



Beeston **Methodist** Church

Newsletter



*A new President
and Vice-president*

August / September 2026

A new President and Vice-president

The Methodist conference in June always elects a **new President and Vice-President** for the new Methodist year. This year we welcome Rev Mark Slaney and Caroline Stead into these roles as you can see on the opposite page. Page 18+ carries an edited version of the President's address to conference. To read or watch it all, and to see the Vice-President's address, please go to the web address at the end of the article.

On 20th June we had a joyful **Celebration Day**, opening our premises to the local community and dedicating the new sanctuary. See pages 16-17 for a report and photos of the day.

Mark Ramsey – Editor

Beeston Methodist Church Newsletter – Aug / Sept 2026

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

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Cover image: *Caroline Stead and Rev Mark Slaney, new Vice-President and President of the Methodist Conference*

Election and Induction of the President and Vice-President



The Methodist Conference elected and inducted the Rev Mark Slaney to serve as President and Caroline Stead to serve as Vice-President on Saturday 27 June at the Methodist Conference in Telford.

The Rev Mark Slaney currently serves as Chair of the Scotland District and the Shetland District. His work has included formative mission, study partnerships and placements with the Church of South India and the Methodist Church and Sierra Leone and Interfaith Forum support.



In his address to the Conference, Mark said: “Throughout the designate year I have experienced a growing sense of the weight, honour and privilege that comes with the role of President. That the Church has discerned this call at this time is affirming and humbling. Be assured of my commitment in serving the Methodist people and our ecumenical, interfaith and mission partners throughout the year to come.”

Caroline Stead is passionate about inclusivity and ensuring that people are welcomed and safe within the Methodist Church, and about supporting volunteers within the Church. In her address to the Conference, Caroline said: “Mark and I have chosen two words to work with next year: Joy and Sorrow. The Christian journey is a tapestry woven with threads of both joy and sorrow.

“I am humbled that I have been called by God into the role of Vice-President. In the year ahead I am looking forward greatly to living out this calling in service to the Church that is growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking, a Church that has given me so much up to this point in my life.”

27 June 2026. Read the full article at www.methodist.org.uk/about/news/election-and-induction-2026/

Leadership Team update



The church leadership team met on 1 July. The time of celebration held on the 20 June was reviewed and all agreed what a wonderful day it was. Thanks were again expressed to everyone who had played a part in making it such a success. It was recognised that there are still some teething problems in the new worship space which need to be addressed and people are working hard to try to resolve these but that may take a little time. A risk assessment will also be carried out for the worship space.

The **Care and Nurture group** have arranged for a toy box to be made and placed into the church along with activities for younger members. This will be put at the back of the church for easy access by young visitors and those caring for them. They are also looking into making story and activity bags for use by younger members during the service.

There have been two applications for the role of **church worker** starting in September and interviews for this post will be held at the end of July.

New **fire alarms** have been fitted in the church and stewards, along with members from the Korean Church and other building users, are to be briefed on how these alarms work. There will also be a fire drill arranged at some point using the new alarm system. To enable people to exit the building quickly in the event of an emergency it is advised that people who use mobility aids should keep them with them and if necessary a chair next to them will be removed to enable this to happen. Alternatively the aid can be stored elsewhere in the church during the service if the owner is confident they could walk to get it should the need arise.

The question was raised about BMC's presence on **Social Media**. Do we need to have a more active presence to raise our profile and to advertise future services and events? Sally Ramsey is going to look further into this but would welcome people's views on the matter.

Ray Howard, our **church treasurer** for many years, is retiring at the end of August. Grateful thanks must go to Ray for all the work and time he has put into

this role. We are now looking for a new treasurer as the church cannot run as an organisation without one. The role could be shared and the finance committee are looking into the best division of the tasks. Please speak to Martin Weir, or one of the stewards if you think you could fulfil all or part of the role.

The church **Harvest Festival** is being held on the 27 September at 10.30am. There is a proposed Harvest Supper on the afternoon of Saturday 26 September. Mary Baxter has kindly offered to organise the food and the Care and Nurture group have offered to organise a Beetle Drive.

The next Leadership Team meeting will be on Wednesday 2 September. If anyone has a matter they wish to have raised at this meeting please speak to any of the members.

Susan Holmes, on behalf of the Leadership Team

Gift aid and regular giving

Gift Aid

£26,926.93 has been repaid to the church by HMRC for the Tax Year 2025-26, which includes Gift Aid tax refunds on offertories, Church Charities and other donations. £4,433.30 of this amount is for the *BMC Mission Possible 2* Redevelopment Fund, from concerts, a dinner, a party, and other events and donations. It also includes the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

If you pay enough tax but do not currently Gift Aid your giving to the church, please contact John Foster (Gift Aid Secretary). Please also let me know if you no longer pay sufficient tax after any income or tax changes. Many thanks to all who Gift Aid and to all who give generously to the church!

Regular Giving

If you would like to start (or change) regular giving to the church by Standing Order, please ask John Foster or Ray Howard for details. If you would like to start (or change) regular giving by Envelope, please ask John Hudson.

John Foster, Gift Aid Secretary, Beeston Methodist Church

Building



As part of the celebration service on Saturday 20th June 2026, everyone was given a plastic building block.

The congregation were invited to bring them forward at the end of the service.

The pile of bricks grew until someone decided to join them all together. The picture on the right shows the result.

