



Beeston **Methodist** Church

# Newsletter



*Everyone is Welcome!*

March 2023

## Everyone is welcome!

A few years ago we became an inclusive church – “a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate” (from the Inclusive Church website).

In connection with this, this month’s newsletter includes two articles featured on the Methodist Church website as part of February’s LGBT+ History Month. One is an article by Rev Mark Hammond reflecting on his his journey from outspoken upholder of traditional teachings to someone who would gladly conduct a same-sex marriage. In the other we hear directly from two young trans and non-binary Methodists about their experiences. I hope you find both articles interesting and informative.

*Mark Ramsey – Editor*

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## Beeston Methodist Church Newsletter – March 2023

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Any articles for inclusion in the next issue should be emailed by 16th March to [newsletter@beestonmethodist.church](mailto:newsletter@beestonmethodist.church). Articles may be edited for space.

## Beeston Methodist Church

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## Minister's message

As we move into the season of Lent this year we will be reading through well-loved passages from John's gospel. John pairs Jesus' teaching with practical illustrations. In John 3, when Nicodemus, a great teacher of Israel comes to him with questions, Jesus baffles him with questions in response, using the image of birth to describe the change that the Spirit works to bring new birth into eternal life, in those who believe in Him.

When Jesus turns to a Samaritan woman for a drink of water (John 4), she soon discovers that He is the source of living water and becomes instrumental in quenching the thirst of her whole village.

In John 2 the account of Jesus turning over the tables in the temple courts, with a fierce anger at the loss of respect for the Holy Sanctuary, becomes an illustration of Jesus' mission that would involve the destruction of the temple of his body and the restoration of a right reverence for God.

By the fourth Sunday of Lent (John 9), Jesus' response to Pharisees complaining about his healing of a man born blind, indicates that they are totally blind to the truth of Who He Is.

Finally, in John 11, Lazarus is raised from the dead... !

*My prayers for you all as you make your own Lent journey of discovery this March.*

*Rev Christine*

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## Prayer

Gracious God, forgive us for all that prevents us from showing love to you, our neighbours and ourselves. May our faith be lived out in acts of love, kindness and justice that enable others to be drawn to you.

Amen.

*Gillian Newton, Sheffield District Chair*

Taken from [www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/prayer-of-the-day](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/prayer-of-the-day)

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## Update from the Leadership Team

We would like to thank Rev Christine Fox for all of the support and encouragement she is giving to BMC, despite the number of different churches she is connected with at the moment. We really do appreciate her faithfulness and care.

We are very pleased to have welcomed Susan Holmes on to the Leadership Team and now have the full complement. We do have members retiring from the role during the year, so please do continue to consider with prayer whether this is a role you could take on. It does come with quite a lot of work attached, but the work is positive and life-affirming, involving us all more intimately with the life and direction of the church and making use of our differing ideas and skills within a supportive team environment. Much to recommend it!

BMC's Season of Peace finished with the Bible study series during Jan/Feb and everyone seemed to enjoy it, not least the warm and engaged community feel which it engendered over those few five weeks. It was good to be able to talk and share with others about questions of faith. We hope we may be able to encourage similar series in the future. We also hope that some of us may wish to join in with new or existing housegroups (the Caring & Nurture Group are working on setting up something new as soon as possible), as these bring us closer to a smaller number of people within our congregation for friendship and fellowship.

We have two big services coming up. On Sunday 12th March at 5pm we will be saying a formal farewell to Rev Ali Jones. There will be refreshments and opportunity to chat after the service. Please do come along to wish Ali and Jenny well in their continuing journey, and do invite others, from our own church community or around the circuit, who you think would like to be there for this occasion.

We are planning a *Back to Church* Sunday morning service on Palm Sunday, which is 2nd April. We aim to invite back those who have been unsure whether to return after the pandemic or after their own period of illness or time away exploring other paths. It is also an opportunity for each of us to invite neighbours and friends (those new to church as well as those who used to attend are just as welcome) to come along and see what we are about. More details, and invita-

tions to give out, are to follow, but please book the date in your diaries and have a think about who you know who might appreciate an invitation.

Blessings to you from the team.

*Sally Ramsey, on behalf of the Leadership Team*

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## **A prayer for the tragic events in Turkey and Syria**



God of time and space, we cry to you for your children – our neighbours – in southern Turkey and northern Syria, following the earthquake that has devastated hundreds of lives. Only they and you know what it is like to experience such trauma in the middle of the night.

We give thanks for the aid that is already being given and for the promises of help that have been made by many nations.

Comfort, we pray,

- those who are trapped in collapsed buildings;
- those who have lost loved ones;
- those who wait for news and
- those digging through rubble to save others.

