

**HANHAM METHODIST  
CHURCH MAGAZINE  
JULY – AUGUST**



# Welcome to the magazine of Hanham Methodist Church, a member of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit.

Our services are open to all, whether or not you are a Church member. Notices and service sheets are available in larger print.

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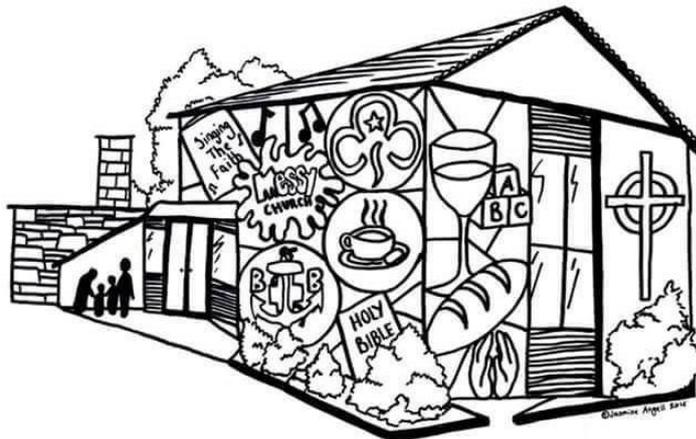
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Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect Church policy. Enquiries should be directed to the Editor.

Copies of this magazine are held on the Church website and therefore all articles can be viewed through the internet. Submissions of all articles should therefore highlight any information you wish to be removed from the online version.

Website: [www.hanhammethodist.org.uk](http://www.hanhammethodist.org.uk)

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# Contents

Conference Season Again.....	4
Saying Goodbye.....	7
Mountains of the Bible.....	8
Thank You.....	10
Wives Group.....	10
Down to the Wire.....	11
Health & Safety.....	13
Dates for your Diary.....	14
Random Thoughts.....	15
What's Brewing for You?.....	17
Just to Say.....	18
Signposts.....	18
Rotas.....	19
Calendar.....	20



## Conference Season again

The Methodist Conference is an annual event in the life of the Methodist Church where representatives from all over the Connexion gather together and make decisions regarding our theology, organisational structures and practice of faith. So, think of it as a giant Church Council that lasts over half a week. However, that description doesn't quite do Conference justice.

I am sure that the thought of it being a really long Church Council would turn some people's stomachs and fill others with dread – but having had the chance to attend Conference twice – I can say with confidence that it is a really positive experience. It is an opportunity to realise that we are more than the churches that we attend. That we are more than a cluster or Circuit or District. That we are a diverse gathering of people of all ages, backgrounds and outlooks – a movement brought together for the glory of God.

A movement that has vision, influence and impact all across our nation and beyond touching millions both home and abroad.

Conference is also the place where we confirm and ordain our Ministers and is where Deacon Corinne Brown from our Circuit will be ordained this year having completed her probationary period. This is a real moment of affirmation, celebration and confirmation; all our prayers will be with Corinne and her family on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June, and we are excited to see God continue to use her in her ministry amongst us in the Circuit.

Every year the Methodist Conference has a crammed full agenda and this year is no different. There are a number of major reports being put before the Conference. For example, Conference will be looking at the report on Marriage and Relationships. This attempts to look at our history as a church, current practice amongst our members and trends within wider society.

Tackling questions like – what does a healthy relationship look like? How has our understanding of marriage evolved over the years and where is God directing our future direction?

Naturally the question of whether the Methodist Church should change its definition of marriage to allow same-sex couples is part of what the report attempts to answer. But it is also much more than this and really attempts to discern God's presence within all kinds of relationships.

Another area of conversation this year is the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. Historically the Methodist Church came out of the Church of England and our founder John Wesley was an Anglican priest. In 2003, with a sense of wanting to strengthen Christian unity, our churches created the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, a declaration of our shared history and striving to work closer together. This year's report attempts to deepen that relationship in the inter-changeability of ordained ministers between our churches.

This may mean in the future we will not have to duplicate pastoral oversight of our Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) churches. At the moment our LEP Methodist/Anglican churches have to have a Methodist presbyter and an Anglican Priest attached to them due to our churches enshrined commitments to members. If approved, it may mean this duplication of ordained leadership will not be necessary going forward.

Naturally, it is holy and worthy to want our two churches to grow ever closer in a quest for Christian unity. Some believing our two churches should be reunited. However, due to hundreds of years of separation inevitably there are areas where we differ in ethos and practice, and while agreeing it is right that we work closer together – others believe that unity shouldn't mean losing one's identity.

