

CAVERSHAM METHODIST CHURCH
Gosbrook Road
and
CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH
Highmoor Road



2017

NEWSLETTER

Volume 43 – No. 5

MINISTERIAL TEAM

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Our Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

David and I were delighted at the number of people who came to one or both of the prayer workshops held in July for our two churches. At the first one, we looked at how to structure and lead prayers of intercession in Sunday worship, and at least one of those present has already used the learning to lead prayers at Caversham Heights! We hope that, as time goes on, there will be more opportunities for members of the congregation to lead the prayers of intercession.

At the second workshop, we explored how to pray with and for others in pastoral situations, whether it be as pastoral visitors, or as friends and neighbours. This was a very moving session, as participants shared their experiences of pastoral visiting or praying for friends in specific times of need. We shared how inadequate we often feel, and how important it is to pray honestly and simply, knowing that Jesus is present, and that God's

Spirit is working in spite of our stumbling, hesitant words. We practised praying for each other, and talked about the challenges and difficulties. One person, a long-time pastoral visitor, said it was the first opportunity they'd had to speak about the actual experience of pastoral visiting.

Both of these evenings were just the tip of the iceberg as far as understanding prayer goes, and of learning to pray. In particular, there was a request for help with learning about personal, private prayer, and David and I hope that, in the near future, we can run some more sessions addressing other aspects of prayer, both private and public.

The great twentieth-century preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones once commented, "Everything we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer." I certainly find this to be true, and yet I know that honest, passionate prayer is absolutely vital to my own Christian journey, and to the life and witness of the church. The old advice, "Pray as you can, not as you can't" is sound, but perhaps we also need help with prayer, and a willingness to learn from others.

As we were reminded at the second workshop, Jesus himself prayed for **us**: "*I am not praying just for these followers. I am also praying for everyone else who will have faith because of what my followers will say about me.*" (John 17: 20 - CEV).

Do look out for future sessions on prayer – everyone is welcome, especially beginners!
Shalom

Jenny



CHRISTIAN AID – 2017 RESULTS

Not many people in our congregation want to, or are able to, knock on doors collecting for charity and this year there were even fewer of us. So a total of £709.22 from the House to House collections was, I think, a very good result. The Church collections in total amounted to £176.35 (apologies I quoted an incorrect smaller amount in the Notices). So the total before Gift Aid is added is £885.57. This is down on previous years but is nevertheless a significant contribution so thank you to everyone again.

It is difficult to mention specific collectors as we all try hard but the Church should be proud this year of two of our collectors who were really not in the best of health but were determined to do their round. I really am very grateful to them as there are already a number of roads allocated to our Church for whom we have no collector. Another collector went out five times to make sure he saw everyone – I think this must be a record!

In comparison to the same roads last year, the number of households giving was down with the amount per envelope down in some and up in others.

Brenda Andrew

CONCERT SUCCESS

David Jenkins in Concert



On Saturday July 8th at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church David Jenkins gave another of his wonderful musical concerts. This year he was joined by Rachel Scarlett (Soprano) and Renato Fonseca (Flautist)

The programme was a delight with many well-known pieces, including 'The Legend of the Glass Mountain', the theme tune from the film 'Ladies In Lavender', 'Moonlight Sonata' and favourites from Paul McCartney and Andrew Lloyd-Webber. David is very talented and the programme was interspersed with some of his own compositions, including some 'World Premiers'. One of these was 'Domine Jesu', a Requiem Mass written by David and beautifully sung by Rachel Scarlett. Both Rachel and Renato joined in some of the items with David singing and playing the piano as well, making a beautiful 'quartet'. Renato also played some solo pieces which had been written by one of his Brazilian friends.

The concert was very well attended. A light supper was provided in the interval.

The concert was raising money for **Thames Valley Air Ambulance** and the amount to date is £320. David had his CDs on sale and proceeds from these will also go to the charity.

Many thanks especially to David for arranging the concert, and to Renato and Rachel for their talented input, plus the 'back room staff' for all the catering.

Eunice Cooper

DAY TRIP TO WESLEY'S CHAPEL IN LONDON





On Thursday 28th June, an intrepid band of travellers set off for London. Predictably, the traffic going into London was heavy and slow – how do people cope with that every working day? Tempting as it was, we resisted the urge to annoy Lesley Boardley, our trip organiser, with **“Are we nearly there yet?”** or **“We’re getting hungry so can we eat our sandwiches now?”!**

Our coach driver decided to take an alternative route into London because of the congestion and it was a real shock that we passed so close to the remains of Grenfell Tower. The stark reality was far more chilling than anything we had seen in the TV images and it was a quiet coach that arrived at Wesley’s Chapel.

