

**HANHAM METHODIST
CHURCH MAGAZINE
JANUARY – FEBRUARY**



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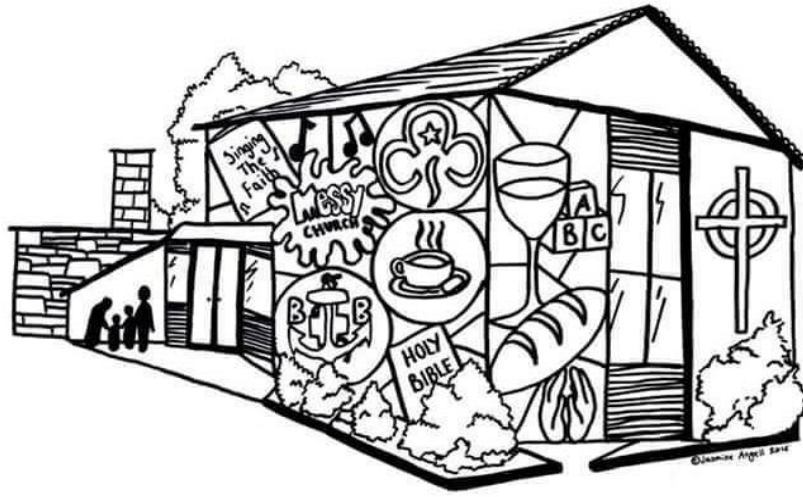
Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect Church policy. Enquiries should be directed to the Editor.

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

Contents

Mountains of the Bible	4
The Methodist Church in Hanham.....	7
Y's Men's Club of Hanham.....	9
Signposts.....	9
Kingswood Foodbank.....	10
Random Thoughts.....	11
Rotas and Calendar.....	12



The Methodist Church in Hanham

Many of you will be familiar with the fact that John Wesley arrived in Hanham in 1738/9 to preach to the lawless miners of Kingswood, the Cock Road gang and many other “unsavoury” characters known to hang about in these parts. The result was something short of miraculous as many turned to the Lord and we are told that tears ran down the coaly faces of the miners. It wasn't long before a small chapel was erected, we think near the site of the Youth Centre, to be followed by the High Street Wesleyan Methodist Church in the early 1840's, again on that site, (It was the church which I attended when I first moved to Hanham, for no particular reason than that you came to it first when turning left at the top of Creswicke Avenue!) At that time, the Ebenezer Primitive Methodist was very much in evidence on the other side of the High Street on the main road to Kingswood. I also joined the Youth Club so met up with many of the young people of that Church, like Janet & Mel. None of us really bothered about the fact that there were two Methodist Churches in close proximity of each other, in fact it was rather the norm, as in Kingswood - Zion & Wesley, in Warmley - Tower & Wesley.

Eventually, there was more and more interaction between the two congregations, the Youth clubs were united and in 1965 the churches too united and it was decided that worship should continue on the Ebenezer site, in fact where we are today.

Why have I told you all this? Well about three weeks ago, Roger Windsor, member of the Youth Club and now Chairman of Hanham History Group (& with a vast knowledge of all things Hanham) with great excitement presented me with a document, which he had discovered at the Kingswood Heritage Museum, dated 19th January 1851 “A disturbance during the evening service at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Hanham”.

I paraphrase the document....

At the Gloucestershire Sessions on Saturday *certain members* were indicted for a misdemeanour in disturbing the congregation of Hanham – street chapel, in the parish of Bitton near Bristol; also with interrupting the Rev. Joseph Cutsworth, the authorised preacher...Mr Skinner, in stating the case to the court, referred to the legislature of George III, which enabled Protestant dissenters to conduct services, strictly religious unmolested. It appears that about 300 persons were assembled and Mr. Skinner described their conduct as not only indecent but “Blasphemous”.

It appeared that when Rev Cutsworth attempted to lead worship , one or more members of the assembled congregation proceeded to pray out loud, neither would they join in a hymn. It seems that the police were also called to the chapel.

On further investigation, it would seem that there were 1200 hearers of “The word” in Kingswood but only 800 adherents to “Conference”, this later refers to the falling out of many worshipers of the Wesleyan persuasion with Conference and its rulings.

The court was told that contrary to the worshippers behaviour being blasphemous, they had come quietly and peacefully for the

purposes of religious worship, had started proceedings with a hymn and ended it with the same and that in fact Rev Cutsworth preached doctrines inimical (hostile) to the religious views of the people of Hanham-street chapel and that he had attempted to force his views upon them. This would not be tolerated by the Church of England in a similar situation.

The jury after a consultation of twenty minutes acquitted each of the defendants and the trial which lasted Five hours, excited considerable interest in Gloucester.

If you look at the date of this paper you will see that it is 1851, the year in which our present building was founded and we all know the story of how members of the Wesleyan congregation, dissatisfied with Conference, acquired land on the opposite side of the road and by the light of their miners' lanterns built the little primitive chapel.

