

# Wesley Memorial **news**

The magazine from Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford | Spring 2020

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*It is the Lord ! John 21:7*

## ***Reconciliation***

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Dear Friends,

A church I once served had a street-facing notice board which it used for 'wayside pulpit' posters, designed to attract or intrigue passers-by. One of the posters which definitely appealed to me showed a grumpy elderly man standing on a cloud, clutching a handful of thunderbolts. The caption read: 'Is this your God? Then come in, and meet ours!'

Whether that poster made any impact on the general public, I don't know. But I'd still sign up to the message. The picture of God as short-tempered or vengeful is still out there. But we echo and affirm the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:19: 'in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.' We proclaim a God whose primary orientation to the world is love, and who works tirelessly to rebuild the relationships which have been ruptured by that turn-in upon self which is fundamental to the being and experience of each and every human being. Where our rejection of God puts us at odds with God, with each other, with ourselves and with God's creation, God seeks to bring reconciliation and to put things right.

As rebuilding relationships in places like Northern Ireland and South Africa, Bosnia and Rwanda, has shown, reconciliation is not easy. It doesn't mean ignoring or forgetting the past. Rather, it means facing up honestly to what has happened, speaking and hearing painful truths, and being prepared to change. Examples like these can shed light on the dynamic at the heart of the Christian faith. In Jesus, God spoke (and speaks) truth to the world, naming evil for what it is and offering an alternative way of life. When people reject the offer, God perseveres, to the point at which the rejection becomes violent. This both serves to make people aware of what they have done, and also enables forgiveness and reconciliation to reach people who have hitherto refused God's gift. In other words, the Cross 'works' subjectively, by prompting a response, and it works objectively, by changing the way things are. In Christ, God reconciles the world to himself.

What might it mean for us to be entrusted with the message of reconciliation? As Paul develops his argument in 2 Corinthians, he is clear that he is charged with the responsibility of sharing the Good News: 'so we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.' The vocabulary of 'mission' has become commonplace these days, and we have become adept at framing everything we do in terms of 'mission'. But we need to be as clear as Paul was in understanding that any 'mission' deserving of the name Christian must include communicating the Gospel. With care, sensitivity, integrity and respect, of course. But communicating nonetheless.

Bearing a message of reconciliation also means a willingness to practise what we preach. Human relationships are always a work in progress, and we grow and develop over time. Within a church community things don't always run smoothly, and there can be friction and tension between people, for all sorts of reasons. Putting things right when relationships have gone wrong is seldom easy, and lasting reconciliation requires a reciprocal willingness which may not always be present. But Jesus encourages us to take the initiative (Matthew 5:23-24) and urges us to be bridge-builders.

At Easter time we celebrate God's reconciling love in Jesus Christ. We rejoice that this love has touched our hearts and changed our lives. May we be enabled to live it, and to share it.

Yours in Christ,

Martin Wellings

# Editorial

Do we live in an ever more divided world? Is the post-Brexit landscape one of suspicion and bitterness? In our society and in our families, can differences be bridged? What does reconciliation actually mean? Forgetting? Forgiving? Seeing anew? And what does it look like? Maybe it happens unseen, deep inside us. Or maybe it's a conversation? A process? An institution?

In this, our Easter issue, we want to think about the place of reconciliation in our personal and collective lives. But we want to start first with the

good news of Easter, that God has bridged the gulf of darkness and despair, to restore us in love. The cross is the place where healing begins. It is the ultimate reconciliation. It is here that we may begin to grow in the hope, humility, compassion and courage we need to live out our journeys of reconciliation in a complex world.

This is a packed issue on a theme that is both age-old and very much for today. We hope you enjoy it.

A very happy Easter from the  
*Wesley Memorial News team!*

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## *Truth and Reconciliation*

We have a model  
for truth and reconciliation  
in Mandela and Tutu,  
in South Africa.  
And yet we are plagued  
by violence and crime  
as they are.  
Fake news satisfies  
our craving for sensation,  
but when that feeling  
becomes the suffering  
of the victim,  
truth is the only way  
to survival.  
Facing up to the facts  
as they have hurt a fellow soul  
is the first step to repentance  
and a blueprint for reconciliation.  
And yet we still ask, as Pilate did,  
'What is truth?'

*Joanna Tulloch*

## *A prayer for Brexit day*

However we feel about today  
We mark this Brexit day  
As people who grieve or celebrate together  
One people  
Loved equally, freely and unconditionally  
By the one wise all-seeing God  
Either way let us hold this day gently  
Giving ourselves permission to leave  
Without elation or despair  
Determined to love our neighbour  
Support the weak and welcome the stranger  
Lord of all life  
Let your servants depart in peace  
And live according to your Holy Law  
Amen

*The Revd Barbara Glasson,*  
President of the Methodist Conference 2019-20

# God's Wrath in the Light of Easter

One day in 1984, lightning struck York Minster. It was the day before the consecration there of a controversial bishop. The Sun newspaper called it "the wrath of God". The headline reflected a widespread view of divine wrath. But that view is pagan, not Christian.

Yet the wrath of God features in both the Old Testament and the New. A modern hymn refers to it:

'... till on that cross as Jesus died,  
'the wrath of God was satisfied' (StF no.351)

So what is the wrath of God?

Wrath is an old word meaning 'anger'. But can God ever be said to get angry? In answering this question, a good place to start is the Old Testament concept of God 'hiding his face'. Consider first the opposite of that – words we hear at a baptism: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord look on you with kindness and give you peace".

As usual with imagery in the Bible, we take the images seriously, though not always literally. (God clearly hasn't got a face like us, even though humans are made in his/her image). Behind the imagery is the conviction that the light of God is the life of the world and of humankind. After all, from where else would life and well-being (shalom – salvation) come, if not our Creator?

So when God 'hides his face', the opposite applies: the world is heading for trouble – in danger, even, of falling apart. This is not because God is inflicting punishments on us. The opposite is true: God is not intervening. Instead God is letting us experience the consequences of our wrong-doing. One of the clearest expressions of this in the Bible is a verse in Isaiah: "...you have hidden your face from us and left us in the grip of our iniquities". (Isaiah 64. 7).

That is what the Bible means by the 'wrath' of God. We have been created "to love God and enjoy him forever", as the Westminster Confession says. But instead we set our hearts on other things, and the Bible calls that idolatry. St

Paul spells out the downward spiral. Our idolatries make us less than human; the divine image in us begins to fade, and human relationships and communities are damaged (Romans 1.18-32). And this is the revelation of God's wrath (v.18): God not intervening. The results are all around us.

