

Withington Methodist News

May 2022



SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sundays at 10.45am

May 1st - Rev. Krystyna Kwarciak

May 8th - Abigail Parr, AAW

May 15th - Pamela Sewart

May 22nd - Rev. Krystyna Kwarciak, HC

May 29th - Rev. Ade Kila

DEAR FRIENDS,

Each year in May, when the spring season reaches its fullness, I marvel at how incredible our world is. When God's creation erupts in colour, birdsong and new life, it's not only a delight for our senses, but also uplifting for our souls.

One of my favourite hymns over the years has been 'How great Thou art'. The first verse of the hymn was written by a Swedish preacher, Carl Boberg after a unique experience on the southeast coast of Sweden in May 1882. He got caught in a violent midday thunderstorm, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm, sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted Boberg to "fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God." The first verse beginning with the words: Oh Lord, my God, When I, in awesome wonder/ Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made/ I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder/ Thy power throughout the universe displayed captures Boberg's awe at how great God is.

What I wasn't aware of until recently is that the last two verses of 'How great Thou art' have Ukrainian roots. They were written by a British missionary to Eastern Europe, Stuart Hine. When Stuart and his wife arrived in a small Ukrainian village, they heard a strange sound and discovered a woman reading from a Bible left behind by a Russian soldier to a house full of visitors. She was reading about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The sound the Hines heard was people repenting, calling out to God, and praising Him for His love. This became the third verse that we know today:

“And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.”

The Hines had to leave Ukraine for Poland during the famine inflicted on Ukraine by Stalin during the winter of 1932-1933, then the outbreak of World War II in 1939 forced them back to London. Stuart and his wife questioned God as to why their ministry had come to an end, but they were amazed to discover that millions of refugees from Eastern Europe were streaming into England. This time around their ministry came to them, instead of them having to go to their ministry. The fourth verse of the hymn is dedicated to the refugees who didn't know when they would see their families again. It's a verse full of hope, a verse that looks to the future: When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart.

At this time of year and at this moment in history, as the war in Ukraine continues to rage, the hymn 'How great Thou art' seems particularly meaningful.

Blessings and Best Wishes,

Rev. Krystyna

PRAYER LIST

We remember in our prayers:

Thandiwe,
Sarah,
John,
Marguerite,
Helen Osei,
Ora and Stasi,
Henry,
the people of Ukraine and Russia,
Ukrainian refugees in the UK



WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning In Person Worship

Covid restrictions have been lifted in England, but we want everyone to feel safe when they come to Church, so in consideration of others, you may wish to continue wearing a mask during the service (unless exempt). However, we recognise that this is a personal choice, and will not be a condition of attending services or meetings.

We would like to resume serving refreshments after Sunday morning services, but we need volunteers for this to happen. If you are willing to help occasionally or regularly, please see Jenny Went, who is co-ordinating this. No volunteers = no coffee!

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 Krystyna on 0161 612 2668.

Coffee Morning and Bible Study on Zoom:

We have a virtual coffee morning every Monday from 11:00 am and a weekly Bible Study every Wednesday from 2:00 pm

Joining details for both meetings are the same every week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84141198605>

Meeting ID: 841 4119 8605

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-

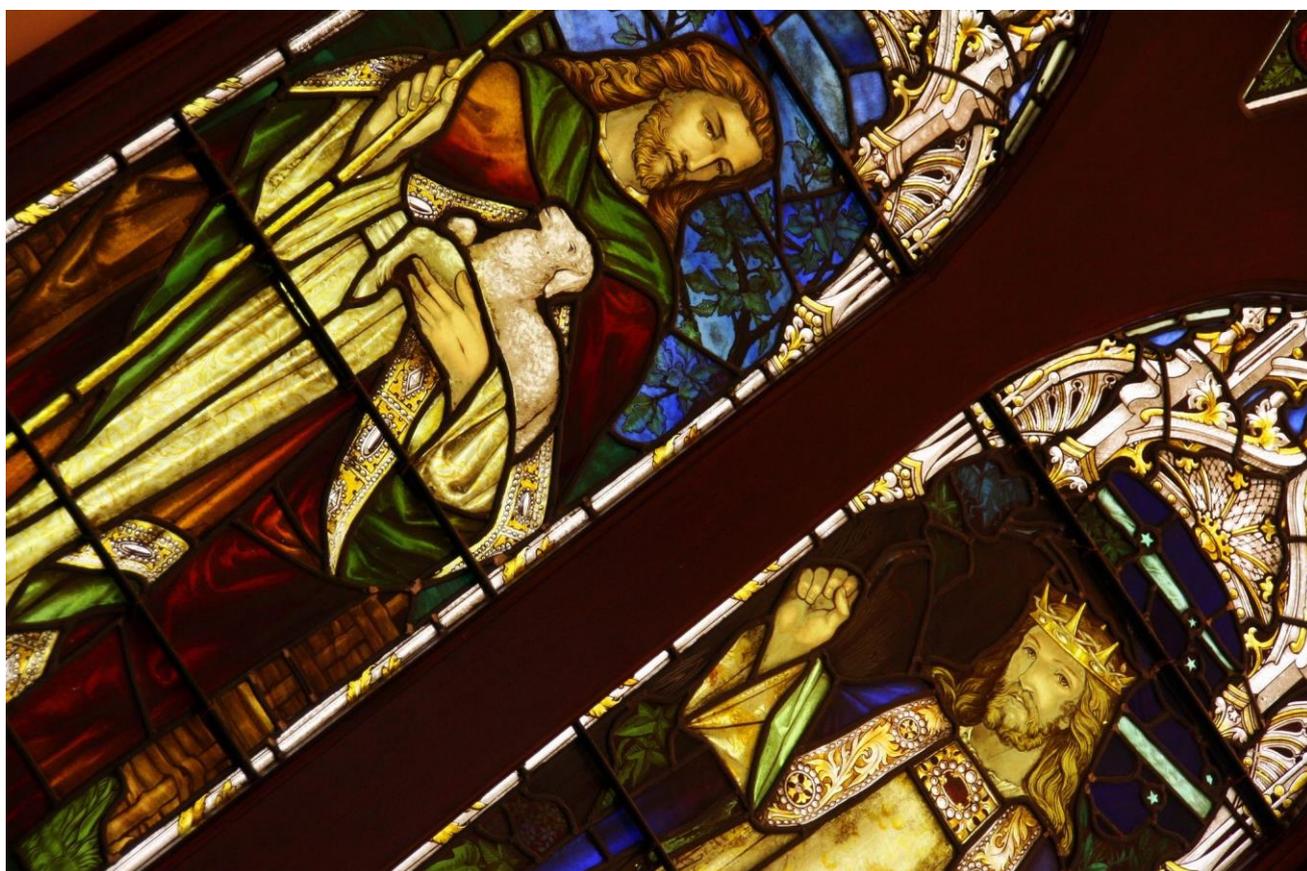
Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 922 0459 9032

