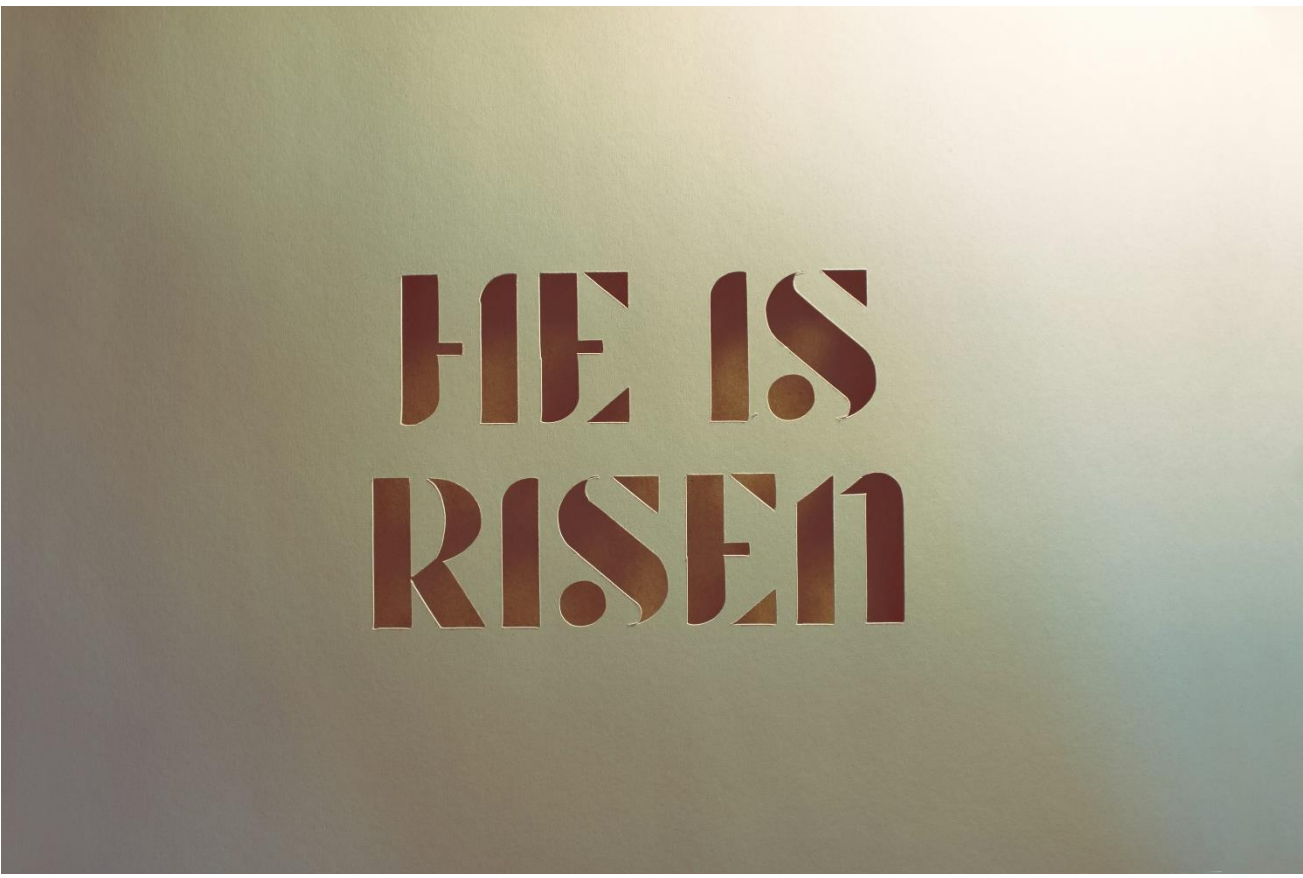


Withington Methodist News

April 2025



**HE IS
RISEN**

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday 6th April: Rev. Mandy Boon

Sunday 13th April, Palm Sunday: Rev. Caroline Wickens, HC

Friday 18th April, Good Friday: service at 10am, followed by walk of witness.

Sunday 20th April, Easter Sunday: Rev. Mandy Boon

Sunday 27th April: Mrs Pamela Sewart

GREETINGS FROM CAROLINE

Resilience: it's a much-prized quality in our turbulent times. Nations and states seek to be resilient in the face of economic shocks. Organisations aim to bounce back from unexpected demands. Individual people claim that yes, of course we're fine, even as we face price rises, benefit cuts, and the lingering after-effects of the Covid pandemic, five years on.

Maybe resilience is over-rated. Human systems, human beings, are not bouncy balls to leap back into action after every upset. We need time to reflect and adapt to changing circumstances and to work out how we are going to cope with new situations. Have you ever noticed how the timeline of Easter creates space for everyone to stop and breathe? On Good Friday, we hear the horrifying story of the death of Jesus, crucified for us. On Easter Day, we deck our cross with daffodils as we celebrate his resurrection.

In between, there's Holy Saturday – we eat the remaining hot cross buns, go for a walk in the sunshine (maybe!) and wait for Easter, for the world-changing cry 'Christ is risen!' But the waiting is also important; it gives us time to process what has happened and to allow it to sink into our souls so that it becomes part of who we are. Yes, we are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song, as Pope John Paul II said, but we are also Saturday people.

When I began serving as a minister, thirty-odd years ago, I was much

influenced by Rev. Donald Eadie, my chair of District. I didn't know that he was facing a diagnosis of spinal breakdown that would change his life. Donald wrote about 'Saturday people':

'There is a long Saturday between the Friday of crucifixion and the Sunday of resurrection. Periods of transition, particularly when we are in pain or distress, are no time for easy answers or religious clichés. Sustenance of a different kind is needed, coming from deep roots and underground streams.'