Darkness – the opposite of the light and life which stream from God's face – i.e. God's presence – symbolizes the divine 'wrath'. Paul writes of human "minds plunged into darkness" (v.21). When that begins to happen, we find it harder and harder, for example, to distinguish truth from illusion, real news from fake news. But, thanks be to God, there is a gospel. The saving power and goodness of God are being revealed (Romans 1.16-7). The parallel, and order, of verses 16 and 18 are important.

So does God hide his face deliberately, as if in a fit of pique, or in a sulk? No! God is love – 100% love. God is also holy, and just – 100% again. So God isn't, as it were, balancing his love against the standards he must maintain, as if his love and justice are in tension. Think of the father in the story of the Prodigal Son.

The heart of our faith are the cross and resurrection of Jesus. The cross was the hour of darkness (God 'hiding his face'), as the gospels tell us. So 'wrath' was 'revealed', not 'satisfied' (which, in my view, is not a biblical idea). The cross was also the victory of love: "it is accomplished". So the darkness is neither permanent nor final. There is Easter to come: "the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not quench it". (John 1.5).

The cross and resurrection revealed, uniquely and forever, the love of God: "This is how we know what love is, that Christ laid down his life for us" (1 John 3.16) and "greater love has no-one than this..." (John 15.13).

The cross thus becomes a universal meeting-point – the place of reconciliation: God extending his friendship to the whole world through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Neil Richardson, former minister of Wesley Memorial, and President of the Methodist Conference 2003 - 2004*

# The Cross – Reconciliation with Humility

Jesus' death on the cross has proved to be a hugely significant event in our understanding of our relationship with God. But many of the interpretations of the way mankind is thought to have become reconciled with God through Jesus' death on the cross fit awkwardly with any positive view of God. Also, it seems odd to believe that Jesus' death on the cross was THE event of Jesus' life on earth that defines the nature of faith. Such an understanding diminishes the significance of the rest of his life and teaching. Jesus' death on the cross does demonstrate his total commitment to the way of life he had taught and lived, no matter what came his way. He trusted the will of his Father, even though it meant enduring intense suffering himself. For Jesus realised that the way of life he had lived was only in full harmony with God through love.

Jesus' way of life, being fully at one with God, demands a commitment which is very costly. But it also demands an attitude to life which we are very reluctant to accept whole-heartedly in the life of the church, both personally and as an institution. To give yourself fully to living in harmony with God's ways of love only becomes possible if we accept that life is to be lived with an attitude of humility. We know this in our own lives in the care and nurture of children and those who are frail. There are times when we must do things which we would much rather not do, that we feel are demeaning, but our love for the other demands that we act with humility. On Maundy Thursday, we honour the idea of humility in our liturgy when Jesus washing the disciples' feet is re-enacted. But, do we take this attitude into the core of our understanding of the nature of God's love and into our everyday life of faith? In the early centuries of Christianity, depictions of the cross were a rarity, it was shameful, shocking and opened Christians to ridicule. But when Christianity was adopted as the faith of the state, a change was introduced in the depiction of the crucifixion which enabled the cross to become the symbol of Christianity, then associated with the seat of power. A loincloth was put on the body of Christ on the cross. This subtle change altered the whole meaning of the cross, from a symbol of shame and humiliation to a

symbol of commitment and endurance... the embodiment of the full nobility of love. However, the full significance of the cross was lost, that if we want to engage with God's love, we have to accept a way of life which involves accepting humiliation and this can only be done by adopting an attitude of humility.

Once the centrality of humility is recognised in the Gospel, it can be discovered throughout the course of Jesus' life: born naked as a baby, teaching people that they have to become like a child to enter the Kingdom of God and being crucified naked on the cross being prime examples. By reaching out to the despised, Jesus gave new life and hope to others. His adoption of the way of humility enabled God's love to flow freely and give a new hope to those on the fringe of society. Yes, love was seen to be powerfully in action during Jesus' life, but this was only possible because Jesus embraced humility in his life at all times.

There has been a trickle of representations of the crucifixion that have engaged with the reality of the event and portrayed Jesus as a naked man on the cross. In modern times, both the *Menorah* (1993) by Roger Wagner and the *Corpus* (2010) by Nick Mynheer (photo) have adopted this approach.



Perhaps these works of art are forerunners of a change of attitude within the life of the church. If they are, then there will be major changes ahead and a rebirth of Christianity in the church becomes a real possibility.

*Andrew Bunch, Vicar of St Giles Church Oxford*

# Epiphany sermon 2020

It is the 11th day of Christmas and time to celebrate Epiphany with the same congregation where I celebrated Christmas. I told them I wanted to speak with them about gifts and about reconciliation.

However before launching into my sermon, I told them that one of the reasons I loved being with them was because of the way it is a joyful church with all the generations present in their numbers.

Then I asked the congregation what gifts they wanted from God and what gifts they could give to one another apart from material gifts as important as they are... as grandparents, as husbands and wives, as teenagers, as boyfriend and girlfriends. Responses across gender and generations included love and wisdom, forgiveness, love and peace, enough to live and patience.

What about Jesus? What gifts did he give people? Jesus listened to people: women and men, children and old people. He did not judge them. Jesus gave everybody dignity and respect. Jesus responded to their pain, to their hunger, to their need for healing.



Father Michael meeting the Pope

In his New Year message, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby urged people to heroically reach out to

those with whom they had a broken relationship, through a phone call, a text message or whatever.

I shared how I was moved to reach out to a friend where our relationship had broken down several years ago. I sent him a message and received a message back. Everything is not yet ok, but there is progress. Then last night, I had a dream during which there was reconciliation.

Sometimes a relationship may have ended. We may not wish to live together again but we want things to be healthier and not filled with hatred and bitterness. Even though our fault may be the minor part, we want to express sorrow for our part.

Often what we need from God is courage.

*Fr Michael Lapsley SSM. Bots'abelo, Lesotho (Southern Africa)*

## An opportunity to shine in an unusual sphere!

*Have you always wished you could rival Spiderman? Are you aged 11 or over?*

Here's your chance! Sign up for the 2020 Christian Aid Abseil and come floating down the tower of St Mary Magdalen in Oxford, on Saturday 9 May, with many other intrepid abseilers.

- Only £20 to register;
- Aim to raise £100;
- Recruit your sponsors.

After the abseil, you can pop back to base (at Wesley Memorial) flushed with

**Christian Aid Oxford Abseil**  
09 May 2020

If you can't stand still while people go hungry, abseil for us.

Are you up for the challenge of abseiling from the tower of St Mary Magdalen church in Oxford to end poverty?

Participants must be aged eleven years or above. The registration fee is £20 and all entrants aim to raise £100 or more through sponsorship.

01865 246818  
oxford@christian-aid.org  
christianaid.org.uk

Christian Aid is a registered charity in the UK and other countries. It is a member of the Christian Aid International network. For more information, visit christianaid.org.uk

success, and enjoy a well-earned lunch or snack at the annual Street Market, while also collecting some of the welcome sponsor money from your family and friends!