With both these reports there are no simple quick answers. Both at their heart are about relationships. Whether it be inter-personal relationships or how institutions should co-operate and relate to one another.

Relationships are messy, complicated, and each comes with its own unique qualities and flavour. When it comes to relationships of any kind it is difficult to say this is right and this is wrong.

Which is probably why Jesus came to us incarnate. Fully human and fully God. This is probably why Jesus came and broke bread with us. Befriended us. And gave his life that we may know the Kingdom of God even more.

Whatever the decision of Conference on these two matters and the many more that they will be discussing; as a church we may need to explore them a little more ourselves going forward depending on the outcome.

I hope and pray, that Jesus will be at the centre of the conversations and discussions that before them. That Conference, our churches and all our people, can be united in saying that 'Jesus is Lord', agree to disagree when necessary, but testify to loving one another no matter what.

If you want to know more about these subjects, Conference, or the many other items to be discussed then they can all be found on the Methodist Church website. You can watch the debates live or download and read the reports.

So whether you are at home or going abroad this summer there is some light (or not so light if you prefer) reading for you.

Either way, I hope you have a great summer.

Every blessing,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David".

Rev. David Willis

## **Saying Goodbye to Chris Spencer & Family**

We all extend our very best wishes to Chris, Emily, Chloe and Leah as they leave us to move to Rhyl in North Wales. We will experience very mixed feelings when we gather together on August 4<sup>th</sup> to say goodbye to Chris and the family, but we know that this move is a fulfilment of Chris' calling to the Anglican Priesthood.

He has been very close to HMC over the past 5 years during his time as a Community Worker within the East Cluster. Chris was appointed by the Circuit to be a real and practical presence within the local community. The fact that he came as an ordained member of the Anglican Church was an added blessing, meaning that he has been able to be fully involved with the churches within our cluster, leading worship, supporting pastoral care, with countless home and hospital visits and supporting a Christian presence within local schools. He has been supportive of the work of Messy Church as well as Open the Book to name but two other areas of outreach. Here at HMC he has always been a willing helper in all things practical, whether filling buckets and soaking oasis for our Flower Festivals or helping with washing up and drying dishes after the numerous occasions when catering has been involved.

Chris has become a familiar figure around Hanham and his work amongst the traders in the High Street has opened opportunities for us to explore further with other churches in the area.

When someone leaves, it is an opportunity for us all to reflect on God's specific call on everyone's life. God's primary call for us all is to Christian discipleship, signposting others to God and enabling them to follow Jesus. This Chris has done within his

ministry over the past five years and we pray the he will continue to do so in his new position.

So as Chris looks forward to all that lies ahead there will be many new challenges for him to think about, how he will be received, how he will manage all the new responsibilities, how the family will settle but he will face these in the sure knowledge that he serves a God who will always be at his side on this important journey.

Every Blessing to Chris, Emily, Chloe & Leah

*The Stewards on behalf of all at HMC*

## **Mountains of the Bible**

### **Mount Ararat Genesis Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9**

I didn't realise until I started to prepare for this article that the story of the flood covered virtually four chapters of Genesis. The reason is that there are two different accounts of a flood intermingled. (Compare reading two newspapers reporting an event and you will see how they vary in what is recorded). Indeed, some of the more radical commentators suggest there were two separate floods. It is also the case that in ancient history stories of the gods destroying humanity as a punishment are not that unusual.

The land of Mesopotamia was very low lying and the rivers Tigris and Euphrates often burst their banks. Archaeological excavation around the city of Ur shows evidence of a very destructive flood at a very early date.

The story introduces us to Noah, an upright man of God living amongst a wicked people. God decides to destroy the whole of humankind, but we are told that Noah found favour with God and God would spare him and his family. And so the famous ark was

built to accommodate Noah and his family and a pair of all living creatures. It was a huge vessel as long and as wide as one and a half football pitches and it had three decks!

We see on the news from time to time the destructive nature of flood water. More often or not the story will be from the Indian sub-continent but a few winters ago now it came much closer to home when people living on the Somerset levels had to be evacuated in the middle of the night for their lives were at risk so fast was the water rising.

On the one hand this strange story seems completely irrelevant to our 21<sup>st</sup> Century and yet we hear more and more of the dangers of Climate Change threatening our planet not necessarily by flood but just as likely by drought which is equally as perilous. Again, the threat is to humanity and all living creatures. Conservationists tell us that many species have already disappeared.

But for Noah, as for us surely, there is hope for God offers him free and unconditionally a covenant, the first of several in the Bible. After the flood subsided and the Ark settled on Mount Ararat God makes a promise that he will never again destroy the earth by a flood and the rainbow will be a sign of that commitment.