Resilience does come – 'they cut me down, and I leapt up high' wrote Sydney Carter in his hymn 'Lord of the dance'; but this Easter, take time too to be Saturday people. Breathe and rest, recognise the ways in which life is changing, acknowledge that this may mean painful loss as well as fruitful gain, and wait for the breath of God to inspire the new life of Easter in our hearts and lives.

Every blessing for this amazing time of year,

Your minister Caroline

PRAYER LIST

We remember in our prayers:

All those caught up in conflict around the world: Lebanon, Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and those facing persecution,

the family and friends of Barry Broadmeadow,

Stella,

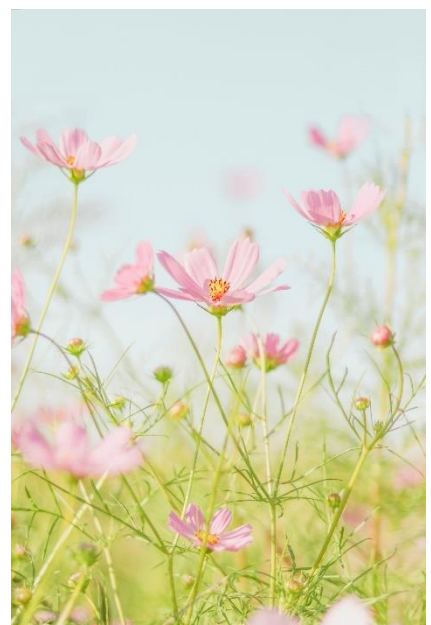
Brenda,

Lynne and Elycia,

Lottie,

all those here who are struggling to pay their bills and facing long waits for hospital appointments,

those members and friends unable to be with us.



WMC – PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Have your say!

In November 2019 Rev. Caroline, as Circuit Superintendent, produced a document entitled 'Towards a Missional Strategy for the Use of Withington Methodist Church Building.' Key characteristics of the local community, the current use of our building and suggestions for why and how we further develop the usage were considered.

Then came the pandemic and for some time all activity, including in person worship, ceased.

As months passed we slowly picked ourselves up and church activities, commercial lettings and our partner groups – Assist, Heart help and Head Forward – returned. But although we welcomed some new faces here, not all pre pandemic users came back. There were significantly fewer worshippers on a Sunday morning (circuit evening worship remained on zoom), though we were well in touch with many who were unable to attend in person, and we no longer had some of our previous regular church run groups and lettings, albeit some new ventures did start up.



In 2021 we began again discussions about the way forward, culminating in an Away Day on 30th October at the Chapel in the Field in Sinderland. This was attended by a relatively small group of members in person and online. We invited Abigail Parr from Transforming Churches and Communities (TCC) to summarize our ideas and provide an objective assessment of the options for the future of WMC, focussed primarily on the building itself. Consideration was given to the past evidence that past rejuvenation projects had not achieved their aims, the workload that was falling on the current Stewards' team and small Management committee, and the desire to move forward.

Abi produced a report which suggested 5 options to consider, and in March 2022 we examined this in a meeting led by Caroline at WMC.

Since then our energy bills, maintenance and staffing costs have inevitably increased. Additionally a significant loss of income arose when the lease with the NHS ended in 2023 and has not been renewed. So a new contract has had to be drawn up with Heart help and Head Forward who are managing to balance their books by paying the church a considerably reduced rent. Thus since 2021 we have been continuing much as before, but with financial implications following our Quinquennial inspection and report in December 2024, the Church Council recommend that we should revisit the discussion regarding our future.

We would strongly encourage those who are concerned about these issues, to attend a meeting at WMC on Saturday 10th May from 10am – 3pm.

Refreshments and lunch will be provided. We look forward to seeing you there!

WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning In Person Worship

Our Sunday Morning services are held at 10:45 in the downstairs hall. Please enter the church via the back car park entrance. We have refreshments after the service and if you would like to help facilitate this, please let us know.

Reflections and written worship resources:

If you are not on email and would like to receive a printed copy of our weekly reflections or written worship resources for Sunday, please contact Caroline Wickens.

Lent and Easter Services:

Maundy Thursday – 17th April at 7:30pm: there will be a liturgical meal with communion (see more details later in the magazine)

Good Friday – 18th April at 10am: there will be a service at 10am, followed by the Walk of Witness.

Easter Sunday – 20th April at 10:45am: followed by tea/coffee and cake.

Wednesday Chat and Bible Study:

During Lent we will be looking at the theme of how to make better use of the resources of God's world. We are also introducing an additional online Bible Study group on Friday mornings – more details to be found later in the magazine.

Manchester Circuit Sunday Evening Service

A warm welcome as ever to our worship tomorrow evening.

The Zoom platform will be open from 6pm for those who wish to catch up with others from their church, and as usual worship will begin at 6:30.

