Good News

Lancashire West Methodist Circuit



The LORD your God is with you! He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with His love. He will rejoice over you with singing! Zephaniah 3:17.

Father how we praise You that You love us in such a celebratory way. Help us to love You the same way!

from Methodist.org.uk

Generous God, fill our hearts, inspire our souls, and challenge our minds as we navigate the paradoxes of life, that we may love you in the heights and depths of our being, and so learn how to love our neighbours as ourselves with wisdom. grace and compassion.

May our love be humble yet courageous, sensitive not presumptuous, and kind and generous in all things; even as you gave your all in Jesus Christ, and outpour your life through the Holy Spirit, through whose presence we pray. Amen.

James Tebbutt, Cumbria District Chair

Deadline for articles to include in the next edition of Good News is

Monday 27th March

Happy New Year!

A baby sardine Saw her first submarine: She was scared and watched through a peephole.

"Oh come, come, come," Said the sardine's mum. "It's only a tin full of people."

SPIKE MILLIGAN



A poem that, perhaps a little irreverently, came to my mind the other day when reading the familiar account of Jesus' calling of the first disciples in Matthew 4: 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' When you get the image of "a tin full of people" in your mind it's difficult for the words not take on a more sinister tone, conjuring for me images of the "Child Catcher" in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang!

That image aside, the idea of fishing for people may seem a bit off putting to some, leading to the suspicion that the Church is always after something, just waiting to hook them in. The fear perhaps that there is an ulterior motive to whatever is being offered.

But it also occurred to me that there is another way of reading the phrase, with the emphasis on fishing FOR as meaning doing something on behalf of other people. Helping them, without expecting anything in return; and if you read on in the passage this is what Jesus goes on to do:

> "Jesus went throughout Galilee." teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people."

For is a Word which should be central to the Mission of our Churches, at the heart of all we do for our neighbours and the wider community around us. What can we do to help people to experience the fullness of life that Jesus came to bring?

Rachel Lampard's information about the Walking with Micah project helps us to look at what we are already doing, and what new things we can do for others.

Cont. overleaf





Rachel Lampard, formerly leader of the Joint Public Issues Team, writes about the Methodist project for 2022-23, **Walking with Micah**

I have always been stirred by the words of the prophet Micah. When asked how God wanted his people to worship, to respond to God's love, Micah replies:

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

As Methodists we find this response to God's love through acting justly present in our tradition. John Wesley, one of Methodism's founders, was a vocal opponent of the slave trade. The Tolpuddle Martyrs – many of whom were Methodist lay preachers - were early activists in the trade union movement. A disproportionate number of Methodists have served in Parliament. Sybil Phoenix OBE is one of many community activists and anti-racists. The work of All We Can, Action for Children and MHA speak powerfully of the commitment of Methodists to see justice for all people in God's world.

What does "challenging injustice" look like in your own life? Methodists are involved in responding to

needs in our communities or the world, through running debt advice centres, giving to foodbanks, raising money for charities, writing to political prisoners. Sometimes we use our consumer power, through buying Fairtrade bananas or avoiding excess plastic wrapping. And through our protesting, writing letters to MPs or community organising we try to change problems at their source.

Justice is present in the bible, in our tradition, often in our lives, and yet we sometimes find it hard to see where it fits in our Church, especially when we disagree.

The Methodist Church set up – Walking with Micah: Methodist Principles for Social Justice – to explore what it means to be a justice-seeking church and people.

Over the last year, and during the year to come, we are listening and learning together, focusing on our principles and priorities for justice. Through this, I hope we can increase our practical ability to seek God's justice, as a Church and in our own Christian lives.

If you're interested in finding out more go to https://www.methodist.org.uk/walking-with-micah

Michael





Lent 2023 is from Ash Wednesday (22nd February) through to Holy Saturday (8th April). This Lent, you can take a deep-dive into All We Can's partnership approach and how we work with partners and communities around the world to help see every person's potential fulfilled. Learn about 'practicing



presence', 'shifting the power' and other key concepts All We Can applies to the communities we work in, and reflect on how these principles can help you, your church and your local community to address the challenges you are facing.

