



Beeston **Methodist** Church

Newsletter



February 2023

It's 2023!

Welcome to 2023, and the first Beeston Methodist Church Newsletter of the year.

This issue includes several articles from the Methodist website. Our President, Rev Graham Thompson, tells us about the most inspirational place he has visited during his presidential year and Anthony Boateng, our vice-President, tells us about SCRAP Weapons' campaign for disarmament. With an article detailing the impact of climate change in Africa, it is heartening to read that the number of Methodist Churches participating in Eco Church increased by seventy percent in a year.

I hope you enjoy your read!

Mark Ramsey – Editor

Beeston Methodist Church Newsletter – February 2023

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Any articles for inclusion in the next issue should be emailed by 16th February to newsletter@beestonmethodist.church. Articles may be edited for space.

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Front cover photo: Mark Ramsey

Minister's message

So far this year we seem to have had rain every day for weeks – and some of those dull days have been pretty depressing - winter can be a bad time for many people anyway – and dull weather doesn't help!

But one day earlier this week I saw a rainbow as the rain-clouds parted and the sun caught the raindrops, and always a rainbow makes me smile.

Thinking recently of God's offer of covenant relationship with all people, I realised how relevant the symbol of the rainbow being used as a symbol of **inclusion** is: we say, "all the colours of the rainbow," and, "the full spectrum." These phrases predated the adoption of the rainbow by the LGBT+ movement. And maybe people have learned through this that the rainbow is not just a weather phenomenon but is a symbol of everyone being included. God's early expression of his covenant relationship with people was made with Noah through the appearance of the rainbow after the flood. God kept renewing that offer of covenant relationship – in Deuteronomy 29:10-15 the last line says, "I am making this covenant not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God **but also with those who are not here today.**"

Not only has the Lord God offered to form a covenant relationship with the Israelites, and not just with the leaders and chief men and elders and officials –but he included all the other men, *and* the women and the children... and not only just Israelite people – but also the people from other nations and faiths living amongst them; **and then** he includes not only those standing there, but those "*not here today*".

God confirms all of these as his people, that he may be their God. Reading through that list of people included in this offer of covenant relationship I can't think of anyone on earth at any time in history who isn't included.

For anyone who has experienced *exclusion* of any kind, the message of God's inclusion is a great blessing. For us who desire to follow Jesus and to show God's love as he did, this is a challenge to examine our own actions and words to see if *we* either inadvertently or even deliberately exclude someone who may be different to us in some way. This active attention to the way we live is an important part of our response to God's offer of covenant relationship with us –we who

have benefited from that inclusion by God to be God’s people, especially since we are not Jews nor were we present on the day that Moses spoke God’s invitation.

I said that when I see a rainbow it makes me smile – a smile that arises from the joy of hope. As we gather to worship God every Sunday we remember that first day of the week when Jesus rose to life, defeating death, renewing hope. And a great part of that hope is in, one day, **all things** (all people, all of creation) being reconciled to God.

As the rain clouds clear and the rainbow appears and we remember God’s offer of a covenant relationship of love, then our hope is restored and we can look forward to the year ahead with joy and maybe with a smile on our faces too.

Rev Christine

CORRECT PROCEDURES

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS AN...

ACCIDENT



WRITE IT IN THE 'ACCIDENTS' BOOK

INCIDENT



WRITE IT IN THE 'INCIDENTS' BOOK

AWKWARD SCENARIO



WRITE IT IN THE 'AWKWARD SCENARIOS' BOOK

EMBARRASSING MOMENT



WRITE IT IN THE 'EMBARRASSING MOMENTS' BOOK

Methodists offer warm welcome



Methodist churches have responded to the cost-of-living crisis by opening their doors to ensure that communities are not left out in the cold. More than 450 Methodist churches have now registered on the Warm Welcome website as being willing to offer somewhere for people to find heat, comfort and companionship. This makes the Methodists second only to the Church of England in uptake of the scheme.

One such church is Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church where Rev Gill Hulme is superintendent. Here, the church has expanded the welcome of some of its existing outreach projects and room-hires to ensure that the church is open for as many days as possible across the week.

Gill commented, "The synergy of working with charities has allowed us to open up our Oasis lounge to more people as a warm space and to offer a range of support for people involving organisations such as the Bishop Stortford Foodbank and Citizens Advice Bureau who also use our space. The organisations and charities we partner with have been very accommodating, opening themselves up to new people. We are fortunate that the layout means you can rest and relax in one part of the lounge whilst activities, like our Tuesday craft mornings go on, and so families, men from our local night shelter and of course the ladies who are knitting all have the space to be included in the activities or simply have soup and a roll.

"Spaces have to be warm, safe and welcoming. Having things like jigsaws and newspapers around means that people can feel involved without having to hold conversations with strangers. However, I do go in there with my collar on and talk to those who want to chat, but I don't ask why they are here. One woman who came to us is now a volunteer. She said to me, 'This is what church should be, this place has been a lifesaver.' "

16 January. The full article can be found at www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/methodists-offer-warm-welcome

BMC offers a warm space every Tuesday 2-4pm. We thank all the volunteers who make this possible.

Update from the Leadership Team

It has been a difficult few months for BMC, with the uncertainty and worry about problems in the circuit ministerial team and the ultimate curtailment of Rev. Ali Jones' ministry. We will have opportunity to say farewell to Ali and Jenny at Ali's leaving service which is being held at BMC on Sunday 12th March at 5pm.

We are pleased that, subject to Methodist Conference approval, we will be welcoming Rev. Tony Malcolm as superintendent minister and Rev. Andrew Checkley as our minister at BMC in September.