The joining details follow-

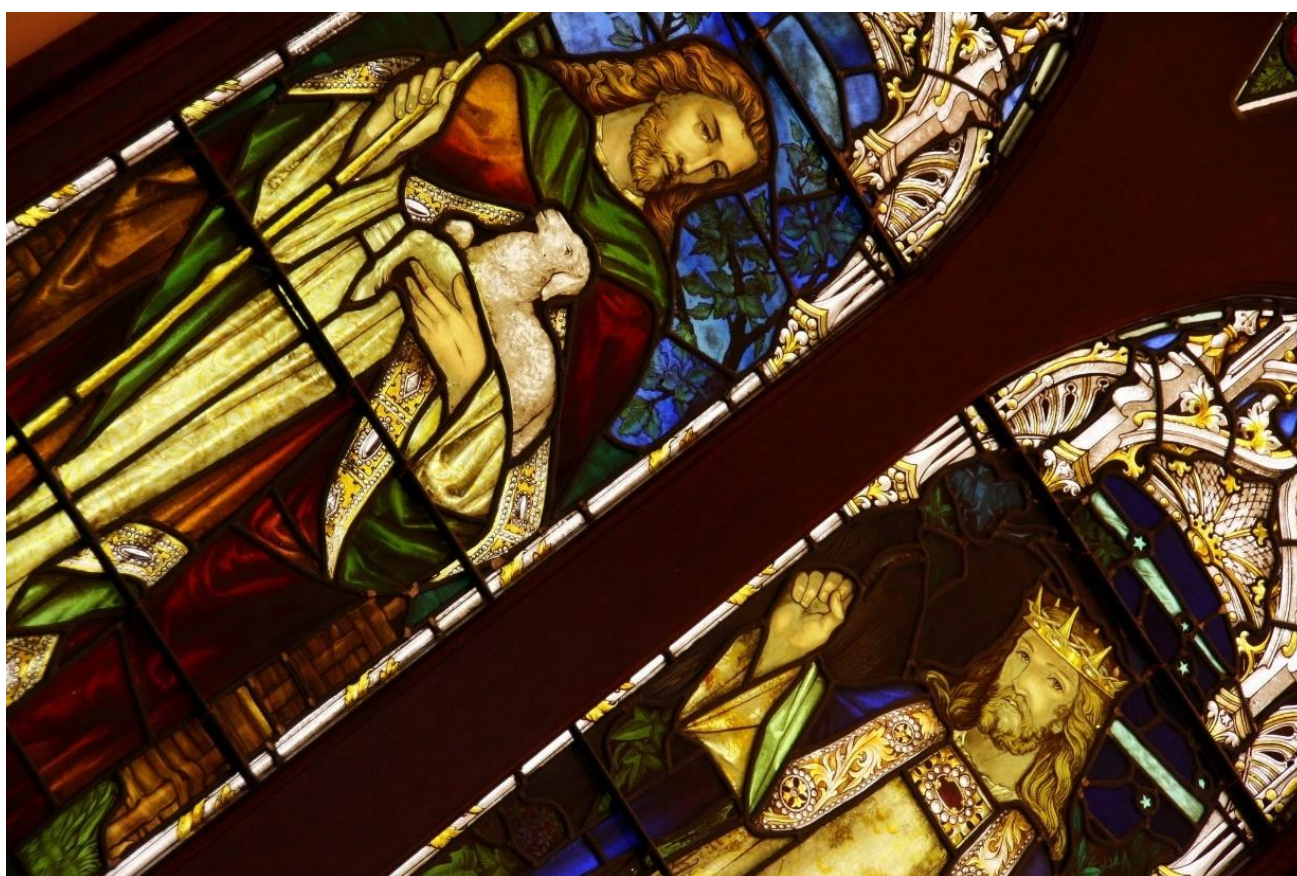
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92204599032?pwd=Tzg0SU9xcVZEZFNQK0FnYnNKWjlUQT09>

Meeting ID: 922 0459 9032

Passcode: 1901

One tap mobile + 12532158782, 92204599032 #, 1901#



NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

04 MARCH 2025

No Other Land, attack update

On Wednesday 28 February representatives from the World Methodist Council, the Methodist Church in Britain, the United Methodist Church and the Methodist Liaison Office, Jerusalem visited Susya in Masafer Yatta, South Hebron Hills. We were greeted by Ahmad a teenager who apologised that his Dad, who would normally meet visitors, was unable to meet us as he was attending the Oscars ceremony! His Dad, Hamdan Ballal, was one of the directors of the documentary No Other Land which was nominated for, and won, the Best Documentary Feature Oscar 2025.



The documentary is the story of the relationship between a Palestinian activist and an Israeli journalist. It highlights the difference in their lives as they join together to challenge the intimidation and violence of Israeli policy, including house demolitions, and Israeli Settlers as they illegally seek to take Palestinian land by force in the West Bank.

In the Oscar acceptance speech Israeli co-writer Yuval Abraham said “can’t you see that we (Palestinians and Israelis) are intertwined... my people can only be truly safe if Basel’s (the Palestinian co-writer) people are truly safe and free...”

Update

On 24 March in Susya Israeli settlers violently attacked homes, cars and

people. The attack was witnessed by five Jewish activists from the Centre for Jewish Nonviolence. They stated that “They started throwing stones towards Palestinians and destroyed a water tank near Hamdan’s house,” and that “the settlers destroyed his car with stones and slashed one of the tyres, all the windows and windshields were broken.” The witnesses also said that a group of soldiers arrived at the scene alongside other settlers dressed in military uniform, who chased Hamdan to his house and handed him over to the military.

Another witness added “There were dozens of settlers together with the Israeli soldiers and they were threatening us with weapons, the police were there from the beginning and did not intervene. While the soldiers were pointing their weapons at us, the settlers started attacking the houses of the Palestinians. Hamdan tried to protect his family and the settlers attacked him. He was shouting for help but soldiers started shooting in the air to prevent anyone from coming to his aid. They let the settlers attack him and then the army abducted him.”¹

Hamdan has since been released having been held overnight in a police station.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated story in the West Bank. In an article from Dec 2024 ¹ reported that since 7 Oct 2023 over 50 Palestinian Communities had been forced from their land due to Israeli settler violence and intimidation.² While such incidents have increased of late, they are a part of a much longer trend. The Israeli human rights group, Btselem, have recorded 1,520 instances of settler violence over the last five years. A quarter of these incidents took place in the presence of Israeli security forces.³ There is a widespread international consensus that Israeli occupation of the West Bank is illegal. This was again reinforced by a ruling of the International Court of Justice in July 2024.⁴ A sense of natural justice might cause us to feel that those engaged in a pattern of illegal activity should have to face the consequences of their actions, yet effective pressure on the government of Israel is rare.