"...be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God."

Join All We Can and our global movement this Lent and hear the voices of our partners and communities alongside insights from NGOs. Sessions are led by Gary Hopkins, the President and Vice-President of Conference, the Joint Public Issues Team, and the Evangelism and Growth Team.

Each week, hear a new story, accompanied by a bible study led by one of our fantastic guests. There will also be a chance to make tangible commitments and challenge yourself.

Sessions will also be complemented by LIVE video broadcasts, podcast content, and online study groups.

Register for weekly updates here. www.allwecan.org.uk/lentonline/

www.allwecan.org.uk/lentonline/

Copies of the devotional guide will be available in the Churches and downloadable resources will be available through the link above.

Corrie Ten Boom: A Christian who inspired me. Barbara Meynell

The first book by Corrie Ten Boom I read was *The Hiding Place*, it was in the Summer of 1976, I took the book with me on my holiday to Sidholme, a Methodist Guild Holiday Home in Sidmouth, taking it out to read in the garden, but for some reason never getting past the first page. That was the holiday I knew the Lord wanted me to apply for the position of Social Secretary at Sidholme. To cut a long story short, a few weeks later I was on my way for an interview, taking *The Hiding Place* with me and when the train left Liverpool, I started to read it and I couldn't put it down, finishing it on my way home the next day.

By the way I got the job, two wonderful years meeting lots of wonderful Christians who encouraged me in my Christian walk. While at Sidholme I used to take walks from Budleigh Salterton to Exeter once a fortnight. At the end of the walk, there was plenty of time for guests to sightsee and have afternoon tea. I often made my way to the Christian Book Shop, having the opportunity to buy more of Corrie Ten Boom's books.

Cont. overleaf



Corrie Ten Boom: A Christian who inspired me. Barbara Meynell

The Ten Boom family were a devout Dutch Christian family in Haarlem. who the Germans invaded, began to help save Jews, hiding them in a secret place in Corrie's bedroom, sheltering them until they could be helped to escape to freedom.

In 1944 when the Ten Boom family were betrayed, taken to be interrogated and put in prison because they wouldn't disclose where the Jews were hidden. Corrie and her sister Betsie were sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp where, despite being very cruelly treated, they were a great help to the other women in their hut, reading God's word to their fellow inmates from their Bibles that they had been able to smuggle in, with the Lord's help,

The conditions in the camp were atrocious, and Betsie became very ill and died. Soon after, Corrie was unexpectedly released; only finding out later, that the week after she was released all women her age and over were killed. Corrie would have been one of them except that there had been an error in the paperwork. God had other plans!

After the war, Corrie knew that God had work for her to do, leading her to America, where she shared how God had helped her through imprisonment and bereavement. While in America God told her, for a second time. that he wanted her to go to Germany. Corrie resisted as this was the last place she wanted to go, but realised she was wrong, asked God's forgiveness and went.

When Corrie was speaking at a meeting in Germany, a man came to speak to her and asked for forgiveness. Corrie recognised him at once as one of the guards at Ravensbruck who had treated Betsie so cruelly, she felt bitterness rise up. How could she forgive? She asked the Lord to fill her with his love, she felt God's love flow down her arm, and as the man put out his hand, she found her hand clasping his. The bitterness had gone, and she was able to forgive. It was God's love that helped her to love her enemy. No longer an enemy but a fellow Christian.

Corrie went on to share her message to many places around the World, speaking and writing.

Corrie Ten Boom's books have given me a love for the Jewish people. When I went to Israel in 1992, I visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum. You enter down an avenue lined with trees, planted for the *Righteous Ones*, each with the name or names of Gentiles who had helped Jews to escape. The Ten Boom family name would have been on one of the plaques.

Within the Museum there are examples of the horrible photos and posters used by the Nazi's to stir up hatred against the Jewish people. Outside there is a floor covered with tiles engraved with the names of the Concentration Camps, and in the centre was a flame lit by the ashes of the gas chambers. This was something I never thought I would see; it was very heart wrenching. The last place we went into was very distressing, a path leading into darkness and then in the roof there were one thousand lights, each representing a child! Names were being read out, the names of children who died in the concentration camps. When we came into the light I don't think that any of us didn't have tears in our eyes. The whole experience made me realise how cruel mankind can be when the devil enters our hearts.

