 2000 coalition got going, housed at Christian Aid and with very strong church leadership and support. It wasn’t easy. Economists argued that debt relief would put off new investors in Africa. The Vice President of the World Bank came to Christian Aid headquarters to tell us it was impossible.

Nevertheless, in 1998, a huge ring of people — including a busload from Wesley Memorial — surrounded a G7 Summit meeting in Birmingham. Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, was there. A week later she came to Oxford, to speak at Queen Elizabeth House. She began, “Last weekend, 50,000 people came to Birmingham to lobby for the cancellation of debt owed by the world’s

poorest people. I was deeply impressed by the commitment and concern of those who came...They didn’t stand in a great chain round the centre of Birmingham because of an ideological belief that debt is bad. They want poverty ended. They want the benefits of debt relief to go to the poor with increased investment in education, health care and the provision of clean water.” Clare Short went on to set out a new strategy proposing to use debt relief to eliminate poverty. There is no doubt that pressure, led by Christians, had its impact. And in a G7 meeting, I heard the Japanese delegate use the word ‘Jubilee’ in its Biblical sense.



Some familiar people setting off for Birmingham in 1998

Debt relief did indeed happen. Debt in sub-Saharan Africa was cut by two-thirds by 2008. Countries were able to increase their health and education spending. On average, Africans are living ten years longer than in 2000.

The world moves on. You may be dismayed that today, several African countries, including Ghana, Mozambique and Zambia, again have debt at very high levels. But we as Christians should not be surprised. In Leviticus, Jubilee is to recur every 50 years, because we humans, and our economic systems, are fallible. Things will again go awry, and once more the world will need to be turned upside down, so that we can start again.

Paul Spray



Rome, the eternal city

“As long as the Colosseum stands so will Rome”. So wrote the Venerable Bede many centuries ago. But, as those of you who have visited the eternal city know, all we have are the ruins of the colossal pleasure dome serving the masses in the glory days of the Roman Empire. And once a year the tables are turned when this pagan pile is reclaimed by the Christians who may or may not have ended their lives there and the Good Friday liturgy is celebrated. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church”.



Tim at Papal Vespers

Luther came to Rome a Catholic and left deeply sceptical about the Papacy and ready to launch a Reformation. Yet he acknowledged the power of the city whose basilicas and churches housed the bones of Peter and Paul, and many of those early Christian Martyrs, drawing thousands of pilgrims to witness to the surviving pull of a faith which death could not overcome. Even when down and out (at least seven major sieges brought the city to its knees — see the excellent book by Matthew Kneale: *Rome: a History in Seven Sackings*), it could rise from the dead, and witness to the enduring power of its place as a religious centre.

To be a Protestant, on the margins of a mostly Catholic city, and a mission partner, representing, as I do, British and World Methodism, is to experience vulnerability and weakness. Yet paradoxically, we feel more ecumenical here than ever we did in Oxford and Cambridge. Surprised as we were to leave Britain at that late stage of our ministry and enter a situation of a different culture in a strange land, it has also been a steep learning curve. The urban environment of a place swamped by tourists (yes, even more so than Oxford and Cambridge combined!) and a

and a haven for displaced persons making the risky crossing to Italy from Asia and North Africa has been a challenge for the five years here. We have become more citizens of the wider world and more hostile to the Fortress Europe and now Fortress UK in this Brexit-era of political uncertainty.

But the ecumenical witness of Protestants and Catholics walking together, working together and praying together, (as Pope Francis reminded his hearers at Geneva last June) in caring for the poor, the homeless and the refugees, in projects like Mediterranean Hope, is testimony to the resurrection power of a religion which though often down is never out, so long as it stands by those whose lives have been turned upside-down. Worshipping at Ponte Sant’Angelo with a congregation which is two thirds African and Asian is to experience Methodism as received through the missionary movement by those who have now find their livelihoods here in Rome with many family members scattered throughout the world.