Grant the gift of hope so that those caught between life and death know that you are with them and that others are ready to support them as they seek a future that overshadows the experiences of today.

We ask this in the Name of Jesus, who endured so much for love of them.

Amen.

*6 February 2023. Prayer written by the President of the Conference, the Rev Graham Thompson. Taken from [www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/a-prayer-for-the-tragic-events-in-turkey-and-syria](http://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/a-prayer-for-the-tragic-events-in-turkey-and-syria)*

*All We Can has partners in northern Syria and are accepting donations to help their work [www.allwecan.org.uk/donate/syrian-earthquake-emergency-donations](http://www.allwecan.org.uk/donate/syrian-earthquake-emergency-donations)*

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# Learning how to minister well to the LGBT+ community

*By the Rev Mark Hammond*



“Would you feel able to consider a written contribution around how we minister well to the LGBTQI community and your experiences?” said the email.

Not for the first time, I feel a pang of embarrassment at being approached as if I am an expert in this area. In reality, I am just a learner; a middle-aged straight man trying his best to learn how to become a better ally to the LGBT+ community.

Moreover, my personal history is not a pretty one. Thirty-one years ago I sat in a gallery gazing down upon the back of President Brian Beck as he chaired the Methodist Church’s Derby Conference, and I felt very far from comfortable with the general thrust of the six newly minted resolutions on human sexuality, not least the last one calling all Methodists to join together in a “pilgrimage of faith to combat repression and discrimination, to work for justice and human rights and to give dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality”.

A year into that pilgrimage, full of righteous indignation, I stood at the tribune of the 1994 Conference and spoke against any move away from traditional interpretations of the bible texts around sexual relations. From Wesley’s chair, Leslie Griffiths directed me to stand down – I still quake at the thought of it.

During the ensuing years, I underwent what might be termed a transformation by the renewal of my mind, such that a quarter of a century later, during the God in Love Unites Us consultation, I preached from those very same bible texts two sermons about same sex relationships and concluded that I would now gladly conduct the marriage of two people of the same sex.

Those two sermons, posted online, were viewed thousands of times, and many contacted me to share how their personal stories echoed my own.

In common with others, my childhood church taught me that sex is God’s marriage gift to straight couples. That worked for me. I am straight, and naively assumed that like me everyone must be wired straight.

As a youth leader in the '90s, I taught young people that sex is strictly intended to be enjoyed by straight married couples. No deviations allowed. In the first of my sermons, with their permission, I accept the damage this view did to members of that youth group. At a terrible cost, I had presented them with a one-size fits all approach to sexuality that simply did not fit.

We only need to look at the statistics to see the level of damage done. Compared to their straight peers, gay young people are three times more likely to consider suicide. Those brought up in the Church are even more likely to commit suicide.

My traditional approach, which cost me nothing at all, was very costly to the gay people in my care. I had previously accepted, and strongly taught, the view that the Bible was very clear in its condemnation of sex between two people of the same gender. I now believe I was wrong.

Many contemporary scholars believe the five brief Bible texts that talk directly of same sex relationships, simply do not refer to the kind of permanent, faithful, stable relationships we are referring to today. Our reading of these ancient texts says far more about us and our prejudice than it does about the texts themselves. The way we read them is deeply conditioned by the traditions within which we have been raised, by our native culture, and by our personal experiences through life.

A key question is what are the fruits of our theology on this issue? The traditional theology I once so diligently espoused produces in the lives of many gay people all kinds of serious mental health issues, self-harm and even worse. By contrast, a more inclusive theology yields in their lives the fruit of belonging, freedom, safety and security. I believe this latter approach reflects the love of Christ.

I used to think that to condone and accept any form of same sex relationship was to be guilty of causing young Christians to stumble. But knowing the damage I have done, and reading the scriptures in the light of that experience, I am now convinced it is wrong to condemn committed, faithful and loving same sex relationships and that to do this is to be truly guilty of causing young Christians to stumble.

The Church's traditional condemnation has strongly supported a culture in our churches and our societies that is oppressive and poisonous for gay people. I know there are some gay Christians who themselves hold to the traditional interpretation of the five texts, and have taken the vow of celibacy. They have my respect. I recognise that the traditional interpretation is open to us. But I believe it is neither the only interpretation nor the best.



I now strongly believe that where two people of the same sex fall in love and make a life-long and exclusive commitment to each other, that is not a sin. In fact, I want to go further and say that I want to celebrate such relationships and ask God's blessing upon them with the same enthusiasm with which I do straight marriages.

I am so glad that the Methodist Church has at last had the courage to allow those churches and ministers who believe it is right to do so, to conduct weddings for same sex couples. I am thrilled that I am now registered to conduct such weddings at [www.highstreet.church](http://www.highstreet.church).