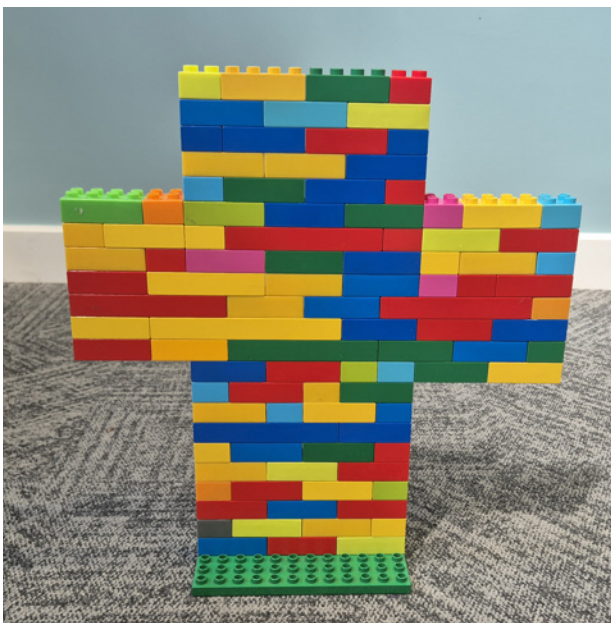
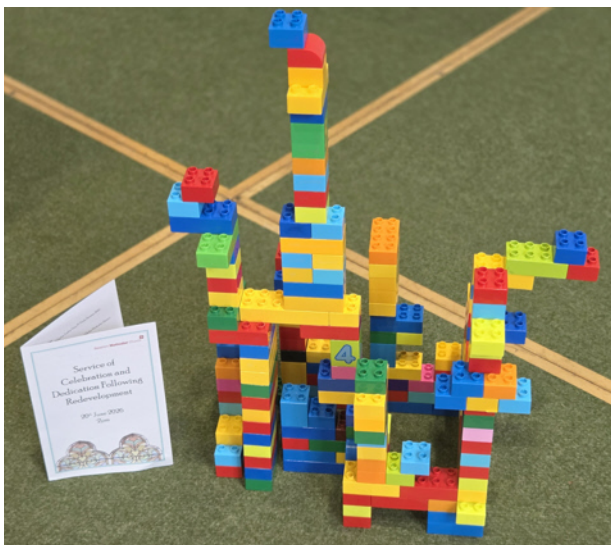
What does this represent for you?

The cross you see below is made from the same bricks. It is a reminder as to what is at the centre of all we do.

The cross stands for all Christ did for each and every one of us.

It also reminds us of the message of God's love that we are all called to take and share into the community through the work we do.

Rev Andrew Checkley, on behalf of the Rededication team



BMC Mission Possible 2

Fundraising is continuing for the redevelopment of our Church.

Recently, Glenda's *unwanted Christmas Present* stalls at the coffee mornings in May and June have raised just over £50.



- Most of the 100 books of **Memories from BMC** and our predecessor churches have been sold. If they all sell, this will raise £100 for Mission Possible 2.
- On Saturday the 13th and Sunday the 14th of June, BMC took part in the **Beeston and Chilwell Garden Trail** as did Elaine Liquorish, with her own lovely garden. Between the two gardens we raised just over £1440 for BMC Mission Possible 2. Quite a few people took the opportunity to look inside our refurbished Church as well as at the gardens and were very impressed. Huge thanks go to Elaine for her work on the church garden and for donating the funds from her own garden. Thanks also go to all who helped on those days or by making cakes or donating items for Glenda's tombola stall.
- On Sunday 28th June, the organ recital given by Paul Hale raised £317.10
- On Saturday 12th September, the annual **Notts Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride Event** will be taking place and, again, BMC will be taking part. If you are able to welcome walkers and cyclists from other churches on the day or by joining in with the sponsored walk, please let Andy Taylor know.
- Elaine Liquorish will be running a **craft fair** at BMC on Saturday 3rd October.

If you have any suggestions for other events, please let Andy or Glenda know.

Thanks to everyone at BMC for their continued support.

Glenda Taylor (on behalf of the Fundraising Team)

Embrace the Middle East *Prayer Diary*



The new Prayer Diary for July 2026 - January 2027 appeared on the Embrace website too late for July's entry to be included in this issue. The prayer diary will appear again in the next issue. The new Prayer Diary can be found at [www.embraceme.org/s/Embrace Prayer Diary Aug26 Jan27.pdf](http://www.embraceme.org/s/Embrace_Prayer_Diary_Aug26_Jan27.pdf)

Church-Speak



Our newsletter and other materials remind everyone that “Beeston Methodist Church is an Inclusive Church”, a church which “celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.” As we celebrate and enjoy worshipping in our redeveloped church, and, we hope, welcome more visitors and newcomers, it seems a good time to remind ourselves that some may not be familiar with the ‘way church works’, or with aspects of Methodist churches. One aspect of this is the language and terminology we use, often without thinking, especially if we have come from a Methodist background.

This article will not cover theological terms – words such as eschatology, justification, salvation, eucharist... – there is scope there for a much longer article, or series.

In being an inclusive church, we should try to use language and words which will be understandable by someone who may be (one or more of)

- joining one of our services for the first time
- unfamiliar with any recent form of church worship
- not a native English speaker
- anxious about not doing the right thing during the service (e.g. standing, sitting, joining in).

So here are some words you may hear on a Sunday, some of which may not often be heard elsewhere, and an attempt to suggest more ‘user-friendly’ alternatives.