How does this promise fit with later pronouncements in the Bible? The prophets spoke of 'The Day of the Lord' when the world would end and the Gospels tell of the final judgement; for example in Mark 13:24-26. To which we can add the prediction of scientists who tell us that our sun has a limited life span albeit of several million years after which the solar system will collapse.

But surely the promise of God to Noah and to us is not a promise of the permanent continuation of planet earth but a promise of his

eternal love for us whatever may befall us. And the rainbow is the beautiful and evocative sign of that promise.

Let me finish with some words of William Wordsworth:-

*My heart leaps up when I behold*

*A rainbow in the sky:*

*So was it when my life began:*

*So is it now I am a man:*

*So be it when I shall grow old,*

*Or let me die!*

*The child is father of the man;*

*And I could wish my days to be*

*Bound each to each by natural piety.*

*TJL*



**Thank you** to all who have visited me in hospital and at home and for all the practical help. It has been a difficult few weeks with so many anniversaries. I am now starting to feel much better.

*Jennifer Angell*

## **Wives group**

Just to keep everyone up to date with what is happening at the Wives Group. It was decided at a recent meeting that the Group would not meet in future during December, January and February.

We will, however, be holding our annual Christmas Service on the 12<sup>th</sup> December in the afternoon and anyone is welcome to attend. More details nearer the time.

*Pat Webber, Secretary*

## **Down to the wire or how to get a quart in a pint pot!**

I had known for a while that the week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> June was likely to be a busy one but just how busy I was yet to discover! For several months Sally had advised me of the Sport's day at Alice & Harry's school & I had duly noted it in my diary & purchased rail tickets well in advance, thus obtaining the best possible value. However with about a month to go J advised me of a concert at Adam's school in the middle of the week. Could I fit it in? I thought that I could, so on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June I set off by road to Hedge End, Southampton via the A36, my favourite route. I arrived in good time, the journey is about 2 hours, had several hours to relax & as a family we arrived at the Wealden Theatre. The concert was excellent, Adam played his ukulele with gusto and I set off back to Bristol at about 9.20pm, with still an amount of daylight. I travelled happily along the M27 in gathering gloom, when just before the A36 junction 2, my car apprised me with this warning "A36 junction closed!!", how could it be? I had seen no signs that morning! So I thought that it couldn't be true. Sadly it was! Although I have a SATNAV, I was in no mood to find a place to stop or indeed trail through unknown Romsey in the dark, so I had little option but to return to Hedge End and beg a bed for the night. My family were a little surprised to see my return, however Paul, my son-in-law, advised me of another route; the A36 was not to reopen until 6am and I needed to be in Bristol for 8am but at that time of day it's often a matter of hitting traffic at Southampton, Bath or Saltford. I set my alarm for 5.15 and duly tried to sleep. Probably worrying about the next day, I got to sleep at about 1am and duly awoke at 4am. It was almost light, so I decided that an earlier start wouldn't hurt and let myself silently out of the house at 4.30am. It was magical at that time in

the morning, travelling the back road towards Winchester, the fields were clothed in mist, I saw 2 deer cross the road ahead of me, and the bird song was delightful. It seemed a very long way but at last I reached the M3 and drove 2 junctions to the A34. Both are busy roads but the only traffic was large lorries hurtling towards London. My next turn off was the A303. I cross this every time when travelling the A36 but rarely drive down it. My luck was in, it's a long road and I went round one roundabout twice looking for Warminster & Bath but as the sun came up, the sky was blue and breasting one hill there before me in the morning light was Stonehenge! It was awesome! Today to the traveller it may seem quite small but to me, with some mist still swirling I had a glimpse of what our ancestors must have felt when in the presence of the Stones. I then had to keep my wits about me for the correct turn off. At last I was reunited with my familiar A36. I arrived home by 6.40am for a welcome shower and leisurely breakfast. I was now back on track. At 8am my hairdresser arrived, surprised to hear of my morning excursion! By 9.40 Pam L arrived to take me to Temple Meads in time to catch the 10.30 to Ipswich via London Paddington. It all seems a bit like a dream now. Suffice to say the next day Alice, the reluctant sport's man managed 3 thirds in her races, whilst Harry won the 100 and 200metres and came a commendable second in the relay, he's fast but there was too much ground to catch up.