We are grateful for the **Season of Peace** which was introduced to us in the Autumn with a peace theme often woven into our worship and also prayer sessions held in the church as part of Week of Prayer for World Peace. The theme continues with the 5 part bible study course currently in progress which has been well attended. Our thanks to Sally and Mark Ramsey for introducing the Season of Peace to us and encouraging us to take part, and also to the Worship Group.

The new **Warm Space** initiative is now operational with regular visitors. Our thanks go to the team of BMC volunteers who are running this. The support and monitoring of this initiative will be the responsibility of the Mission and Outreach group.

The **Christingle** service in December was well attended and appreciated by all ages who enjoyed making their Christingles.

The **Salvation Army Band** concert on the evening of 21st December was a joy and wonderful to see such a large audience filling the church. Over £800 in donations was raised which is split between BMC Mission Possible and the Salvation Army.

We are pleased that **Leprosy Mission** speaker Guy Wilcock will be joining us for our morning service on Sunday 16th April.

A **Back to Church Sunday** service is planned in the near future. Further details will follow in due course.

We would like to connect further with our local **Girls Brigade** so that the young people feel part of our church community. There are various ways in which we

could do this. If you are interested in being involved please speak to one of the team or our Church Administrator Karen Jowett.

Following the recent challenges experienced at BMC, the Leadership Team have produced a memorial to Methodist Conference 2023 in consultation with the circuit leadership team and other circuit churches, with the purpose of improving current processes. The memorial requests the following:

- The involvement of an independent professional body to manage/co-ordinate the processing of complaints.
- The provision of specific and separate third-party support for circuit leadership teams and individual congregations affected by complaints involving any member(s) of their ministerial teams during and after the processing of these complaints.

Claire Milligan, on behalf of the Leadership Team

Honorary Doctorate awarded to Rev Sonia Hicks

The Rev Sonia Hicks, past President of the Methodist Conference, is to be awarded an honorary doctorate from Oxford Brookes University in recognition of her achievements in the Methodist Church, particularly around the development of the Church's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy for racial equality and its acceptance of same sex marriage.

Sonia will accept The Honorary Doctorate of the Letters during a ceremony to take place at the university's Headington Campus on Saturday, 27 May where she will also give a brief speech to the students who are graduating that day.

Sonia commented, "I have to say that I was stunned - I even phoned up the Chancellor's office to make sure that it was intended for me!

"I am delighted that I was selected but I see this as an award for the whole Methodist Connexion in Britain and the steps it is taking towards inclusivity. I pray that as we rollout the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Strategy we will continue to share God's table with people who have not always been welcomed consistently."

19 January 2023. Taken from www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/honorary-doctorate-awarded-to-the-revd-sonia-hicks

Update from the Redevelopment Group

Planning application

This went in just before Christmas. We hope to get a response in March.

Bats in the Belfry (well, spire actually!)

We have evidence of bats having roosted recently in the spire. In the rest of the roof space there are lots of places that bats would love to have as a baby bat nursery so the experts can't be sure they haven't been there as well. This means that we have to wait for a further assessment in May when they will be looking for bats coming in and out once the breeding season starts. If present, this will have some effect on timing of the work and making sure the entrances and exits aren't blocked. We may be able to start some of the work on the spire but are awaiting confirmation of this.

Hall

We are delighted with the acoustic panels that went up at the end of December. They have made the hall brighter, added some subtle colour and the sound is considerably improved.

Timetable

It is likely to be September at the earliest and possibly going into 2024 before the building work can start. Once we have planning permission (assuming Broxtowe has no major problems with it) the architects will start the detailed planning with the consultants. We also need to get up to date likely costings. Then we will go out to firms to tender for the work. Once planning permission is gained, we can start grant applications.

The hall is now ready for us to move in for worship. This won't be for several months, but it is important that plans are made in good time to make this move. We have asked Church Council to start thinking about the issues that will need to be sorted out. For example:

- Storage of furniture that won't be used in the hall;
- Movement each week of chairs etc. that we will need in the hall each Sunday and storage between Sundays;
- Change of AV system from church to hall;
- Arrangements for side entrance and coffee bar when this is out of action;

- Arrangements for bookings.

Can you think of other things that need to be considered? If so, or if you would be interested in being part of a group of people making arrangements, please talk to a member of the leadership team or the redevelopment group and we will pass you on to the appropriate person.

These are going to be exciting times. Let's try and ensure that things go as smoothly as possible.

Chris Bridges and Connie Pullan, on behalf of the Development Group

Update from the Communications Team

We are grateful for the various people who continue to try to ensure that our church members and friends and the outside world are informed of what is happening at Beeston Methodist Church. We ask that those of you, who do read the notices and newsletter, look at any posters, the website and anywhere else that information about BMC appears and see anything which is out of date, incorrect or giving a confusing message, let us know so that things can be changed.

In January an effort has been made to have all the links on the church website activated and website content, the poster boards, welcome leaflets and packs updated. In some cases that was the name of the minister and list of our current church charities and also the list of groups currently meeting on the premises.

Social media is also being used and this may be one of the reasons that so many came to the Salvation Army Band concert. You can help by spreading the news of events to your contacts through WhatsApp, Facebook etc. Details should be on the church notices. The recording of the Sunday service is now available for anyone to see and we know there are people in other parts of the country and abroad who appreciate sharing in that service. When a Kenyan friend realised what the Carol Choir does he organised with his minister for a group from his church to go singing round the streets of Chogoria on Christmas Eve.

As a member or friend of Beeston Methodist Church you can do your part in sharing the news about what is happening.