Contact the Oxford Christian Aid office 01865 246818  
oxford@christian-aid.org  
for full details and forms.  
Tickets on Evenbrite at  
<https://bit.ly/332EQrb>

# Reconciliation 1949... and today

## *Your 'starter for ten...'*

'In a spirit of reconciliation, the Treaty of London 1949... created... what is now the largest of the European organizations... the Council of Europe.' If this had been a 'starter' on University Challenge, I wonder how early in the sentence the buzzer would have been pressed? We are obsessed about the quite separate EU, but too often forget the Council of Europe (COE). The COE ([www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)) is older than the EU ([www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)) and has 47 member states compared with 27. The UK has not left the COE. \*

## *The role of the COE*

The COE promotes democracy, the rule of law and human rights through inter-governmental co-operation based on the European Convention on Human Rights. The Convention and related agreements cover (e.g.) the prevention of torture, action against human trafficking, the protection of children against sexual exploitation, combating domestic violence, media freedom, the protection of national minorities and minority languages and promoting North-South dialogue.

The COE celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity whilst respecting national and regional identity. It does not issue directives: its recommendations allow each member state the flexibility in implementation to act in accordance with its 'national or local circumstances.'

## *Working with COE colleagues*

On COE education projects from 1992, I was privileged to learn of the diverse experiences of colleagues sharing common values. After the collapse of the USSR, the COE provided support for educational reform in the new democracies; I shall never forget our Lithuanian colleague telling us with tears in her eyes how much the COE meant to them. In 1992, the two representatives from Czechoslovakia sat together; a year later, they sat apart representing the two new states but in continuing friendship. In a discussion about reconciliation near the UN 'green line' in Cyprus, I was the only person in the COE

team whose country had not been occupied. A Bosnian colleague had spent a year in a cave during the Balkan conflict. One Christmas as I sat in Teddington Methodist Church, hit by a flying bomb in 1944, I was very aware that my colleague Hartmut would be in a Lutheran church rebuilt after Allied bombing.

Although debate was robust and chairing was a challenge, the arguments were never acrimonious, perhaps because we experienced an underlying fellowship. I recall, for example, 15 middle-aged professionals fumbling with their change on a corner in middle Europe. A colleague's teenage daughter had commissioned Mum to get coins from as many countries as possible: our solidarity with Mum was total!

## *A shared heritage*

The UK is held in high esteem in the COE. Winston Churchill inspired the COE's creation, the UK was a founder member, and David Maxwell-Fyfe led the drafting of the Convention. In language education, a former Cambridge don, John Trim, had a standing with his peers in Europe that few Englishmen have enjoyed in any field. A war veteran, he was inspired by a vision of a harmonious Europe and by his faith.

COE conferences open with the European Anthem, an arrangement without words of the prelude to the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. I have always found it moving; for many it symbolises not union, but unity, unity of values and aspirations for peace.

These values are part of Britain's European heritage. Today when intolerance and narrow nationalism are rife, we can turn to them in the search for reconciliation between and within countries.

*Alan Dobson*

\* The two organisations are often confused: the EU adopted the COE flag and anthem in 1986; the EU meets from time to time in Strasbourg, the seat of the COE.

## Reconciliation – a process that never ends

In this piece I reflect on my thoughts about reconciliation as a member of the Christian faith community, a Methodist and as someone hailing from a country with a history of reconciliation. I structured this reflection to cover my own encounters with reconciliatory processes, the meaning of reconciliation for me and how I've been able to share it with others, and the South African experience of reconciliation. I also share some reflections on my chosen topic.

I always knew about forgiving, as someone raised within a big family where most of the time forgiving is supposed to be an everyday thing. I quarrelled and engaged in some stick fighting with my cousins from time to time, but we would forgive each other and let it pass. The same applied in my experience with non-relatives when I was growing up in the farm community where with other young boys, we would make jokes about each other, sometimes uncomfortably so, which we still let go in the name of forgiveness. However, there was something different in our community which a stranger would not be able to notice or even understand. Some families did not speak or offer support in times of need to certain families in the community, besides a small number of homes on the farm. Here I spotted the difference in how, as children, we were able to forgive and let pass, but it was hard for the elderly to let go like that. One instance where two families turned to be enemies, was when a petrol generator burst, causing fire at a wedding; suspicions grew that a member of the other family in the neighbourhood planned to burst this generator out of jealousy about the wedding taking place. This is an event from 2006 and the degeneration of relations went on for many years.

What was different for me was that as a child I thought it was also about forgiveness, which is initiated by someone asking for forgiveness or the wronged party initiating it. I since then understood that it is not that simple. The families never entered a process of reconciliation or forgiveness to date, but they've found a way to get along.

These are childhood encounters of both forgiveness and reconciliation that never happened. A lesson I take from this, is that we ought to be like children, like Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven



belongs to such as these." (Matthew 9.14). Nonetheless the allegations of jealousy and intent to cause harm were also not based on any evidence. What was clearer was the feelings the families had towards one another – distrust and discomfort. Which goes to show that forgiveness is one thing, but to reconcile requires a thinking process where the two or more parties involved in a dispute, conflict or unjust acts are able to reflect on how they feel, put themselves in each other's shoes and then think of what is good. And the good is reconciling and living in peace with one another.

In this reflection I have no intentions of defining what is reconciliation, but I look at it from a perspective of forgiving and allowing a new start when I've wronged or have been wronged by other people. I view reconciliation as a process. In 2015, I was inducted into the Mandela Rhodes Scholarship. Part of the scholarship's programme is a workshop on reconciliation. I thought it would be one of those workshops where you sit and listen to someone speak about reconciliation, but it was much better than that, in a challenging way. I will not disclose full details about the workshop process in the interest of copyrights of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, to keep up the expectation that what happened in the workshop has to remain with scholars. The term reconciliation was deconstructed in the workshop and in the process the political connotations were removed to focus on the personal. The question of the workshop for all participants was about the meaning of reconciliation at a personal level.

Personally, I felt challenged, in my views about sexuality,



race relations, relating to people who are different from me and accepting who I was. Often the discussions about reconciliation focus on the outer world, but what I learned is that all people have the responsibility to look into themselves for reconciliation. When one finds it, only then can one extend peace, forgiveness and be reconciled through a way of living better with others, and recognising their needs too.

The South African experience of reconciliation is a unique one. A country divided by race and separate development did not end in war, but in a Truth and Reconciliation commission. To reflect on this, I am taking a slightly gentler approach. Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 saw many South Africans from multiple racial backgrounds coming together to chart a new way forward. The 1994 democratic elections were a step towards this long process. The new government launched the Truth and Reconciliation commission to deal with the sad truths of the past.