In common with many churches, the membership of High Street remains a mix of both those who are fully supportive of this progressive move and those who are not. Many times since preaching my same-sex sermons I have experienced the sadness of pastoral conversations with members who have chosen to leave us over this. I have been sorry to see these people leave our church community. I am pleased that others who hold a traditional view have remained with us, and that we continue to move forward together with our contradictory convictions.

There is, however, no mistaking a dilemma here. I am a minister and preacher who believes that giving "dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality" requires me to say regularly and clearly what I believe, and yet I am also seeking to minister and preach to those who struggle with what I believe. Mindful of this tension, now that the votes on same sex marriage are behind us, it is tempting to stop raising the subject of inclusion so as to avoid the discomfort of some, but that is not a valid option for those of us who truly believe that God is calling the churches we lead to become truly safe places for LGBT+ people.

The sad reality is that many Christian churches are still far from being fully inclusive communities, and the fact that so many choose to avoid the subject altogether does not help. In the experience of LGBT+ people, churches are still generally unwelcoming and unhealthy for those who stray from the very narrow limits of conventional norms when it comes to gender identity and sexual orientation.

It is therefore vital that those churches that are seeking to be more inclusive, communicate that often and clearly. This necessarily requires us continually to risk the discomfort of some as we regularly preach, minister and lead in a way that is openly and actively seeking to include and affirm LGBT+ people and their allies. I think we need to sensitively promote the healthy discomfort that arises from an awareness of the mismatch between inherited beliefs and lived-experience. That discomfort was a necessary part of my own individual transformation. I sense it is now a necessary part of High Street's collective transformation.

Having said all of that, and returning to where I started this piece, I am under no illusion about my own inadequacy for this task. I remain no more than a middle-aged straight man on a steep learning curve, knowing just enough to comprehend the great magnitude of my own ignorance of the lived-experience of many of those alongside whom I seek to minister. I am blessed to be surrounded by an amazing team of people whose life-experience is far broader than mine, and who tell me whenever my own words or actions or choices are exclusionary. My hope is that our High Street community will continue to accompany me along this change curve, that we will continue to learn together. I hope that more LGBT+ people and their allies will join our community and help us, that we may more fully represent God's all inclusive kingdom.

*Mark Hammond's original sermons on same sex marriage and more recent sermons on wider issues of inclusion can be found at*

[www.highstreet.church/inclusivity](http://www.highstreet.church/inclusivity)

*Taken from [www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/lgbtplus/lgbtplus-history-month-2023/learning-how-to-minister-well-to-the-lgbtplus-community](http://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/lgbtplus/lgbtplus-history-month-2023/learning-how-to-minister-well-to-the-lgbtplus-community)*

## BMC Season of Peace



Over the past few months here at Beeston Methodist Church we have followed a Season of Peace where we are exploring the place of peace today, in our world and in our lives.

It began with the week of Prayer for World Peace in October when a few people met daily to pray for peace. This was followed by our White Ribbon service where Chris Harris from Broxtowe Women’s Project told us how they support women facing domestic abuse. It continued on Remembrance Sunday when Louise Lawrenson reflected on the importance of peace-making in our world today.

Paula Dawson led our Advent Sunday worship thinking about the place of peace in preparing for Christmas – the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Our Advent Liturgy, by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, explored different elements of peace-building at work in the world today.

In January and February, over 20 of us engaged in a 5 week Bible Study called ‘The things that make for peace’, exploring various themes relating to peace, and how it impacts our lives as Christians.

Our Season of Peace may have ended, but our calling to be peacemakers continues.

*Martin Weir and Mark Ramsey*

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## The things that make for peace

In this recent five-session study we were challenged to look again at some familiar biblical passages and to interpret afresh the words of Jesus, spoken as they were at a time of harsh Roman occupation. We explored the many aspects of hospitality, forgiveness and reconciliation and the restoring of broken relationships. Sitting in cafe style, there was plenty of opportunity to share our thoughts with our group members and the thoughts of all led to some lively exchanges.

There was so much of true worth in this study, I thank you so much for bringing it to us.

*Jen Drinkwater*

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# Peace thoughts



These are some 'peace thoughts' from people attending the bible study:

**We would like peace all over the world after what has happened in the past few weeks in Europe.**

Was Jesus ever 'violent'?

An answer received: Yes in the temple. When he turned the tables over.

**Peace starts with ourselves. Be kind to one another.**

End of war (but how do you deal with aggressors?)

**Peace takes many forms:**

*within one's self*

*making peace with others, living peacefully*

*nations at peace*



*No war, disagreements*

Jesus's life was not peaceful at all. He was so busy looking after everyone else. No home of his own and the authorities were after him because they were jealous of all the crowds interested in what He said.

His peace He found was in praying to His Father.