We have one person attending, a former Muslim from West Africa, who is a homeless migrant now to be received into membership through confirmation. He was baptised by the Orthodox in Greece before he made it to Italy. I asked him in our study together of Mark’s gospel, looking at Jesus’ words about troubles and persecutions, what he thought he most appreciated about the witness of the evangelist. He said that it was the hope of the resurrection that could sustain those who felt their world turned upside-down. His simple faith, even in the midst of present difficulties, is the latest story which stretches back to Peter and Paul and all those Christian martyrs whose lives we commemorate with such thankfulness here in Rome.

Tim Macquiban

*Tim and Angela outside
Ponte Sant’Angelo
Methodist Church*



‘Underground Story’ — creating a New Testament for children aged 9-13

This Oxford based project led by the Revd Brian Brown (and supported by a management team which includes John Cammack and Sue Barratt) is seeking to revolutionise the way in which the Bible is regarded by young people. Instead of seeing the Bible as an historic text, we want them to see it and its message as relevant, up to date and life-changing. But they won't do that unless they have a text which speaks to them in language they can understand and images they relate to. Enter 'Underground Story' with its ambitious aim of engaging 9-13 year olds with the New Testament.

Underground Story is a bold project to deliver a new version of the New Testament, designed to grab the attention of the 9-13 age-group. Its objective is to counter biblical illiteracy so that God's Word may be known to young people from all backgrounds, communicated in a way they can understand.

For a project which has so far had input only from volunteers, an impressive amount has already been achieved. Brian and his team of experts have given more than 14,000 hours of their time and have already developed:

- **A fresh translation of the New Testament** accurate to the original, but tailored to a reading age group of 9-13 years. This translation has been produced by leading New Testament scholars, including James Dunn, Morna Hooker, and Stephen Travis, and has been reviewed and validated by educationalists and clergy (including from this circuit).
- **Six graphic novel concepts**, to be illustrated by two of the UK's leading graphic artists. These novels take an exciting and different approach, incorporating the translation text within an adventure story to increase the engagement of non-biblically literate children. The New Testament has been split into 6 separate sections and the novels drafted such that no story is repeated. The text for the Mark graphic novel is complete, and Luke-Acts, Matthew, John, Letters and Revelation have been drafted.
- **A project to test and trial the translation** of the Gospels in school years 5-8. Phase one of this will make class sets of one Gospel available to schools so that they can use it. Feedback will be sought from both teachers and pupils, meaning that those for whom the translation is intended get

a chance to air their views and to influence the final versions. A second phase of trials will trial the graphic novel concept. Junior Church leaders around this Circuit will take part in these trials.

- Links with Christians from other denominations; with the Bible Society and with academics and educationalists across the country.

The Underground Story team wants to see the complete New Testament translation and all 6 graphic novels published and generally available across the UK and internationally. This will require considerable investment and grant funding as the graphic novels in particular require a level of investment that is unlikely to attract a commercial publisher without further investment.

However, the test phases have tangible outcomes in and of themselves. Every copy which goes into a school means that a relevant translation of the revolutionary and transforming word of God is made available to young people. Every PDF copy shared spreads the message. Every drawing which engages a passer-by means someone engages with the bible who might never otherwise have done so.

With minimal further investment, the digital and other assets already created can also have a life beyond the defined trials. In this digital age not everything has to be published in hard copy.

This is a project which you can be part of — whether through making a donation, trialling the PDF versions, spreading the word among educationalists and other Christians, or volunteering to help out with grant applications, administration or other tasks. It may be a project with a national and international vision, but it was very much born and bred in Oxford, and we'd love it to be the latest of many Oxford-based developments which have revolutionised the world. To know more, to make a donation or to be involved in any way, please contact Sue Barratt, John Cammack or Brian Brown. (Details in Church office.)

Sue Barratt

Tech-savvy teenagers take us into 2029

We might long for a world turned upside-down, or we might fear change that upsets all we hold dear. But what about those to whom the future really belongs? What will their world look like — the society into which they will eventually make their way?

To find out, we asked our young people in Fizzy what they thought the world would be like in 10 years' time.

Ben reckoned he'd be working by then; Eloise and Nicole wanted to be at university. John and Alastair, looking at what was on the table in front of them, hoped jaffa cakes would stay the same.