Twenty-five years later a new debate on economic redistribution has emerged more strongly, owing to increasing poverty amongst the previously disadvantaged communities. The emergence of this debate is not a sign of cracks in the South African reconciliation programme but is evidence that reconciliation is an ongoing process. South Africa as a nation has learnt a lot from the political transitions of 1994 but continues to do so through debate, engagement and conversations. I admit though that it is and will continue to be a long process.

What I take away from all these experiences is that - reconciliation is a process of truth, forgiving, putting yourself in other people's position and it never ends.

We therefore should be prepared to engage in the process of reconciliation as long as we live.

*Sizwe Mkwanazi*

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## *Pre-Lent Indulgence, Sunday 23 February, as enjoyed by younger participants!*

Every year we have a Pudding Party at our church. This is so we can spend more time with one another and have a little bit of fun. Everyone who wants to get creative, bake a cake for the party and bring it in on this special day is welcome to. This year we had twenty-five amazing entries but sadly, you can only vote for three. I tried a caramel cake, a chocolate orange cake, some elderflower ice cream and a rice crispy cake. Surprisingly, my lemon roulade (made with my dad) came joint 2nd with a delicious chocolate hazelnut ice box pudding. We both came 2nd after the scrumptious elderflower ice cream made by Mel and the Youth group. The prize was a box of fantastic chocolates. After all the scores got announced, my birthday was also mentioned as it was tomorrow. After the puddings, the three winners of the best (voted) puddings had

to have a picture taken. The whole event was a lot of fun and possibly, my favourite year doing it.

Jasper

... This year, Alice and I couldn't wait to get started! I made a marbled ring cake with a bit of help from my parents, and we had good fun baking together. The other puddings were also delicious and we were all so full up at the end!

Laura

...Today we had really so yummy cakes, I felt a bit ill at the end. My favorite cake was the caramel chocolate cake. My Mum and Dad only let us have three cakes. I loved all the ones I had. When I saw the puddings on the table I couldn't believe what I saw. There were so many puddings there on the table that I liked.

Alice

# Reconciliation and Initiatives of Change

After winning the general election, the Prime Minister called for national reconciliation. He seemed to suggest that the way to achieve it was for those who disagreed with him over Brexit to admit that they were wrong. It's not yet clear how successful his call has been. But I must admit familiarity with a similar urge: if only other people would recognise that I am right and they are wrong! But it takes a minor miracle every time for me to remember that, as a Christian, I should be the first to admit where I am wrong.

I appreciate being invited to say something about the approach to reconciliation of Initiatives of Change (IofC - previously known as Moral Re-Armament), not least because it starts exactly at that point where you recognise your part of wrong in any conflict.

Encountering it as a young person in the 1940s was a revelation as it showed me a way to implement my Christian faith in all aspects of my life. It led me to experience reconciliation myself with people I'd been jealous of, stolen from, lied to and talked about behind their back.

But I first witnessed reconciliation between nations when I visited the international MRA conference centre in Caux, Switzerland in 1951. The centre had been created a few years earlier by Swiss who, having been spared the horrors of the war, bought a run-down hotel on a mountainside as a place for the former warring parties to meet. There I heard about a leading French politician who had initiated reconciliation with the Germans in Caux a few years earlier.

Irène Laure was a former resistance leader, whose son had been tortured to force her to inform, but she hadn't given in. She had a profound hatred for the Germans, and when she heard that a delegation of Germans were arriving, she packed her bags. As she marched through the foyer, she bumped into the initiator of MRA, Frank Buchman, and told him why she was leaving. "Do you think you can rebuild Europe without the Germans?" he asked her. Stunned by the question, Irène didn't leave but went back to her room. For three days she had a terrible inner struggle, but when she emerged, she accepted an offer to meet a German. When they met, Irène poured out all she had suffered without

even finding anything out about the woman she was talking to, but she ended by saying, "I'm telling you all this because I want to be free of it."

Then the German spoke about her own experience. Her husband had been involved in the failed-plot to kill Hitler and was executed, and she was left with two children to bring up and nothing to live on. But she apologised for the failure of her people to stop Hitler when they had the chance to do so. There was a long silence, and then Irène, a Marxist socialist, said, "I believe if we prayed about this, God would help us." And she prayed, "God, will you help me to be free of this hatred so we can build the future?" And then the German prayed, but she prayed in French, and as she did so Irène reached out her hand and touched her. And a new stream of reconciliation began in Europe. Irène was then invited to speak to the whole conference, where she again told all she had suffered, but then apologised to the Germans for having wished for the destruction of their country. She was invited to Germany and spent months there repeating her apology in state parliaments, meetings and on the radio.

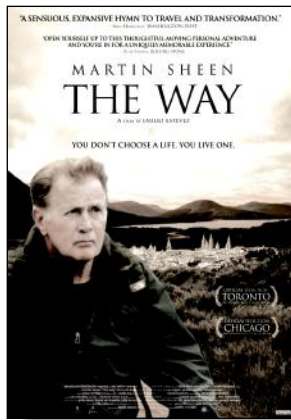
During the immediate post-war years, Buchman's team enabled thousands of future political, business and trade-union leaders from both countries to meet each other in Caux on the basis of acknowledging their own shortcomings rather than blaming the other. And when political and economic agreement took place, Buchman was honoured by both France and Germany for his part 'behind the scenes' for his work of reconciliation between them.

I am glad to have the opportunity to retell this story, because it is not widely known that there was a spiritual impulse behind the creation of the European Economic Community. This story is told in a remarkable film *For the Love of Tomorrow* at <https://vimeo.com/281647777>

Perhaps there is something in this story to help us in Britain today in healing our divisions, both internal and external? *Lesley Marsh, Supernumerary Minister in the Oxford Circuit*

## Reconciliation ... on film

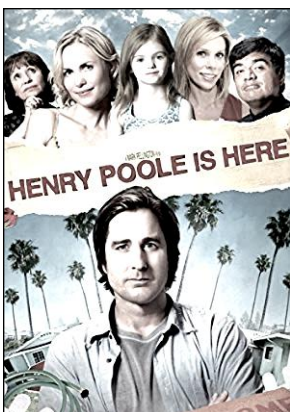
Over the past few years churches in which I have served have used different films as a way of focussing thoughts and prayers during Lent. This continued last year at Lime Walk, where the film *The Way* provided the basis for worship, prayer and fellowship, and as a means of considering how reconciliation plays a part in our own lives.



Those of you who are familiar with this movie will know that it relates the story of an American who makes the Camino pilgrimage journey across Northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela. Santiago is supposedly the resting place of St James whose body, according to legend, was taken there after his martyrdom.