When faced with an understanding of what is happening in the Holy Land people often ask ‘What can we do?’ Please continue to pray for all who live under the threat of violence and losing their land. Call on your Governments to work tirelessly for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, to ensure protection

to all Palestinians in the West Bank and for Israel to withdraw from their illegal occupation of the West Bank.

The Methodist Church's Lebanon and Gaza Justice Appeal was set up to support projects that the Church has been involved with for many years. Supported by All We Can and the United Reformed Church, over twenty thousand pounds has been raised so far. You can stream the film on All 4.

05 MARCH 2025

Anglican-Methodist Covenant Meeting

On 28th February, President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Helen Cameron, and Vice-President, Carolyn Godfrey met with the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell at Lambeth Palace. A meeting between the Archbishops and the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference is a regular, annual occurrence.

The President and Vice-President were accompanied by Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler; Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Michaela Youngson, and Connexional Ecumenical Officer, the Revd Steven Cooper. The Archbishop was accompanied by Secretary General of the General Synod, William Nye; Bishop of Stafford, the Rt Revd Matthew Parker (the Church of England's lead bishop for relations with the Methodist Church), and the Church of England's two national ecumenical officers, the Revd Dr Jeremy Morris and the Revd Tim Norwood.

"It was a positive and fruitful discussion, which included sharing around the joys and challenges affecting our two churches at the moment, and reflection on the recent 21st anniversary of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant for England", commented Revd Steven Cooper, the Connexional Ecumenical Officer. "Both the President and the Archbishop expressed a shared desire to move forward with the ongoing work needed to enable fuller sharing between our churches in the mission of God, including work towards a hoped-for relationship of full communion between our churches, in which our ordained ministers will be able to serve interchangeably between the two."



There was conversation around the key issue of safeguarding in the life of our churches, to which the Vice-President brought particular insight from her professional experience as a Safeguarding Officer.

There was a mutually illuminating discussion about the distinctive ministries of deacons in the Methodist Church and the Church of England, which led to a shared desire for further conversation to learn about the different forms diaconal ministry takes in our two churches, and about how those ministries may relate with one another.

The meeting also included discussion of the Methodist Church's leading role in the Let's End Poverty campaign, and about how our churches can share together in responding to the needs of local communities.

Both parties expressed assurance of their continuing prayers for each other, in a very cordial meeting that served to strengthen the bonds between our traditions.

12 MARCH 2025

Suicide prevention training to support vulnerable people in Cornwall *Content warning: mentions of suicide.*

Thirty people across Methodist Churches in Cornwall have been trained with skills to support vulnerable people who might be experiencing suicidal thoughts. The training, which is part of the district's social justice training, will enable workers and volunteers to offer help at a community level.

In a county with the third highest suicide rate in the UK, a powerful community collaboration is helping to equip those on the frontlines with vital skills to recognise and respond to those in crisis. The South West Peninsula Methodist District has recently completed an important initiative, delivering Prevent Suicide Training to 30 volunteers and staff across Cornwall.

"Church volunteers and staff often come across individuals who are struggling. This training equipped us with skills and knowledge to support others. It also put us in contact with specialised organisations such as Healthy Cornwall," says Helen Pearce, District Social Justice Co-ordinator.

"Ensuring that frontline volunteers have access to high-quality training, such as Suicide First Aid®, is essential in building confidence and skills to respond effectively," adds Fiona Aldred, Chief Executive of the National Centre for Suicide Prevention Education and Training.

The training was facilitated by the Revd Jonathan Budd and the Revd Danny Reed, who are Superintendent ministers from the Saltash Circuit and the Lizard and Mounts Bay circuit and was delivered by Healthy Cornwall. Both superintendents also encouraged people from their wider communities to attend.

Many of warm welcome spaces, foodbanks and clothing banks are lifelines for vulnerable people. "Completing a suicide prevention training course was incredibly valuable in equipping us with the knowledge and skills to recognise warning signs and provide support to individuals in crisis," explains Jo Couch, Circuit/Church Administrator at Saltash Wesley Methodist Church.

“In Saltash we witness the lack of affordable counselling for people who have experienced trauma and how it impacts their mental health. Through our community café, we meet people having suicidal thoughts, it’s good to know how to respond and be pro-active, as well as staying safe and taking care of ourselves.”- Jo Couch, Circuit/Church Administrator at Saltash Wesley Methodist Church.

What makes this initiative particularly effective is its community-based approach. Rather than relying solely on professional services, the training acknowledges the crucial role that community volunteers play in reaching vulnerable individuals who might otherwise slip through the cracks of formal support systems.

The Samaritans report that more than 6,000 people across the UK and Ireland take their own lives each year and only a third of those will have been in contact with specialist mental health services in the year before their death.

Becky Miles, a Healthy Cornwall trainer who delivered the sessions, says the community-centred approach is important:

"When people are struggling, they often turn first to those they already know and trust in their communities. Equipping these individuals with suicide prevention skills creates a vital safety net that complements professional services." - Becky Miles, Healthy Cornwall trainer.

The training days were intensive but thoughtfully organised. In Saltash, local company Rowe's Ltd contributed by donating pasties for all delegates – a gesture that brought a touch of Cornish hospitality to a challenging subject matter. This local business involvement further emphasises the collaborative spirit driving the initiative.