Technology getting better and better

"It'll be tech heavy," said Ben. "Apps will control our heating, water and whatever." Alastair thought there'd be fewer petrol cars. "We'll have electric cars. That's bad because we wouldn't hear them, but good because it's less petrol - helping stop global warming." John countered that he thought we'd be driving hydrogen cars: "Hydrogen-powered cars don't pollute. They emit water vapour and no carbon dioxide." Eloise liked the idea of phones built into our clothes: "You wouldn't have to get it out to use it." Ben wondered if more technology makes people lazy. Frances believes we'll see lots of advances in health: "Medical cures, like for cancers."

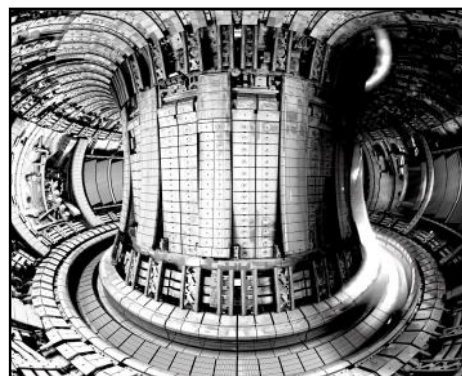
The group generally saw there were up and downsides to technology's increasing presence in our lives. And there needed to be an honesty about the impacts.

"We still won't be on Mars," said Ben with some bitterness, seeing through hyped promises on space travel in the past.

Climate change

"It's going to be hotter because of global warming and climate change," said Frances. "It should stop." Nicole said we needed to "recycle more, save energy, and use much less plastic".

Eloise thought we would have managed to change things so there was much less global warming. "Hopefully," agreed



Nuclear fusion might provide clean energy

Frances. Rowan hoped fusion energy would power the world. "If we don't change, in 100 years there will be no world. Stop killing our world," pleaded Rowan. He thinks technology should be applied for the big issues like this, not things that just make us comfortable.

Frances hoped there would be more progress on equality and that racism would be a thing of the past. "It will happen," thought Rowan, "but not quickly."

In fact, there was a lot to look forward to in their predictions for a changed world in 2029. But among the group's great hopes, there was always a recognition that there are benefits and risks to advances in a complex world. Either way, we can rely on the next generation to be our guides to a topsy-turvy world of the future.

Frances Cruz, Eloise Wood, Nicole Chakanyuka, Ben Ibbotson, Rowan Mitchell, Alastair Phillips and John Phillips



Fizzy hoped the expansion of solar power would slow down climate change

Time & Again — turning the church upside-down!



In our Christmas edition, Clare Matthews promised us a medley of songs and scenes from the shows, “from the sublime to the ridiculous, from lyrical solos to all-singing, all-dancing choruses”, in short, a thoroughly good evening’s entertainment. And so it proved. We began with Moses’ attempts to evade

God’s call in the desert of Midian, and ended at Aldersgate with John Wesley’s experience of *Amazing Love*.

There were so many stunning performances, it would be impossible to list them all, but who can forget the duet *Time to go*, between Moses and Aaron, so beautifully sung by Tom Ibbotson and Chris Butler? And the gospel style *Liberation*, with Ali Tweedie-Wood’s voice soaring high?

We were moved by the lovely story of Ruth, interpreted by Julie Todd, accompanied by daughters-in-law Jenny Ayres and Hilary Phillips / Kath Ridley in the song *Wherever you go*. After the trials of the return to Bethlehem, and the thought-provoking chorus number on women’s work, the *Wedding Song* for Ruth and Boaz was glorious — joyous singing, inspiring trumpet playing by Alannah Jeune, and uplifting organ backing by Josh Ridley.

This led into favourite scenes from *Alternativity*, introduced by Mel McCulloch’s and Hannah Stammers’ moving singing of *Vanity of vanities*. The crackling radio and plyboard ark made welcome return appearances. The patriarch, prophet and kings sang their stories while the chorus excelled in very energetic dancing, until all fell silent at the arrival of Simeon who has ‘seen the Messiah’. Jonathan Todd gave us a splendid *I have waited for the Lord*, and the first half ended fittingly with that song of praise to the God of surprises, *Catch Him if you can*.