In *The Way*, the lead character's son dies in an accident at the start of his own pilgrimage to Santiago, and the father, having received news of this whilst he is in the US, travels to arrange his son's funeral and to collect his possessions. He then decides to make the Camino-journey himself. His grief is palpable, and slowly he becomes reconciled to the loss he has experienced, and to the greater fullness of life and faith to which he gradually begins to return. It is a film full of emotion and humour, in part because of the

companions met on the way...and is well worth a watch.



This year's film, *Henry Poole is Here*, whilst being rather different in tone, does share a focus with *The Way*. A man called Henry Poole has become separated from life and companionship, and

through those around him – even though their presence is not something he welcomes! – gradually change happens.

Reconciliation plays a part in many films and novels, and can be understood in many ways. In the films mentioned above, there is a need for reconciliation to take place within the main characters, and also with the circumstances in which they find themselves.

They also share a further common element as we encounter differing ideas about God, and the revelation of God. This is apparent in the mixed responses of pilgrims to Santiago, both in why they are making the journey, but also in what it means to arrive at the Cathedral with its history, central legend, and religious imagery. Henry Poole also meets those with beliefs which are very strongly held, even when he finds them to be strange.

In both films, the characters whom we begin to get to know, become reconciled to the beliefs of others – not in the sense of sharing those beliefs, but in accepting their validity. Reconciliation, we discover, is also about respect for the views and faith-positions of others, even when they are not shared by all.

From the stories unfolding before us, we may ourselves pause to consider the place of God in situations of separation, and we may then be led to look to our own lives as part of our Lenten and Easter thoughts and reflections. From what, or whom, do we hide or remain unreconciled? Which situations do we avoid? What feelings do we have which we would prefer were not within us?

In Jesus' ministry he encountered those who were in one place, and he challenged them to move to another. He encouraged journeys which might not have been comfortable, but were authentic. He led others towards wholeness and the fullness of life. Whether we have been reading a Lent book, or watching a particular film chosen for the season, themes of reconciliation within ourselves, with others, and with God, are likely to have been evident. We are blessed with Lent as a season in which to consider these things, and Easter to rejoice in God's reconciling gift of himself in Christ.

*Stephen Maunder, Minister in the Oxford Circuit*

## Hostile Parents – apparently alienated children

In our respective working lives we witness the damage children can suffer when their parents separate.

Those cases in the court arena are usually the most embittered. There will be others who work hard to minimise the adverse effects on their children. When children have not seen one parent, as a result of such division, there are actions we can all contribute to reconciling them to that absent parent. Below are just some steps we may be able to take to move the parent from hostility to conciliation for the sake of the child(ren).

The first is to encourage the parents to attend a Separated Parenting Information Course (SPIP) which is free and available from Cafcass (the Court and Families Conciliation and Advisory Service). The course emphasises the importance of agreeing what is best for the children and the potential cost to the child of being deprived of a relationship with one of their parents.

The second is to encourage the parents to read the research which stresses the need for a child to continue to develop their relationship with each parent for the benefit of their emotional wellbeing. This is so in spite of the oft heard stories that ‘they showed no interest in the child when we were together.’ It is surprising how following a separation, each parent’s wish to retain a relationship with their child takes on a greater significance.

The third is to ask the parent, anxious to remove the child from their ex-partner, how important that parent’s relationship is with both their parents and wider families. Often at times of relationship breakdown, the grandparents’ supporting role to their child and grandchildren is key. Sometimes a parent can identify the importance of and need for their own relationship with each of their parents, enabling them to see beyond the recent hurts or betrayals.

The last is to facilitate contact. In Orpington, Malcolm enlisted volunteers at church to run a contact centre. Twice a month on Sunday afternoons at church, children came to the centre with the parent they lived with, to meet their ‘absent’ parent. The security and safety of the location and presence of volunteers re-assured the parent with care, that

their child(ren) would be safe.

Friends and relatives can all offer to facilitate contact by acting as a go-between, providing a more neutral location to meet and/or being present during contact. In the great majority of cases we witnessed children loved seeing their absent parent despite the negative picture often painted by the parent looking after them. Most often meeting at the contact centre was the start of progression towards meeting away from the contact centre over 3 - 6 months. Some families took much longer. A good example were Jack and Jill (not their real names) aged 4 and 6 when they first attended. Their mother was hard working having two low paid jobs to make ends meet. She despaired of the alcoholic separated father. Both children adored him. Jack and his father loved football and played together at the contact centre. The father was attentive and caring with both children. After nearly 4 years of contact centre meeting the parents agreed to mediation. Eventually a grudging trust was established and the father was able to see the children in the community, away from the contact centre. He got work and made a modest contribution to the mother to help with their upbringing.

Sadly, all too often, trust is lost during separation and takes time to be re-established. Family and friends sometimes unwittingly exacerbate the conflict when comforting one party. Seeing children reunited, reconciled with their absent parent was one of the most uplifting aspects of the contact centre.

Time and again we saw echoes of the parable of the loving father. As the child entered the room for contact, both parent and child ran to greet each other. The hurt and anger buoyed by weeks, sometimes months of being told ‘they don’t want to see you’ evaporated before our eyes. The joy and love we witnessed time and again were the best evidence that children need both their parents, however flawed they may be.

There are of course, sadly, instances where a child needs protection from and not relationship with a parent.

Thankfully they are rare.

*Gillian & Malcolm Dodds*

## Stories of empathy have the power to transform

Jo Berry is an activist for peace. In October 2009 she began a charity 'Building Bridges for Peace.' She said the hardest bridge she built was with Patrick Magee. The significance is that Jo Berry is the daughter of Sir Anthony Berry who was killed in the Grand Hotel bombing in Brighton in 1984. Patrick Magee was then an IRA bomber and responsible for that bombing. He was convicted and went to prison until 1999 when he was released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. Whilst in prison he completed a PhD examining the representation of Irish Republicans in 'Troubles' fiction. For 27 years he was a committed member of the IRA and remains a Republican.

Jo met Patrick one year after his release. Together they have spoken at many events to describe how they have come to act together to benefit others, one of which was in October 2018 at a Methodist Church in this district in Northampton. Jo advocates that empathy is the biggest weapon we have to end conflict. With political, religious and racial divides deepening as global and local events unfold, her words offer a message of hope and encourage us all to see the humanity in others. Since 2000 they have met over 200 times. Although Pat carries the burden of knowing he had caused Jo profound hurt, they continue to explore their common humanity, recognising that war robs combatants of what it is to be human, of an essential capacity to empathise and to see the world through the eyes of others.