But we have a God who can turn even the hardest of hearts and cruellest of men when they meet Jesus and realise they can be forgiven.

Just like the German guard in Ravensbruck.



Voices in Harmony Methodist Women in Britain Conference 2023

Friday evening 14th April to Sunday lunchtime 16th April 2023

Keynote Speaker Pam Rhodes (Songs of Praise presenter & author) 'Hymns and Her'

Bible Study & music Rev Jenny Pathmarajah (Methodist Presbyter, Cambridge)

Plus: inspiring worship; news from the World Federation; the Market-

place; workshops on the Saturday afternoon; evening activities; make new friends.

A weekend of faith, friendship and fellowship in the beautiful setting of

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire - or join us on Zoom

Residential Cost £185 **Zoom only option** £40

A deposit of £100 by **10th February** secures your place

Can't stay? Why not organise a get together at your church and join by zoom

HOW TO BOOK

The easiest and most secure is to go through our website www.mwib.org.uk and book direct through the ENTHUSE booking and payment system.

Alternatively email **swanwick.mwib@gmail.com** and ask for a booking form

or contact Swanwick 2023, c/o 27 Juniper Close, Chatham, Kent ME5 0NX or 07554613495

A small number of bursaries of £150 are available for women who would otherwise not be able to attend for financial reasons.

Email swanwick.mwib@gmail.com for application form.

Don't delay – secure your place today – limited places available.





Young people, modern society, and the church by Liam Woods

My name is Liam Woods, I'm 24 years old, I'm from Skelmersdale, I'm a local preacher and I'm a former militant atheist. In the past few years, I have been on a spiritual and intellectual journey that has led me from ignorance of what Christianity is, and its significance, to faith in God and Jesus Christ. Along this journey I began to understand that I had a distorted view not only of the church, but also of morality itself. I feel that we have lost a generation, probably two, perhaps even three, and because of this we have created a crisis of meaningless in my generation.

I believe strongly that modern people are turning to materialistic pleasures to fill the gap that God, the Church, and a Christian way of life used to fill in their lives. There are many verses in scripture on why this approach to happiness and fulfilment do not lead to satisfaction however the one that comes to mind is the section of Ecclesiastes entitled 'Riches Are Meaningless' (Ecclesiastes 5:8-19).

I believe that the best response to this crisis is that the Church should continue to tell people, from both a Christian and secular point of view, that material wealth and the pursuit of pleasure is no substitute to the kind of fulfilment and meaning that we can offer. I however believe that if the Church wants to succeed it must go about this in a different way. It occurs to me that modern secular society is not yet ready to have such a conversation in theological and religious terms and that we must first cultivate a secular respect for the knowledge that we possess, which can then be transformed into a mythological and symbolic appreciation for Christianity which can then be transitioned into real faith.

Individually I think that we can respond by recommending to our secular friends that traditional Christian ways of doing things have persisted for so long because they work and that embracing tradition like the Christian faith tradition can bring a lot of meaning.

As I previously mentioned Ecclesiastes 5:8-19 jumped out to me as being particularly helpful in understanding the theme I wanted for my service. The verse is useful as it details exactly why money and riches as an aim in life does not lead to happiness and it can be particularly useful, if you think of it not just as describing wealth, but also as describing material comfort and a selfish pursuit of pleasure. The verse details how one should think about wealth, pleasure, and enjoyment, not as an end to themselves, but merely as a gift from God which is not at all guaranteed in life.

On this theme I also found John 4:13-14 useful. The verse uses water as a metaphor, regular water represented physical sustenance while the living water that Jesus offers represents spiritual fulfilment. To me this metaphor seems perfect to describe the dichotomy of my theme, physical pleasure is fleeting and quickly leaves you seeking more, but the kind of spiritual fulfilment Jesus and his Church offers lasts forever.