Sanctuary	The main part of the church building used for worship
Vestibule	Entrance porch or lobby
Transept	Area to the side at the front of the church
Vestry	Room where the preacher normally completes his or her preparation for a service
Pulpit	Part of the raised platform from where the preacher may lead the service

Congregation	The people meeting for a service of worship	
Intercessions	Prayers for the situations in the world, for others, and ourselves	
Offertory	The money which has been given during the service or by other means – also known as ‘Offering’	
Pew-Bibles	The Bibles available in pews or seats for use in the service	
Lectionary	The sequence or list of Bible readings to be read in services during the year; this follows a 3-year cycle and is similar to that used in other churches	
Fellowship	Sharing with and encouraging each other – often involves cups of tea or coffee	
Hymn	<i>[pronounced ‘him’]</i> A song or other item to be sung by the congregation	
The Grace	A blessing sometimes used at the end of a service; the words often used come from the end of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, and are “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you (or ‘us’) all, evermore.”	

This is just a small sample; you may well think of other words which could be added – or perhaps this may spur you into compiling another list!

Ray Heasley

Wayside pulpits



Voices of Christians in Palestine



The voices of Christians in Palestine have been heard by the Methodist Conference, meeting in Telford, with the Conference receiving the Kairos II document as part of the Mission Committee presentation. This is an update on the first Kairos document regarding the effect on Palestinian Christians of the occupation of Palestine that was first published in 2009 and called for Christians worldwide to respond with faith, hope and love.

Kairos II responds to the events in Gaza after 7 October 2023 and was launched in November 2025 as *A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide*. Developed collaboratively, it renews the call for justice and an urgent, global Christian response.

A Notice of Motion was passed by the Conference, asking for a study resource to be produced based on Kairos II that can be used for churches. It also asked for the President of the Conference to write to the UK Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary and the governing bodies of other jurisdictions in which the Methodist Church of Great Britain has a presence, urging them to uphold international law and to take the actions outlined in the Time To Act campaign.

Kairos II was presented to the Conference by Father Fadi Diab, Rector of the Anglican Parish in Ramallah. Speaking at the Conference, Father Fadi commented, “Kairos II emerged during one of the darkest chapters in Palestinian history, during and after the genocidal aggression against the community in Gaza, and the restrictions on the Palestinian people in the West Bank.

“The last three years have changed us for ever. In Gaza we have seen the decimation of an entire society... this document (Kairos II) is not an abstract theological reflection but a cry of a people whose faith is being tested.

“The pain and destruction we have seen requires a new voice, stronger even than Kairos I. Kairos II has a clear message to the international community, to the Palestinian community and to the international Church. The Church cannot be neutral and cannot remain silent in the face of destruction of life.”

2 July 2026. From www.methodist.org.uk/about/news/voices-of-christians-in-palestine/. Read Kairos II at www.kairospalestine.ps/images/Final_Kairos_document_II_English.pdf

Bodelwyddan Castle 2026 – Pat's Tours

‘Scenes of beauty, faith and hope’ was the description of what awaited us at the textile exhibition in Chester Cathedral. A short break on our outward journey to Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales, was just time to view *Threads through the Bible* – 44 panels, 25,000,000 stitches covering 80 metres. The Bible is depicted through abstract representation of creation then pictorial scenes from the life and death of Christ and finally images from the Book of Revelations. Also on show was a rare *Tyndale Bible* printed in 1526 during the reign of Henry VIII. William Tyndale translated the Bible into English thereby making the word accessible to the people.

Our first outing was to Llandudno, where we had stayed in 2004, on the first of Pat's Tours. A stroll along the main street spotted the White Rabbit part of an Alice in Wonderland Trail and a statue of a wild goat, a reminder of the creatures that invaded the town centre during lockdown. The choice of a tram ride, an attraction since 1902, to the top of The Great Orme, the headland 679 feet high, had seemed promising. But the long delay before the ascent began caused concern as to whether the expedition would be completed in our allotted time. A changeover of trams at the halfway station took up more time and exposure to a very chilly wind. Our arrival at the top brought relief to see other members of our party. Just time to get a coffee and join the queue for the return trip. Marvellous views of the bays on either side of the rock and the town laid out below. A leisurely walk along the seafront brought us back in time for the coach.

Next outing was to Bodnant Gardens where our arrival was welcomed by Chris Gray, a Minister known to many of us. A volunteer guided us through the entrance



Laburnum arch at Bodnant Gardens

suggesting that we started at the beautiful laburnum arch, seen now at its best in full flower, hence an increase in the of number of visitors, 2000 a day. The formal gardens are laid out in tiers, five Italianate terraces that drop down into the wooded valley, *The Dell*. The grounds are extensive, but you could soon be away from the crowds. We returned to the coach through the underpass that protects visitors from a dangerous road crossing, probably used by hedgehogs too.

On our free day, we made our own choices. For the adventuresome, a bus ride could reach Conwy, or the seaside resorts Prestatyn and Rhyl. From the hotel it was a long walk to visit the Victorian church of St Margaret's, known as the 'marble church', with fourteen types of marble used in its construction. If not already done so it was an opportunity to explore the grounds of the hotel, either with a guided tour or at your own pace with an audio tour.

There has been a building on the site at Bodelwyddan since 1460, now a solid Victorian castle built around an existing hall, its chimneys encased inside the towers as part of the battlements. It claims to be the third most haunted property in Wales and is favoured for that and other purposes for television programmes. Before the hotel, the castle premises had previously been occupied as a girls' school and as an outpost for the National Portrait Gallery. In the surrounding fields mounds remain of the trenches used to train soldiers in WW1 warfare. A signpost pointed to the *Gorgeous Gardens* contained within the walled area; fireplaces remain that once used to warm the walls to encourage growth of various fruits. Here was another arched tunnel created with wisteria flowers and small gardens enclosed within a hedged maze. Plenty of seats to just sit and enjoy the surroundings, taking in a view across the countryside.