Shortly after our arrival, we were warmly greeted by Leslie and Margaret Griffiths and shown into the chapel. As Leslie chatted to us from the front, he kept stopping in his tracks as he saw faces he recognised so well from his time at Caversham Heights and regaled us with stories from those days.

For both of us, as for many others, this was our first visit to the chapel and it did not disappoint! It has such a warm, inviting feel to it and we were immediately aware of the huge number of country flags hanging from the gallery, representing all those from countries around the world who have worshipped there. Our attention was drawn to the beautiful, wooden pulpit which was originally five feet higher than it is today with an additional level. John Wesley would have preached from the top, the scripture was read from the next level and standing on the floor would be the precentor who led the singing.

The font was given to the chapel in 1891 and the carved stone within comes from Antigua where Nathaniel Gilbert began preaching to the slaves in 1759 – the beginning of Methodism in the Caribbean. The broken fetters depicted on the font represent the abolition of slavery.

The Conversion Window, commemorating their conversion experiences which took place in Aldersgate in 1738, shows John Wesley and his brother Charles singing Charles’ conversion hymn, ‘Where shall my wondering soul begin?’

The front communion rail was donated by Margaret Thatcher who was married in the chapel and both of her children were christened there.

A quick stop in the basement for a coffee and to eat our lunch. We then joined the lunchtime worship led by Leslie in the chapel. There were a good number of other worshippers at the service, some of whom were visiting tourists.

Leslie reminded us of Charles Wesley's life in his address and we were delighted to have Kido Baek as our pianist. (Kido had preached at Caversham Heights and Gosbrook Road). Leslie then had to take his leave as he was due in the House of Lords to host a visiting group during the afternoon.

We were then looked after by the Heritage stewards who - after showing us a DVD which was a real reminder of our Methodist roots - took us on guided tours of the grounds where we saw John Wesley's tomb, Charles Wesley's single manual pipe organ in the Foundry Chapel, the museum and John Wesley's house.

John Wesley moved into the house in October 1779 and used it, intermittently, as his London home, shared with his preachers, until his death in his 88th year on March 2nd 1791. We were shown the bedroom where he died after breathing the words: **"The best of all is God is with us"**.

Off his bedroom was his small prayer room where we were told that he would pray and read his Bible from 4am before going to the chapel at 5am.

In the museum room we were able to see his hat, gown, preaching bands and shoes. In the preachers room on the second floor we found a copy of a preaching plan, probably showing John Wesley's last preaching appointments before he died. Two hundred or so years might have passed but today's plans don't look very different - though no longer hand written!!

Before leaving us, our tour guide encouraged the ladies to find a man to accompany them to the gentlemen's toilets!! Much to Ken Lunnon's delight/dismay, we asked him to take us - to view the original public toilets on site. (Still in use today).

Having ensured that there were no unsuspecting males in there for genuine reasons, we were treated to a look around a most amazing room. Magnificent green marble around the hand basins and urinals, beautiful mahogany toilet cubicles with Thomas Crapper's original wall cisterns and ballcock mechanisms and the crowning glory - so to speak - the porcelain toilet bowls emblazoned with the words - **'The Venerable'** and the Thomas Crapper and Company logo! There was much laughter, many photographs and some very inappropriate comments! We were then asked to leave so that the men could use the facilities! A subsequent visit to the ladies, refurbished but still with much of their original elegance was - sadly - nowhere near as interesting.

Our grateful thanks go to Lesley and Peter Boardley for all their hard work in organising such an enjoyable day - one full of fellowship and fun.

Margaret Ellison and Jan Talbot

Check the Wesley Chapel website – where you will find lots of coloured photographs and fuller details:
www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH LIBRARY



“This is likely to be an outrageous book by an outrageous old woman!” So said Wanda Nash when she wrote ‘Come let us age. An invitation to grow old badly.’ Published by the Bible Reading Fellowship in July 2017 – so it is absolutely ‘hot from the press’!

This book entrances me. It is quite a short book (a mere 92 pages) but it contains more on being a Christian with old-age adjustments than any other book I have read.

Where do I start? Wanda Nash – who died in 2015, was a tremendous character. She loved riddles, puns and word-play. There was a great sense of humour in her and she was constantly ‘thinking outside the box’

Trained in stress counselling, and the wife of a Winchester Cathedral priest, her life with her family and elsewhere was very full. In spite of this, she had mastered being rushed off her feet and retaining at the same time ‘the still small voice of calm’. A super Martha and a super Mary rolled into one!

Wanda’s daughter and a friend completed the book.

There are extracts from Wanda’s journals, including a lot about ‘Stillness’ and ‘Clearing the loft – handing over and passing on’. Lessons for all of us to learn. Other sections include: ‘God laughing’ and ‘Feeling awful and playing’. These are unusual approaches, but are totally relevant.

Finally we come to ‘The best is yet to come’ and ‘Finale’ where a part of a poem is included.