Colin Firbank, on behalf of the Communications Team

Climate Change: Finding ways to mitigate a global issue



I was standing on the edge of a village in rural Tanzania in October.

About 25 women were waiting patiently with empty containers beside the village water supply. This is a water-hole, the only source for the village and its surrounding area, providing drinking water, washing and cooking water and irrigation for the fields. It was little more than a puddle, not enough to fill a small, single bucket.

After hours of waiting and hoping that some water may ‘bubble up’ from the ground, the women walked back to their homes with empty containers. This year, yet again, the rains have failed. Two months after the rains should have begun, the ground is parched and dusty. At a time when harvest should be approaching, the crops have not even been planted.

This is not an isolated occurrence. In recent months I have travelled across Central, East and Southern Africa and witnessed similar scenes throughout the continent. The devastating drought and repeated failure of the rains, caused by climate change, extends from the Horn of Africa, as far south as Mozambique. Huge swathes of agricultural land have no crops and are becoming a dustbowl. There is now real concern across Africa about the possibility of widespread famine next year.

Villagers all say the same thing; in recent years, weather patterns have become totally unpredictable. The normal, seasonal, patterns have disappeared and the dry, barren land that results becomes badly eroded when the rains finally do arrive, creating floods that are destructive of the environment and of the societies that depend on it, often requiring an international relief response.

Climate change has far-reaching human social and political consequences that create instability on an international scale. Typically, it is the poorest and most vulnerable people that are most affected, but the hardship created by climate change does not remain localised.

As the land is denuded, pressure between groups of people for its use, for example between settled and herding people, increases. In parts of Africa, this tension has led to extreme violence. As people from different communities compete for advantage and control of declining resources, existing tensions of culture and religion intensify in a way that has lasting, dangerous implications across borders.

Climate change is making some areas uninhabitable and is contributing hugely to food insecurity in numerous nations. These conditions have caused a significant move from rural to urban areas of Africa.

As population and unemployment levels increase in towns and cities, internal migration becomes less attractive with an increasing number of people seeking to migrate externally. Notwithstanding the possible contributions that migrants can make to the countries in which they settle, this movement of people in search of a better life can put social and economic strain on the receiving countries, many of them poor themselves, whilst reducing the human resource and capacity within the countries of origin.

Given the extent of the environmental challenges across Africa, many attempt to migrate north to Europe, using three routes: across the Mediterranean from Libya or Tunisia to Italy; from West Africa to the Canary Islands; and from Morocco to Spain. Despite the multiple and considerable dangers of all of these routes, the number of attempted migrations via these routes is high and are likely to increase as the consequences of climate change, which include political instability and conflict, make life more difficult and even unbearable in some of the most affected regions.

However, there are solutions.

Throughout Africa, local agriculture projects are seeking to increase crop yields, to plant trees and fruit plantations that will not only provide food, but re-invigorate the soil. Large infrastructure projects could also pipe water from mountain regions and lakes in Africa to more arid areas far from substantial water supplies. Whilst the cost of national infrastructure projects may seem high, it is nothing compared to the cost of supporting the millions of migrants, managing conflicts and doing nothing to prevent environmental degradation.

It is incumbent on those countries guilty of the industrial practices and policies that contribute the most to climate change to address these challenges at home.



In 2021 the global arms trade was valued at over one trillion dollars. It would be better for the international community, rather than prioritising the success of those industries that facilitate conflict, to enable and support the transformative, life-giving projects across the world. Governments have a moral and political responsibility to reconsider their economic priorities and their long-term impact on the planet and on humanity.

Climate change has a devastating impact on tens of millions of the most vulnerable people and Methodist partners all over the world are undertaking projects to mitigate its consequences at a local level. A few months ago, the Director of Humanitarian Relief and Church Development in the Methodist Church in Kenya said: “Climate change will soon be THE number one issue we have to address in our Christian ministry and service.”

Initiatives on a local and national scale can mitigate some of the consequences of climate change. For example, The Methodist Church in Britain has now funded the construction of a bore-hole in the village mentioned at the beginning of this article. This will transform the lives of all the villagers and provide irrigation water for the fields.

Climate change affects us all, it is both a practical and a theological issue. We are deeply aware of how connected the social, political and even religious implications of climate change can be. It is incumbent upon the developed nations to take note of the reality of the impact of climate change on some of the poorest places on the planet, and to seek transformative solutions to mitigate its effects.

The Methodist Church In Britain, with its partners globally, is committed to playing its part in contributing to this goal.

Dr. Andrew Ashdown, Partnership Coordinator for Africa

Taken from www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/climate-change-finding-ways-to-mitigate-a-global-issue

There is Room for the Homeless



I was asked which had been the most inspirational place that I have visited during my time as President of the Conference. I paused just to be sure before replying that this would be the Whitechapel Mission in London. It isn't that the other places weren't inspirational; so many of them are. It is just that the Mission has – so far – been the most inspirational.

I was invited to preach at the Mission's 146th Anniversary but also invited to visit the Mission beforehand so as to better understand the context of the Anniversary service. My visit was hosted by the Director, Tony Miller, who has been leading the outreach at Whitechapel for over forty years.

Like those who run foodbanks, the Staff at the Whitechapel Mission wish that it wasn't needed. But recent statistics indicate that it is needed more than ever as the number of Guests is rising each month as the cost of living crisis hits and hurts more and more people. This Methodist mission project has grown to become a 365 day a year operation, sometimes feeding up to 600 Guests a day and offering shower facilities and fresh clothes to any in need. The staff are also available to help their Guests make changes in their lives and move on from homelessness.