Passcode: 1901

One tap mobile + 12532158782, 92204599032 #, 1901#



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

May 15th - May 21st

News from the Christian aid website

Every gift. Every action. Every prayer. Every one of us can change lives. Drought starves. It robs women of the power to farm and grow food for their families. Now, for the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. Covid-19, conflict and the climate crisis are pushing more of our global neighbours into a struggle for survival.

Women and men in Zimbabwe are hungry to provide a more hopeful future. Mums often skip meals to share with their children what little food they have. One of these mums is Jessica Mwedzi. Drought makes every day a struggle for survival. Jessica is hungry. Hungry for a good meal. Hungry to earn a decent living. Hungry to provide a more hopeful future for her family.

‘My children crave a good meal, but I can’t provide.’ Jessica says. ‘It pains me to send them to bed hungry.’



Your gift could help Jessica grow drought-resistant crops. You could help her set up a water tap on her farm and learn how to grow food in the harsh climate. She'll turn her dry, dusty land into a garden of hope.

This Christian Aid Week, you can be one of the hundreds of thousands of our supporters who give, act and pray – stepping out in love for our global neighbours. With you by our side, we won't stop until everyone can live a full life, free from poverty and hunger.

From envelope collections to walking 300,000 steps in May, Christian Aid Week brings people together as one community helping those living in poverty to transform their own lives.

This Christian Aid Week (15-21 May), please:

- Give generously to help women grow crops that survive in the drought.
- Act and raise your voice for justice. Join our Loss and Damage campaign.
- Pray that families will stay strong during tough times of drought.

Together, we can turn hunger into hope. Join us at caweek.org

House to House collection

This year we are going to use Delivery Only Envelopes. We will deliver Christian Aid envelopes but not go back to collect them. Instead we will put a slip of paper in asking people to give on-line if possible, if not to post cheques off themselves. Also if people really want to donate cash we will ask them to email WMC office and only one or two of us will then try to arrange to go and collect them.

Delivery envelopes will be put in bundles along with the roads to be delivered to. These will be available in church from Sunday 8th May.

It is hoped more houses can be targeted in this way and that more people will be willing to help as it will not involve knocking on doors.

Everyone wanting to help deliver these envelopes will be very welcome.

E-envelope

This year I have again created an E-envelope for on-line donations. It has been created via the Christian Aid website. You can access it from the link or the QR code below. I have entered an ambitious? target of £600 for congregational and house to house donations combined. The usual donation envelopes will also be available in church for those wishing to give cash.

<https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/withington-methodist-church?channel=copy>



DEC collection for Ukraine in March

The collection in Church last March for Ukraine raised £125. Thank you to everyone who was so generous. The plate was rapidly piled high with notes.

NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

04 APRIL 2022

Revd Helen Cameron inducted as Moderator of the Free Churches Group

On Sunday, 3rd April, Revd Helen Cameron was inducted as Moderator of the Free Churches Group and as a President of Churches Together in England, representing Free Church national member churches.

The Revd Helen Cameron currently serves as Chair of the Northampton District and from 2015 -2017 she was Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Conference.

Helen trained as a physiotherapist in Edinburgh with a specialism in stroke rehabilitation and while working in York she candidated for ordained ministry. Helen's first ministerial appointment was at Longbridge (just as decisions were being made for closure of the car factory) and Frankley.

The church in Frankley was a Local Ecumenical Partnership where Helen experienced the importance of churches working together in mission and ministry.

Helen remains convinced that diversity is a gift, and welcomes the opportunity that serving as Moderator will offer to continue to support and encourage Free Church identity within Christian life, witness and service.



04 APRIL 2022

Methodist Modern Art Collection on display in Bewdley

A selection of art from the internationally renowned Methodist Modern Art Collection, one of the UK's most significant collections of modern religious art, is on display in the Wyre Forest Gallery at Bewdley Museum each day until Sunday 24 April 2022. Opening hours are 11.00am to 3.00pm and admission is free.