The second half began with *Miracle Man*, calling all to “come and see the new Messiah”, and this was followed by another memorable duet, between Jairus and his wife, *Strange to recall*, sung by Mel with Jim Godfrey. The story of the disciples turning away children was enacted in the

song, *Jesus knows us all by name* which gave the children a great moment to display their skills, as they moved around the adults trying to send them packing!

Moving down the centuries in the blink of an eye, we arrive in Assisi where the chorus are now spoiling for a fight with any neighbouring city state; and Francis decides to embrace poverty. *Praise be* was delightfully rendered by Tom with Friars and chorus, and what a visual treat as Brother Sun and Sister Moon moved across the stage! Finally, in this scene, Clare and Francis bid each other a sweet farewell in *Perfect Love*, beautifully sung by Tom Ibbotson and Livi Ridley — and the bush bursts into flower (sometimes).

So on another 500 years to John Wesley and the story of the “brand plucked from the burning”— *Fire! Fire!* Brothers Rowan and Jasper Mitchell ably took on the roles of young John and little Charles, under the watchful eye of father Samuel (Huw Morgan). Jack Godfrey returned as Oglethorpe, the very convincing *Man with a Plan* who would whisk them all across the Atlantic in spite of storms (*Give me a faith*). Finally we return to London for *Lift up your voice*. Charles and John, now reconciled in song, pledge to tell the story of *Amazing Love*, wonderfully sustained by Simeon Mitchell and Tom Ibbotson in his fourth role!

Our congratulations must go to all the teams — production, music, catering, stage-management, lighting. Definitely worth turning the church upside-down! A friend of Christine Spray, after seeing the show, sent us this spontaneous appreciation : “That was a really splendid evening! I thoroughly enjoyed it and was SO impressed with the high standard of singing, .. and loved the frequent touches of humour. But I specially loved the inclusiveness of it, **everybody** had a part to play from the littlest to the oldest...From catchy tunes to soulful ones, from sincere and heartfelt singing to jazzy and tongue twisting numbers, it was altogether hugely enjoyable. The slickness of costume changes and the way the huge cast moved about so smoothly,... was admirable and so ‘pro’. The Narrator was excellent, and the pianist superb — never missed a note, it must have been very demanding!” Very well said!

Kate Dobson

Time & Again Gallery



Time to go, Moses!

Boaz and Ruth



The animals ready to board the Ark!

Jesus knows us all by name!



I've obeyed all the 10 commandments



I'm a Man with a Plan

Laura loved being in the show!

There were eight children and thirty-five adults in the cast so we had a lot of words to learn in the songs and us children stayed up VERY late during the last week of practising and performing.

In some songs, I was singing and some I was doing something else. For instance, in a song called *Treasure in Heaven*, I was a lily of the fields and in another song called *Assisi*, I acted as a cheerleader with some of the other children. We did that sort of thing a few more times in other songs.

One of the songs in the second act was *Jesus Knows us all by Name*. It had two groups singing, the disciples and the children. The children were singing about how Jesus knows everyone and that even children can see Him. But the disciples were pushing them away and saying that Jesus was busy and had no time for them.

The *Time and Again* musical was quite funny at some bits like *Patriarchs*, *Prophets and Kings*. Sometimes it was exciting like when we sang the *Miracle Man* song about Jesus coming. I REALLY enjoyed it!

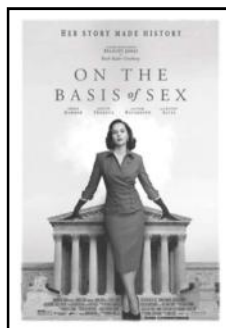
Laura Ibbotson

Films

In January I went to see the documentary film *Three Identical Strangers*, which aired on Channel 4 at the end of February. I hadn't read up on the story beforehand and only knew it was about American triplets. Bobby, David and Eddy were born to a single mum on 12 July 1961. They were together in a Jewish Adoption Agency for about 5 months after which they were adopted by 3 different families.