What is so inspirational about the Whitechapel Mission? Namely that a team of dedicated people are reaching out in the name of Christ to meet the needs of homeless people in London. Their dedication means that there is something to offer everyday and each day starts with a Full English Breakfast. The Staff and Trustees work with daily teams of volunteers and have to raise over £1.7M a year to keep the enterprise going.

The Mission is a shining star in the Methodist sky and deserves our prayers and support.

Rev Graham Thompson, President of the Conference, 19 December

Adapted from www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-president-and-vice-president-of-the-conference/the-blog-of-the-president-and-vice-president-of-conference/there-is-room-for-the-homeless

Find out more about the Mission at whitechapel.org.uk

Bible reading: No us and them

Something to read

“Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household... This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 12:3, 11-13

Something to think about

The Passover story is part of the great liberation narrative of the Hebrew Bible. We read of families eating their lamb stood up and ready to go, it is the beginning of the escape out of slavery in Egypt. It's worth us pausing to consider the role of the sacrificial lamb in this epic tale.

After Pharaoh's refusal to let the Israelite people go into the desert, and nine plagues sent from God in consequence, we might well think we know who deserves to be under the judgement of God. Most of us have a tendency to read ourselves into a story as the 'good guys'! But when the judgement of God passes over the land, the Israelites don't escape it because of their goodness. Instead, they need to rely on God's provision of grace.

The Christian message calls us to accept that none of us are truly good. As we look at the injustices rife in the world around us, and the oppressive actions of nations and societies together, there's no 'us' and 'them'. We are all culpable in the brokenness of our world, and need the saving grace of God, given through the Lamb.

Something to do

Write a note of confession for the ways that you, as we all do, play a part in the unjust systems and structures of our society. Burn it, or destroy it in another way, recognising Jesus' forgiveness is for you.

Something to pray

Jesus, Lamb of God, I'm sorry for the ways that I hurt others through my own small actions, and through my share in structural sin. Thank you for the forgiveness and redemption that you give to me. Amen.

The contributor is Rev Claire Jones.

Taken from www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/daily-bible-readings

Praying for Peace

May God bless us with discomfort
At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships
So that we may live from deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger
At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of God's creations
So that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with tears
To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,
So that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with just enough foolishness
To believe that we can make a difference in the world,
So that we can do what others claim cannot be done:
To bring justice and kindness to all our children and all our neighbours who are poor.
Amen.

Benediction of St. Francis. Taken from www.edgefieldadvertiser.com/2019/12/a-franciscan-benediction

A Force More Powerful



As followers of the Prince of Peace, we learn about violence and wars throughout history, but are rarely told about successful campaigns of nonviolence. *A Force More Powerful* is a documentary series which tells this story – six examples of how nonviolent power overcame oppression and authoritarian rule in the 20th century.

India

In India in the 1930s, after Gandhi had returned from South Africa, he and his followers adopted a strategy of refusing to cooperate with British rule. Through civil disobedience and boycotts, they successfully loosened their oppressors' grip on power and set India on the path to freedom.

USA

In the 1960s, Gandhi's nonviolent weapons were taken up by black college students in Nashville, Tennessee. Disciplined and strictly nonviolent, they successfully desegregated Nashville's downtown lunch counters in five months, becoming a model for the entire civil rights movement.

South Africa

In 1985, a young South African named Mkhuseleli Jack led a movement against the legalized discrimination known as apartheid. Their campaign of nonviolent mass action, and a powerful consumer boycott in Eastern Cape province, awakened whites to black grievances and fatally weakened business support for apartheid.

Denmark

In April 1940, German military forces invaded Denmark. Danish leaders adopted a strategy of *resistance disguised as collaboration* – undermining German objectives by negotiating, delaying, and obstructing Nazi demands. Underground resistance organized sabotage and strikes, and rescued all but a handful of Denmark's seven thousand Jews.

Poland

In 1980, striking workers in Poland demanded independent unions. Using their leverage to negotiate unprecedented rights in a system where there was no power separate from the Communist Party, they created a union called

Solidarity. Driven underground by a government crackdown in 1981, Solidarity re-emerged in 1989 as Poland's governing political party.

Chile

In 1983, Chilean workers initiated a wave of nonviolent protests against the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. Severe repression failed to stop the protests, and violent opposition failed to dislodge the dictatorship – until the democratic opposition organized to defeat Pinochet in a 1988 referendum.

See the documentary at www.nonviolent-conflict.org/force-powerful-english

Mark Ramsey

TPNW Update

Two years ago today the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into legal force. Nuclear weapons are officially banned under international law, just like chemical and biological weapons. Since that date more than 90 states have signed the Treaty with dozens formally joining as States Parties.

During the First Meeting of States Parties in Vienna last year a clear roadmap was produced for the Treaty. The TPNW has brought a new energy too the global campaign for nuclear disarmament – something for which we thank God.

The TPNW has the support of the overwhelming majority of global states. 122 voted in favour of it after the lengthy negotiations in 2017, and recently even more states voted in support of the Treaty at the United Nations. Despite the treaty having the support of the majority of states, churches, other faiths and civil society across the world, nuclear-armed states have so far failed to engage with the TPNW. We continue to pray that this attitude would change in the coming months and years.

To mark the anniversary, Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament joined other peace groups in delivering a letter to the Foreign Secretary, calling for meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament. The letter calls on the UK government to engage with the Treaty with a view to making progress towards nuclear disarmament.

Taken from an email from Christian CND dated 24 January. It can be viewed at <https://mailchi.mp/1ae73a77ac12/ccndjune22-13706280?e=840cff8ca8>

Methodist success in Eco Church Awards



More Methodist churches are signing up to be part of the Eco Church award scheme operated by A Rocha UK.