Alternatively, the hotel provided activities throughout the day such as axe-throwing, boules, shuffleboard, quizzes, use of a swimming pool and gym. Evenings presented all singing, all dancing entertainment. In the absence of a lounge, we had to make do with space in the bar after the evening meal. One evening a late cabaret singer was so loud that the area cleared rapidly. Meals were mostly self-service with a choice of food that meant you could fill your plate or sample something new. Someone said that they had not eaten so much in years. Our party had their own dining room, but some seating arrangement

was so constricted that the toing and froing was like a game of musical chairs, particularly at breakfast.

Friday, the heatwave started as we travelled home. Another stop at Bridgemere Garden Centre, expanded over recent years and providing a variety of shopping outlets.



Bodelwyddan Castle

A big thank you to Pat Shirra for organising another successful holiday. Already plans are being made for next year's holiday.

Robert Dawson

A prayer for patience

Holy God, in the wonder and diversity of your awesome creation, your glory is revealed all around us in a myriad of ways. Yet often we are blinded to the treasures that you have placed for us to discover because our eyes are focused on our own priorities, or we look in all the wrong places!

The most wonderful treasures are often to be found in surprising corners, unexpected people and new experiences. Help us by your Spirit to have patience to understand that you are always at work; even when it remains unseen by us. Give us eyes that are open to see where your activity is evident and ears to hear when you are inviting us to share in the process of bringing new things to birth.

May your light shine in all the dark places of our lives, our churches, our communities and our world, so that the treasure that lies within might be revealed to us.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

Gill Newton, President of the Methodist Conference, 2023/2024

From www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/resources/prayers

Scarecrow John Wesley



What do John Wesley, Pavarotti and Taylor Swift have in common? On the surface very little but they all appeared together, in scarecrow form, at the Hunshelf Scarecrow Trail in South Yorkshire.

The theme of this year's competition was 'ICONS! – Someone who inspires you!' John Wesley fitted the theme perfectly, and his horse Gospel (named after a character in a recent children's book) came along for the ride.



The public cast their votes, and it was nail-biting stuff; other contenders included Liam Gallagher, Freddie Mercury, and not one but two Paddington Bears – but Wesley emerged the victor.

The display was environmentally friendly too. John Wesley's creators, members of the Green Moor Methodist Church in Sheffield, pipped the other entrants to the post by upcycling and reimagining a previous church project. It was appropriate for a scarecrow that the congregation employed a make-do-and-mend approach, fashioning Wesley and his horse from long-forgotten models from the nativity. The Minister, Deacon Annabel Terry says, "The dusty woven willow creations of Joseph, Mary and a donkey were rediscovered in cellars and

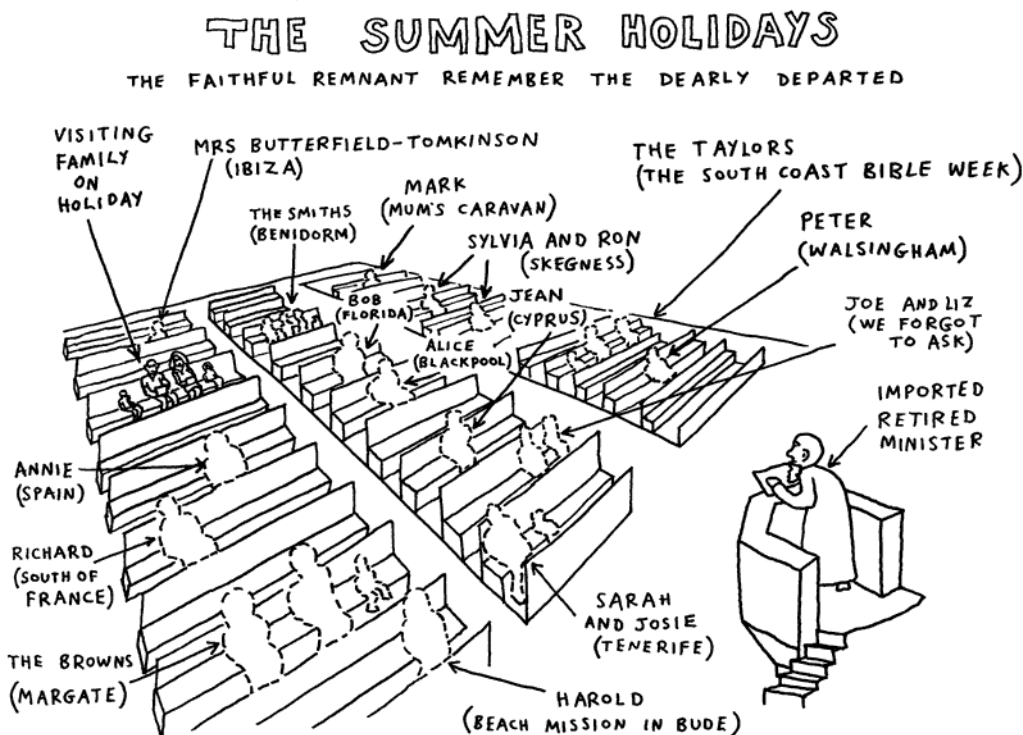
sheds, then cleaned and repaired with fresh willow kindly donated by their original creator, who still lives in the village.”

This is only the second year that the competition has run and there was a good turnout. Locals had a week to view the entries before voting and chose a very worthy winner.

John Wesley and his steed stand proudly in the corner of the churchyard, overlooking the road, drawing plenty of attention from passers-by. Meanwhile, Green Moor Methodist Church celebrated its success with a prize of wine, sweets and a rosette.

Although in its infancy, the event has proved so popular that it will return to Hunshelf next summer. The theme of 2027's competition has yet to be decided.