Fast forward 19 years and Bobby goes off to college. Although he does not know anyone there, lots of people seem to know him and he is very confused. This is just the start of a rollercoaster journey for him as he discovers that his 'double', Eddy, had attended the very same college the previous year. The young men meet and it is like looking in a mirror. Immediate disbelief, followed by euphoria, engulf them. They are thrown into the limelight in the newspapers and on television and before long, they are introduced to David, the third brother, who makes contact after seeing the publicity. The brothers had no knowledge of each other before this point and had been brought up in very different socio-economic families. All the attention is put on the similarities they have – food tastes, mannerisms etc – the story is captivating. However, when the families try to find out more about what happened in 1961, the euphoria takes a downturn, because it transpires that the triplets were part of a 'twin' study led by Austrian Dr Peter Neubauer to determine once and for all whether nature or nurture

defines who a person becomes. The brothers discover that they all had mental health issues through their teenage years and it is now thought that, when separated, they suffered from separation anxiety. Trying to determine exactly what had happened continues today. All the paperwork for the study is now stored at Yale University, with restricted access until 2065. The 2 remaining triplets are being allowed to see their paperwork – much of which has been redacted, so there are still many questions to be answered. As the film's closing sequence ran, the cinema was silent and the shock was palpable as people processed the story. How could this have happened?



Last week I saw the film *On the basis of Sex*, based on the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was appointed an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1993, a position she still holds to this day. The film focuses on Ruth's early life as she goes to Harvard Law School in 1956 and, then, as she represents

Charles Moritz, a bachelor caring for his mother, who was denied a tax deduction allowance because he had never married. This is a very powerful, inspiring story about a woman's determination to fight for people's rights and equality over the last 60 years.

Janet Forsaith

The New Oxford Easy Anthem Book

As Olive Townsend was a great lover of the Wesley Memorial church choir and its music, her family gave a very generous gift in her memory, towards the purchase of music.

Our first buy was a set of the New Oxford Easy Anthem Book which was published in 2002, and had been recommended as a good collection which might suit a choir that has a variable number of singers from week to week!

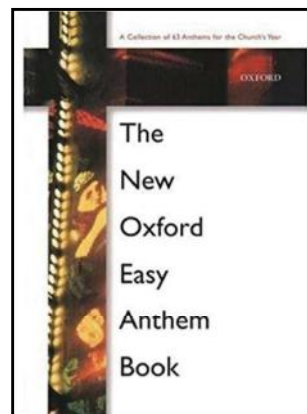
It has been really useful to have this compact volume of some old favourites, and quite a few new pieces; and a most enjoyable experience exploring them and singing them Sunday by Sunday. The title suggests that the pieces have been simplified, but that is not the case: some are easy,

some are 'more interesting' musically! There are helpful indications for matching music to the seasons of the church's year and 63 anthems go a long way!

So our warmest thanks go to the Townsend family for their thoughtful gift, and the delight it is bringing.

And we still have funds for more new music!

Kate Dobson



Open Doors update

Facilities Since our last update we have started the final phase by completing the refurbishment of the Ladies Toilets on the first floor and replacing the single glazed leaded light windows in the John Wesley Room and spaces above occupied by *Oxford Cruse Bereavement Care*, with new double glazed windows. *Cruse* have told us how much these are appreciated and have reduced noise pollution and draughts. The toilets included an additional third cubicle designed to ambulant standards and which we plan to repeat on the ground floor in the last phase.



New facilities in the 'Ladies'

Feedback We invited our new partnerships including *Waste2Taste*, *The Archway Foundation*, and *Rethink* to comment on their experiences of meeting at Wesley Memorial. One of the organisers of *Waste2Taste* (Cooking for Health and Wellbeing workshops pilot) involving eight vulnerable adults said: "The venue is perfect for facilities but more importantly has a shared understanding of the client group". The New Young Adults Co-ordinator for the *Archway Foundation* commented: "The welcome of the staff and their interest in the project helped the group feel wanted and accepted; a key message Archway seeks to communicate through its work". The Service Manager for *Rethink* wrote: "The *Oxford Carers Support Group* has now been running for one year and the Wesley Memorial Church venue provides a comfortable and safe environment where unpaid carers can meet their peers, to offer help and support to families and friends of individuals whose lives are affected by mental illness".