Jo is frequently invited to address international conferences and seminars on themes of humanitarian aid, conflict resolution and human rights. She is a trained facilitator in storytelling, conflict transformation and restorative justice. "I do now call him my friend," said Berry. "It is an unusual friendship and that is because of what we have experienced together [...] He is not just the person who killed my father in 1984; he has become somebody who travels with me and works with me and we listen to people sharing their stories and opening up. We hear the most extraordinarily difficult stories and people open up and he is very supportive in those situations."

A play was written in 2015 about her friendship with Patrick Magee. She hopes it will change people's perceptions. "The challenging part has been that people might think I've betrayed my father. I understand that and respect that opinion ... I've thought deeply over the years about what betrayal is."



*Magee & Berry: photo by Brian Moody*

Berry recalled her first meeting with Magee when he used politics "to justify killing my father... I thought I would not be returning for a second meeting and then he changed. He later said he was disarmed by the empathy I gave him; he couldn't stay in his position of righteousness."

"My overall focus is how can we make sure others don't go through this, how can we change the future because we can't change the past, what lessons can we learn. [...] It hasn't always been easy. It has been challenging but it has been transformative."

Jo and Patrick's story is one of the many available through The Forgiveness Project, at:

<https://www.theforgivenessproject.com>

It uses the experiences of others to transform lives. Through learning of their experiences, many are enabled to 'forgive' and no longer be held back by traumas.

The project includes work on Restorative Justice where victims of crime meet the offender who caused them such hurt. Victim-offender dialogues address social injuries by giving victims a better chance of healing and offenders the opportunity to apologise and take responsibility. That too can be transformative for each one, changing their respective futures.

*Gillian & Malcolm Dodds*

## Promoting understanding between Christians and Muslims

The Centre for Christian-Muslim Studies based in Iffley Road, Oxford, has just launched a series of Hikmah Study Guides to help Christians and Muslims understand each other better. Hikmah means “wisdom” and the intention is to draw on the ancient wisdom of both faiths.

One of the first study guides is “Christians, Muslims and Persecution” and focuses on the persecution that followers of each faith have experienced from the other. It begins by pointing out that both communities may feel quite unjustly accused.

When Christians raise issues of violence in places such as Nigeria and Sudan, the Muslim reply is often “but that’s politics, not Islam”. Christians may be convinced that the violence and discrimination is supported by Islamic texts. But many Muslims protest that their interpretation is different, and that the Prophet Muhammad personally pledged the safety of Christians in Muslim society. Similarly Muslims raising concerns about “the war on terror” or western support for Israel may attribute these to Christians. After all, both George Bush and Tony Blair publicly identified themselves as Christians. And Christians may reply “but that’s politics, not Christianity”. The short guide carefully considers both Christian suffering in Muslim-majority contexts, and Muslim suffering in

Christian-majority contexts. It includes thorough references, guidance on further reading, and a series of questions for reflection, some aimed at all readers and some carefully balanced questions specifically for Christians or for Muslims.

For example:

- (For Christians): Are you as a Christian aware of and sympathetic to Muslim suffering in different parts of the world? Should Christians support Muslims who are experiencing persecution? How?
- (For Muslims): Are you as a Muslim aware of and sympathetic to Christian suffering in different parts of the world? Should Muslims support Christians who are experiencing persecution? How?

The guide urges Christians and Muslims to talk together openly about their experiences and to consider how to combat religious persecution wherever it happens. The Hikmah Study Guides can be downloaded from the website of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, Iffley Road, Oxford: [www.cmcsoxford.org.uk/hikmah-guides](http://www.cmcsoxford.org.uk/hikmah-guides). Other titles already available are: *Christians, Muslims and War* and *Christians, Muslims and Sectarianism*. Coming soon are useful guides on the Bible, God, Law, and Islamophobia. *Diana Musgrave*



*Photos of Miss Jessie Eltham kindly supplied by Margaret Chalmers. Jessie's story follows on pages 15 and 16.*



# Jessie Eltham's Untold Story

Relatives told us “Jessie never married and stayed at home to look after her parents”. But our research paints a picture of an independent woman with a very public life. The family (some now in Australia), were amazed by Jessie's story, which until recently had been unknown to us all.

## *Early Life*

Jessie was born at Cogges near Witney in 1880, the eldest child of Harry and Mary Eltham. It was Mary's second marriage. In 1870, Mary Light married Alfred Muhairo, with whom she had four children, one dying in infancy.

Mary's first husband was born in Africa and was brought to England as a child as the servant of a British Naval Officer. Their youngest son was two at the time of Mary's marriage to Harry.

Harry Eltham worked in the family road contracting business, which was based in Eynsham. We know very little about Jessie's early life other than the presence of half-brothers: Ernest in the family home with an aunt.

A clue to the Elthams being Methodists comes in a copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* awarded to Jessie's younger brother Enoch Andrew Eltham by the Eynsham Wesleyan Sunday School in 1894.

During the Oxford-based ministry of the Revd Hugh Price Hughes (1881 - 84), great attempts were made to establish Sunday Schools and chapels in the villages around Oxford and in the newly emerging suburbs.

Although only in Oxford for three years Price Hughes achieved a great deal and the Chapel and Sunday School at Eynsham was one of his 'projects', opening in 1884.

## *Moving on*

By 1901 Jessie had moved out of the family home and was working in a household in Kidlington and 'living in' as a nurse. In the same 1901 Census, Jessie's parents were living

in Eynsham with their other six children.

In 1904 Jessie's mother, grandmother and aunt all gave money to the Wesleyan Methodist Centenary Fund collected at Eynsham Methodist Chapel. (This was a country wide fundraising scheme, the records of which are kept at Westminster Central Hall). So Jessie's wider family, including her mother were clearly Methodists.

By 1911, Jessie had moved again and was living in Maidenhead. She was working as a housekeeper for a family in the drapery trade, whereas her now widowed mother, was still living in Eynsham (aged 60) with her sons, John and Allan, who were both farmers. Two years later, her sons emigrated to Australia.

## *Becoming a Preacher*

Our next records of Jessie emerge in 1918, when a Miss Eltham and a Miss Somerton were mentioned as suitable 'auxiliaries' in the Local Preachers Minutes of the Banbury Wesleyan Methodist Circuit. Auxiliaries ('stand-in' but not official Local Preachers) were used during the First World War when many Local Preachers were on active duty.

By June 1918, Miss Eltham was attending the Local Preachers' meeting and in the Banbury Guardian for Thursday July 11th 1918 we learn that she took the annual anniversary services at the Calthorpe Street Wesleyan Mission, quite high profile occasions albeit that they were geared towards children and their parents.

By September 1918 Miss Eltham was admitted 'on trial' and was 'fully received' in June the next year. This puts her amongst the first cohort of women to become local preachers in 20th century Wesleyan Methodism. (The early 19th century Wesleyan ban on women preachers had been lifted in 1910).