Today I caught the 10.29 from Stowmarket, the 13.00 from Paddington, arriving home just before 4pm. It all seems like a dream now. What do I remember? The concert, the children's enthusiasm for their races (Alice less so!) and the glory of early morning when "God's in his heaven & all's right with the world"

*Pam B*

## Health & Safety Policy

Methodist Insurance requires the Church to carry out a risk assessment and have a Health & Safety Policy in place as a condition of insuring our premises.

The Property Committee have carried out the assessment and prepared a policy document in line with the guidance notes supplied. The policy document will be kept in the Church safe and reviewed annually in June.

Whilst the Property Committee have completed this task and will ensure the premises are kept fit for purpose it is our collective responsibility as members and adherents to make sure that the premises and equipment are safe to use. If you notice something that we have missed please contact me in the first instance.

As part of the Policy we are required to record all accidents. A revised copy of the H&SE accident record book is located with the First Aid kit outside the upper kitchen. In the event of an accident please complete the next form in the book. These forms now have to be removed from the book and kept separately. I will deal with the removal of forms and subsequent filing.

If you have any questions or observations please contact me.

*John Ireland, on behalf of the Property Committee.*



## "Strawberry Tea" 4th July 2.30pm

Come along to a Strawberry Tea on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Let me know if you would like to come along, £5 each.

Thank you, *Pam B*



## "Cream Tea" 7<sup>th</sup> August 3.00pm



I will be having a Cream Tea in the Church lounge at 3.00pm on the 7<sup>th</sup> August for anyone who would like to participate. The cost of the tea will be £3.50 per head and this will be in aid of the Wives Charity for 2018/19 which is Bristol After Stroke, a very worthwhile Charity.

If you would like to come along please let me have names so that I can estimate numbers.

Many thanks  
*Pat Webber*

## Coffee Morning 7<sup>th</sup> September

I will be holding a Coffee Morning on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September with all proceeds for Church Funds. Hopefully members of the uniformed groups and Messy Church will have small stands advertising themselves and one end of the hall.

I would be extremely grateful for any help on the day and also for cakes to sell. **Please put this date in your diaries.**

Many thanks  
*Pat Webber*



## **Random Thoughts – Something More About Prayer**

One justification for meditation and prayer is that we concentrate on the largely subjective brain actions that are already engaged in trying to resolve, mentally and physically, particular problems. For example, medication can force-focus our powers of healing against a particular illness but we need to clarify what it is we are praying for and what we hope and expect the outcome to be.

In contemplative prayer the mind often seems to wander perhaps due to a lack of self-discipline and traditional set-prayers do help to concentrate the mind and minimize this wandering as does praying aloud, nevertheless like the silences in prayer our needs can begin to be met as a result of these mental wanderings.

**Traditional Prayer:** If we set aside Contemplative Prayer, then traditionally, prayer has been regarded as having four distinct aspects that are interrelated:

### **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication**

**Adoration:** Praying how wonderful and awe-inspiring is God, seems rather like “buttering up” to someone with obvious authority and influence over us in anticipation that the person might be kindly disposed towards us. This aspect of prayer, for me feels honestly uncomfortable since such adoration is not for God’s benefit but ours, because there is an “adoring-necessity” in our psychological makeup; in short we need to admire and look-up and even worship someone or something. In this context the relationship and status between God and us is not static and there are differing images of God and relationships with God and these are likely to change over a lifetime. There is obviously, the God of the Old Testament, the God portrayed by Jesus and today we can anticipate a new image of God as the 21<sup>st</sup> century progresses – perhaps the concept that God really exists at the core of our being as those progressive mid-20<sup>th</sup> century theologians suggested. It is of course the relationship between communicating parties in their associated circumstances that generates the tone, mode and expectancy relative to that communication. The God we once feared in our ignorance was transformed into a strict but just Father and is now something of a

friend and benefactor; and it is this latter and still imperfect image of God that the traditional church seems to adore, worship and serve. In this connection we can acknowledge God in the wonder and horror of Nature but we must guard against worshipping the Creation rather than the Creator and likewise we must avoid the tendency to worship ourselves especially in prayer. "Holiness" (being God-like) is an interesting concept, perhaps the essential characteristic of a "Saintly" person irrespective of that persons religious beliefs, worldly status, or "Saintly" may be associated with a place or invested in an object or symbol e.g. a holy shrine, a relic or an event like the burning bush where Moses is said to have met God. Holiness in prayer relates to our relevant image of God and how we adore and worship God.

**Confession:** To acknowledge, repent, make retribution and receive forgiveness for our faults and unsavoury activities is for our benefit and as such the transcendent God does not specifically desire our confessions but in acknowledging our shortcomings we begin to mitigate the effect of sin and thereby develop within us a more appropriate image and personality; we begin to grow in Grace. Other aspects of Confession and Forgiveness in prayer I leave for your consideration.

