

**HANHAM METHODIST
CHURCH MAGAZINE**

MAY – JUNE



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

Although we are not able to meet face-to-face, we can still keep in touch through calls, emails and other mediums. All the Church magazines and the Worship Committee newsletters are held on our website (in the “About Us” section), for you to peruse at your leisure!

Minister: Rev David Willis

Office number: 0117 935 3308

Email: david.willis@methodist.org.uk

Editor: Katrina Cowie

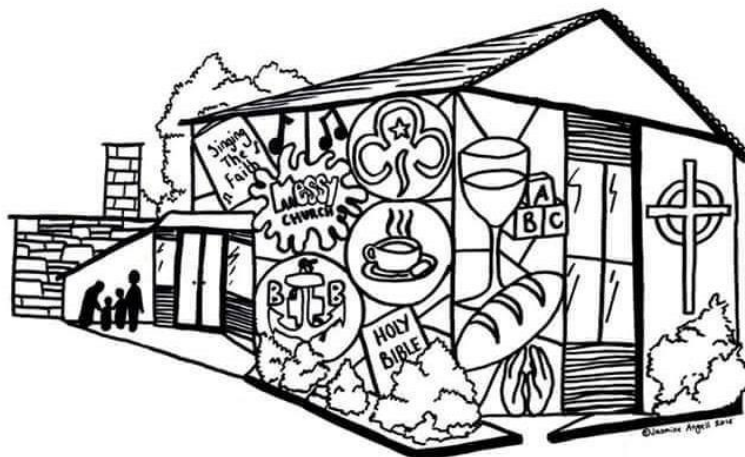
Email: katinacowie73@gmail.com

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Mountains of the Bible

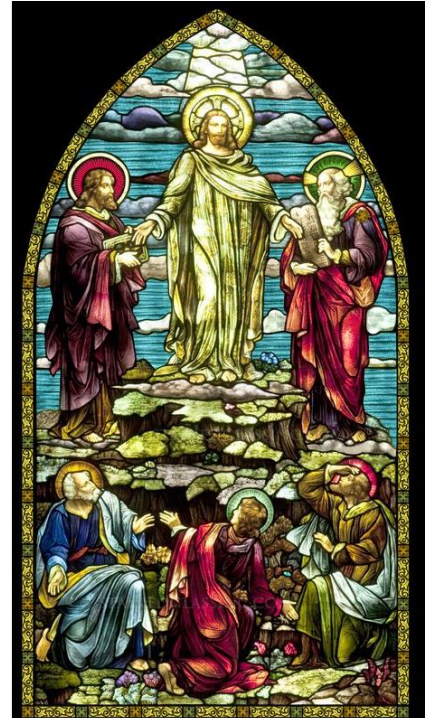
The Mount of Transfiguration Mark 9:2-13

The story of the transfiguration of Jesus has been a moveable feast over the years. Back in the 1960's, if there was a lectionary no-one followed it, but the old Orthodox and Catholic tradition of celebrating this captivating story fell on August 6th. Whether this was chosen as it was holiday time no-one seems sure, for the story suggests that Jesus moved away from his daily task of preaching and healing to seek rest and renewal.

When the Methodist Service Book was published in 1974, we discovered the lectionary and the Transfiguration was the set reading for the fourth Sunday of Lent. The problem was that this coincided with Mothering Sunday so the Transfiguration was, therefore, generally ignored. When our current Methodist Worship Book was published in 1999 the Transfiguration was included on the Sunday before Lent where it remains.

The story is found in all the gospels save John's and, in each case follows immediately after the account of Jesus challenging the disciples as to who he was, and Peter's visionary response 'You are the Christ!'. This took place in Caesarea Philippi well to the north of Galilee and Judea. Not far from here is Mount Hermon a very high mountain with strange cloud formations often evident. Most commentators believe that this was where the transfiguration occurred.

On the mountain with his three closest disciples, Peter, James and John, Jesus appears in a transformed state, flanked by the presence of Moses, representing the law handed down from Mount Sinai and Elijah representing the unique line of Hebrew prophets. Strangely neither Moses or Elijah speak. What actually happened we cannot rationalise. Whether it was a dream, an illusion caused by the cloud formations or reality we cannot say and it is not worth the speculation. It is best to take the story as read and see what it says for us today.