Many delegates support the Orange Badge Scheme, developed by Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care System to identify those trained to address suicide concerns. This badge signals to vulnerable community members that they are with someone ready to listen and help.

The success of these training days demonstrates how the Methodist Church can play a strategic role in supporting local communities through positive collaboration. The training's impact extends beyond participants, as each delegate received a resource pack with links to charities and support

services for suicide prevention. This ripple effect helps spread awareness about available support in communities.

When life is difficult, Samaritans are here – day or night, 365 days a year. You can call them for free on 116 123, email them at jo@samaritans.org, or visit Samaritans.org to find your nearest branch.

Those interested in attending similar events or learning more are encouraged to contact Helen Pearce, SWPMD Social Justice Co-ordinator, on 07450989571.

12 MARCH 2025

Methodist Church hand over three scrolls to Federation of Synagogues

The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Federation of Synagogues are helping the Methodist Church with historic Torah and Book of Esther scrolls which were previously kept at Wesley College, Bristol.

On 28 January, ministers, rabbis and staff oversaw the handover of a Torah scroll previously in storage following the closure of Wesley College, a former Methodist theological college, in 2012. On 6 March, two Esther scrolls were also handed over from the Methodist Church to the Federation of Synagogues.

With limited information known about the Torah, the scroll had been kept in climate controlled archival storage while arrangements were made for it to be returned to the Jewish community. Following an inspection by a scribe, overseen by the Federation, it was determined, due to the nature of the parchment and the style of writing, that the Torah scroll was written in Baghdad and dates from the early nineteenth century. While little is known about the scroll, it is thought that it may have reached Britain either through Methodist missions in Britain-held Iraq, or through British troops, merchants, or businesspeople. The Torah scroll has significant fire and water damage predating its time at Wesley College Bristol. However, it is believed that the

scroll was donated to Wesley College in the late nineteenth-century to be used as a teaching aid.

In a meeting facilitated through the Board of Deputies, representatives from the Methodist Church, including Reverend Steven Cooper (Connexional Ecumenical Officer), Jude Levermore (Head of Mission), and Olivia Threlkeld (Heritage and Collections Officer), attended the handover and shared their knowledge about the scroll. The scroll was received by Federation of Synagogues CEO Avi Lazarus, Head of Burial Lawrence Littlestone, Av Beit Din Rabbi Shraga Feivel Zimmerman, and the Dayanim of the Beit Din.

Rabbi Zimmerman marked the occasion with a speech sharing the significance of the Torah to the Jewish people, thanking the Methodist Church for returning the scroll and acknowledging the representatives present for sharing in friendship and mutual respect.

Due to the damage, the Torah scroll will be buried in accordance with Jewish law.



Ahead of Purim, two other scrolls in storage, were received by the Federation. Both of the scrolls are the Megillat Esther; also thought to have been used as teaching aids for the Methodists at Wesley College. Having received the scrolls, the Federation will oversee the inspection and establish the next chapter for them.

As the scrolls were transferred into the care of the Federation, its Av Beit Din Rabbi Shraga Feivel Zimmerman reflected on the profound significance of the moment, stating:

“The Torah is the heart and soul of the Jewish people. It is our moral guide,

our connection to Hashem, and the foundation of our nation throughout millennia of exile and persecution. The return of this sefer Torah is a powerful reminder of our eternal bond with the Torah and our enduring heritage.”

Connexional Ecumenical Officer for the Methodist Church, Reverend Steven Cooper said:

"We are delighted to hand over these historic scrolls and grateful for the friendships we have developed with the Federation of Synagogues and the Board of Deputies in recent months. These scrolls have a long history, of which their time in Wesley College Bristol was one chapter. We look forward to the next chapter for these scrolls in the Jewish community. Mutual respect, understanding and deep faith has united us in partnership for the care of these scrolls. We look forward to continuing that commitment into the future."

"Mutual respect, understanding and deep faith has united us in partnership for the care of these scrolls. We look forward to continuing that commitment into the future."

Reverend Steven Cooper, Connexional Ecumenical Officer for the Methodist Church

Board of Deputies CEO Michael Wegier said:

“The Board of Deputies is delighted to have facilitated the transfer of these scrolls from the Methodist Church back to the Jewish community. It has been a pleasure to work with the Methodists and the Federation of Synagogues to ensure this could be accomplished, and we hope that this is the beginning of further Interfaith engagement between the two communities.”

19 MARCH 2025

Hundreds of breakfasts served at a fundraiser in Cornwall

Camborne Wesley Methodist Church, alongside the local committee of Cancer Research UK, has helped to fight cancer with a Big Breakfast that has raised over £6000. This is the 22nd year that the fundraiser has been held at the church.

"Within the room I spoke to several people saying, 'Oh, my granddaughter survived it,' or 'My husband, without your research, he wouldn't be here,'" recalls Viv Chadwick, Secretary of the Camborne local committee of Cancer Research UK (CRUK).

According to CRUK, there are more than 385,000 new cancer cases in the UK every year. "Cancer Research UK is well-placed to achieve donations from the public since many people know someone affected by the disease," adds Mike Wills, Chairman of CRUK Camborne Local Committee.

The Big Breakfast is held every first Saturday in March at Camborne Wesley Methodist Church in the South West Peninsula Methodist District, with hundreds of community members gathering to enjoy a hearty, full English breakfast while supporting cancer research.

"We can seat 96 people comfortably on the church premises. We use a rolling system – people turn up and get shown to a table – and we don't rush them. They often see friends they haven't seen for a while and have a chat while they're eating."

Homemade in the Church

Started by Mansell Williams from the Camborne Wesley Methodist Church congregation in 2003, the Big Breakfast has established itself as one of the most successful fundraising initiatives for Cancer Research UK in the country. For the third year in a row, it was recognised as the biggest fundraising local group in the UK. "Every breakfast served is a step towards beating cancer together," confirms Viv.