The September 1919 Minutes record that a Recognition Service for new Local Preachers, including Jessie, had taken

place and that it was ‘of a very impressive character’. They also record that Miss Eltham was about to move to Oxford.

The Oxford Wesleyan Local Preachers’ Meeting minutes for December 1919 duly note that Miss Eltham had arrived in Oxford, her address being 1 Henry Road. She preached four times in the first six months of 1920 at New Hinksey (twice) and at Headington Quarry and New Headington. We think this makes Jessie the first fully accredited female local preacher to have taken services in Oxford.

### *Challenges and Change*

However, on 22 September 1921, in response to the question about any resignations, the Minutes record: ‘Miss Eltham, having joined the United Methodist Church., wishes her name to be removed from Full Plan but expressed her willingness to help..’

It is hard to explain this move. The United Methodist Church (UMC) was one of a series of ‘breakaway’ denominations that fractured Methodism in the 60 or so years following Wesley’s death, causing rivalry and some animosity. However by 1921, relations were a great deal better and moves were afoot to re-unite the various branches – which actually happened in 1932.

Circuit Plans for the Wesleyan churches for 1920 and 1921, list Jessie Eltham as an accredited Local Preacher, but after those first four appointments, she is not given any more. It is not clear whether this was a result of her moving to the United Methodists or if she simply felt more at home there.

UMC Circuit Plans show that Jessie conducted at least 26 acts of worship between 1924 and 1932, both at the largest church in St Michael’s Street (now *Bills* restaurant) and also at Rose Hill, Kidlington, Steeple Aston and Woodstock. She preached on Sundays and at morning and evening acts of worship during the week, quite a substantial commitment of time and energy overall.

### *Reconciliation*

In 1932, the various Methodist branches re-united to form the current Methodist Church. We know that Jessie continued to preach, although there is a break in appointments around the time of her mother’s death. Less than a year later, on 6 September 1936, Jessie preached at Eynsham Methodist Church. This would have been in the same building where she had once attended Sunday School.

In 1939 Jessie, still living at 1 Henry Road, is recorded as a ‘boarding house keeper’ with two female boarders. We do not know whether she had any other form of employment. Jessie continued to preach around the Circuit until the end of the Second World War, when she seems to have retired, although she had one further appointment, again at Eynsham in the summer of 1949.

### *Later Life*

The last 10 years of Jessie’s life is the period we know least about. She died on 11 April 1959. In the minutes of the Local Preachers’ Meeting on the 28th May 1959 we read: “The names on the plan were read and the death of Bro. W S Bayliss and Sister J F Eltham was reported. The meeting stood to their memory and prayer was offered by the Chairman.”

### *Conclusion*

Jessie’s story is a fascinating example of how political circumstances gave women like Jessie the opportunity both to lead worship and preach in public for the first time. Despite challenges she continued faithfully in this calling as long as she was able. Whilst she may have been the daughter who looked after her parents, this role did not define or ultimately limit her.

Sadly we know of no one in the present Circuit who is old enough to remember Jessie. However, I am sure Hugh Price Hughes would have been delighted to know that his vision to establish chapels in rural villages had such a positive result. We certainly are!

*Alison Butler*



## Discendi, Amor santo

When our recent ‘Songs of Praise’ service was announced, I had thought I would like to present *Come down, O Love divine*, one of my very favourite hymns, and one which we chose for our wedding service. However, I realised I had so much to say that it might be too long, and better delivered in a readable form!

Many times, fascinated by the language I later learned, I had read the early Tuscan-Italian line which headed hymn 273 in the *Methodist Hymn Book*, and wondered what the whole original was, and where I might find it. If ever.

The *Companion to Hymns and Psalms* tells us that the original hymn was written at some point in the mid-thirteenth century; and that the groups who circulated their worship songs in the vernacular so early on were very probably dissenting groups in the mediaeval church. Protesters before the Reformation! It was published six centuries later in a collection entitled *Laudi spirituali del Bianco da Siena*, in Lucca in 1851.

In the fullness of time, a few years ago, my googling of ‘Discendi Amor santo’ produced the desired result, bringing up all eight verses of the original poem. The first stanza gives a clear idea of the theme – the Pentecostal fire – in language that is very easy to follow!

<i>Discendi, amor santo,</i>	Come down, holy love
<i>Visita la mie mente</i>	Visit my mind
<i>Del tuo amore ardente,</i>	with your burning love
<i>Si che di te</i>	So that with you
<i>m’infiammi tutto quanto.</i>	I am all aflame.

Amazingly, the English translation that we know so well dates from 1867, a mere 16 years after the appearance of the *Laudi spirituali*, when writer and clergyman R.F. Littledale published it in his *People’s Hymnal*. And there, despite its evident poetic worth, and its brilliant condensing into four verses of the eight originals, it languished in obscurity, until composer Ralph Vaughan Williams came along in 1906.

In collaboration with the Revd Percy Dearmer, Vaughan Williams compiled and published in 1906 the *English Hymnal*, which set out to revive the flagging standard of hymnody in the Anglican tradition with “a collection of the best hymns in the English language”. Plus some new ones, like *Come down O love divine*; and some unforgettable tunes and arrangements by the composer. This challenge to *Hymns Ancient and Modern* so displeased the Archbishop of Canterbury, that, seemingly unable to recognise the high quality of the music, he banned its use for a time.

Vaughan Williams wrote a tune for this ‘new’ hymn and called it *Down Ampney* in honour of his birthplace near Cirencester, where his father was parish priest at the time. (Photo) Tunes are being more frequently swapped over



from one hymn to another, but, thankfully, *Down Ampney* (so far) belongs only to these words. The eminent composer William H. Harris also wrote a tune, *North Petherton*, for the words, because the antagonism between *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and the *English Hymnal* had resulted in a ‘copyright issue’ (lasting until 1983!) whereby *A&M* could not publish *Down Ampney*! Harris’s is a fine tune but it never overtook the original.

And so we have it still, through the *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933), *Hymns and Psalms* (1983) and into *Singing the Faith* (2011), this glorious and most singable hymn. For me, it unites us with our earliest ‘protestant’ brothers and sisters in 13th century Italy, a studious 19th century cleric who rediscovered it, and a famous and well-loved 20th century English composer who claimed not to be a believer, but gave so much music to the church in Britain.

It remains one of the finest hymns in our tradition and a great blessing which we own and share!

*Kate Dobson*

## Dorothy Elizabeth (Betty) Lawes (1917-2019)

Betty was born in Nottingham in the Spring of 1917. Hers was an interesting family: her parents were active in politics in Clay Cross, and so Betty grew up with a strong ethic of social service and an equally strong commitment to education. There was an exotic aunt or maybe a great-aunt in the family, who was rescued from Russia at the time of the Revolution by Betty's uncle (or great-uncle) and who subsequently married him.