This is a narrative that seems to gate-crash into the everyday events of the disciples' lives. We all normally live in what we may all 'Chronos time' where all our moments are determined by the clock and the calendar: whether it is the date and time of a meeting the longing for the day of our holiday to come or anticipating or dreading another birthday. But occasionally something happens which seems to stop the clock and we forget time. Sometimes we might say 'I wish this day would never end'. This is a Kairos moment. It is God's time. It might come when you see a glorious sunset or hear a piece of music or share an intimate conversation.

For Peter, James and John this was a Kairos moment seeing Jesus like they had never seen him before. There is now an awareness of his majesty his 'otherness' arrayed in fearsome glory. Do we ever see Jesus in this way? We live in an age of familiarity, of being pally, of using Christian names even to address strangers. Of course, we should see Jesus as a friend with whom we can draw close to but we shouldn't forget the other side, the god-fearing awesomeness that we seem to have lost in recent times.

Transformation can come to us all; a Kairos moment can hit us when we least expect it. The writer Monica Furlong tells of sitting in a London garden on a sultry August day. Suddenly the sun behind the clouds grew brighter and brighter; the clouds assumed a strange shape and in her own words "I suddenly felt myself spoken to. I was aware of being loved, of being wholly accepted, accused and forgiven, all at once.

And less you think this can only happened to an articulate Christian writer here is a poem by John Betjeman.

'Let us not speak of the love we bear one another-

Let us hold hands and look '

She such an ordinary little woman

He such a thumping crook

But both for a moment a little lower than the angels

In the teashop's inglenook.

But such moments don't last. As Charles Wesley writes "The arrow is flown, the moment is gone" (StF460). Even for Peter and the others the moment was rare, not to happen again. Indeed, the other disciples were left below in the valley and never experienced it at all.

Peter typically tries to freeze-frame the moment, not wanting it to pass. How typical of us all. I recall when I was assistant manager of a smallish bank branch, there was a time when we had a first-rate staff across the board. I mentioned this to my manager, saying it would be great if we could retain them just as it was. Being much wiser than me he reminded me that life was not static and things would change. Within days, as if to prove the point, one of the girls informed us that she was expecting a baby and would be leaving shortly.

But Jesus is clear Peter cannot stay, in the valley below there is work to be done but the experience of the mountain top will energise them to face the task ahead. But for many like Andrew and the others disciples who didn't experience the transfiguration that doesn't mean that there will be no experience of God. God will be found in the ordinary the everyday, the Chronos moments just as in the mountain top experience.

Mother Theresa tells of her search for God. "*When I try to raise my thoughts to heaven there is such emptiness that those same thoughts return like sharpened knives and hurt my very soul.*" She found God, not on the mountain top but in the faces and outstretched hands of the poor of Calcutta. This challenges us to look for God not just in those fleeting ethereal moments but in the ordinary warp and weft of everyday life.

I am writing this as the news from Italy regarding the coronavirus has caused panic in this country. By the time his piece is published matters will almost certainly have changed one way or the other. By then today will be history and today's future will be tomorrow's present. Many of us fear for the future, not just because of the virus but because of climate change and personally, of growing older.

On the mountain top Jesus faced his tomorrows assisted by the presence of Moses and Elijah representing his yesterday and by the presence of God being the experience of the current moment.

So, we can face our tomorrows by the knowledge that God has led us this far and will give us the strength to face the future.

The story of Goldilocks tells of the three bears finding one bed too big, one too small and one just right. The same was found to be with the chairs and the porridge, one too hot, one too cold and one just right. Don't allow nostalgia for the past loom too large in your life. Don't shrink away from the future thinking it is no concern of ours. Above all live for the present. Seek God in every situation. He can transform (transfigure) the plainest simplest things to His honour and glory. Pray for the Kairos moment and your Chronos moments will be all the better.