The total Collection features fifty works, including some by well-known artists such as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink, William Roberts, and Maggi Hambling. Some of the artists were or are Christian, while others not, but together they offer widely differing perspectives on the Christian story.

An extensive conservation programme has recently been completed to return these important paintings to their full glory and to ensure they are available for future generations.

Twenty works have been chosen for the Bewdley exhibition, depicting scenes from different stages of the life of Jesus before focussing on his crucifixion and resurrection.

A programme of exciting creative events, including workshops, talks and reflections has also been planned over the duration of the exhibition. Full details can be found [here](#).

This exhibition has been organised by the ecumenical group Bewdley Churches Together, consisting of six local churches, and is financially supported by several local organisations.

Jim Ineson from Bewdley Churches Together commented "It is a privilege to have this Collection here in Bewdley. The works that we have on display offer a thought provoking and sometimes challenging perspective on Christ's life. Whether you are a person of faith or not, Christian or non-Christian, you will find yourself challenged in intriguing new ways through this exhibition appropriately called 'For All People'."



05 APRIL 2022

Methodist Council 2 – 4 April 2022

The Council received updates on the work of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Connexional Team. As part of the CT update, the Head of Mission Ms Jude Levermore updated the Council on ongoing work in response to the war in Ukraine including three webinars supporting churches who want to host Ukrainian refugees.

This April Council meeting was the last with Mrs Jill Baker as Chair, and the Council approved the nomination of the Revd Sonia Hicks to the Conference as Chair of the Council from 1 September 2022 for four years. Mrs Jill Baker said she knew Mrs Hicks would bring much grace and wisdom to the role.

The 2021 Conference had directed the Council to ‘establish a framework to establish the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference’. The Connexional Secretary, Mr Doug Swanney, presented a paper on work which is being done on Impact Measurement which examines decisions made at the Conference and the impact they have on people locally, in circuits, churches as well as the Connexional Team in terms of what resources will be needed to complete the work. There were several recommendations in the report that the Council agreed to pass back to the Conference.

Oversight and Trusteeship

The Council received updates on work relating to Oversight and Trusteeship. The Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler introduced this and reminded the Council that: ‘the church is not a monolith – we are not set in stone’, hence the need to look at new structures. The Revd Loraine Mellor shared an update on the work of the Task Group for District and Regional Structure Planning. The update included plans that the budget for District Chairs would be reduced by the restructure and the timetable for when changes would happen, with a target for completing the changes by 2027-28. The Council received the report, which will form part

of the wider report on Oversight and Trusteeship to the 2022 Conference.

The Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Michaela Youngson presented the paper on the Constitution of the Conference and underlined the importance of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Strategy in encouraging diversity within the Conference membership and the wider Church. The proposals include reducing the number of voting members of the Conference from 306 to 221 with reductions being made in the number of ex-officio, Conference-elected and Youth Assembly representatives as well as reductions in the numbers elected by Synods. The report also proposes changes to ways of working and reducing the time spent in the Representative Session. These are proposed to come into effect in 2024. All resolutions were carried, and will be brought to the Conference as part of the Oversight and Trusteeship recommendations

Wales Synod Cymru

The Council heard an update from the Wales Synod Cymru Implementation Group which recommended the creation of Wales Synod Cymru as a District from 1 September 2022, which will mean the amalgamation of the two Welsh Districts. The resolution was carried and the recommendation will now be put to the two Synods before being presented to the Conference. The Council was informed that the conversations have been detailed and not always easy; the proposed new Synod will include a Welsh speaking circuit and as far as possible treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.

Methodist Ministers' Housing Society

In response to the report of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society (MMHS), the Conference had directed conversations about the support of Supernumerary ministers and their dependents. Dr Hustler reported that those conversations had taken place and presented a report which clarified the position of the MMHS and assured the Council of the care which is taken and the help offered when there are particular cases of need.

Ministries Committee

The report was brought to the Council by Mr Keith Norman, deputy chair of the Ministries Committee.

Mr Norman highlighted the good work that has gone on during lockdown and how technology had, in some cases, been a positive force in enabling people to share others' worship. He highlighted well-being research detailed in the report and acknowledged the hurt many contributors felt as a result of being overwhelmed with streamlining structures and an increased workload. Mr Norman took Council members through some of the resolutions including directing the Ministries Committee to conduct a thorough review of the Stationing Process and increasing supervision to all Local Lay Pastors and Pioneers working less than half of a full-time post.

The Revd Dr Roger Walton presented the Candidating Review Group's findings to Council members. He explained proposals for a revised process for candidating for ordained ministry, which would be shorter and more focused, with some requirements being removed, including the need to be a Local Preacher before going through the candidating process to become a presbyter.

The Council was enthusiastic about the proposals and recommended them to the Conference.

Methodist Schools

The Chair of the Methodist Schools Committee, the Revd Dr Roger Walton, introduced the Report from the Schools' Committee. Dr Walton started by telling Council members of an exciting International Schools Conference which will be held in Bristol in April 2023.