Church tradition is particularly important to this topic, just as Scruton (2018) argues traditions contain the distilled inherited wisdom of tradition on how to live a good life, and to some extent, I think we should be arguing to secular people that traditional morality holds far more wisdom than modern morality. Pike (2017) argues that modern morality is a derivative of traditional Christian morality, therefore there is



some level of utility in reminding British Non-Christians where their morality originates from and inviting them to engage in traditional ways of being as a source of meaning which can lead to a connection with God.

For example, marriage is still an example of a Christian institution, and tradition, that most people can find meaning in. Marriage and its traditional link to parentage functions as an example of something that can very well, at times, be the opposite of pleasurable that the average person can take meaning from. It serves as a way of showing that the pursuit of pleasure as an end goal is not a good idea, because true meaning very often comes from doing something difficult and unpleasant. This message is something the Church has always championed as it is inherent to the message of Christ.

My experience is that no one my age is thinking about getting married, or seeking deeper meanings, they just want pleasure. Many of my generation go out partying frequently and using illicit substances thinking that partying all the time is the route to a happy life.

From my own life I can only say that the people I know that engage in this behaviour the most, are the least happy, and the least satisfied with their lives.

It seems to me to be a running theme with people my age, people aren't looking to get married, people aren't looking to be a part of anything (like a church or any other group). They simply go to work and then go home and enjoy media, and occasionally go out partying. They do not look for the fulfilment of a stable and nurturing long term relationship/marriage, they care only to enjoy things. When I think about this, I can't help but feel worried for their future.

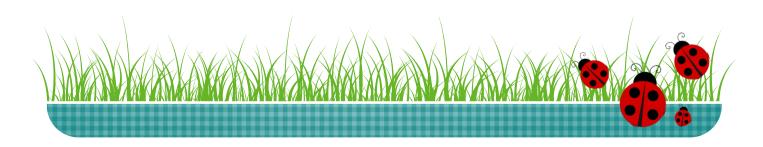
This contrasts considerably to my own life. since I joined the Church and became a Christian, I can't help but think how much fulfilment I have in my life, and how much meaning it has. I know who I am, I know I have a purpose that is important, and I have community that needs me.

And I couldn't be happier.

References

Pike, M., 2017. British values and virtues: schooling in Christianity and character?. British Journal of Religious Education, 41(3), pp. 352-360.

Scruton, R., 2018. Conservatism: An Invitation to the Great Tradition. 1st ed. London: All Points Books.



MAWDESLEY METHODIST CHURCH

Welcomes you to

OPEN DOORS

Our Doors are Open

Tuesday

7th February, 7th March

& 4th April

9.30 am - 12.00 midday

A warm invitation to meet and chat with friends.

Dog friendly.

Refreshments

provided in the school room.

Play board games.

Bring your own crafts.

Book Exchange.

Church also open for quiet time and reflection.

Everyone Welcome.



Sunday February 12th

at 6:30pm

All are welcome to come and enjoy our monthly worship evenings. Encounter the presence of God, as we worship Him through songs and times of prayer.

See, I am doing a new thing

Venue

Croston Methodist Church Westhead Road, Croston PR26 9RQ







From Emmanuel, Ormskirk

THANK YOU FROM SRI LANKA

The £5,000 Emmanuel has raised for the Community Hall at the Methodist Church at Bibile, Sri Lanka has now been received by the Headquarters Office.

We have received messages of thanks from the President of Conference and, included below, is a message from Rev. Leslie Dareeju, Secretary of Conference.

"Thank you very much for all of the faithful efforts that you all have put into this great work. We are delighted and kindly convey our sincere thankfulness to Rev.Sue, to the Church leaders, and to the Ormskirk community for making this happen.

We look forward that we can work together more closely in the future and sharing joy and love with each other.

Please be assured that the Methodist Headquarters finance department will officially acknowledge your

generous donation soon.

With Prayers and Best Wishes, Rev.Leslie Dareeju Secretary of the Conference"

During my visit to Sri Lanka in February 2023 I plan to visit Bibile to see, hopefully, work underway on the project! An update on my return.