**Peace is being in a community of people where all are welcome and valued...  
a bit like our Bible study community for those five weeks!**

We are at peace when we are in step with the will of God.

Working out what that is, requires prayer and attention.

## ***Bible reading: Importance of identity***

### **Something to read**

“Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.... suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’”

*Matthew 17:1-2, 5-7*

### **Something to think about**

The image of Jesus on top of a mountain – the place of God’s tremendous glory descending in Old Testament narratives – blazing and dazzling with light, is alarming; it’s out of the ordinary, and not what we expect to happen to any old carpenter’s son from Nazareth. But the voice from the cloud confirms that this is certainly no ordinary man. The true identity of the fearsome being makes all the difference to the way we onlookers respond.

In Jesus, the perfection of God and the fragility of humanity are at last brought together. At last we need not shield ourselves behind protective limits from the glory of God, finding in the radiance of Jesus the God who says ‘Do not be afraid’.

### **Something to do**

Read through this passage again, engaging your imagination. Picture yourself in the scene, witnessing the extraordinary events. What stands out to you? Speak with Jesus as you meet him on the mountaintop.

## Something to pray

Jesus, beloved Son of God, thank you that you draw together humanity and divinity so that we can truly share in the life of God. Help me to find myself in you, and know myself beloved too. Amen.

*The contributor is Rev Claire Jones.*

Taken from [www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/daily-bible-readings](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/daily-bible-readings)

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## Update from the Worship Group

The BMC Worship Team last met in December to discuss arrangements for the next Plan which starts in March, and also to consider other worship related matters.

A **joint service with St John's**, Beeston to present Stainer's Crucifixion is planned for the evening of Sunday 26th March at 6.30pm (at St John's). Services for Holy Week and Easter Sunday were planned, and on 16th April, Guy Willcock from Leprosy Mission (one of our church charities) will be leading our morning service.

As part of our '**Season of Peace**' we organised and led a 5 part Bible Study on 'The things that make for peace'. Each session was well attended and some challenging topics were discussed; thanks to the various speakers who volunteered to lead them. We will now look at organising another bible study during this year.

**Local Arrangement Services** are continuing to feature in the Plan. We will be looking for volunteers from within our church community to help to plan and lead future LA services – rather than to expect our Local Preachers, who already have Plan commitments, to take on extra services.

As ever, new members with an interest in Worship related matters are welcome to join us – the next meeting is on Wednesday 22nd March at 7.00pm.

*Martin Weir, Chair of the Worship Team*

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# The Ukraine war one year on – some personal stories



On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. In the days and weeks that followed, millions of people left their homes to flee the conflict, most of them women and children. It is the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Below are updates from some of those who have been involved in supporting those who have been displaced over the last twelve months.

## **Yulia Starodubets is an ordained Methodist Minister who left the capital Kyiv early in the war for the safety of west Ukraine.**

Here, she has been working to support others escaping the conflict.

Although the fighting is currently less fierce than it was last year, it is still not possible to relax as each day brings more sad news. We follow the events and we pray.

Since the war began, our support has become more organised. We provide shelter for 50 people a day, some are here for a short period of time, some for longer. We try to take care of them both physically and psychologically. We have people who were on the front line who have been badly injured and are missing limbs, these and their families need urgent help and rehabilitation.

We have received support from many Methodists around the world. Our shelters cared for 600 people in the first months and we would not have been able to continue this without help. We have been supported by the Methodist Church in Britain and other churches, including the United Methodist Church. Without the global Methodist family's help, we would not be able to do these things.

We have a good team here in Western Ukraine but they are tired. We pray for each other, we encourage each other, and we move forward.

The main problem now for civilians is electricity. Across Ukraine it is only available for about six hours each day during the morning and at meal times. This makes living difficult.

I tried to go back to Kyiv several times thinking it would be more peaceful now. It was for a while but it's become dangerous again with missile attacks. I decided

not to move back because I have children. In the beginning of the war, when we took them from our home, they asked us why Russia tried to attack us. “They’re so huge why do they need more land?”

The children pray with us each evening for peace and for justice.

To have our land returned and to have stable peace in our country. We ask you to pray for our ministers who are exhausted. For those Ukrainians who are being hosted in the UK, I ask you to pray for them not to lose hope and that they will come back home to us soon.

## **Bridget Down is a Methodist preacher from West Devon who welcomed a family from Ukraine**

The dream, the offer, the want to rescue, seem such a distant memory, the naivety immense! 12 months ago I stood in my kitchen and pressed a video call icon which entered me into a world so far from the rural idyll I inhabit. It left me uncomfortable and restless that a mother, a mother like me in many ways, was standing in a camp in Poland, desperate to leave the dangers they had travelled through and experienced. We had to help.