Dr Walton also gave an update on the Schools' anti-racist RE resources which were released last year and are being accessed and used by over 1400 schools and said the Committee is delighted at the uptake. He also reflected on the Government decision that all schools will be expected to become academies and said while it was not surprising it will be a challenge as many Methodist Schools are not yet academies. Dr Walton said that positive conversations are happening with MAST and Epworth Trust schools and he

was confident that we are in a strong position to respond to the Government's plans. The Council received the report.

The Presidential Year

As part of the Sunday morning worship, the President and Vice-President reflected on their year, recounting their visits and sharing stories of how Methodist churches are doing innovative and inventive ways of reaching members of the community. The Vice-President, Mrs Barbara Easton, said they had met a man in Northwich who runs a board games café which attracts young men who are at risk of loneliness and the 'butty van' in Shropshire which goes out to listen to farmers and people who don't come to church or talk about their feelings, but are experiencing huge levels of suicide in their industry.

The President, the Revd Sonia Hicks, opened her reflections of the year by saying what a great privilege it has been to be President to hear at first-hand what it feels like to be a Methodist at this time. She said it was hard to ignore the tiredness in our family but that there were signs of hope and God's presence in many places they visited. Mrs Hicks talked about how many have had to take a leap of faith and let go of the past and embrace new ways of working and the impact that has had. She talked of a small group in Rugby who invited asylum seekers from a nearby hotel in for a meal and found that they wanted to cook for the community, it was a huge success and has continued. Some of the asylum seekers are being supported to work towards a hygiene certificate.

The President talked about things in the year of which we need to repent. She reflected on her Presidential address where she had talked about the racism her great aunt had suffered when trying to worship at a Methodist Church. She quoted from Job 10 and said there were times when we are filled with songs of lament and sadness and there will be times of conflict and times when we feel abandoned. She said many people throughout the year had shared their experiences of discrimination, including young black people in her own church.

The Vice-President talked about the experiences she had heard about where lay people had not been affirmed for their work, but excluded. The President

concluded this part of her reflections by saying she did not want to be part of any church where there is intolerance for others who do not share our view. After group conversations, the service concluded with the Council praying for Ukraine.

Ministerial Covenant

The Revd Ken Howcroft presented a paper on the Ministerial Covenant, which looks at the relationship between the Church (and its members) and its ministers. Mr Howcroft explained that procedures in the past had not covered all the aspects needed and it was hoped the revised and retitled Code of Conduct sets out the expectations the Methodist Church might have of its ministers, and what expectation ministers might have of the Conference and those who exercised responsibility for ministers on the Church's behalf. The Council agreed, in principle, that it would be presented to the 2022 Conference.

The Methodist Diaconal Order Rule of Life

The Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order, Deacon Karen McBride, presented the paper on the Rule of Life which has been reviewed and updated since being discussed at the 2019 Conference. After the presentation, there were small group discussions on the content.

The Council received the report from the Connexional Allowances Committee and recommended it to the Conference.

Connexional Central Services Budget

The Director of Finance and Resources, Mr Matt Tattersall presented the Connexional Central Services Budget to the Council. Mr Tattersall explained that indicative savings mentioned last year need to be followed through, but setting a budget does not prejudge decisions the Council or the Conference may make. He explained setting a budget for one year and not for the following years does bring with it some uncertainty, so in order to help

planning in the longer term it is being recommended the budget be looked at in the longer term. The Council received the report, adopted the draft budget for 2022/23 and voted to recommend to the Conference the district allocations of the assessment to the Methodist Church Fund.

Pension Schemes

The Pensions Schemes paper was presented to the Council by the Director of Finance and Resources, Matt Tattersall. He started by thanking the churches, circuits and districts who have made donations to the Pension Reserve Fund and told members that the donations have exceeded £6.2m with around 25% of churches making a contribution. Mr Tattersall told the Council that many of the churches who have given more than 15% (the suggested donation) actually have the least to give. The Council approved a contribution of £500,000 from the Methodist Church Fund to the Pension Reserve Fund and noted that a fixed levy on church and circuit balances was not justified. The Council recommended to Conference that the appeal for donations is kept open through 2022/23.

The Council voted to recommend to the Conference that the circuit contribution rate for the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme increase to 29.5% from 1 September 2022 (approximately £700 per minister per year).

JDS report

The Report from the Shadow JDS Committee was presented to Council by the co-chair of the Committee, the Revd Charity Nzegwu. Ms Nzegwu paid tribute to the enthusiasm and energy around the Connexion in supporting the JDS strategy and told members the implementation process has now started and many districts have appointed EDI officers. The Council voted for resolutions including recommending that a service of repentance, re-commitment and thanksgiving celebration be held at the 2022 Conference and then offered to circuits later in the year. The Council also noted the important work which continues to be done on the issues around Reparations for the Trans-Atlantic Slavery including assessment of the ways the Methodist Church has benefited from the enslavement of people. The

Council considered how best membership data could be collected and used to monitor progress on EDI and recognised that more work is needed in this complicated area.

Conversion Therapy

The Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler presented the policy on Conversion Therapy which has been written as a result of the 2021 Conference decision immediately to ban conversion therapy anywhere within the Methodist Church. Dr Hustler told the Council that whatever Government legislation goes through Parliament the Methodist Church's policy following the direction of the 2021 Conference is that no such therapy should take place on Methodist Church premises or in the name of the Methodist Church. Dr Hustler explained to members that this policy does not prohibit pastoral conversations with people who have questions about their sexuality, but making it clear that they would be an 'open exploration' of the issues. The Council received the report.