Finance We are currently debt free. Last July we obtained a revised building cost estimate (£762,324 including VAT). Assuming that we are able to recover the VAT, (and we need to do this by March 2020), we have in hand some £480,000

towards this sum. This includes the 'Big Give Christmas Challenge' which raised £16,510 in one week thanks to 23 donors and the match funders - the *Mosawi Foundation* and the *Reed Foundation*. In addition, we are to receive a second grant of £50,000 from the Northampton Methodist District, now confirmed, and we have also applied to the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes for £100,000 (decision expected in March). Grant applications have also been made to the *University of Oxford Community Fund*, *The Doris Field Charitable Trust* and *The Bernard Sunley Foundation*. The Oxford Circuit has offered a loan of £50,000 to help with any shortfall and we are looking at other possibilities for loans to bridge any gap.

Faith In justifying our project to the District, we stated that a more generous indoor area connecting the church and the halls would:

- Provide a well-lit, more welcoming and accessible entrance for all, especially at night during the winter.
- Provide essential break out and sharing space, a 'hub in which to hang out' at any time of the day.
- Bring individuals and different user groups together deepening relationships and opening up increased potential for collaboration.
- Provide the opportunity for imaginative interpretation of our heritage to engage the public and building users with the good news that God's love is for all.

Future We are planning to seek builders' estimates during April/May 2019 for completing the Heritage Hub which will also include a permanent storage facility at the rear of the premises, the refurbishment of the Gents toilets on the ground floor, 22 bike racks and completing works from earlier phases. We will be taking a proposal to the summer Church Council with a view to starting work later this year. The project is now in its tenth year - we have had our ups and downs but it is now beginning to look as if we might have completed the project by this time next year – or even earlier!

Derek Rawson

Partnership party January 2019

The New Year Church Party took place on Saturday 26 January. About 80 people came and, as usual, it was good to welcome friends from Cowley Road as to join us. There was a wide spread of ages and a genial atmosphere to the whole event.



The party started in the John Wesley Room where board games had been set up alongside the 'ice-breaker' activity. The stewards and a team of helpers had been busy all afternoon preparing hot food and setting up. Everyone moved into the hall to listen to a musical interlude of folk songs performed by Jim Godfrey, Mel McCulloch and Esther Ibbotson, before enjoying conversation and the delicious spread of food.

After the meal Anna Herriman set up her 'Olympic Games' challenge with teams competing against each other. A great deal of fun was had by all participating in the events and the children/young people's team emerged as the winners! (See photo below!)



Thanks to everyone who came along, and to all who contributed in making the evening a real success.

Janet Forsaith

John Wesley Society students' Pudding Party

This annual feast of indulgence and competition for the most delightful pudding was held, most appropriately, on the last Sunday before Lent.

Around 50 people enjoyed a choice of soup with bread and cheese, followed by as much pudding as one could decently manage! The sweets on offer were elaborate, exquisite, and enormously tempting. And that included Mel's 'contribution from God', a fresh pineapple, not entered in the competition.



After tasting came voting and the prizewinners were:

- 1st — Tom and Laura Ibbotson's Marbled Cheesecake (above)
- 2nd — Toby and Ian Collier's Choc-orange Shortbread
- 3rd — Simeon Mitchell's Turkish Choc Mocha Pots

Many thanks to the students for organising, and for raising around £260 (with Gift Aid) towards our 'Open Doors Phase 4' Fund.

Kate Dobson

Upside-down pancakes!

There were plenty of upside-downs at the annual Pancake Party, generously hosted by Wendy and



Paul for our students, on Shrove Tuesday. Amazingly, considering it was only two days after the pudding party none of the participants had any difficulty in returning for repeat helpings of pancakes, with an endless choice of fillings, from the traditional lemon and sugar to increasingly more adventurous – lime juice, chocolate paste, maple syrup and every kind of savoury. We even began the meal

with a special ‘pancake grace’.

Needless to say there was lots of laughter, especially as the essential ingredient to the evening not counting the enormous quantities of batter which the Sprays had ‘prepared earlier’, was that everyone cooked their own pancakes. The real test of maybe hitherto unknown character and faith was to prove who were the ones to risk tossing them in the air with a kitchen full of hungry onlookers, all knowing their turn was coming next!