For just £6, attendees enjoyed a generous full English breakfast, preceded by

cereal or fruit juice with unlimited tea, coffee and toast. Many visitors chose to donate above the asking price, with £10 or even £20 notes being handed over in support of the cause.

Beyond breakfast, visitors could participate in additional fundraising activities including a cake stall, raffle and competitions such as "guess the weight of a cake" or "name the toy".

Between 40 and 50 people contribute to the day's success, from those cooking in the kitchen to volunteers washing dishes and staffing the various stalls. "The church community is heavily involved alongside the committee in staging the event", says Viv.

Perhaps most remarkable is that the event operates with virtually no overhead costs. "Everything raised is passed to the charity," Viv emphasises. "All the food is donated by local businesses and Camborne Wesley Methodist Church allows us the use of the Wesley Centre and its facilities free of charge."

Beyond the financial contribution, which is substantial with approximately 76 pence of every pound donated to CRUK available to beat cancer, the Big Breakfast has become a significant social event within the community, drawing participants from as far as Penzance and Truro.



26 MARCH 2025

Money donated by British Methodists reaches Gaza projects

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have led a call from senior faith leaders for the government to be 'bold and ambitious' in its forthcoming

"Thanks to the generosity of British Methodists our appeal has, and continues to, play a part in enabling this vital work to continue. Funding is a sign of love for those caught up in the devastation of 15 months intensive bombing." How the money you generously donated is reaching vulnerable children and adults in Gaza and the West Bank."

The Methodist Church's Lebanon and Gaza Justice Appeal was set up to support projects that the Church has been involved with for many years. Supported by All We Can and the United Reformed Church, over twenty thousand pounds has been raised so far.

As part of a recent solidarity visit to Jerusalem, the group visited organisations that have received money from the appeal including the Princess Basma Centre who support children with disabilities. Princess Basma had just set up a satellite clinic in Gaza when the Hamas attacks on Israel started in October 2023. Despite working in dangerous and precarious situations, the Gaza staff's dedication and resourcefulness has been a testament to their dedication. Staff have themselves been made refugees with many having to leave their bombed out homes, as well as having to find new premises for clinics. Each new challenge has been met with the sole aim of providing basic medical and trauma care for the people of Gaza. The clinic staff have been tirelessly supported by their colleagues based in Jerusalem with frequent video calls and problem-solving as they worked to make the best of the deteriorating conditions in what became a war zone.

Princess Basma reported that in Gaza in 2024 they were able to treat 415 children in the Al Ahli Hospital comprising of 319 children with chronic

disabilities and 96 post-acute cases due to the ongoing conflict. In displaced areas, including communities living in tents and shelters, 225 children benefited. Overall, despite the horrendous conditions across Gaza, Princess Basma staff held 4000 therapy sessions. The hospital in Jerusalem has had to suspend planned work to renovate its hydrotherapy pool after a grant secured through USAID was frozen when the new American Government took power and suspended overseas aid. The hydrotherapy unit was a central part of the rehabilitation for young patients at the hospital.

Thanks to the generosity of British Methodists our appeal has, and continues to, play a part in enabling this vital work to continue. Funding both Princess Basma and DSPR is a sign of love for those caught up in the devastation of 15 months intensive bombing.

Violette Mubarak, General Director of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre said:

“Where is the hope? This is a question many are asking about the situation in Gaza right now. For me, I find hope every time I talk to our Princess Basma team of 7 remarkable therapists, doctors and social workers, now reunited and working out of our satellite unit at Al Ahi hospital. This work is Hope in Action, through their dedication, resilience and deep act of service to some of the most vulnerable in our community here, children with disabilities and their families in Gaza.

I want to thank all our Methodist friends who through the Gaza/Lebanon Justice Appeal have joined us in this transforming work and contributed to our healing ministry there. It is a celebration of our common humanity and our ability to make a positive difference in our world.

It was our privilege to welcome representatives of the Methodist Church in Britain to our Centre last week on the Mount of Olives here in Jerusalem so that we could pass on our thanks to you all for not forgetting us and instead for helping to sustain hope and our ministry in Gaza. Thank you for remembering us and holding us in your hearts.”

The money you have donated has become all the more important as we have seen recent cuts in international aid^{1,2,3} and political moves to hinder humanitarian work⁴ which continue to have a direct effect on organisations like Princess Basma.

Thank you for your continued support for these wonderful, resilient and brave organisations that have been providing medical and trauma care and hope in Gaza and will continue to do so whatever happens in the region in the future.

You can still support the appeal at The Gaza/Lebanon Justice Appeal - The Methodist Church

A Prayer:

*We care, O God,
but it is hard to keep seeing the devastation, injury and death of war.
We long for peace, O Lord, but wonder when and how – and if - it will ever
come.
We pray, and pray to you,
but our words are drowned out by missiles, guns and the cries of the dying.
Remind us, faithful God,
that our prayers are not passive words, but acts of resistance.
Standing by all who fear and are oppressed,
heartfelt phrases calling for world to inch closer to your vision:
where there is no war,
only justice and peace, not abstract remote concepts,
but the foundation of all relationships.
In the name of the Prince of Peace, Amen*

During the solidarity visit, the group visited the village of Susiya in the south Hebron Hills. There they met Ahmad whose father was involved in making the Oscar winning documentary No Other Land. You can read more about their story here: [No Other Land - The Methodist Church](#)

Revd. David Hardman, Methodist Liaison Officer, Jerusalem

27 MARCH 2025

Faith leaders call for bold action on child poverty

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have led a call from senior faith leaders for the government to be 'bold and ambitious'

in its forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy. The call comes in an open letter to the co-chairs of the Ministerial Child Poverty Taskforce, Bridget Philipson, Secretary of State for Education, and Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

The letter is signed by 35 senior faith leaders from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist traditions, and was coordinated by The Methodist Church. It was also signed by the Methodist Youth President, Bea Hulme.