Thank you - it is hard for us to imagine what a difference the hall will make to the people there.

Anne Baldwin



PS If you plan to holiday in Sri Lanka and would like to visit Bibile or other aspects of Methodist Church life there please be in touch. A Circuit trip?





The church is upstairs and the manse on the ground floor!



Croston's Christmas & New Year Message 2022/23

The talented knitters from Croston Trinity Methodist Almost four hundred Christmas tree stockings have church have been busy again, supporting the church's local community witness activities. The challenge is to continue to ask - what is God's calling for our church? We are an 'outward facing' church committed to community engagement and mission.

It is important to Rev. Sue that we use the creative talents of our knitters to bring the love of God to hundreds of people in our local community without them having to enter a church building. It is worthy of note that our church website went live to the community on Sunday 2nd May 2020 and the visitor statistics now show 116,085 visits from 61,828 visitors since the starting date which is astonishing from a small village church.

been knitted, filled with chocolates and a Christian message of love has been attached to each one. They have been distributed to Croston Park Care Home, Marsh House Care Home, Trinity and St Michael's Primary School and Bretherton Endowed Primary School.

These tangible knitted gifts of love are Christian leaven. We have demonstrated that we can reach out beyond our church buildings and touch the lives of people in our local community with the love of Christ.

Every Blessing,

Croston Trinity Methodist Church Leadership Team.





Hope Journey at Upholland Methodist Church

Once again this was supported by the other Up Holland Churches, with characters from all 3 churches in Up Holland.

The children came from 3 local schools and thoroughly enjoyed them selves and we received positive feedback from the teachers and other staff attending.











ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE GIVEN TO CHARITY REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1193007



Burscough Methodist Church

The Hope Journey was a wonderful day for all the children and staff who came along after 3 years of being able to meet together. We welcomed 73 children from the 5 schools in the district - Burscough Methodist, Holmeswood Methodist, St Johns Catholic, The Village Primary and Tarleton and Mere Brow schools. As usual the children loved every minute and the teachers are already looking forward to the next event. Many, many thanks must go to our fabulous volunteers from Burscough Methodist Church who help me to organise this, without them it would not happen.

Our Foodbank was very busy during the month of December Many food parcels were handed out. We also had the Tesco Collection Weekend and the people of Burscough were so very generous, so a huge Thank you to them. Very many thanks also go to the lovely churches of our Circuit who support us by sending donations of food and money , we couldn't help so many people without these generous gifts.

We also helped Derrian House with gifts of toys, and the Women's Refuge in Skelmersdale by donation food parcels and lots of gifts for the children and families staying there.

Finally, our church was beautifully decorated with knitted characters this Christmas.

Made with love by our 'Sit & knit' group.











Wonderful World—written by Joan Holcroft Mere Brow

Wander down the country lanes and gaze above, around.

See the hedges wakening, and listen for the sound

Of tiny birds all singing, bathing in the breeze

Among the many branches of the tall and stately trees.

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Blackbird chases blackbird and robin sings so sweet

Attracting tiny hen-bird flirting at his feet.

Chaffinch searches quickly before it is too late

To join the thrush and bluetit in calling for a mate.

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Among the trees the buds creep out from soft and sticky cell

And little fleshy green leaves will soon begin to swell

Into the full-blown foliage of dainty, frilly gown

Parading in their beauty with gentle eyes cast down.

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The woodland floor is now ablaze with golden celandine

And over stumps and branches eternal ivies climb.

Beside the shrinking violets the primrose grows

And meandering the hedgerows we smell the sweet briar rose.

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Nature is so beautiful above us and around,
Climbing man-made structures and even underground.
Without it we would perish, the world would be so bare
So let us guard it carefully—pollute it if you dare!



A beautiful re-introduction to Spring, Joan.

Thank you for sending it in and sharing your talent with us all.

Circuit Family & Schools' Worker News

Hello everyone,

Following on from very busy second half of the Autumn Term, I thought I'd let you all know what I've been up to! During November and early December, upwards of 650 children heard the Christmas message through story time and crafts at Upholland Toddlers, through Messy Church at Croston and Emmanuel, and through Prayer Days in five of our Primary Schools.