**Thanksgiving:** If confession is "person centered" i.e. where we are responsible for our sins, thanksgiving substantially concentrates our attention on those materialistic and spiritual possessions which are freely given often without any special merit or endeavour.

Thanksgiving will reveal the moral things we value and will demonstrate something of our nature and worth. Thanksgiving can generate a feeling of well-being, e.g. when we "Count our Blessings" our stress and anxiety may be reduced so that even the poorest or ill might give thanks for the courage and strength to cope with their adversity and perhaps become an example and inspiration to others. Thanksgiving for our circumstances should encourage us to be open towards and to freely give of ourselves to others especially those in need. We know that the forgiveness we grant and receive and the giving of ourselves in service to others will enable us to experience a consistent contentedness in life and peace.

## What's brewing for you?

A group of people, now well established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. The conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life. Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain-looking, some expensive, and some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the coffee. After they all had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice-looking, expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. It may be normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, but this may be the source of your problems and stress. I can assure you," he went on, "the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases, it's just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink.

What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups and then began eyeing each other's cups. The professor then said, "Life is the coffee, and your jobs, money and position at work and in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change, the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided for us. God brews the coffee, not the cups."

John Wesley was once asked how he managed to attract the crowds when he was preaching. He replied, "I set myself on fire with the Gospel and the people come to see me burn."

## Just to Say...

Dear Church Family

After 48 years of service to the flower committee both in flower arranging and the treasurership, I have decided to stand down and take a well-earned rest.

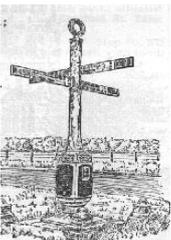
As a result of this the rest of the flower committee have decided that they too are of a senior age, and to wind up the committee in its official capacity. All funds remaining will be transferred to the church accounts at the end of the financial year. However Glen, Angela and Pat are going to continue on a voluntary basis as flower arrangers according to the list, and in future they will be handling all donations.

I would like to finish by personally thanking all those people who have donated over the years and all the help from the committee past and present and various people within the church.

Yours,

*Ann Houlden*

## Signposts



Hazel's birthday on July 6<sup>th</sup> (95) and my daughter Bridget's birthday on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, so a busy month. The garden outside Hazel's room has been developed by volunteers, the fence painted, trellis work put up, two wishing wells, raised flower beds and a rockery, very nice. At the time in 1960 Jamaicans arrived in Bristol from the *Windrush*. Many changes, a memorial now in Waterloo Station where so many passed as they entered the UK.

With all the changes God the Lord is still Lord and Creator, Jesus dying on a cross for the sins of the world my Lord and Saviour.

ACW

## Flower Rota:

<b>July</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>21st</b>	<b>28th</b>
<b>Ch</b>	Messy Church	Glen & Roy	Janet Morgan	Barry Churchill
<b>WM</b>	Messy Church	Glen & Roy	Pat Webber	Rosemary Ireland
<b>August</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>18th</b>	<b>25th</b>
<b>Ch</b>	Messy Church	Andre Wheatley	Pauline Sampson	Des Davies
<b>WM</b>	Messy Church	Free	Pat Webber	Binnie White

## Doors and Books Rota:

<b>July</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>21st</b>	<b>28th</b>
<b>Morning</b>	G Roberts M Stoodley	P Kirby	J Green P Blackmore	M Wilby M Sagar
<b>Evening</b>	Messy Church	Hanham Mount	M Kenway M Kenway	C Haycock R Ireland
<b>August</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>18th</b>	<b>25th</b>
<b>Morning</b>	P Webber J Tippett	H Teague B Jones	K Cowie I Cowie	M Golding P Webber
<b>Evening</b>	W Stanford B Griffen	J Morgan M Morgan	Ystrad Mynach	T Lansdown

## For Your Diary

- July 4<sup>th</sup> 2.30pm Strawberry Tea
- July 7<sup>th</sup> 10.45am Y's Men's Annual Service - David Willis
- July 14<sup>th</sup> 4.00pm Open air service on Hanham Mount
- July 21<sup>st</sup> 6.00pm Circuit Leavers' Service at Knowle
- Aug 4<sup>th</sup> 6.00pm Farewell to Chris Spencer - Cluster Service @ HMC
- Aug 7<sup>th</sup> 3.00pm Cream Tea
- Aug 18<sup>th</sup> 2.00pm Visit to Ystrad Mynach
- Sept 7<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Coffee Morning in aid of Church funds