Participation in the Eco Church awards for the 12 months until June 2022 shows an increase of 70 percent for Methodist Churches over the previous year. In that period, 94 churches achieved a Bronze award, 28 churches achieved a Silver award and one, the Methodist / URC Emmanuel Church in Bungay in the East Anglia District, received a Gold award.

There are now more than 640 Methodist and Local Ecumenical Partnership churches registered for Eco Church, with four churches having achieved Gold.

The Eco Church award scheme is a national community of churches from all denominations addressing the environmental crisis, using a common framework, an online toolkit of resources and the award survey, as well as learning and speaking up together.

Three award levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold encourage churches to engage more deeply with the environment within worship and teaching, buildings and land management, community and global engagement and lifestyle. The awards are not an end, but a means to help churches embed caring for creation across every area of church life.

Jude Levermore, Head of Mission at the Methodist Church, commented, “Living sustainably is an essential part of our calling, which we are living out in the context of a global climate emergency. The Methodist Conference has committed our Church to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030 and the increasing number of Gold and Silver Eco churches are leading the way. It is great to see how Eco Church is inspiring action in our churches and bringing people together. Eco Church will be an important part of the Methodist ‘Hope in Action’ agenda over the coming years.”

Helen Stephens, Church Relations Manager from A Rocha UK, commented, “Awareness of the deepening climate and biodiversity crises has been brought

into searing focus by the summer heatwave, but together, the Methodist Church and A Rocha UK's Eco Church programme offer a hopeful way to respond to the environmental crisis.

“There is something each one of us can do to help change the course that we're on. And it needs every one of us to do something. If we want to grow future generations in our churches, then the environment is one of the biggest priorities on which they want to see action.”

7 December 2022. Adapted from www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/methodist-success-in-eco-church-awards

BMC Church Charities 2022-23



**The Leprosy
Mission**
England and Wales

Macular Society
Beating Macular Disease



The total raised by January 4th was £6188.83

eBay	£3579.68	Donations	£318.36
Other items	£798.44	Recycled books & CDs	£297.76
Coffee mornings	£482.71	Coffee bar	£400.96
Money jars	£177.52	Event refreshments	£63.40
Events	£70.00		

Recent contributions include £612 from ebay sales, £77 from recycled books and CDs and £74 from auction sales.

In December £5,000 was shared between the charities. The Macular Society received £2,500 which will be used to support research. HOPE Nottingham received £1,250 and will be used for the allotment. Leprosy Mission received £1,250 and this is being used to support children in Niger so they can attend school and have a uniform, shoes and a packed school bag.

Colin Firbank

Enjoy nature this New Year



Fall in love with nature in a new way this New Year! Here are some ideas to help you make 'enjoying nature' more intentional:

Bring nature into your home or garden. Plant a herb or flower as a reminder of our responsibility to steward God's earth. As you tend to this plant, prayerfully ask God how you might nurture nature better at home.

Take a wildlife quiz. From cool questions on the coldest regions to testing for knowledge on the deep blue sea, learn something new about nature alone or with your family with WWF's selection of fun quizzes.

Spot winter wildlife. Winter is still a great time to be outdoors and see wildlife. Soak up the seasonal sights on your doorstep or find out what you can see in different parts of the UK here.

Walk and Worship. Go for a walk in nature and note all the signs of the season. Use this time to reflect on the changing season and what we can be thankful for.

Write about or draw something that inspires you in nature. Try this one as a group activity and share your ideas and reflections.

Birdwatch. A great way to begin could be taking part in the Big Garden Birdwatch this January (27-29).

Visit an outstanding area of beauty in the UK. Many of our Partners in Action offer beautiful surroundings and even retreat days or weekends. Check out The National Trust's website for your nearest escape to nature too.

Get to your nearest green space more often. Time spent enjoying God's creation will help set your mind and seek the things that are above. Bring your sketch or note book, your Bible, or whatever helps you connect with our heavenly Father. Or perhaps God is inviting you to just bring yourself (with some extra layers!) and simply sit.

Bring a friend along! Next time you meet up with a friend, why not suggest an extended or brisk wintery walk together (don't forget your reusable coffee cups!)

Try out a new delicious meat-free recipe. What we eat impacts the earth's resources. Get creative in the kitchen and sample some tasty Meat Free Monday recipes from www.supportmfm.wpengine.com/our-recipes.

Grow your own. What could you grow inside your home, in the garden or even at church? Who can you bless along the way?

Plan a Wild Time! Plan something completely wild in nature for later this year. Experience kayaking, wild camping, forest school, forest church... Make it your resolution to really enjoy what nature has to offer this year. Break out of your normal routine and join a volunteer work party or take to the water for wild swimming. Whatever you do – do something different and have fun!

Jennifer Plummer, A Rocha UK Communications Officer

Taken from www.arocha.org.uk/ideas-to-enjoy-nature

The preacher's donkey

A man bought a donkey from a preacher. The preacher told the man that the donkey had been trained in a special way. The only way to make him go was to say, "Hallelujah." The only way to make him stop was to say, "Amen."

The man immediately got on the donkey to try it out. "Hallelujah!" he shouted and the donkey started to trot. "Amen!" shouted the man and the donkey stopped immediately.

"This is great," said the man. With a "Hallelujah!" he rode off very proud of his new purchase. The man travelled for a long time through some mountains. Soon he was heading towards a cliff. He couldn't remember the word to make the donkey stop.