15 July 2026. From www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/scarecrow-john-wesley/



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

Redevelopment update



The **Celebration Day** on June 20th was a great success. Many thanks to all who made it so special.

The weather on the day was glorious and the open morning was very popular and we had a good range of displays by groups in the church. Over 200 people came to look round, catch up with old friends and eat and drink the coffee and cake laid on by the



Wholly Ground team. There were many favourable comments, and performance items, by the Korean Church, Carol Choir, the Beeston Drumming Circle and organ, provided a musical backdrop.



A splendid buffet lunch was provided for church members and invited visitors. These included representatives from the professionals who helped us along the way (architects, fund-raising advisor, builders and various consultants), previous ministers, and church members who had

been involved in the project in its early stages, but had since moved away.



The service in the afternoon was a real celebration of all we have achieved together. The renovated Sanctuary was dedicated to God's work with the help of an augmented choir (with brass accompaniment and the organ being heard for the first time), drama and encouraging words. The church was virtually full both downstairs and the gallery.

Many people wrote messages in a special visitors' book. It is still in the coffee bar if you would like to add your own thoughts or read what others have written.

Prior to the Celebration Day there had been a flurry of activity with new chairs arriving, the organ completed and tuned, the sign at the front installed and the new banners hung from the beams across the roof space.

The Redevelopment Group will continue to meet over the next year to sort out any snags that arise. One of these is the acoustics in the church, especially for spoken word and for some of those with hearing aids. We are getting a specialist in to advise about how best to remedy this.

Connie Pullan and Chris Bridges, on behalf of the Redevelopment Group.

The President's address to Conference



I am very grateful to be here, having grown to understand and appreciate and feel the weight as well as the honour and privilege that this role brings. I am endlessly grateful to God for our salvation and life in Christ Jesus, for that divine call on our lives that accepts us just as we are and offers us a vision of who we could become together, giving purpose and reason and making us better people and the world a better place in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

There are many folk to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. Let me mention one person as an example.

Roy remains a local preacher and a member of Baildon Methodist Church. I was 15 years old and the Youth Fellowship, to which I belonged, had been invited to contribute to a Sunday evening service. Following the service, Roy approached Mum and I and asked if I would be willing to accompany him when preaching and read the Bible passages. Later that week I stood at the front of church reading from the Bible and Roy stood at the back and said encouraging, helpful words like – louder, slower, clearer!

After three months of readings, Roy said something like: “you’ve done readings now, why don’t you lead prayers next time?” “But I don’t know how to do that.” So, Roy taught me about preparing prayers – written, extempore, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession. For the next three months I prepared and led prayers and Roy would offer encouraging, helpful words.

Then Roy said, something like: “you’ve done readings and prayers. Why don’t you preach next time?” “But I don’t know how to do that.” So, Roy taught me about prayerful preparation, lectionary readings, expounding the word. At a Sunday evening service at Baildon Methodist Church I preached my first sermon. As I recall I tried to tell everyone everything I thought I knew about God and stuff.

Roy saw the preacher in me before I knew it was there. And he made it his business to draw it out, to give space for learning, reflection, practice, mistakes, successes, growth and development. It feels a long way from local preacher to President, from 15 years old to 55.



The Vice-President ably promotes the work of Action for Children. Our second chosen charity for this coming year is All We Can with a focus on the Middle East Justice Appeal.

Right now, people are living through suffering and terror. Our partners remain on the front line of a relentless humanitarian crisis, supporting communities affected in Gaza and Lebanon. To support them, All We Can has relaunched its appeal with the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, continuing to

fundraise for partners delivering life-transforming and essential work.

I visited one of these partners earlier this year. Princess Basma Centre, located on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, has supported Palestinian children with disabilities since 1964 through rehabilitation services and an inclusive school. It combines clinical care, education and family support, working closely with children and their parents. The Centre aims to ensure all Palestinian children with disabilities have access to quality healthcare, inclusive education and future opportunities. The Centre was posed to launch its new outlying work in Gaza just as the attacks of 7 October 2023 changed everything. The new work was reimagined, despite the ravages of terrorist and military action, and operates with a small team of educationalists, nurses and doctors from a tent in Gaza. It is a remarkable, resilient, courageous and vulnerable piece of work.

Sorrow ~ Joy

The Vice-President and I have chosen two words for the year: sorrow joy.

Any number of paradoxical words could have served us well but we chose 'sorrow joy', because maybe they run and flow through each other and through each one of us, because maybe one is the way to the other, because Jesus holds them both with us and there is no lack of either in the Bible, because we warmed to the visual impact of these two words intertwined in cross-form. The cross offers the paradox holding Jesus who is human and divine; mortal and eternal; suspended between earth and heaven, the innocent one executed between convicted thieves.

We are particularly grateful to Mary Fleeson, an artist based in Holy Island/Lindisfarne, who has created 'sorrow joy' images for the Methodist Prayer Handbook. Some months after choosing these two words we heard the following poetry of former monk William Brodrick which offers a better commentary on 'sorrow joy' than I can muster:



*We have to be candles, burning between hope and despair,
faith and doubt, life and death, all the opposites.
That is the disquieting place where people must always find us.
And if our life means anything,
if what we are goes beyond the ... walls and does some good,
it is that somehow, by being here, at peace,
we help the world cope with what it cannot understand.*



'But out of all the Lord has brought us by his love; and still he does his help afford and hides our life above.'

Here comes joy.

God is love. You are loved and you are enough. (If you hear nothing else I say in the next 12 months just hear and contemplate and rest in that.) It took me 40 years or so to learn, to know, to trust that I am loved by God. That I can rest assured in divine compassion. I have come to trust that God is not like my fears and insecurities. That to some wonderful degree it is my lack of not being up to it, not good enough, that makes room for God to be God in and through and around and, at times, despite me.