Action for Hope

The Head of Mission, Ms Jude Levermore presented a report on Action for Hope, the work to enable the Methodist Church to work towards being a carbon net-zero church by 2030. Ms Levermore set out the aims of the work and stressed the importance of working out what we are called to do and who we might work alongside when trying to achieve our goal. Many consultations have already taken place including with ecumenical and other faith partners, Methodist family organisations, and across the Connexion. The aims of the report are split into sections: assets, wisdom and lifestyles. Council members adopted the Action for Hope plan, including annual focus activities but voted against asking churches, circuits and districts to collect annual carbon footprint reports for travel and gas and electricity. The Action for Hope task group will continue to report progress towards net zero to the Council on an annual basis.

Faith and Order Committee

The Report of the Faith and Order Committee was presented to the Council by the Secretary of the Committee, the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt. The report set out a review of the work of the committee and also the work being brought to the Conference. The Council received the report.

Audit of Safeguarding Practice

The Audit of Safeguarding Practice across the Church was presented to the Council by the Director of Safeguarding, Mr Tim Carter and Ms Jane Stacey, the author of the Past Cases Review and a member of the Safeguarding Committee. The paper is an amended form of one the Council discussed at its last meeting. Ms Stacey explained the audit will look at frontline ministers and presbyters to examine to what extent culture change has been embedded and what has helped and hindered. Ms Stacey said in ascertaining best practice across the Connexion it can be shared with others and that it will be a learning process. Council members received the report and voted to approve the audit framework.

Appreciations

The Chair of the Council, Mrs Jill Baker thanked those people whose term on Council finishes at the end of the Connexional year, and also to the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt who leaves her role in August.

The Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler then paid tribute to Mrs Baker who steps down as the Chair of the Methodist Council in August. He described her exceptional service to the Council and to the Methodist people in the last four years and said while it was not the term she would have expected, she had carried out her duties with great calm and wisdom. He thanked her for the tremendous care and attention she gave to being Chair, describing her as both gentle and firm when conversations have been difficult. Dr Hustler concluded: "Above all in all this you have reminded us that the Kingdom of God is very near. We have been blessed by your spiritual leadership – you have offered theological wisdom and our work has been surrounded by prayer. We thank you and thank God for all you've given us over the past four years."

08 APRIL 2022

The Methodist Church reaffirms its opposition to Conversion Therapy

The Methodist Council has reaffirmed its opposition to Conversion Therapy in any form at its recent Council Meeting. The Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, presented a policy written as a result of the 2021 decision made by the Methodist Conference, the governing body of the Church, to immediately ban conversion therapy anywhere within the Methodist Church.

Dr Hustler told the Council that the Methodist Church's policy, following the direction of the Conference, is that no such therapy should take place on Methodist Church premises or in the name of the Methodist Church. Dr Hustler explained to members that this policy does not prohibit pastoral conversations with people who have questions about their sexuality, making it clear that this would be an 'open exploration with no significance being placed on any particular perceived outcome as being preferable'.

The Methodist Church took part in a recent Government consultation on Conversion Therapy stating it supported a ban on Conversion Therapy and saying: "In adopting the Memorandum of Understanding of Conversion Therapy our position is that any conversion theory assumes that a particular sexual orientation or gender identity is preferable. This assumption is at odds with our position affirming dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality or gender. Therefore, we ask the Government to remove the conscience clause for over 18's and ban conversion therapy in all situations".

The Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Michaela Youngson said, "The Methodist Church position is that, regardless of government decisions, it is not permitted for conversion therapy, including trans conversion therapy to take place on Methodist premises, and that no conversion therapy can take place in the name of the Methodist Church.

14 APRIL 2022

Response to the Government's plans to offshore asylum seekers in Rwanda

The Government's plans to offshore asylum seekers in Rwanda gives yet another insight into its hostile, uncompassionate and ineffective response to asylum seekers and refugees.

People are not a problem to be dealt with, but are individuals with inherent value and dignity made in the image of God. Sending some of the most vulnerable people in the world thousands of miles away to be imprisoned does not respect this dignity.

The factors which push people out of their homes and into displacement will always be much stronger than those which motivate them to claim asylum in a certain place. As we have seen in Ukraine, conflict and persecution can become a daily reality at a distressingly rapid pace.

Whilst it is important to address the dangerous trade of people smuggling across the channel, the lack of safe and accessible routes by which people can claim asylum in the UK will ultimately contribute significantly to increased small boat crossings. The government have shied away from committing to a resettlement target, and the Nationality and Borders Bill lacks detail of new or expanded resettlement routes. Now, the government is passing the issue onto another country, which the UK has previously criticised for holding a poor record on human rights.

Offshore processing is a distraction from the real work which needs to be done to establish workable, safe and welcoming routes through which the UK can play its part in responding to need.

We urge the government to reconsider their approach, and accept proposed amendments to the Nationality and Borders Bill to uphold a practice of welcome.

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, The Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton

Our colleagues at the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) are encouraging people to write to their MP this weekend to encourage them to support amendments tabled by the Lords (including rejecting offshoring).

A Prayer for our lawmakers

O God, who holds the nations in loving hands, we pray for British Parliamentarians as they hold the futures of asylum seekers and refugees in their hands. We pray O God, for new laws to be just and fair, to be compassionate and life enhancing. We pray for those who will debate, table amendments and vote on the Nationality and Borders Bill. May your love, O God, reign in their hearts. May they see beyond short term populism and grasp the common humanity that we all possess. May your Holy Spirit inspire us as we campaign against any government initiative which seeks to override the fact that we are all made in Your image. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen.