"Stop!" said the man. "Halt!" he cried. The donkey just kept going. "Oh no... Bible... Church... Please Stop!" shouted the man. The donkey just trotted faster. He was now getting closer and closer to the edge of the cliff. Finally in desperation, the man said a prayer, "Please dear Lord. Please make this donkey stop. Amen."

The donkey came to an abrupt stop just one step from the edge of the cliff.

"HALLELUJAH!" shouted the man!

Journey towards peace



Towards the end of last year, I hosted faith leaders from different faith at Methodist Central Hall President's room to discuss issues of disarmament. Among many others, Rev Dr JC Park (President of World Methodist Council), Prof Dan Plesch (Professor of Diplomacy and Strategy at SOAS University), Steve Hucklesby (JPIT Policy Advisor) and supporters of a project called Scrap Weapons were all present.

Prior to this, along with Steve, JC Park and a few friends from JPIT we met up with Lord Paul Boateng and Lord Leslie Griffiths to engage in an informal discussion over coffee and lunch. Overall our friendship was deepened. We spoke about peace in general and how to work towards it.

This is particularly poignant in our current context. We held in mind that as the world suffers from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, rising levels of inflation, and a cost-of-living crisis so dire many will be unable to heat their homes this winter, \$2,000,000,000,000 are being committed annually to military spending under the guise of security and deterrence [1]. Nevertheless, one may simply look at Ethiopia, Iraq, Ukraine, Yemen and many other regions of the world to see that this is not the answer. For peace to be a reality tools of conflict and war must be scrapped.

Peace is the essence of religion and disarmament is at the heart of peace. Therefore, we call upon all faith groups to join *SCRAP Weapons'* call for General and Complete Disarmament. *SCRAP Weapons* is a disarmament project housed at SOAS University of London advocating for the elimination of all Weapons of Mass Destruction and the implementation of global controls and reductions of all other weaponry. Although one may argue that this is an unrealistic proposal, *SCRAP Weapons* seeks to shift the paradigm from a fragmented approach to a holistic and practical message, offering a draft treaty based on proven practice and provisions of pre-existing international agreements, as well as the prototype of a Global Weapons Tracking Portal to ensure agreements are being upheld. *SCRAP Weapons* are currently campaigning to activate a UN Special Session on

Disarmament (SSOD) to encourage states to advance the General and Complete Disarmament agenda in practice.

SCRAP Weapons' message and campaign for a UN SSOD are in line with the fundamental teachings of many faith groups: Hinduism preaches the ideal of Ahimsa, non-violence, the New Testament's Epistle to the Hebrews preaches to "strive for peace," whilst the very name of Islam is rooted in silm, making peace. *SCRAP Weapons* seeks to bring humanitarian concerns to the centre of international foreign policymaking and believes that an interfaith forum for disarmament would greatly contribute to widen the conversation, reiterating messages of peace and emphasising the need to bring an end to suffering as a result of conflict and war.

For more information on *SCRAP Weapons'* call to activate a UN Special Session on Disarmament please view our information pack and kindly visit www.scrapweapons.com

'UK Faith Leaders Conversation' has suggestions for further action. One area that we might each consider at this time is support for the call for a UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament. For advice on taking forward resolutions to ask for a new UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, contact Zahraa Kapasi zk8@soas.ac.uk .

*O God of hope, your prophets spoke
Of days when war would cease:
When, taught to see each person's worth,
And faithful stewards of the earth,
We all would live in peace,
We all would live in peace.*
Basil Bridge (b. 1927)

Anthony Boateng, Vice-President of the Conference, 30 November 2022

Taken from www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-president-and-vice-president-of-the-conference/the-blog-of-the-president-and-vice-president-of-conference/journey-towards-peace

[1] www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time

My Inclusive Church Story



I grew up in Sydney Australia in what I would these days label fundamentalist Christianity. There was no room for error, and despite it being spoken about frequently, there was no room for grace. As I matured, I soon learnt that there was certainly no room for gay people like me and I spent years in conversion therapy attempting to contort my life into the shape I was told honoured God. Eventually I left both the church and my faith. Eight years later, I decided to come out as gay, and a spiritual seeking emerged. I ended up in one of the tiny number of inclusive Anglican churches in Sydney before making real a life long dream to travel and spend time here in the UK where I have a lot of family.

With this newly rediscovered, more open, and inclusive faith, I was looking for inclusive spaces and found that at St Bride's in Liverpool. I discovered Inclusive Church through being at St Bride's which, in 2007, was the only registered inclusive church for many miles around. Having experienced what I had in the past, I was elated to see a charity committed to making our churches more inclusive spaces through education, advocacy and support. I just had to support this work and made a simple start with a small regular financial donation. As I learnt more, I helped organise hustings for General Synod, supported IC to hold a day conference in Liverpool and eventually becoming IC Ambassador for the Liverpool diocese/region. It has been a joy to walk beside churches as they journey to registration and, while certainly not down to me alone, we now have many more registered inclusive churches in the area.

I often hear people speak of inclusion as some fuzzy, post-modern fashion, and yet after 15 years of being part of IC and as a lay minister to Open Table Liverpool (an LGBTQIA+ congregation and part of the Open Table Network), I am convinced that inclusion is actually the beating heart of the gospel. If the gospel we preach isn't about tearing down barriers and time spent with those society push to the margins, then we aren't preaching Jesus' message. Inclusion really is the beating heart of the Gospel and that's something worth shouting about!

Warren Hartley. Warren is the LGBTQIA+ ministry facilitator for Open Table Liverpool and the IC regional ambassador for the Liverpool area.