I knew what we could offer wasn’t much, it would be a stretch to house five adults and eight children, but with the help of great friends, the grandparents, and the two 18 year old girls could be given places of hope and safety. That left us with eight children and their mother, which over the various options on the farm, meant we could offer sanctuary.

As we travel towards a year of community living, we can see where culture has both rubbed and hurt and where culture has given new insight and joy!

We know that the family will be moving on in the summer to explore new dreams. This comes with bitter sweet emotions. Desperately, we all want the very best for our new found friends. Sad that the rural life cannot give them all they need. Worried that we need to put our hope in systems, which could seem rosier than they transpire.

By giving this family rest and rehabilitation, they can now tiptoe onwards to a new place, on their own journey, leaving us changed too. Changed for the good, reflecting that this past year has been one of travelling to a new place for each of

us as well, seeing the world in a closer focus through the lens of people who view it very differently to us. Holding dearly the memories of noise, chaos, food and mud!

15 February 2023. More stories can be found at [www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/the-ukraine-war-one-year-on-some-personal-stories](http://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/the-ukraine-war-one-year-on-some-personal-stories)

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## Volunteers urgently needed!

In the February Newsletter, the Redevelopment group provided an update on progress with the plans.

Church Council expressed thanks to the group for the fantastic work they are doing and we are now asking for volunteers to help with the planning for the time when we move into the hall for worship. We need to start planning **now!**

We have been provided with the following list of things to be considered but there may be other things to add to the list.

- 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

We need a group of people to do the forward planning. If you are interested in being part of this group, please talk to me, a member of the leadership team or the redevelopment group.

I know we will be inundated with people coming forward but don't let that deter you. We need a range of skills and the more people who volunteer, the lighter the workload will be.

Once the planning has been done, we will all need to offer what we can when the move happens. When we then move back into Church, the job will be done so you won't be committing to a long-term task.

Thanks in anticipation of your support.

*Jenny Weir, Secretary to Beeston Methodist Church Council*

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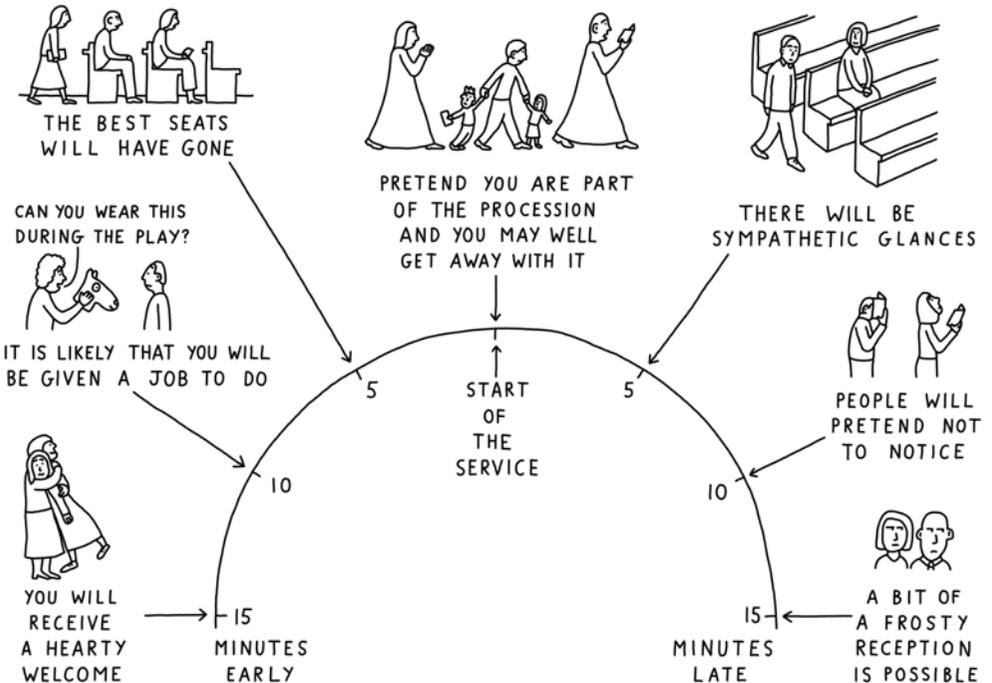
# BMC Jigsaw Library

We would like to say a big 'thank you' to all those who have donated jigsaws to the BMC Jigsaw Library. Over 20 donations have recently been added to those available, so if you think that you have done them all, then please have another look! We now have over 100 jigsaws available for you to borrow.

The Library is available when Wholly Ground is open on Wednesdays, so come along and meet friends while you choose your next puzzle. Alternatively if you cannot get to church at that time then please give your contact details to Karen in the church office and Ann or Roger Duffin will get in touch to arrange another way of getting puzzles to you.