However they were flipped, the pancakes were really only ready to eat when they had been upside down and browned on both sides. We weren't sure if there was a life lesson there, but we certainly had a great evening of fun, conversation and fellowship before the start of Lent.

Freda Cammack

Looking forward to Christian Aid Week 2019

Supporting new mothers in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is the world's most dangerous place to become a mother. Every day 10 women die from giving birth. In Sawula district, the community struggles with a tiny clinic which has no electricity and only two delivery beds.

Jebbeh Konneh is heavily pregnant. Her sister recently died in childbirth and Jebbeh fears she may be next: ‘I’m afraid. I pray, when that day comes, God will help me to deliver safely, so that I can have a bouncing baby and I’ll be healthy.’



The community in Sawula dreams of having a health centre that can meet their needs. Operations, deliveries and baby checkups all happen in one single room with the two delivery beds.

Newly appointed Nurse Judith works around the clock to meet the needs of mothers and young children who come to

the clinic. But the need is great, and sometimes she is forced to send people away. When women come to the clinic at night, there's no light for Judith to use. So she

has to ask her patients to bring a torch to see by. In addition to this, there are often not enough drugs at the clinic. Judith sees diseases like malaria and typhoid, especially in children. She has to go on a motorbike or sometimes walk for three hours to collect drugs.

‘I need help,’ nurse Judith says.

‘Women are dying from childbirth, children under five are dying, because

of poverty. Please help.’

This Christian Aid Week, together, we can make childbirth safe for mums and babies. Through our gifts and prayers, we can help give the world's poorest mums a chance to live and enjoy their babies.

Christian Aid

Gerald William Clarke 1932 - 2019

Gerry Clarke was born in Nottingham on 16 December 1932. After National Service in the RAF he moved south, eventually settling in Jericho with Beryl, his second wife. Gerry worked at Bicester Army Depot, at the OUP Bookshop, and finally as butler at Wadham College. He was a very skilled ballroom dancer, and only stopped attending Tea Dances at the Town Hall when very frail. Gerry also loved gardening, maintaining an allotment for many years. When

Beryl's infirmities made it necessary for them to move to a flat in Iffley, Gerry persuaded the Housing Association to purchase a green house, so that he could continue to cultivate flowers and vegetables. A friendly and sociable man, Gerry cared for Beryl until she died, and then maintained his independence at home until his death on 6 January 2019.

Martin Wellings

Freda Elizabeth Winfield 1921 - 2019

Freda Winfield was born in Kelmscott, Oxfordshire, on 3 December 1921. She was the youngest in a family of eight: seven sisters and one brother. Their father was a shepherd, and Freda remembered the rigours of working life in the Oxfordshire countryside in the inter-war years. From school, Freda came to work in Oxford, and this necessitated a three-mile cycle ride, followed by a bus journey, as a prelude to a long working day. During the Second World War Freda worked on a factory assembly line, and she continued working for Morris Motors until retirement. A skilled and conscientious worker, she benefitted from piece-rate payment, and remained indignant that this was abolished by Mrs Thatcher! With her sisters Gladys (Wickens) and Pam (Dunford), Freda became very involved in the life of Wesley Memorial, playing a very significant part in building up the

Wednesday Coffee Morning.

She was also a faithful member of the Tuesday Afternoon Fellowship. In recent years loss of transport made it hard for Freda to attend events at church, but she remained keenly interested in all that was happening, and very appreciative of Wesley Memorial's pastoral care. Last year she moved into the Brookfield Methodist Home in Greater Leys, and, following treatment in hospital for pneumonia, she died peacefully on 18 February 2019.