19 APRIL 2022

Presidency joins call for changes to the Nationality and Borders Bill

The Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, have joined faith leaders in writing to MPs ahead of Wednesday's vote on the Nationality and Borders Bill, urging them to use their influence to make changes to the Bill.

The Nationality and Borders Bill is due to come before MPs on Wednesday 20th April, to allow them to vote on amendments proposed by the House of Lords. The Bill is in its final stages and continues to be backed by the government, despite having suffered multiple defeats in the House of Lords.

The Church leaders who have signed the letter represent a range of denominations and traditions in the UK, many of whom have been outspoken about the Bill over the past year. The letter has been sent to

every MP currently elected to the House of Commons.

You can read the full text of the letter below:

We are writing as a group of Christian leaders, from denominations and traditions across the UK, ahead of the vote on the Nationality and Borders Bill in the House of Commons this week. We want to take this last opportunity to make it clear where we stand on the Nationality and Borders Bill. We urge you to use your influence to encourage concessions to the Bill ahead of the vote, and to support the changes made to the Bill in the House of Lords.

Faith groups have been outspoken on our concerns about the Bill since the start of the process. We have made it clear how we feel the Bill fails to uphold the principles and values of the UK by creating hostility and fostering discrimination against some of the most vulnerable people in the world. Only in the last few weeks we have witnessed the seemingly limitless compassion and commitment shown by UK citizens as they have welcomed Ukrainian refugees into their lives and homes. Yet the Nationality and Borders Bill directly contradicts this approach. We find it challenging to understand how the policies within the Bill will work in practice, except that they will cause hardship, criminalise innocent people and fracture families.

The amendments made in the House of Lords will improve the Bill as they seek to bring it in line with international convention, compassion and care for our common humanity. In particular, we support amendments made to expand and protect family reunion rights, to enable asylum seekers to work after waiting six months for their application outcome, to establish a target for resettlement and to amend the two-tier system proposed for asylum seekers. Each of these amendments recognises that the trauma and need of a person seeking asylum should be prioritised, and that we should do all we can to offer opportunities for people and families to restore their lives in a place of safety. In supporting these amendments, we urge you not to vote against the lives of vulnerable children, men, women and families who are in desperate need of our support.

At this time of Easter, as Christians we celebrate new life and new hope. Our faith tells us that our God-given hope in new life should influence the way we treat our neighbour, wherever they come from. As the Nationality and Borders Bill comes before you this week, we ask you to consider how your vote demonstrates how you care for those most vulnerable in our world.

Regardless of the outcome of this week's vote, we will not stop advocating for love to be shown to our neighbour through the policies and practices in our asylum system. Churches across the UK will continue to come alongside those who remain in desperate need of our friendship and welcome.

We wish to encourage you in your role, and hold you in our prayers during this time.

With Regards,

Bishop John Arnold, Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford

Nicola Brady, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Dr Patrick Coyle, Chair, Cytûn - Churches Together in Wales

Revd Clare Downing, General Assembly Moderator of the United Reformed Church

Barbara Easton, Vice-President of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain

Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading

Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, The Baptist Union of Great Britain

Rev Ruth Harvey, Leader, the Iona Community

Revd Sonia Hicks, President of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain

The Bishop of Dover, The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin

The Most Revd Andrew John, Archbishop of Wales and Bishop of Bangor

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain

The Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath, Bishop of Bradwell, Chair of Churches Refugee Network UK & Ireland

Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary of Churches Together in England

Lord Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith

Most Rev Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church

Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

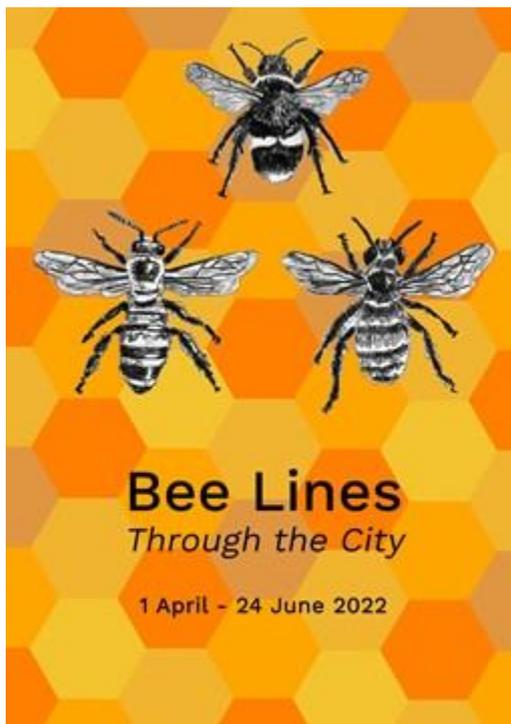
20 APRIL 2022

Bee Lines Through the City

Exploring through the creative arts our role in caring for the natural world

An exhibition that explores the importance and interconnectedness of bees to nature's diverse ecosystems has opened at a Methodist arts project, Shieldfield Art Works, in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Through art, music, dance and crafts the exhibition explores how bees relate to different aspects of the natural and human world through the food we eat, our culture and our environment. The exhibition also investigates how humans can support bees in the city through sustainable, local food growing and better urban planning.