*'Love divine, all loves excelling, **joy** of heaven to earth come down, fix in us your humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown. Jesus, you are all compassion, pure, unbounded love you are, visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.'*

It is also true that God has a vision, a dream, an imagining of who we could be, how we could be, what we could be – each one of us, all of us together, sharing holiness and demanding justice, making better people and a better world.

Earlier this year, I visited Jerusalem. On the first Sunday of the trip, at the invitation of Archbishop Hosam, I read the creation poem of Genesis, chapter 1, in the service at St George's Episcopal Cathedral. In that passage, God says, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness ..."

There is ancient wisdom here. Who we image God to be is what we become, what we become like, how we are made. You image God to be exclusive, retributive, violent even – you're more likely to exclude, punish, hurt and harm in the name of God. You image God to be inclusive, forgiving, non-violent – and you're more likely to include, reconcile with, non-violently resist in the name of God.

Jesus is our image of who God is and what God is like, showing us how God relates to, responds to and treats human beings who themselves are made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus is not just our image of God and what God is like. He is also, and equally so, our image of humanity, what a human being can be like at our very best and enduring the very worst.

As Christians, as disciples and followers of Jesus, we want to be like him in our humanity, re-made in his image to become our very best, even in enduring the very worst that humans and this world throw at and upon us.

I have come to believe that God loves and accepts us just as we are and that such acceptance is the first delight of divine forgiveness – it is at least some of what it means to have your sins forgiven. Because you can only work with what is – not with what you wish was. You can only start towards the better you, a better world from where you are, not from where you ought to be or want to be, right?

Let me try to illustrate with one of my favourite stories from one of the places where I've been a stationed minister.

The only battle on English soil during WWII took place in the Lancashire mill village of Bamber Bridge on the evening of 24 June 1943 between USA military forces personnel. This was the 1940s, before MLK and Malcolm X, and the US soldiers were under strict racial segregation. On that night, Military Police were on their evening patrol and discovered two black soldiers frequenting Ye Olde Hobb Inn, but these two soldiers neither had the correct passes nor were they wearing correct uniform. Heated discussion led to a bit of a fracas, locals defending the black soldiers, then a gunfight. The following morning, the highest-

ranking US officer visited the landlord of Ye Olde Hobb Inn and insisted, for the sake of peace and calm in the village, that the landlord make his inn into a single race establishment. The landlord agreed. Outside the Inn that evening was an A-frame sign on which were painted the following words:



BLACK SOLDIERS ONLY

I love that Bamber Bridge landlord for that alone. The landlord had no option but to accept it as it was imposed upon them. But with a bit of creative genius and non-violent resistance they acted for something better, for something just and dignifying, a suggestion of who we could be, how we could be together.

During this springtime's visit to Israel/Palestine we spent one day in the West Bank planting olive and fruit trees, Israelis and Palestinians together (plus two British Methodist ministers), organised by Rabbis For Human Rights. An intentional act for what the future could be, what it looks like when folk work the land together rather than fight over it.

What troubles have we seen? What conflicts have we passed? Fightings without and fears within since we assembled last!

Sorrow.

We're living in a world of increasing conflict and division. It might serve us well to remember that when, in Jesus, God-with-us acted for our salvation and the redemption of everyone and everything, the context was one of conflict and division. An invading Roman army, living under rule of Empire, soldiers on the streets, violence and resistance, religious and theological disagreement on what to be and do.

The Gospel reading from Matthew, The Beatitudes, was chosen because Palestinian Christian theologians draw on it deeply in their understanding and practice. Exploring the 3rd of the beatitudes, Mitri Raheb seeks to make sense of the claim that the meek inherit the land: "When occupied people face empire, they generally become so overwhelmed by its power that they start to think that the empire will remain forever ... Jesus wanted to tell his people that empire would not last, that empires come and go ... Who remains in the land? The meek, that is, the powerless! Empires come and go, while the meek inherit the land."

Into and out of such a context Jesus profoundly challenges those in power and authority and teaches his followers to love their enemies, to be peacemakers, to put down the sword.

Palestinian liberation theologian and Principal of Bethlehem Bible College, Munter Issac, suggests that we read the Beatitudes as Jesus' way of challenging power and introducing the people of the kingdom of God on earth to qualities that are radically different from the kingdoms of this world:



The poor in spirit – not the proud

Those who mourn – not those who live in prosperity.

The meek – not the powerful, not empire builders.

Those who hunger and thirst for justice – not for money, comfort, power or fame.

The merciful – not the powerful or ruthless.

The pure in heart – not those who seek a 'pure' society.

The peacemakers – not those who are indifferent to suffering.

Those persecuted for justice's sake – not the ones who stay in their comfort zone and do not speak the truth.

We must begin with our own understanding. How we think of and handle conflict and division. To be transformed by the renewing of our minds, as the writer of the Letter to Romans puts it, because "true purification begins from within" according to Bishop Elias Chacour, also reflecting on the Sermon on the Mount. The Methodist Church offers training for churches, ministers and members, called Growing Through Conflict.

As President Designate, I was privileged to visit the Holy Land back in mid-February. Eleven days after my return, conflict in the Middle East escalated with the initial bombing of Iran by USA and Israel.

The Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem invites all those who visit to 'come and see, go and tell'. There was much to see and much to tell. The Methodist Church in Britain through our Global Relations team chose a focus of **witness** and **solidarity** for our visit. We witnessed through mission partners and others the

insidious dehumanizing, destructive dismissing of people and communities – some of them amongst the oldest Christian communities in the world. We offered the solidarity of the Methodist people in Britain and returned with three clear acts of solidarity which Palestinians ask and which I now ask of The Methodist Church in Britain.