Currently 4.3 million children – three in 10 children in the UK – are living in poverty, and without further action a further 400,000 are likely to be pulled into poverty by the end of the decade. The Prime Minister promised during the last election that his government would introduce an ambitious plan to lift ‘millions’ of children out of poverty.

The letter says: “We write to you as faith leaders from communities across the UK, to encourage you to be bold and ambitious in your upcoming Child Poverty Strategy.” It goes on, “While we come from different faith traditions, we share a belief that working to end poverty should be a hallmark of any decent, compassionate society. We also believe that transformational change is possible. We are hopeful that the Child Poverty Strategy could be a turning point for the communities we serve, and we are ready to work in partnership with people of goodwill across society to ensure that every child has the start in life they deserve.”

The letter highlights the findings from ‘Paying the Price’, a new report from Action for Children released this week, which sets out measures that could lift 1.2 million children out of poverty by 2030. These include action to reform and invest in a more effective social security system, and steps to boost social housing and improve opportunities for income from employment. The research found that the single most cost-effective step would be scrapping the two-child limit and benefit cap.

Revd Helen Cameron, President of the Methodist Conference, said: “The levels of child poverty we are seeing in communities across the UK cannot be acceptable. With communities trying to pick up the pieces and support families who are struggling, it’s time for the government to step up too. We know it is possible to significantly reduce child poverty, and a social security system that enables families to afford the essentials will be a central pillar. The government must demonstrate that tackling poverty is a priority and

make ambitious choices. We pray that the government's strategy will rise to the challenges we face."

Louise, a 24-year-old from London, faced poverty in childhood before going into foster care from the age of 11. She continues to struggle financially as a care-leaver, particularly as a young, single mum to her four-year-old daughter, battling child care expenses and the high cost of living.

On the launch of Action for Children's new research, she said: "The impact of growing up in poverty is huge. It affected me physically, mentally and emotionally. Not eating enough food as a child affects your health, weight and concentration. You feel angry and confused. A child can't understand why they're excluded from school trips with their friends, or why they don't have new clothes. You feel different. I felt like I was being punished. I didn't understand we just didn't have the money.

"As a care leaver, breaking the cycle of poverty and finding financial independence can be overwhelming and feel impossible at times. There are often barriers you don't know how to overcome on your own as a young adult without the family support and guidance that others may take for granted.

"As a mum, I want the best for my daughter and to give her opportunities I didn't have. It is motivation, but it also brings its own pressures. Even though I worked as much as I could, before she went to school, I was in my overdraft every month and relying on Universal Credit just to pay for childcare so I could keep my job. That isn't right.

"I think there is more support needed not just for young people leaving care, but also for families with young children on low incomes, to help people stay in work, care for their children and thrive."

WMC WHAT'S ON

Maundy Thursday Meal

Many years ago when David Copley was Superintendent and our Minister, we held a service on the evening of Maundy Thursday which included a meal based on the special food prepared at the beginning of the Jewish Passover festival. On our table was unleavened bread, (a reminder of the how quickly the Jews had to leave Egypt), bitter herbs (horseradish - evoking the bitterness of slavery). vegetables dipped in salt water (recalling the tears shed in oppression), roast lamb and an egg. We also had a paste made from apples, nuts, cinnamon and raisins (called Charoset, representing the cement and bricks used by the slaves in Egypt).

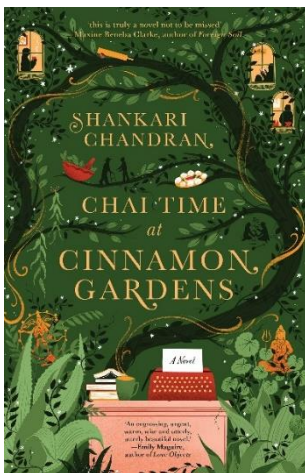
We shared this meal as a reminder of Christ's Last Supper, finishing with Holy Communion, and it proved a very moving and meaningful occasion.

We are going to revisit this special service and meal with Caroline at 7.30 on Maundy Thursday - April 17th and will be inviting both Levenshulme and Didsbury Church to join us.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Heather Steward on 07773015882 for catering purposes.



Withington Book Club



The next meeting of the Book Club will be on Monday 14th April, 7.30pm, when we will be talking about "Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens", by Shankari Chandran.

Following that we are reading "Conclave", by Robert Harris, meeting on Monday May 19th.

New members always welcome; happy reading!

Death Café



Come and join us for an informal chat about grief, death and mortality.

It's a free event with tea, coffee and biscuits. All mortals welcome!

What it is... An opportunity to get together, have a conversation about death and break down the taboos that surround it.

What it is not... a cult, a lecture, a funeral service, a faith-based talk, a fancy dress party, a counselling service, a grief support group, though grief may be expressed and shared.

Thursday 3rd April – 6.30pm – 7.30pm – Withington Methodist Church.
Thank you!

MWiB (Methodist Women in Britain) Spring Gathering

A warm invitation is extended to all to The Methodist Church Manchester & Stockport Area MWiB (Methodist Women in Britain) Spring Gathering, which will take place



**Methodist Women
in Britain**

for women, for justice, for Christ

On Saturday 12th April from 10.30am – 3.15pm (Coffee served from 10.00am) at

Monton Methodist Church (Corner of Park Road and Grange Drive, M30 9JG) please contact Liz Stuart – lizstuartlp@aol.com for directions).