At school Betty was a keen hockey player; from school she went to Southlands College, in South London, to train as a teacher. Southlands was a Methodist teacher-training college, sister institution to Westminster, but Betty apparently wasn't too impressed by the courses. Proximity to London, for concerts and dances, and the chance to hear some celebrity preachers, was much more appealing.

After Southlands and a job in Chesterfield, Betty went to Durham University to study for an MA in theology. A truly life-changing experience. At Durham Betty met Jim, on a blind date; and encountered some of the finest scholars of the day, including Michael Ramsey, later Archbishop of Canterbury, and Kingsley Barrett, the great Methodist New Testament scholar. Betty said that Kingsley Barrett later told her that supervising her studies delayed the completion of his massive Commentary on John's Gospel.

Betty and Jim were married, moved around as Jim's research took him to different places, and then came to Oxford in 1959, to work at Westminster College, itself newly transplanted from London to Harcourt Hill. Betty enjoyed teaching; she enjoyed the collegiate atmosphere at Westminster; and she cherished great and lasting admiration and respect for Trevor Hughes, the Principal. And of course she became involved with Wesley Memorial. Interestingly, back then this was a 'posh' church, as Betty remembered it. Betty continued to value the worship and fellowship of this congregation over an astounding sixty years.

As befitted a Durham theologian and pupil of Kingsley Barrett, Betty's faith was real and deep, but never pushy or obtrusive. She had no time for pious platitudes; she appreciated thoughtful preaching, and she said so. Jim's death in the Autumn of 2008 was a dreadful blow to Betty. Despite the love and care of many friends, she remained lonely for the rest of her life. She retained her independence to the end, latterly with a live-in carer, and she came to church as often as she could, thanks to kind friends who provided lifts. She celebrated her 100th birthday just over two years ago, and her sharpness of mind was undimmed by the passage of time. Betty died on 12 October 2019, following a brief illness. MW

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## Edna Irene Longshaw (1925-2019)

Edna Longshaw was born in Oxford in February 1925. Her mother was a Belgian refugee who had come to Britain during the First World War; her father worked for the Central Electricity Board. The family lived in Jericho, and Edna continued to remember with great affection the close community life of their neighbourhood.

During the Second World War Edna worked as a rat killer, visiting Oxfordshire farms. This entitled her to a car and a petrol allowance, and, having learned to drive (without the need to take a driving test), she remained a keen driver until her 90th year.

Edna married George Longshaw in 1947. When they moved to their second home, in Hurst Rise Road, they met Harry and Olive Townsend, and Olive and Edna became lifelong friends and partners in a wide range of activities.



Over a relatively short period, Edna lost her mother (aged 97), George, and then their daughter Kim. Edna continued to find friendship and support at Wesley Memorial, and was cared for by her daughter Annette as her health deteriorated. Eventually Edna moved into Bridge House, Abingdon, where she died peacefully on 27 October 2019. MW

# Heard it on the grapevine...



## Baptisms

Gregory Alexander Goddard Jones, 1 December 2019  
Humphrey Peter Blainey, 2 February 2020

## Deaths

Edna Irene Longshaw, 27 October 2019.  
Joan Gordon, 15 February 2020.

## New Members

Matthew and Rachael Fletcher, received by transfer from  
Nexus/Walcot Methodist Church

Lauren Vollmer Forrow, received by transfer from  
Harvard/Epworth United Methodist Church, USA

## Notes from Church Council

An extraordinary Church Council Meeting was held on 23 January 2020 to discuss financial updates, Open Doors Phase 4b and Oxford Zero Emissions Zone.

At the meeting on 24 February 2020, the meeting noted:

- A church response to the City Council's proposed Oxford Zero Emissions Zone had been submitted.
- The success of the Winter Light Night event.
- Discussions to find a permanent location for the scale model of the Church, probably within the Church sanctuary.

- The continued need for more Junior Church leaders and helpers.
- Information about legacies is available.
- The new speakers are now in place in the John Wesley Room, Hall and Choir vestry to relay sound from the sanctuary.
- The need to keep up to date with developing guidance on precautions necessary due to Coronavirus.

*Janet Forsaith, Secretary to the Church Council*

## Late New Year Party 1st February

We are all given different gifts, says St Paul, and together we make one body. Some gifts are more unexpected than others – the ability to bounce table tennis balls into umbrellas, for example, or, behind your back, to roll in soft toys on lengths of string. Some are widely shared – knowledge of nursery rhymes, for example – and some more specialised, such as a knowledge of German nursery rhymes! Some are loud, such as bass guitar and saxophone on *I wanna hold your hand*, and some more gentle: the last notes of *Let it be* on a recorder.

And food! Quiches and stews, potatoes and salads, pavlovas and profiteroles, jelly and cream. All combining to make one feast. With almost twelve baskets of food to take away afterwards.

Such was our very enjoyable church party this year. Many thanks to the stewards, to Kath and Jon Ridley, and to Rockfish, for organising it so well.

*Janet Forsaith*



*Ping-pong balls & umbrellas*



*Rolling in the soft toys!*



# 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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Wednesday prayers 12.30 pm

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Contributions, letters, questions, pictures, book reviews and any other suitable items for publication are always welcome. Please email them to the editorial team, stating if you are willing for them to appear on the church website. Items may be edited.

Articles express the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Wesley Memorial Church or of the Methodist Church.

## Dates for the diary

Thursday 9 April 7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Communion at New Road Baptist Church
Friday 10 April 10.00 am	Good Friday Service at St Columba's URC
Sunday 12 April 10.30 am	Easter Communion at Wesley Memorial
Friday 24 to Sunday 26 April	Church weekend break at High Leigh, Hoddesdon
Saturday 9 May	Christian Aid Street Mkt
Sunday 10 May 11.00 am	United service at St Columba's URC
Sunday 17 May 12.00	General Church Meeting
Sunday 24 May 6.30 pm	District Ordinands' Testimony Service at Wesley Memorial
Sunday 7 June	Hospitality Sunday
Sunday 14 June 10.30 am	The Revd the Lord Griffiths preaching at Wesley Memorial
Friday 19 June 6.00 pm	Evensong at Christ Church –
	Marks the Tercentenary of John Wesley's matriculation
Saturday 27 June	Wesley Historical Society AGM & Lecture, at Wesley Memorial
Thursday 9 July 7.30 pm	Wesley Memorial Lecture Professor Clive Marsh
Sunday 26 July	Revd Dr Neil Richardson preacher at Wesley Memorial; speaker at lunchtime meeting.

*Deadline for the next issue:  
22 May 2020*

## WESLEY MEMBRAN THE 4 STAGES OF RECONCILIATION