I'll tell you a bit more about the Prayer Days, which were hugely successful and much appreciated by the schools. The children were fabulous and responded very well—with staff commenting that it was great to be able to give the children the time and space to think and reflect in this way.

The Prayer Days were on the theme of Advent, with six prayer stations set up (either in classrooms, in the school hall, or in the church). Children visited in their classes and took part in the activities at each station; which included a Bible verse, some information/story or something to think about and an activity to do.

The Prayer Stations:



We talked about Advent being a time of waiting, of preparation for the Coming of Jesus at Christmas. We talked about the 4 Sundays in Advent and the candles that are lit in churches.

We waited the flower shapes to unfold in the water and waited for 'Jesus' to appear.



We talked about how a light in the darkness can give us Hope, and that for Christians, Jesus is that light.

We talked about times that might feel dark or scary or worrying and those people and places that are facing difficulties right now.

The children wrote prayers of Hope or 'Please' prayers....

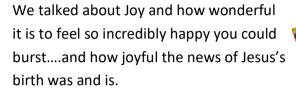


Circuit Family & Schools' Worker News



We talked about following in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace; bringing peace to one another and inside ourselves.

Children wrote a 'Sorry' prayer or message of peace on the paper strips and joined these together to create a



We thought about things that make us feel joy and said a 'Thank you' prayer to God while making a playdoh smiley face.





Promise

We used a heart shape prayer labyrinth to trace with our finger while we thought about how much God loves us; how God sent Jesus to show us how to be the people he wants us to be & how we can show God's love to others by being kind, helping, caring and sharing.

The children were encouraged to think about anyone they knew or had heard about who needed to know God's love at that time. They wrote their name on a heart shape (or drew a picture of them).



We talked about the promise of a Saviour and the angels bringing the Good News that the promise had been fulfilled. We talked about Jesus being the light of the world, always being there to show us the way.

The children made stained glass windows to display on a window—representing God's love, the angels'

Finally - a huge thank you to the schools for hosting us for the Prayer Days, and thank you also to the volunteers from Burscough, Croston and Mawdesley churches who each helped at the prayer day for their local school.

CHURCH SERVICES

	February			
	5 th	12 th	19 th	26 th
Burscough Orrell Lane 10.00 HP, CMP, STF, NIV	o/a	Michael Tindsley F	Liam Woods	Michael Tindsley
Holmeswood Holmeswood Rd 10.30 HP, CMP, STF	Mere Brow	Merle Farthing	o/a	Mere Brow
Mere Brow Mere Brow Lane 10.30 MPC MHB	worstill	Anne Wallbank	Emma Birkbeck	Merle Farthing
Holmes Park Lane 10.30 HP, MP, JP	Mere Brow	Lorraine Howarth	Michael Tindsley S	Jonathan Richardson
Tarleton Church Rd 10.30 HP, MP	Mere Brow	Geoff Farthing	o/a	11am Michael Tindsley
Mawdesley Gorsey Lane 10.30 HP, MP, JP, NIV	o/a F	Helen Hindle	Alex Laing	Croston
Croston Westhead Rd 10.30 HP, MP, STF	9.30 Sue Guénault F	Malcolm Abbott	Mawdesley	Geoff Farthing
Ormskirk Derby St 11.00 HP, CMP, STF	Sue Guénault Parade F	Sue Guénault S	David Allen	o/a
Trinity High Street 11.00 STF, GNB	Alex Laing Café Church	Andrew Richardson	o/a	Malcolm Abbott
Up Holland Alma Hill 11.00 STF LP	o/a	Alex Laing S	Helen Hindle	o/a

MP –Mission Praise Combined

CMP – Complete Mission Praise

O/A – Own Arrangement

HP – Hymns and Psalms

STF – Singing the Faith

F – Family Service [All Age]

JP – Junior Praise LP – Let's Praise Cov – Covenant Service
S - Holy Communion

P – Parade Service

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