I am aware of how much passion and anger and division and difficulty the conflict in the Holy Land engenders in people. The sensitivities and tensions that exist across faiths, differing theologies, scriptural interpretations, political persuasions, historical narratives and legal understandings of The Land, ecumenical and interfaith colleagues and friends. I advocate from one side in a complexity of sides. It is not my intention that the words I share be used to further hatred or prejudice. It is not just Palestinians who have been harmed and killed and traumatized by the violent and terrorizing actions of others.

I have tried my best to simply, straight report what I saw and heard. To amplify the voice of those Palestinian Christians I met who feel unheard, abandoned by the Church in Europe and failed by international law.

These are the three acts of solidarity they want us to hear, and I am privileged to bring to us:

- That we **support Kairos 2** as the authentic voice and vision of Palestinian Christians. Kairos 2 is a document issued by the Palestinian Christian Ecumenical Initiative in 2025.
- That we call upon and seek to **influence the UK Government** to meet its full obligations under international law in relation to the ongoing situation in Israel/Palestine.
- That we call upon the UK Government to **challenge the Israeli Government's** recent law of death penalty meted out by military court for Palestinian prisoners.

Let me restrict myself here to sharing one story, which had a profound effect on me. In Jerusalem and Bethlehem, senior Palestinian Christians shared with us the Biblical passage which helps them hold and make sense of the situation they are in. They told us that they were with Jesus in Gethsemane, praying “if this can be taken away from us...”

I made the mistake of pointing out that if in Gethsemane then what follows the death is resurrection. I proclaimed resurrection! And it fell flat. Resurrection fell through my fingers like sand, like water rushing down a drain. I was rushing ahead in hope of hope, but they were in Gethsemane. What was it Jesus said to his disciples? *Stay* here with me, *remain* here with me, watch and pray. I couldn't last a few minutes let alone an hour!

Stay here with me. Solidarity. Watch and pray. And Witness. Solidarity and witness understand that sometimes you cannot change the outcome, but you can change the experience.

All We Can and the Methodist Church are amongst those endorsing partners of the recently launched Just Peace Coalition and its campaign *Time to Act* which seeks to build and resource a movement across national and local churches in costly solidarity with Palestinian Christians seeking a just peace for all who call the Holy Land home. You can find out much more about the **Just Peace Coalition** and *Time to Act* online at www.justpeacecoalition.com .

Frank Esack is a South African Muslim scholar, writer and political activist known for his opposition to apartheid, his appointment by Nelson Mandela as a gender equity commissioner and his work for inter-religious dialogue. He writes: "It is not going to be easy. What we do know is that our world has become small and dangers threatening it, multifarious ... Humankind, especially the marginalized and oppressed, need each other to confront these dangers and the challenges of liberation. Let us hope that, because of, and not despite, our different creeds and worldviews, we are going to walk this road side by side. Let us hope that we will be able to sort out some of the theological issues whilst we walk the road ... All of us participate in the shaping of the cultural and religious images and assumptions that oppress or liberate the Other, and thus ourselves."

In summary: be more Roy; the greater flow of spiritual wisdom; God is love; a Church that seeks to grow through conflict, learning to live with contradictory convictions, seeking justice, dignity and solidarity.

Edited for space. Read the full address at www.methodist.org.uk/about/structure-and-governance/the-methodist-conference/conference-2026/presidency/the-presidents-address-to-the-conference

Could you help the Methodist Church put its money where its mouth is?



“In my life, I have seen the devastating impact that the exploitation of wealth can have on communities. We have a requirement to use our wealth with compassion, wisdom and love, both as individuals and as a Church. Being involved in ethical investment helps me to do that.”



The Revd Dr Vincent Jambawo, superintendent of the Stockton Circuit in the Darlington District, has been a member of the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI) for nearly five years.

JACEI was set up to help ensure that Methodist money is invested ethically in line with Methodist principles. It advises the Central Finance Board (CFB), which has legal responsibility for investments, on a range of ethical issues such as banking, human rights, climate change and employment practices. The CFB engages with companies, acts in coalition with others to push for best practices, or, in the most serious cases, disinvests from companies or whole sectors.

In the last year, the Committee has looked at how Methodist money can be used to safeguard children’s rights, encouraged CFB in engaging with banks over the financing of the fossil fuels sector and developed a policy on investing in AI.

JACEI is currently recruiting new members. This is a voluntary role, with a commitment to four meetings a year, online or in person. “You don’t need to be an expert in ethical investment”, reassures Vincent. “You just have to be curious about ethical investment and committed to it. Members of the Committee bring transferable experience – from work, study, voluntary activity or lived experience – in ethics, business or theology, or some of the issues that the committee looks at.”

“I think that JACEI is the most important strategic expression of justice in the Methodist Church,” concludes Vincent. “I would really encourage anyone who is

interested in helping our Church to put our money where our mouth is to consider applying to join the Committee.”

To find out more and to apply to join JACEI, visit www.methodist.current-vacancies.com/Jobs/Advert/4216651?cid=1885&t=Member-of-the-Joint-Advisory-Committee-on-the-Ethics-of-Investment

8 July 2026. From www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/could-you-help-the-methodist-church-put-its-money-where-its-mouth-is

BMC Church Charities 2025-26



The total raised by July 7th was £13019.98

ebay	£4323.72	Money jars	£178.37
Other items	£1713.02	Recycled books and CDs	£301.72
Coffee mornings	£1365.16	Coffee bar	£10.70.18
Donations	£2238.41	Wishing well	£1162.00
Event refreshments	£137.96	Coins	£29.44

Contributions in the last month include £325 from ebay sales, almost £1150 from the Gift Aid claim, £87 from the June Coffee Morning and £500 from the Wishing Well.