***“I see that an infinitely loving God has
used every thread of my life to weave
a perfect fabric of truth -
“Don’t ask me how.”***

Strong stuff!

Meryl Beek

Separated families update – a step forward or backward?

I wrote last in the April-May Newsletter at a time of hopefulness.

I had met with Iain Duncan Smith in January. He appeared to understand how faulty legislation was causing many parents, separated from their children, to be asked to pay child maintenance amounts that they could not possibly afford. He talked about the ways in which he might be able to help.

Also, the Work and Pensions Select Committee were preparing a report, presenting the conclusions of their Inquiry into the Child Maintenance Service. I had been told that my evidence, which explained the origin of the problems and their damaging impact, was being used in the draft report. This was good news.

The Report was eventually published on 2 May, the day that Parliament was dissolved in the run-up to the General Election, and I opened it in hopeful anticipation. To my surprise there was absolutely no reference at all to my evidence on the faulty legislation. Nor was there any reference to the evidence provided by numerous separated parents who spoke of the difficulties of their situation, their desperation and distress. **(See sample quotes below.)** Half of the submitted evidence (links are given in the Report) has been completely ignored. The 'elephant in the room' of faulty legislation remains unacknowledged. This is a remarkable situation and I have been thinking and praying as to how best to respond.

There have been side effects to the Inquiry. Someone impressed by my factual evidence contacted me to talk through their personal situation. 'FNF – Both Parents Matter' (the Welsh branch of Families Need Fathers) are quoting my work and are keen pursue it. They asked me to join a working group on child maintenance and I recently met some of them in London. They have many other causes of concern, as well as the simple matter of unaffordability that I concentrate on, so there will be challenges in working together.

I continue to work for a resolution to this deplorable situation and would appreciate the support of your prayers and any other help that you find yourself able to give. Perhaps you know someone caught up in these difficulties who would value your understanding.

Christine Dugdale, 12 July 2017

"I am writing this letter in desperation as I cannot hold out much longer.... Can someone help me out or point me in the right direction because it must be against human rights or something to have someone who has worked all his life and looked after his kids for ten years being reduced to eating 14p noodles and having holes in my shoes, this must be wrong!"

"I was talked out of suicide 2 days ago because of this situation I'm facing as I see suicide as the only logical way to deal with this! I've been in the same job for 17 years and made an enquiry into redundancy unfortunately work said no hence why suicide became my only other choice."

PASTORAL NEWS – GOSBROOK ROAD

Mary Prior has been ill recently first suffering from shingles followed by jaundice. She is much improved but continues to have tests to ascertain the cause of the jaundice. Please remember Mary in your prayers also **Gareth Sweeting's son, Luke**, who was knocked off his bicycle and recently had an operation to repair his collar bone.

We continue to pray for our housebound friends, **Alma Alexander, Gwenda Buckledee and Barbara Tucker.**

PASTORAL NEWS – CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS

Our thoughts and prayers are with **Viv Emerson and the family – sadly, Myra passed away on 15th July after many months of ill health. We thank God for Myra's life and her dedicated service to our church and elsewhere. We will all miss her.**

Derek and Mary Richings - Derek has ongoing health problems.

Margaret Ebbs and family following the death of **Brian**.

Nathan Dow – Sandra Walton's grandson – following a very serious operation – we pray for his full recovery.

Congratulations to Janet and Mark Plant, celebrating their **40th Wedding Anniversary**

Tribute to Myra Emerson



As a church community we have lost, very recently, one of the true Saints of the Lord: Myra Emerson. She has been at the heart of our life as a church for sixteen years – not, perhaps, as many years as some, but her contribution has been beyond reckoning.

My own memories of Myra, however, go back much further, to September 1958, when we both registered as students in the University of Southampton and immediately joined the student Methodist Society: Meth Soc. She proved a popular and valuable member of Meth Soc, playing a full part in its fellowship.

It was soon evident that she and a certain Viv Emerson were destined to join forces in due course: they were married in July 1961 at St James' Road Methodist Church, Southampton. I had the privilege of playing the organ on that occasion, because, as Myra said: her father was otherwise occupied. We kept in touch over the years following one another's lives as Myra and Viv went to Cardiff and then Newbury, and Monica and I married and went to Glasgow.

They moved to Newbury and played a role in Northbrook Street Methodist Church much as they have in Caversham Heights. In 2001 Viv retired and they celebrated their Ruby wedding, an occasion to which we were invited. While we were there they told us of their imminent move to Henley, to be nearer their family. So we found ourselves working together once again, now at Caversham Heights.