Speaker – Revd. Leonora Wassell –

Part 1 – ‘The Status of Women’ and

Part 2 – ‘The Butterfly Movement’ (with Craft!)

Please bring your own lunch – drinks provided. All welcome. Many thanks.

Eco-Lent

Have you ever wondered what the Bible says about shopping? The circuit is joining together to explore Biblical thinking about how to make better use of the resources of God's world. Sunday by Sunday, and in Bible study groups, we'll consider practical ideas for making a difference around transport, use of water, shopping, pollution and energy use. You can join in via the Wednesday Bible study group or a new online group for Lent, 10am – 11:30am on Friday mornings, both led by Caroline.

You are invited to join Rev.
Caroline Wickens for online Bible
study Friday mornings
10:00-11:30am throughout Lent.



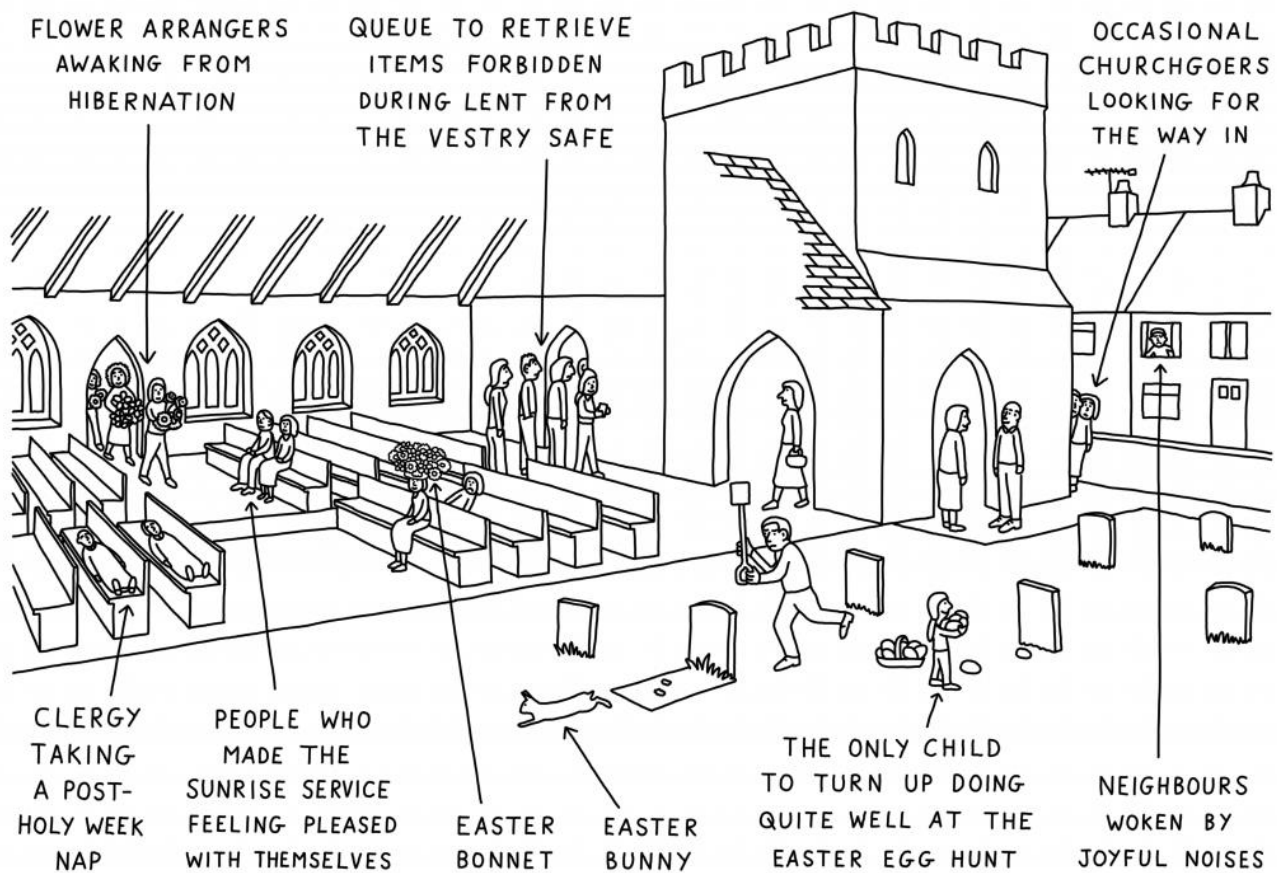
This series of bible studies will be focused on our
Eco Lent theme and are based on the book 'Eggs
and Ashes' by Ruth Burgess & Chris Polhill (Wild
Goose Publications, 2004)

Starting Friday 14 March and continuing through
to Friday 11 April.

Please email
communities@manchestermethodists.org.uk
for zoom joining details.

THANK YOU FOR READING!

THE EASTER SERVICE



CartoonChurch.com

The next magazine will be out on the 2nd May. As usual it can be found on the **Withington Methodist Church Facebook Group and via email.**

If you have anything you would like to contribute to next month's magazine please pass it on to Caroline Bracegirdle - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

If you would like to receive an emailed copy of the magazine please email - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

Withington Methodist Church

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Sunday Services

Morning Worship : 10:45 am taking place in the ground floor hall. Holy Communion once a month.

Regular Activities

Monday Monkeys (Mondays 10:00 - 11:30am)
Kundalini Yoga (7:00 - 8:30pm)
Brownies (Wednesdays from Oct. 6:45 - 8:15pm)
Snooker Group (Fridays 1:00 - 3:00pm)