The total raised for the year will be recognised in the morning service on Sunday, September 13th.

Church Charity 2026-2027

At the Mission and Outreach meeting on July 6th the various nominations for next year's Church Charity were considered. It was decided that we will support 3 charities. Forever Stars will receive 50% and The Leprosy Mission and Gitare Primary School will each receive 25%.

Colin Firbank

Understanding the Journey to Ordained Ministry



What happens when someone feels called to ordained ministry?

How does the Methodist Church recognise and test a possible call to ordained ministry? It's not through one interview or a single decision, but through prayer, conversation and careful listening.

This process is called **Discerning Ordained Vocation**, or DOV. It reflects something deeply Methodist: calling is not only personal; it is something the whole Church helps to discern.

What happens in DOV?

DOV gives people space to explore whether God may be calling them to serve as a presbyter or deacon. It is supportive rather than pressured, and it happens with others alongside.

A journey shared with others

DOV1 is a time of exploration. Those taking part look back over their life and faith, notice where God has been at work, and begin to ask what God may be inviting them into next.

No one discerns alone

Each person has an **accompanist** who listens, asks thoughtful questions and prays with them. Local churches also play an important part by offering encouragement, honest conversation and prayer.

There may also be conversations with ministers, an **Ordination Exploration Day**, and opportunities to see ministry close up.

Key moments

Along the way, there are several helpful moments of reflection, including:

- a **two-day residential retreat** for prayer and reflection
- a conversation with a **DOV1 Advisory Group**

- a clear next step, which may be to continue, pause, or explore a different calling

Each outcome is treated as a faithful response to God's leading.

Listening on behalf of the Church

The **DOV Committee** has a particular role in DOV2, a 48-hour residential process with worship, interviews, shared conversation and chaplaincy support.

Committee members, lay and ordained, listen carefully and pray faithfully. Their task is not simply to 'approve' people, but to help the Church and individuals make wise and prayerful decisions about future ministry.

Could this be a ministry for you?

The DOV Committee depends on people willing to offer time, attention and prayer. Members listen to candidates' stories, take part in residential discernment, and help hold the process prayerfully before God.

You don't need to be an expert or have all the answers. What matters most is being able to listen well, reflect thoughtfully and pray faithfully.

If you would like to know more, do ask me or speak with one of our circuit presbyters, Tony & Andrew, or with Deacon Sian who is the diaconal chair of the DOV2 Committee.

A challenge for us all

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." 1 Samuel 3:9

Discernment isn't only for those exploring ordination. It belongs to all of us. God calls people in many ways: to serve, to listen, to encourage, to lead, to pray, to speak, to care.

So perhaps the invitation is this: to make space in our own lives to ask, "Lord, what are you calling me to notice, to offer, or to become?"

May we be open to God's prompting, ready to listen, and willing to take the next faithful step.

Paula Dawson, Lay Member, Discerning Ordained Vocation Committee

A Rocha Easy Eco Tips Calendar 2026



August – Looking after wildlife in the heat

Times of drought and dryness can be dangerous for wildlife. Provide water for birds and insects – put a dish of water out to help wildlife stay hydrated. Insects, small mammals, birds, and even badgers, foxes, and deer could benefit. A stone in a plant saucer helps bees to perch and drink without drowning. These small actions make a big difference and are just some of the ways we can live out our calling to care for God's creation. See our blog on looking after wildlife in the heat for more warm weather eco tips: arochoa.org.uk/looking-after-wildlife-in-the-heat



September – Season of Creation

The **Season of Creation** (1 September-4 October) is dedicated to God as the Creator and sustainer of all life. Join A Rocha UK's Season of Creation prayer and reflection webinar on Wednesday 2 September to start this season with others.

During this period of the church calendar, many churches celebrate Harvest, thanking God for his provision through the land and the food that it produces. If you are part of a church or community, suggest that a service or gathering has a Season of Creation focus. Prayers, worship, teaching and the offering could focus on creation. Could there be an activity with a creation focus too?

Explore more Season of Creation resources at: arochoa.org.uk/what-we-do/season-of-creation

For more practical ways to enjoy, nurture and defend nature, sign up to A Rocha UK's Wild Christian email: www.arochoa.org.uk/wild-christian

From www.arochoa.org.uk/easy-eco-tips-2026-calendar

Dates for your Diary

August 2026

Mon 3rd **Knit, Sew, Natter and Craft** at BMC 2-4pm

Mon 17th **Knit, Sew, Natter and Craft** at BMC 2-4pm

Sat 29th **Coffee morning** at BMC 10-11.30am

September 2026

Sat 12th **Coffee morning** at BMC 10am-12 noon

Table Top Time – family board games at BMC 3-5pm

Mon 14th **Knit, Sew, Natter and Craft** at BMC 2-4pm

Fri 18th **EMBER – Igniting the soul**

Contemporary worship at Grangewood Methodist Church 7.15pm

Sat 26th **Coffee morning** at BMC 10-11.30am

Harvest Supper and Beetle Drive at BMC

Sun 27th **Organ recital** by **Simon Lumby** (Chilwell) at BMC 3pm

Mon 28th **Knit, Sew, Natter and Craft** at BMC 2-4pm

October 2026

Sat 3rd **Craft Fair** at BMC 10am-3.30pm

Oxjam music performances at BMC during the day

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*

Tuesday **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)

There is no **Little Acorns group meeting during the school holidays.*



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 has gained the Eco Church Bronze Award 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