Myra and Viv have always seen themselves as a team, working closely together in projects of all kinds: as Church Stewards and Pastoral Visitors, as caterers

(preparing substantial meals for eighty people or more without batting an eyelid). They were also involved in the weekend called *Sharing God's Love*, and in the subsequent church weekends which have done much to strengthen our commitment and deepen our vision. Though in some ways Viv has been the more visible partner in Team Emerson, Myra's contribution has been distinctive and essential to its success and to the part they have played in church life in Caversham.

As a former English teacher Myra's gifts naturally fitted the needs of the editorial board of the *Caversham Bridge*, on which she served for many years. She also played a pivotal role in the creation of two pantomimes for the church; she looked back on those as among her most significant contributions.

Myra was also involved in tending the garden, in launching the Monday coffee mornings, and in Stay-a-While, and in the House Group of which they were members.

Perhaps the most remarkable part they played in the life of our church was their determination to get to know everyone by their Christian name. They kept a loving and watchful eye on folk without trespassing on their privacy, and it was here that Myra's most memorable gifts played their fullest part: her engaging smile and the unconditional, loving warmth of her welcome. These are what comes to my mind when I remember her. Her greeting was always an encouragement. I felt I understood myself a little better because she knew me so well; I could stand tall and be a better me. I dare say many others would be able to say the same.

Our service of baptism has always included the prayer that the child being baptised would remain Christ's faithful soldier and servant to their life's end. That prayer has been richly answered in Myra Emerson. We are grateful to God for a truly wonderful person.

John Ogden

**We rely upon you, O God
to be our companion when others are nowhere to be found
We call upon you O God
to be a voice when we struggle to find words we need.
We rest upon you O God,
Our haven when the walls of life close in on us.
for the times when we are alone,
or silenced by the moment,
or crushed by the weight,
We look to you, O God, our companion, voice and haven.
in the gatherings, noise and expanse,
May we never forget that you remain an ever-constant
presence,
the God of life, liberation and love. Amen.**

Bruce Thompson, Lincolnshire District Chair

**DIARY DATES –
CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS**

AUGUST

Sunday 6th

9 a.m. Rev'd David Jenkins
– Holy Communion
10.30 Katherine
Baxter

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 13th

10.30 Rev'd Jenny
Dowding – Holy
Communion
6.30 Rev'd David Jenkins

Sunday 20th

10.30 Mr David Munns

1 – 3 p.m. Churches Together in Caversham picnic in Caversham Court Gardens

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 27th

10.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding
6.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding – Holy Communion

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 3rd

9 a.m. Rev'd Jenny Dowding – Holy Communion
10.30 Mr Terry Rowell

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 10th

10.30 Rev'd David Jenkins – Holy Communion
6.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding

Thursday 14th September – CIRCUIT MEETING at Caversham Heights

Sunday 17th

10.30 Dedication Service for Stay-a-while helpers.

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 24th

10.30 Rev'd David Jenkins
6.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding – Holy Communion

DIARY DATES – GOSBROOK ROAD

AUGUST

Sunday 6th

10.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding – Holy Communion

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 13th

10.30 Mr David Munns
6.30 Rev'd David Jenkins - at Caversham Heights -

Sunday 20th

10.30 Mr Barrie Davies
1 – 3 p.m. Churches Together in Caversham picnic in Caversham Court Gardens

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 27th

10.30 Local Arrangement
6.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding Holy Communion at
Caversham Heights

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 3rd

10.30 Mr David Munns

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 10th

10.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding – Holy Communion
6.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding at Caversham Heights

Thursday 14th September – CIRCUIT MEETING at Caversham Heights.

Sunday 17th

10.30 Local Arrangement

NO 6.30 SERVICE

Sunday 24th

10.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding
6.30 Rev'd Jenny Dowding at Caversham Heights

Holy Communion

ON SUNDAY 9TH JULY Andy Moffoot took the evening service at Caversham Heights and encouraged us to sing the following hymn:

From Singing the Faith – No. 144

Here are my thoughts, Lord, here is my mind
Here are my deeds, Lord, help me unwind.
Here is my strength, Lord, here is my will.
Here is my life, Lord, help me be still.

Here is my heart, Lord, here is my hope,
Here is my love, Lord, help me to cope.
Here is my time, Lord, here is my might,
Here I am yours, Lord, bless me tonight.

David Adam

(What a wonderful hymn/prayer to end the day}



ADVANCE NOTICES



**1st October – Harvest Sunday
For both Caversham Heights and Gosbrook Road
followed by a Bring and Share lunch at Gosbrook Road**

**Please bring items suitable for Readifoods for harvest gifts.
Lists will be available in the vestibules at the beginning of September.**

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS AUTUMN FAIR
Saturday 4th November 2017
Proceeds to be divided equally between

The Alzheimer's Disease Society

and

THRIVE

(‘THRIVE’ is the national charity whose aim is to enable positive change in the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people through the use of gardening and horticulture.)