*Ann Duffin*

## ARRIVING AT CHURCH



CartoonChurch.com

*This CartoonChurch.com cartoon by Dave Walker originally appeared in the Church Times.*

# Connect with God's creation over Lent



As we begin the season of Lent this week, Lord, open our eyes each day to see something new and wonderful in your world, so we may choose to be more considerate towards your creation during this time of reflection and beyond.

**Week One – Bring nature into your home or garden.** What could you grow inside your home, in the garden or even at church? 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 over the Lent period and beyond.

**Week Two – Connect with creation in a new way.** 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!). Note all the signs of the season. Use this time to reflect on the changing season and what we can be thankful for.

**Week Three – Discover the great outdoors with company.** Meet up with a friend or several for an extended or brisk wintry walk together. You could visit an outstanding area of beauty in the UK or keep it local and soak up the seasonal sights on your doorstep in your nearest green space. Bring along a notepad and pens to write about or draw something that inspires you in nature and share your ideas and reflections.

**Week Four – Plan a Wild Time!** Plan something completely wild in nature for later this year. Experience kayaking, wild camping, forest school, forest church... Make sure to take the opportunity to really enjoy what nature has to offer beyond Lent. Join a volunteer work party or take to the water for wild swimming. Whatever you do – do something different and have fun!

**Week Five – Join us to protect and restore nature together.** How can we make small changes in our everyday lives that can make a big difference to others and for your world? Contribute to positive change as part of an A Rocha UK community, as a church (Eco Church) and as an individual or family (Wild Christian).

**Week Six – Be still in nature.** During Holy Week, find a quiet spot outdoors and reflect on what Holy Week means to you. Surrounded by the beauty and creativity of nature, the shortcomings of humanity and our need for repentance are often clearer, but so also is the power and timelessness of God. Bring before him your own concerns and the needs of the natural world. Continue to pray with us via our weekly prayer diary at: [arochoa.org.uk/get-involved/pray](https://arochoa.org.uk/get-involved/pray)

**Easter Sunday – The Easter hope of reconciliation is good news for all.** May we celebrate Christ’s commitment in relating to his creation; that the God-man Jesus would enter into the deepest pains and realities of the flesh in order to restore the relationship between Creator and creature. By this restorative work all creation is reconciled to its intended delight, finding peace and mutual flourishing.

Taken from <https://arochoa.org.uk/download/23790/?tmstv=1674720394>

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## **Broxtowe Green Umbrella (BGU) and BMC**

BGU is a new local initiative bringing together local community groups under a broad aim of ‘connecting people through community climate action’.

I was at the BGU meeting in January as a rep from the BMC Mission and Outreach group, along with 23 other groups, to explain what initiatives we have been involved in. Each group had 2 minutes to outline their environmental and/or community aims.

I began with stating how ‘visible and vital’ we are on the High Road and to Beeston. Groups such as Incredible Edible and Beeston Wild life Trust have provided new planting and bird boxes along with our volunteers’ efforts to improve the Garden – something that we should all be proud of. I also appealed for volunteers to assist with the Garden as it enhances the High Road.

I tried to explain in 2 minutes how our activities and support for local community groups are interlinked and listed all the groups and charities we support: light parties, concerts and community events to recycling. All because we are a community with a central belief in Faith with Works. I sat there and felt privileged to belong to BMC and how we should feel proud of all the things we do.

It is Time to Let our Light Shine.

*Lynn Goulding*

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## Young, trans, non-binary and Methodist



Discussions around trans and non-binary people can seem everywhere at the moment. Many of the conversations can feel unhelpful for those who are trans or non-binary themselves, often focusing on gender in relation to others, rather than welcoming them as the people they are called to be.

Here, as part of LGBT+ History month, young trans and non-binary people talk for themselves about their experiences.

### **We have come far and there is more to go**

I have always had a good relationship with the Methodist Church regarding my queerness. I am non-binary, panromantic and demisexual: non-binary meaning that I feel neither male nor female regarding gender; panromantic meaning that for me gender does not affect romantic attraction; and demisexual meaning I do not feel any sexual attraction unless I have a strong emotional bond with someone. I came out about my sexuality late in 2021, and came out with my gender identity in June 2022.

One of the main events that links my queerness to my faith, and to the Methodist Church, was my baptism. I was baptised on the 17th July 2022, and I used my baptism as a confirmation of my identity in the Christian faith, and a confirmation of my identity in myself. My identity in both are intrinsically linked with each other. I could not have my faith in God without my identity of being non-binary; I could not have a full understanding of my gender and sexuality without a strong faith and belief in Jesus and God.

In the Methodist Church I attend we have recently agreed to start conversations linked with the 2021 Methodist Conference decision allowing churches to choose whether they want same-sex marriages on their premises. For me, this shows the willingness of my church to have a better understanding of the issues and discussions surrounding the topic. It also makes me feel more accepted, therefore allowing me to be open about who I am as a person.