Martin Wellings



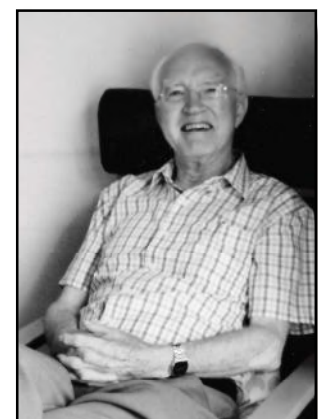
Henry Lumley Gordon 1927 - 2019

Henry Gordon was born in Dublin on 9 August 1927. He came from a strong Methodist background, with several Irish Methodist ministers on the maternal side of his family tree, and he was educated at Wesley College, Dublin, the only Methodist school in the Republic. Henry proceeded to university, taking a first-class degree in civil engineering. Through Rathgar Methodist Church Henry met Joan, and they were married in 1955. Four years later, now with Michael and Carolyn, Henry and Joan moved to Great Britain, where Henry worked on the Great Ouse Flood Protection Scheme. A series of engineering jobs around flood protection followed, including project management for the Thames Barrier, under the Greater London Council. Henry retired from the GLC some thirty years ago. Alongside a very busy professional life, Henry continued to be very active in

the local church, and to enjoy sport and music. In retirement at Benson Henry gave much time to volunteer hospital driving, clocking up 799 journeys. He and Joan were regular worshippers at Wesley Mem, and very much part of our church family, sharing church life with

Carolyn, Mike, Anna and Will. Increasing frailty in the last year or two brought challenges, and these were met with courage and cheerfulness. Henry died peacefully at home on 20 February 2019.

Martin Wellings



Heard it on the grapevine...

Birth:

Isobel Grace Ford 12 February 2019



Transferred to other churches:

Matt and Hannah Stammers to Bury St Edmunds.

Ceased to be a member:

Jane Ann Jones.

Deaths:

Gerry Clarke January 2019

Freda Winfield February 2019

Henry Gordon February 2019



Isobel Grace comes to church for the first time



Notes from the Church Council

The meeting on Monday 4 March 2019 considered the Committee Reports and noted:

The Songs of Faith music editions have arrived. Word editions should arrive by the end of March.

Paperwork for Wesley Memorial to be recognised as an Eco-Church is being completed. The next step is to find someone who would champion this work and take a lead in moving it forward. Anyone interested should speak to Revd Martin Wellings or one of the stewards.

The website has been updated and refreshed. Please do take a look at it.

Prayers were offered for the families and friends of Gerald Clarke, Henry Gordon and Freda Winfield who have died.

Thanks were expressed to everyone involved in the *Time and Again* production which had been a huge success.

Recommendations from the Open Doors Steering Group were agreed. Work on starting Phase 4 of the Open Doors project was discussed.

Rev Anthony Buckley is the new vicar at St Michael in the Northgate; Rev Christopher Woods at St Barnabas.

The Winter Night Shelter January-March 2019 is going well. Thanks to all who are supporting this important work.

Discussion about the importance of youth work, including students, was productive and it was agreed to write a letter to the Methodist Connexion from this Church Council and also to discuss sending a Memorial to the Methodist Conference from the March 2019 Circuit Meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 24th June. Observers are always welcome.

Janet Forsaith, Church Council Secretary



Wesley Memorial Church

New Inn Hall Street, Oxford OX1 2DH

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Children's, families' & outreach worker: *Mel McCulloch*
Mission & Heritage Officer: *Alison Butler*
Church manager: *Nikos Paplomatas*

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Contributions, letters, questions, pictures, book reviews and any other suitable items for publication are always welcome. Please pass them to the editorial team by email, stating if you are unwilling for them to appear on the church website. Articles may be edited. Articles express the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Wesley Memorial Church or the Methodist Church.

Dates for the diary

Sunday 14 April, 10.30 am	Rev'd Canon Helen Cameron leading Palm Sunday service
Thursday 18 April, 7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Service at St Columba's
Friday 19 April, 10.30 am	Good Friday Service at Wesley Memorial
Sunday 21 April, 10.30 am	Easter Sunday Communion
Saturday 11 May 10.30 am	Christian Aid Street Market
Sunday 12 May, 10.30 am	United Service at New Road
Thursday 11 July, 7 pm	Wesley Memorial Lecture: The Lord Beith

Advance Notice: Next Church Weekend Break

We are going to High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts, EN11 8SG, from Friday 24 April-Sunday 26 April 2020. Save the date and let Mel McCulloch know if you would like to book your place.

*Deadline for the next issue:
24 May 2019*

WESLEY MEMBRAIN



*Jim 03/19