When talking with Roger, we concluded that this could well have been either "the straw that broke the camel's back", or an incident very much relating to it, which caused Methodists in Hanham to worship separately for nearly 120 years. I should have liked to have been a "Fly on the wall" of those fascinating times.

Pam B

Y's Men's Club of Hanham

The Y's Men's Club of Hanham are pleased to tell you that we have arranged a concert with the Dodington Parish Brass Band, on March 21st 2020.

Please put this date in your diary - full details to follow.



MOUNTAINS OF THE BIBLE

The Hill Country Luke 1:39-56

Some years ago there was a film entitled “The man who went up a hill and came down a mountain”. I feel like I am going in the reverse direction to that. This is supposed to be a series on mountains and here I am asking you to think about hills. But as this will be published between Christmas and Epiphany it seemed appropriate to consider a story relating to the birth narratives and this was the nearest I could get to a mountain.

Luke tells us that the pregnant Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth in the hill country and stayed with her for about three months. So let us reflect on these two women who were both to give birth to very special children who would in time perish in violent murderous circumstances.

There is a story told that two theologically naïve Methodists attended a Jewish/Christian convention. Coming away at the end of the day one said to the other “I didn’t know that Jesus was a Jew, did you?” “No” said the other “and to think that his mother was a Catholic!” That unlikely story does point up the way that the Roman Catholics revere Mary, sometimes to the point of what is called Mariolatry, whereas Protestants tend, generally, to ignore her except when it comes to the Nativity tableau. And even there she is usually depicted with blonde hair, fair skin and wearing a blue silken gown, an unlikely garment for a poor Nazarene girl. Luke tells us that Mary went to Elizabeth’s in haste. Was this because she had to leave her home town of Nazareth in disgrace? Pregnancy before marriage was deemed as such in 1st Century Palestine as it was in Britain not that long ago. Did the wagging tongues and those sideways glances prove too much for her? Already she may have been ostracised as she was engaged (betrothed) to an older man. So you can imagine her tearfully, fearfully, making her way up the hills of Palestine to the home of

Elizabeth. Yet still, no doubt, she carries in her heart the message of the angel that this baby will be a very special child. But Elizabeth too is the subject of a strange story. She is also pregnant even though she is past childbearing age. This has come about following a strange revelation to a husband, the priest Zachariah, when for the only time in his life he is allowed into the innermost sanctum of the Temple to burn the incense. An angel appears and tells him that his wife will bear a son, notwithstanding her old age. So in her heart must be that strange mixture of delight that she will, after all her sorrows, have a child, but at the same time fears that she will have difficulty coping in her old age. Both women therefore experiencing that mixture of joys and sorrow at the same time.

One may wonder how the two women spent the three months together as they prepared to give birth. We are given one or two hints. In such a relationship you would expect that the older woman, and indeed in this case the hostess, would take precedence over the young teenager. But no, Elizabeth acknowledges that Mary is carrying a unique baby referring to her as 'the mother of my Lord' (v.42-44).

Clearly there is no jealousy or competitiveness between the two as there was for example between Sarah and Hagar as recounted in Genesis 16. Perhaps there is a lesson for those of us in our senior years that we should not claim the privilege of age over youth. The media are full of stories of feral youths and the mayhem they cause but they comprise a very small percentage of our young people many of whom are committed to leading lives helping others and saving the planet from rising temperatures and sea levels.

And the worth of young people is born out in Mary's response to Elizabeth's greeting in the time-honoured words of the Magnificat

(v.47-55) Here are words as revolutionary as any heard today from the likes of Greta Thunberg or Malala Yousafzai.

Elizabeth perhaps anticipated that the women's two sons would themselves have a special relationship. I wonder if she felt a pang of sorrow that because of her age she might not see her son develop to adulthood as Mary would

For three months the two must have lived and prayed together as these two special embryos developed inside them. One imagines that the two supported each other despite the considerable age gap between them. It would be more like a grandmother/granddaughter relationship and some of us know from experience how special those grandparent/grandchild relationships can be; jumping a generation seems to instil a special bonding. This is even more so today where most of us are living longer. I never knew either of my grandfathers and memories of both my grandmothers are of elderly women just sat in a chair when they were probably little older than I am now. Yet for my part we have had 20 years of seeing our grandsons grow up and build an especially close connection with them.

So here we see two women from a very ordinary background extending love and care to each other notwithstanding that God has set them aside for a special task. Each had a burden to bear but they supported each other despite the age differential and despite that knowledge that one of the boys would take precedence over the other.

What a happier world it would be if we could asset aside our prejudices, our concerns only with ourselves and concentrate on loving each other as Jesus taught us to do.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

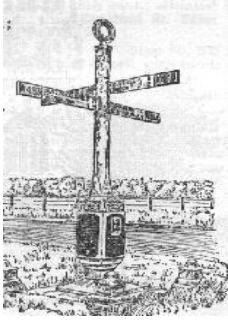
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;

Tender to me the promise of his word

In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice. StF186

TJL

Signposts



Last year difficult with the passing of Hazel, now this new year promises changes with two marriages, a new baby on the way. whatever happens God is with us with the power of the Holy Spirit and the eternal love of Jesus our saviour.