I am happy in my church community, and I am happy with the Methodist Church's response towards people in the LGBTQ+ community. We have come far from where we were a decade ago, and there is more to go, but the Methodist Church should be proud of what we are doing for queer people.

*Alex (They/Them). 3Generate Agents of Change Youth Rep*

## **Coming from a queer family in the church**

My name is Luca, I am a Global Youth Representative for the Methodist Church and have been attending church since birth, I'm a transgender queer man, and I have lesbian parents. Needless to say, we aren't your stereotypical churchgoers. It often surprises people to hear that I am religious, and I've even lost friends over it due to them thinking my identity is a sin or that I am being hypocritical. Others think all Christians are homophobic, when in reality that is an old drawn-out stereotype and not the truth.

My mums have been taking my sisters and I to church our whole lives. They took us to 3Generate for the first time in 2018 which allowed me to meet so many more queer, young Christians. In 2019 I came out as transgender, a month later I gave testimony in front of at least a hundred people at my second 3Generate, which was so empowering, I had people come up to me afterwards to talk about being a queer Christian and this set in stone the idea of becoming a youth representative once I was old enough.

Over the course of my life, I have had a couple of homophobic experiences within the church. Once the person leading the service started talking about homosexuality being a sin. Thankfully I was in the Sunday school at the time but my mum came in having left the service and that person was never allowed back to preach. We had the support of the whole church and so much love was shown to my whole family afterwards. Last year my church voted unanimously to allow same-sex marriage, and this made me feel even more welcome.

Queer Christians exist, God loves us just the same as everyone else.

*Luca. 3Generate Global Youth Rep*

9 February 2023. Taken from [www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/young-trans-non-binary-and-methodist](http://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/young-trans-non-binary-and-methodist)

## BMC Church Charities 2022-23



**The Leprosy  
Mission**  
England and Wales

**Macular Society**  
Beating Macular Disease



The total raised by February 7th was £7308.64

eBay	£4245.57	Donations	£333.36
Other items	£904.32	Recycled books & CDs	£330.69
Coffee mornings	£624.22	Coffee bar	£544.79
Money jars	£192.29	Event refreshments	£63.40
Events	£70.00		

Recent contributions include £666 from ebay sales, £141 from the January coffee morning, £61 from auction sales and £32 from recycled books.

*Colin Firbank*

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### ***Prayer***

Wonderful God,

You love all your children equally. Forgive us when we have failed to do so. When we have turned our backs on our LGBTQ+ siblings because it was the easier thing to do. We pray for those who cannot ignore this mistreatment because it would mean choosing between themselves and their relationships.

We thank you for those throughout history who could not live with injustice and have fought for a better world. Because of them, we can be the beautifully diverse people you created.

Thank you, wonderful God.

Amen

*Afon, 3Generate Agents of Change Youth Rep*

9 February 2023. Taken from [www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/young-trans-non-binary-and-methodist](http://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/young-trans-non-binary-and-methodist)

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# Embrace the Middle East

## *Prayer Diary*



### **5 March**

This week we mark International Women’s Day (8 March) by giving thanks for our partners working to advance women’s rights and opportunities. In Egypt, Think and Do supports women who were denied an education as girls. The Life School project enables women to develop their literacy, become aware of their rights and learn vocational skills.

### **12 March**

The Pontifical Mission for Palestine is working with seven Christian schools in East Jerusalem and the Old City to provide careers guidance for 270 young people. In the region’s difficult social and political situation, teenagers can lose hope and motivation – this guidance will help them understand their strengths and plan for a successful future.

### **19 March**

As well as providing education and training for hearing-impaired children and young people, the Learning Centre for the Deaf in Baabda, Lebanon, advocates for the rights of deaf people. They lobby the government for increased provision of sign language interpretation, communications technology and better employment rights.

### **26 March**

The war in Syria has physically and psychologically devastated the country. Millions of children are not in school and are vulnerable to injury and exploitation. Our partner, Middle East Revive and Thrive (MERATH), works with a network of local churches to provide child-friendly spaces where children can play and receive informal education in safety and relative normality.

*“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”  
Colossians 4:2*

From [https://embraceme.org/s/Embrace-Prayer-Diary-Feb\\_July23-Web.pdf](https://embraceme.org/s/Embrace-Prayer-Diary-Feb_July23-Web.pdf)

# BMC Mission Possible



By the time you read this, you will have had the pleasure of listening to Simon Lumby give an organ recital and our sale of 'Unwanted Christmas Presents' will have taken place.