Adapted from www.inclusive-church.org/2023/01/19/ic-story-warren-hartley

Embrace the Middle East

Prayer Diary



5 February

The Arkan Cultural Centre in Alexandria invites Christian and Muslim young people to learn technical and communication skills that will improve their chances in the job market. By working together, youths of different backgrounds build friendships and cultural understanding, which promotes cohesion in the wider community.

12 February

In the political turmoil of the occupied West Bank, olive trees – a major source of income for generations of Palestinians – are a target for Israeli settler attacks. Our Olive Tree Project helps replace the destroyed trees, both to support the livelihoods of future farmers and as a peaceful act of solidarity.

19 February

This week is the UN's World Day of Social Justice (20 February). We pray for all our partners in the Middle East as they strive for peace with justice amid some of the most challenging situations in the world.

26 February

The Maryamana Hospital in Erbil was established in 2020 to provide a high standard of medical care to disadvantaged people in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The hospital is led by the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese and offers a full range of services, including maternity care, an intensive care unit and an emergency department.

*"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end."*

Lamentations 3:22

From https://embraceme.org/s/Embrace-Prayer-Diary-Feb_July23-Web.pdf

Beeston Memory Café 2022

Beeston Memory Café, which offers support to people with dementia and their carers, meets weekly at The Middle Street Resource Centre from 2-4 pm. We started the New Year in January 2022, determined to resume 'as normal' after the disruption of the pandemic. This had meant no meetings at The Middle Street Resource Centre for a time and a period when communications were continued in various ways with those who had attended the sessions. As soon as meetings could be held in a limited way a rota was established and people attended once every 2 weeks.

On January 6th 2022, the first open meeting was held and weekly meetings were held all year. There is a pattern. On the first Thursday pupils from John Clifford come and play table games for an hour with the guests. Relaxation Therapy by 3 ladies is available on both the first and third Thursdays. On the second Thursday the carers are able to

have an hour together while Mary Hastings leads singing for those with dementia, supported by our volunteers. The third and fourth Thursdays are usually led by visiting individuals and groups. These can include entertainment, exercise, craft etc. and it is good that people with dementia can feel involved in what is provided.



Dancing at the New Year's Eve Party

There are some 'special' sessions, so in July there was a Garden Party, in September Memory Café celebrated its 8th birthday and in December there was both a Christmas Party and a New Year's Eve Party.

All of this is not possible without the support which is given in various ways. Financially there is a grant from Nottinghamshire County Council and we receive donations in memory of guests and from local groups who recognise what Memory Café offers. For our 'special' occasions there is also good support from local businesses in the form of food and raffle prizes.

Beeston Memory Café relies very much on its Trustees and Volunteers who are all dedicated to providing an enjoyable experience to all who come and also act as a provider of good advice, particularly to new carers as they come to terms with the situation. We are particularly keen to increase our volunteer numbers. This would suit someone who has had personal experience of caring for someone with dementia or is interested in it. Volunteers need to be over 18 years old.

If you are interested in finding out more about Beeston Memory Café, either because you are a carer or interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact us on 07846 403342, email info@beestonmemorycafe.com or visit the website at www.beestonmemorycafe.com

Colin Firbank

Repair Café

Have you ever wished that it was possible to get a broken household item repaired rather than throw it away and buy new?

The good news is that a Repair Café will be coming to Beeston. And we hope to run it from the Methodist Church, Chilwell Road. The idea is that members of the public bring their broken items; electrical, textile, wood, jewellery and others, and volunteer 'fixers' do their best to repair them, whilst you watch and learn. Refreshments and cake will be available to buy while you wait.

If you are someone who likes fixing things, we would love to hear from you, as the more volunteer fixers the more we can do. You don't have to be an expert and we don't expect to be able to repair everything but we will have fun trying.

Hang onto your broken items and watch this space, we hope to start in May. Please email klstainer@gmail.com if you can help.

BMC Mission Possible



Diane Wilson is thrilled at the support she has received for her **sponsored swim** in November. In total she raised £580 for BMC Mission Possible. Well done and thank you Diane.

The **Harlequin Autumn Concert** took place at BMC at 7.30 pm on Saturday November 19th. A good time was had by all and £536.50 was raised for BMC Mission Possible. The music was great and Doreen's cakes were delicious!

Mary Teale **sold bags and scarves** during the church coffee morning held on Saturday, November 26th; the amount raised was £90.

The **William Booth Memorial Halls Band Christmas Concert** on Wednesday 21st December 2022 was a great success. A large and enthusiastic audience donated £865.30 for the concert and for their refreshments. The money raised was shared equally between the Salvation Army and BMC Mission Possible.

The total amount raised so far for BMC Mission Possible is approximately £160,818 plus £8,240 for the organ.

Our next Fundraising Events are:

Sunday February 19th at BMC 3pm: *Organ recital by professional organist Simon Lumby*

Saturday 25th February: *Sale of 'Unwanted Christmas Presents'*

This will take place at the Church Coffee Morning. If you have any things which have been bought for you which you don't want or need (wrong size, wrong colour, wrong flavour etc etc...), then please take them to Karen in the office. At the same time there will be an opportunity to buy more handbags and scarves!

Easter Sunday morning 9th April: *Breakfast at church*

Either continental or full English. Thanks to Clare Farrelly and Mike Colechin.

We are thinking of offering **old slates**, removed from the church roof during the redevelopment and painted, for sale as decorations or household ornaments – for example, house numbers.

We are also thinking of inviting people to **sponsor a (new) slate** for £10, which is roughly what each one costs, as hundreds of new slates will be fitted as part of the redevelopment.

There are already ideas and plans for skilled carpenters (aka Chris Wright and Eric Walker) to make **benches** (for sale) from the old pews removed during the development.