Explaining the motivation for the exhibition, Lydia Hiorns, Director of Shieldfield Art Works, said “Almost three quarters of the world’s crops producing fruits and seeds for human consumption depend on pollinators such as bees for sustained production, yield and quality. Yet bees are under threat from use of agrichemicals, loss of habitat, climate change and parasites.

“Through our exhibition and associated events we’ll be investigating how we can collectively care for the natural world, combat climate change and ensure the survival of our bees!”

The exhibition features *Symphony in C*: A contemporary dance commission responding to new music inspired by bumblebees who vibrate at middle C to unlock pollen from plants.

Visitors are encouraged to get involved with activities including making fabric dyes from local plants, seed paper honeycomb and venturing out on pollinator corridor walks.

Shieldfield Art Works is an arts organisation based in Shieldfield, Newcastle upon Tyne. Lydia Hiorns, Director says,

“We believe art and creativity are integral parts of human life, and with art’s unique ability to articulate, question and enquire, we can enact positive change in our communities and the world.

“As a project of the Methodist Church, we are built upon Christian foundations of seeking truth, challenging injustice, social activism and operating for the common good. Anyone, of any faith or none, is welcome to participate in our programme.”

Events during the exhibition include:

- Tell it to the Bees: thinking about climate grief on Fri 29 April. This will be an informal and in-depth discussion thinking about why care for the environment is a social justice issue, how we can collectively care for creation and what Christianity brings to the conversation. Speakers include Andii Bowsher, David Wilkinson, Hannah Malcolm, Richard Young and Rev Sarah Moon.
- A garden opening on Friday 24th June for a recently developed community garden space.

25 APRIL 2022

Working in partnership to support people recovering from addiction

As part of a district wide focus on issues around addiction, Woodlands Methodist Church in Glasgow has partnered with charities, government agencies and academics in a symposium and exhibition, ‘Recovery Rising’, to outline a vision of what services could look like if they were reoriented from the culture of addiction, to a culture of recovery.

Over 150 people working in the sector attended the event on 23 April including the Scottish Government Minister for Drugs Policy, Angela Constance and a dozen MPs and MSPs. The keynote speaker was Professor David Best, Europe's most eminent academic in this area. The symposium offered a space for reflection, to bring hope to the conversations, opportunities for participants and delegates to learn from each other and to network.

Laurent Vernet, minister from Woodlands Methodist Church, said:

“It is the mission of the church to offer a space for the community to meet

– from Government ministers and law makers to those who live at the margin of society because of addiction.

“This symposium is focusing on the good news of recovery; how as a nation we can walk together to tackle this social challenge and offer hope in a new life to all the victims of addiction.”

“The Methodist Church in Strathclyde is exploring ways to collaborate and to partner with agencies and charities so the church brings what is unique to the policies... compassion and love by fighting stigma and blame and fear toward victims of addictions.”

Annemarie Ward, CEO of FavorUK, said: "FAVOR UK has worked with many organisations including the Methodist Church in Scotland to offer the first Recovery Conference in Glasgow putting Scotland's drug death crisis back on the agenda. Scotland remains the European lead in the number of drug related death. Such collaboration with the church is vital to address a challenge which must be the concern of the whole society. It is together that we will be able to move forward”.

Organisers plan to publish a report of the conference and it is hoped that there will be a further conference in the next six months to provide an update on evolution and progress.

The Scotland and Shetland District of the Methodist Church has a missional focus on addiction issues. On a recent visit to Glasgow, the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Sonia Hocks and Barbara Easton, signed a five point pledge to recognise the human rights to those in recovery from addiction.

Participant organisations in the symposium and exhibition included: the Methodist Churches in Strathclyde, Favor UK, The Bluevale Community Charity, SISCO, Street Connect, The Maxie Roberts Foundation and others.

Woodlands Methodist Church offers outreach and hospitality to the wider Glasgow community in a number of areas including having been the Methodist hub at the international climate conference, COP26, that took place in the city in 2021.

28 APRIL 2022

Statement on the Nationality and Borders Act 2022

A statement on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain, Baptists Together and the United Reformed Church:

We lament the passing of the Nationality and Borders Bill into law. Compelled by the Biblical call to welcome the stranger, our denominations were outspoken in our criticism of the Bill, arguing that it would unjustly remove the rights and threaten the dignity of people who are in need of our nation's care and protection.

Over the last year, members of our churches have come together with a wide range of people to raise concerns about the government's proposals, and to stand alongside refugees. Many have also signed up to host refugees from Ukraine, and continue to be involved in welcoming people seeking sanctuary in their own communities. This legislation will not diminish that spirit of compassion, hospitality and solidarity. We know that through such encounters we will learn more about ourselves, each other, and God.

Alongside the practical work of welcome, our Churches will not stop advocating for love to be shown to our neighbours through the policies and practices of our asylum system. We will continue to push the government to open up more safe and legal routes for people who are in need of the sanctuary we can offer here in the UK. Our denominations have also joined hundreds of other organisations and charities in pledging to work towards the repeal of the UK's 'anti-refugee' laws. We remain committed to working with others towards a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion.