## ***Our next Fundraising Events are:***

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

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

### **Saturday 22nd April : Sponsored Circuit circuit**

This date has now been booked by Andy Taylor and Dave Lowe with full details still to be confirmed. We hope to involve walkers from many other churches in the Circuit to take part in a sponsored walk visiting all the Nottingham Trent Valley Circuit churches. The estimated distance is 15 miles. Participants will be invited to choose their own charities for sponsorship, but we hope those from BMC will support BMC Mission Possible. We are in the process of making special arrangements for Junior Church or any other interested parties for whom 15 miles is a bit too far.

### **Saturday 29th April : Gift day**

We will be holding a third and final **gift day** to coincide with a coffee morning.

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.

## ***Upcoming events to be arranged:***

- A **Church Family Concert** (to replace the pantomime this year).
- A **Coronation Concert** being arranged by Chris Bridges

- **Tombola.** Glenda Taylor will organise one, possibly to make use of any remaining unwanted Christmas presents as well as other prizes. Could be put on at another coffee morning or perhaps a spring fair.
- **Sponsored bike ride** round Carsington Reservoir (or similar). Martin Weir is considering organising.
- **Sponsored ride on a static bike.** Malcolm Wilson is considering organising.

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.

Thank you.

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

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## News from the Circuit Stewards



NTV's latest **Circuit Service** took place on Sunday 26th February 2023 @ Kingswood Methodist Church, 10.30am.

It was an uplifting and inspiring experience to be a part of this service with our theme **We are Living Stones**. Our preacher was Rev Canon Helen Cameron who was ably assisted by Rev Christine Fox, Rev Arnold Dixon, Deacon Sian Street, and the Grangewood Worship Band.

Our all-age congregation was made up of 130 @ Kingswood plus 60 people on 48 Zoom screens at home around the circuit, plus 17 watching on Zoom @ Trinity, 12 @ Sandiacre & 16 @ Stapleford:

**235 people worshipping together across our circuit.**

There were 9 musicians in the Grangewood Worship Band leading the singing.

Helen's sermon can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPYoEnRbUIk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPYoEnRbUIk)

We are aware of some tech issues with the sound during the singing which our tech teams are working hard to rectify for our next Circuit Service which is on Sunday 21st May 2023 at Christ Church Methodist Church, Long Eaton. Our preacher will be Rev Canon Helen Cameron, Chair of Notts & Derby District.

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## Spring Concert by Carlton Male Voice Choir



**Saturday March 11th 7.30pm**

Carlton Male Voice Choir do look forward to performing for you again following the Covid outbreak preventing the choir from being there at short notice at Christmas last year. These things cannot be helped but we are coming to perform for you on Saturday 11th March and would love you to come and support our choir and the three deserving charities the church has chosen for us to represent.

You will hear the choir performing a set of contemporary music ranging from Beatles to Coldplay and then we are proud to present a set of more traditional lower voice repertoire which concludes with a bit of Tom Jones and some other fun items.

Come and say hello to Nottingham's largest Male Choir and see what we have been up to as we work towards our Albert Hall Festival Concert to be held on Saturday 22nd April 2023.

*Ian Watts (Musical Director, Carlton Male Voice Choir)*

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## Concert by Nottingham Hospitals Choir

**Saturday March 25th 7.30pm**



The Nottingham Hospitals Choir, conductor Nick Milburn, will perform their next concert on Saturday 25 March at 7.30pm at Beeston Methodist Church.

We shall be singing Bob Chilcott's *Dances of Time*, a medley from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*, music from *My Fair Lady* and *The Merry Widow*, and many more.

Tickets are available on the door priced £8.

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# Dates for your Diary

## ***March 2023***

- Mon 6th     **Knit and Natter** at BMC 2pm
- Sat 11th     **Coffee morning** at BMC 10am-12 noon
- Sat 11th     **Table Top Time** – family board games at BMC 3-5pm
- Sat 11th     **Spring Concert by Carlton Male Voice Choir** at BMC 7.30pm
- Sun 12th     **Leaving Service for Rev Ali Jones** at BMC 5pm
- Mon 20th    **Knit and Natter** at BMC 2pm
- Sat 25th     **Coffee morning** at BMC 10-11.30am with various stalls
- Sat 25th     **Concert by Nottingham Hospitals Choir** at BMC 7.30pm
- Sun 26th     **Stainer's Crucifixion** – joint service at St. John's, Beeston, 6.30pm.

## ***April 2023***

- Mon 3rd     **Knit and Natter** at BMC 2pm
- Sat 8th     **Coffee morning** at BMC 10am-12 noon
- Sat 8th     **Table Top Time** – family board games at BMC 3-5pm
- Mon 17th    **Knit and Natter** at BMC 2pm

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## ***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)
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# 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**.

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## 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](https://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](https://www.inclusive-church.org)