We are thinking of holding a third and final **gift day** on Saturday 29th April 2023.

Please let anyone on the fundraising team know if you are prepared to run or help with any event for BMC Mission Possible. We are looking to start up **Fine Dining** in 2023 and would be very grateful of offers to host a dinner party for 6, 8, 10 or as many people as you can manage.

Fundraising Team: Andy and Glenda Taylor, Doreen Corlett and Dave Lowe.

We are looking for some new Fundraising Team members so please let one of the Team know if you are able to join us.

Prayer

Entwine, O God, your very being, your word, your love, through our lives.

Run through us like the trickling brooks of summer, like the raging torrents of winter, like the rays of summer sun, like the crispness of icy mornings, so that all our lives are flooded with your love, so that your love may seep and flow and flood and shine from us to all we know and love and care for.

Amen.

Elaine Halls, supernumerary presbyter, South West Wales Circuit

Holy God,

may our hearts be warmed by your Spirit as we read your word and reflect upon it. May we be ready to answer your call and live lives that help other people to know that they can be saved to the uttermost.

Amen.

Graham Thompson, President, British Methodist Conference 2022/2023

Both taken from www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/prayer-of-the-day

Beeston Methodist Carol Choir A Christmas 2022 Review



Advent and Christmas 2022 have been and gone and are now behind us. Formal Covid restrictions are nearly gone (thank goodness!) but it still wouldn't have been right to try and sing in Care Homes. However the Carol Choir was able to sing in several different contexts and it all felt nearly back to normal.

We started off with a practice in the church hall on Sunday 4th December, and followed that with a very special rendition of Shaw Lane at Bert Taylor's Thanksgiving Service on Thursday the 8th. Ruth and I were very pleased and grateful that we could do it as part of a lovely day in Dad's memory.

The next Sunday we sang *Three Harks* in the morning service which was led by Christine Fox and this was followed by a busy week: On Tuesday we sang for the Tuesday Connection at BMC, on Wednesday evening we were back in The Crown Inn and on Thursday we entertained the audience at the Memory Café in the Beeston Resource Centre.

After that we were out on the streets and had three evenings of great weather for singing; the Tuesday and Thursday evenings were particularly good. Christmas Eve was harder work, but still good, and we had the reward of finishing at Jen Drinkwater's for hot drinks and warm mince pies. That wasn't the end of our efforts though, as we sang for The Friendship Group at St. Helens Church in Stapleford on Wednesday 4th January. It was the first time we had been there and it turned out to be a lovely afternoon with the group at the invitation of Dave Steggles. This year, for the first time ever, our door-to-door collections totalled over £1,000, and this rose to £1,114 when donations from the venues where we sang were included.

The Carol Choir's three-part mission is to bring our carols about the birth of Jesus to a wider community; to raise money to help those in need locally through the work of the Benevolent Society and other charities; and to support each other and enjoy our own fellowship through the singing. We are grateful to have been able to achieve all these again this year, so thank you to everyone who has sung, collected, conducted, donated or who has helped in any way.

Andy Taylor

Dates for your Diary

February 2023

- Sun 5th **President of Methodist Conference visiting** to meet the young people of the Circuit at Toton Methodist Church 4pm
- Sat 11th **Coffee morning** at BMC 10-11.30am
- Sat 11th **Table Top Time** – family board games at BMC 3-5pm
- Sun 19th **Organ recital by Simon Lumby** at BMC 3pm
- Sat 25th **Coffee morning including sale of ‘Unwanted Christmas Presents’** at BMC 10-11.30am

March 2023

- Sat 11th **Coffee morning** at BMC 10-11.30am
- Sat 11th **Table Top Time** – family board games at BMC 3-5pm
- Sat 11th **Concert by Carlton Male Voice Choir** at BMC 7.30pm
- Sun 12th **Leaving Service for Rev Ali Jones** at BMC 5pm
- Sat 25th **Coffee morning** at BMC 10-11.30am
- Sat 25th **Concert by Nottingham Hospitals Choir** at BMC 7.30pm

Weekly events

- Sunday* **Morning Worship** at BMC 10.30am
Evening Service 6.30pm (on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday of the month)
- Monday* **Little Acorns Parent and Toddler Group** at BMC 9.30-11.15am
Church open for quiet prayer and reflection 11am-12.30 fortnightly
- Tuesday* **ABC (Adults, Babies and Coffee)** at BMC 9.30-11am
Little Acorns Parent and Toddler Group at BMC 9.30-11.15am
Open Space refreshments and fellowship at BMC 11.15am-12.15pm (lunch at 12.15pm every second Tuesday of the month)
- Wednesday* **Wholly Ground Café** at BMC 11am-1pm (including a short act of worship at 11.15am on the first Wednesday of the month)
-

Beeston Methodist Church



Here for You: God is calling us to

- Offer **spiritual nourishment** and **growth** to all
- **Welcome** and **nurture** everyone
- **Serve** those in our local community
- Be a strong voice for **Justice**.

Beeston Methodist Church is an Eco Church

From meditation to insulation, from location to invocation, loving God and His creation should impact everything in our church lives. **Eco Church** is a scheme to help churches demonstrate that they care for God's earth, to help them 'go green' in all areas of church life.



Beeston Methodist Church gained the Eco Church Bronze Award in March 2021 and is now working towards the Silver Award. ecochurch.arocha.org.uk



Beeston Methodist Church is an Inclusive Church

We believe in **inclusive church** – a church which **celebrates and affirms every person** and does not discriminate.

We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of **disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality**.

We believe in a Church which **welcomes and serves all people** in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

www.inclusive-church.org