TWAM

Tools with a Mission

JOIN MANCHESTER METHODISTS THIS LENT AND SUPPORT TOOLS WITH A MISSION



TWAM ARE A CHRISTIAN CHARITY THAT COLLECTS UNWANTED USABLE TOOLS, REFURBISHES THEM, SORTS THEM INTO TRADE TOOL KITS AND SENDS THEM TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD FOR LIVELIHOOD CREATION

WE WILL BE COLLECTING TOOLS ON THEIR BEHALF AT OUR CHURCHES THIS LENT. TWAM ARE ASKING FOR TOOLS UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS, FOR FULL DETAILS PLEASE VISIT:

WWW.TWAM.UK/DONATETOOLS

AGRICULTURAL
BUILDERS'
CARPENTERS'
ELECTRICIANS'
MOTOR
MECHANICS'
PLUMBERS'

GARAGE WORKSHOP
POWER TOOLS
SEWING MACHINES
KNITTING MACHINES
HABERDASHERY
FULLY WORKING IT EQUIPMENT
BIBLES



Manchester Methodists

Seeking, serving, sharing Christ

The contact person for Withington is Heather-
07773 015 882 heatherjsteward@yahoo.co.uk

GIVING TO CHURCH - YOUR OFFERING

You may have noticed that we no longer pass a collection bag around during the Sunday morning service. Things have changed during the past few years, with cash becoming less popular, and direct giving through your bank being an easier option.

However, if you prefer to give to church with cash or cheque, there is always a collection plate near the entrance to the worship room, or you can give your donation to one of the stewards.

Most importantly, however you give, if you are a tax payer, PLEASE remember you can GIFT AID your giving, meaning we can reclaim the tax, increasing your gift by 25%, at no further cost to yourself!

So here are the details you need:

Account name: Withington Methodist Church

Account no.: 06149480

Sort Code: 01-09-78

Cheques made payable to: Withington Methodist Church.

Gift Aid declaration forms: Giselle Du Toit at:

giselle@withingtonmethodistchurch.org

or ask one of the stewards.

Finally, we know times are hard, but please consider your giving to our Church.

Many thanks for your generosity!



CHURCH NEWS

Join us to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee!

On Thursday 2nd June from 2.30 - 5.00pm there will be a tea party at Withington Methodist Church to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. This will be a community event organised by members of Withington Methodist, Withington Civic Society and Assist. Plenty of tea, cake and entertainment!

Tickets will be on sale - £5 Adult and £2 Children and are available with further information from Heather 07773 015 882 heatherjsteward@yahoo.co.uk.



Do join us for what will be a 'magical' afternoon.

Join the Book Club

The Book Club will next be meeting at Withington on Thursday 5th May at 7.30pm, and this month's book is- **“The Girl With The Louding Voice”** by Abi Dare.

We welcome any new members! If you are interested, speak to Helen Fielding or Heather Steward, or just turn up!

Thank you for a lovely Easter!



We began Easter Sunday celebrations at WMC with a breakfast attended by 20 friends. it was a lovely shared occasion and we are very grateful to those who prepared, cooked washed up and generally helped on the morning. Following the meal we enjoyed a wonderful service led by Liz and 40 members in the congregation.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to such an uplifting morning

Easter Offering 2022



TELL HER STORY, TELL OUR STORY



Easter Offering 2022 was prepared by Methodist Women in Britain for the World Mission Fund. This act of worship enables the Methodist Church in Britain and Ireland to give to the work of our global Church Partners.

The service will be held at the Circuit Evening Zoom Service

on Sunday, 22nd May starting at 6.30 p.m.

www.mwib.org.uk • www.methodist.org.uk/easteroffering

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**Methodist Women
in Britain**

for women, for justice, for Christ

The **Methodist Church**

5201123

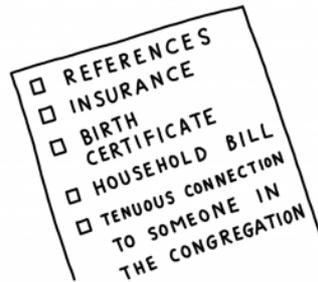
THANK YOU FOR READING!

FOLDING TABLES

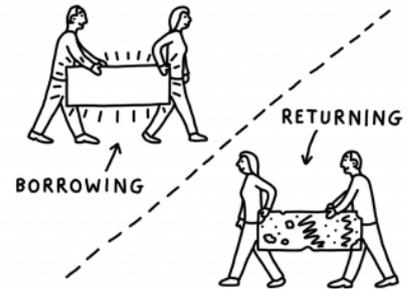
COMMON SCENES



A FLAGRANT DISREGARD FOR THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL



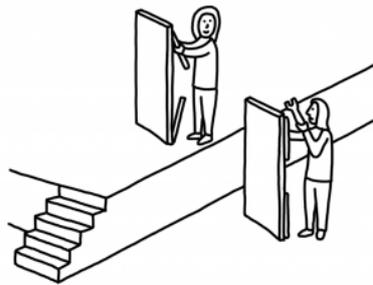
CHECKLIST FOR THOSE WANTING TO BORROW TABLES



BORROWERS, WHO HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY DILIGENT



SEMINAR FOR THOSE NEW TO THE UNFOLDING PROCESS



THOSE WHO DO NOT NEED THE SPECIAL TABLE TOOL LOOKING DOWN ON THOSE WHO DO



THE MAN WHO CAN UNFOLD TWO TABLES SIMULTANEOUSLY

CartoonChurch.com

The next magazine will be out on the 5th June 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 Fielding - 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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Minister: Rev Krystyna Kwarciak

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)