Random Thoughts: The Reality of Faith

To what extent can the Reality of Faith be scientifically verified? This flawed question is clearly problematical, implying that our “spiritual dimension” ought to be proven by the use of scientific argument – a little like trying to accommodate two opposing ideologies in the absence of a catalyst. It all depends of course on what is meant by reality, faith, and “spiritual dimension”. When suffering from flu-like symptoms and being decidedly unwell, we usually experience a subjective sense of hope and a feeling that we will recover. These emotions are usually based on two beliefs (i) that the body will create the necessary anti-bodies to counter the virus (scientifically proven) and (ii) that we should recover from this type of illness. And when an illness is more serious, our faith in our failing ability to heal ourselves is transferred to the medical specialist. This transfer of trust often generates a measure of comfort as we undergo and wait for the outcome of our medical treatment. These emotional reactions represent something of the reality of being unwell. The religiously minded person may, in addition to the reassurance derived from confidence in the medical expertise, possess a belief in a potential healing intervention of God and thereby experience a further measure of reassurance and hope in the healing process. The principle underlying this Faith proclaims that whatever comes to pass, God will remain a conscious presence, taking care of us

by sharing in all aspects of life – in health, sickness, joy and sorrow. So does this principle embrace the “reality of faith” and to what extent might it be scientifically verified? Is there statistical evidence to demonstrate that, on average, a religiously orientated person will live longer, bear more suffering, display more fortitude, be less prone to depression, will better recover from serious illness and be less inclined to commit suicide than the atheist or agnostic? If statistical research did show that the religious person performed better than the atheist or agnostic, it would not prove the existence of God, but could more readily imply that a positive benefit had been derived from a person’s belief in the intervention of God. Sigmund Freud did not believe God was real, but merely an image needed to cope with our psychological fears and desires. Since Freud, a few radical mid-20th century theologians tentatively moved away from the image of a theistic god to which Freud may have been referring. Freud stated *“That scientific work is the only road which can lead us to knowledge of reality outside ourselves”*. Antony Seldon (educator and historian) has a converse view of the scope of science, to quote *“Science explains much about life, but not all; it has not told and cannot tell us the full nature of human consciousness, nor provide us with a moral compass, nor rationalise the existence of selfless love...”*

There are times when the adversities of life carry a person beyond their capacity to cope and external administration of love, compassion and service is required – it is thought that even holding a sick person’s hand is both medically and spiritually comforting for those involved. The extent to which the healing capacity of God, being in addition to the compassion and skill of others, which is regarded as the conduit enabling the delivery of God’s commitment to humanity, is myth or real, is perhaps not as important as the actual administration of that love and service through a sharing in suffering. More next time ARGI.

East Bristol Foodbank
Bourne Christian Centre
Waters Road, Bristol BS15 8BE

26 November 2019

Dear Members

KINGSWOOD FOODBANK

We write to thank you for your donations to Kingswood Foodbank. Your donations have helped us feed (to 11th November), 1280 people of which 490 have been children. Over the corresponding period last year we fed 1154 people. You can see that the demand for our support, and yours, continues to grow. Fortunately our supporters, such as you, have continued to be generous and the amount of donations has also increased so that we have been able to meet this increased demand. But we need to maintain this level of support.

This will be our 6th Christmas since we opened and experience tells us it will be our busiest time of the year. As well as food and toiletries, at this time of year we try to give small Christmas presents.

Should you wish, you can keep up to date with what is happening with us via the Kingswood Foodbank Facebook page which is updated every Monday afternoon.

A Happy New Year to you

The Kingswood Foodbank team

Flower Rota:

Jan	5 th	12 th	19 th	26 th
Ch	Messy Church	Nesta Hogg	Ann Houlden	Joan Brabon-Hibbs
WM	Messy Church	Rosemary Ireland	Ann Houlden	Free
Feb	2 nd	9 th	16 th	23 rd
Ch	Messy Church	Tom Herival	Joyce Godwin	Barbara Lewis
WM	Messy Church	Free	Carol Haycock	Barbara Lewis

Doors and Books Rota:

Jan	5 th	12 th	19 th	26 th
Morn	J Green P Blackmore	M Wilby M Sagar	P Webber J Tippett	H Teague B Jones
Eve	Messy Church			
Feb	2 nd	9 th	16 th	23 rd
Morn	K Cowie I Cowie	M Golding P Webber	G Roberts M Stoodley	J Angell P Kirby
Eve	Messy Church			

For Your Diary

Jan 12 th	Bristol Methodist Centre will tell us about their work
Jan 19 th	Annual Covenant Service
Mar 1 st	Pastoral Visitors' Rededication