*If we could bear your brightness here
And stay forever in your light
Then we would conquer grief and fear
And scorn the terrors of the night.
But, from the heights, you bring us down,
To share earth's agonies with you
where piercing thorns are made your crown
and, death accepted proves love true (StF261)*

TJL

Remembering John

When my family moved to Hanham in April 1960, I knew nobody and was not inclined to move house anyway, as it meant leaving all my friends. My mum organised us to attend High Street Methodist, where I met Uncle Don and in the September, when I was 14, I was able to attend Youth Club. The YC had recently amalgamated with the one at Ebenezer and so I met John. He was shy and unassuming but also quietly friendly and supportive. I discovered that he lived on the corner of Rangers Walk and Abbots Avenue with his mum and dad, and my journey to school or club or church went directly past his house. His parents were very friendly, although to me appeared quite elderly and his mum was disabled and usually in a wheelchair.

I became friendly with two girls, Lesley Woodland who lived in Forest Edge and Maureen/Mo, in Rangers Walk, we became a "Group", which often included John. Most Wednesday and Sunday evenings after YC,

we would all walk home together, with John the first to be dropped off. We girls gave him the nickname “Our Mutual Friend”, (I think that it had recently been shown on BBC). We all enjoyed his company and protection, sometimes if it was very dark he would walk us all the way home.

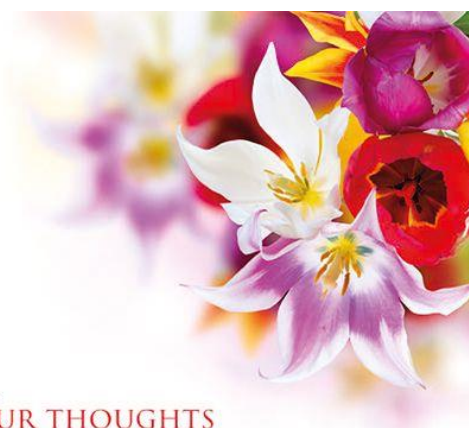
It's funny the little things you remember, he was always there on YC outings and adventures, often ribbed by Uncle Don but only in a nice way, which he took with a good grace, he was reliable and dependable, I shall miss his words of encouragement and lazy smile.

Pam B

John's funeral will be held on the 6 May at 12.15 p.m. at Haycombe.
Tim will officiate.

Under the current restrictions, as you are aware, attendance is restricted to 10 persons so we imagine it will be family only, however, they have requested a Memorial Service to be held at Church as soon as practical.

Please hold the family, and Tim, in your thoughts and prayers on the 6th.



Just to say...

Thanks for all cards etc for my 90th Birthday.

Love and best wishes to all

Arnold Wheeler

Messy Church

The Messy Church team were very creative and reacted quickly to the lockdown. Although they couldn't meet in person to celebrate Easter, that was no reason to stop getting messy! Ella prepared an excellent Messy Easter Booklet with craft ideas, a story and a prayer. There were also links to a couple of Messy Church's favourite songs. The families were delighted with the pack and set to work with their crafts, sending back photos of their daffodils!



Isolation v Nature

Firstly I must point out that not everyone is fortunate enough to live near a green space and that not everyone is able to take advantage of said green space, perhaps because of physical ability or more likely because they are considered vulnerable. I know that some people are dreading the fall of a letter through their letter box, stating that for health reasons they should stay at home. It is a very true statement that says "we don't really appreciate something until it is taken away".

All of us have been affected by greater or lesser degree from the lockdown, so much so that my heart goes out to those surviving with small children in high rise flats or houses of multiple occupancy. I have always lived in a house with some outdoor space and now I value it to the nth degree.

Just over four weeks ago I decided that I needed a plan of action, to survive with some degree of enjoyment. The idea of living by myself was ok, I had got used to that but it was not being able to do the things which I usually take for granted, ride on a bus, shop when and where I liked, visit family on the train, drive my car. So what new things could I introduce? And did I need a routine?

Under the first heading I decided on a walk every day, come rain or shine, could I learn a new skill? After all I would have plenty of time to practise. What about the routine?

The routine involved doing some housework every day and some gardening but I also tried to set aside 5 minutes at 11am as a quiet time, when it was suggested others might do the same and I should feel connected. These three things I have stuck to as religiously as I can but no one had told me that dusting books also involved becoming engrossed in them and that before I knew it several hours would elapse, whilst I happily went down memory lane or discovered a long-forgotten gift. Still I have spent some happy hours!

Sundays are important too with the BBC service, although they keep changing the time, Songs of Praise and the information provided by our Leadership team for keeping in touch. Sundays anchor the week for me, otherwise I feel like a bark tossing on a stormy sea.

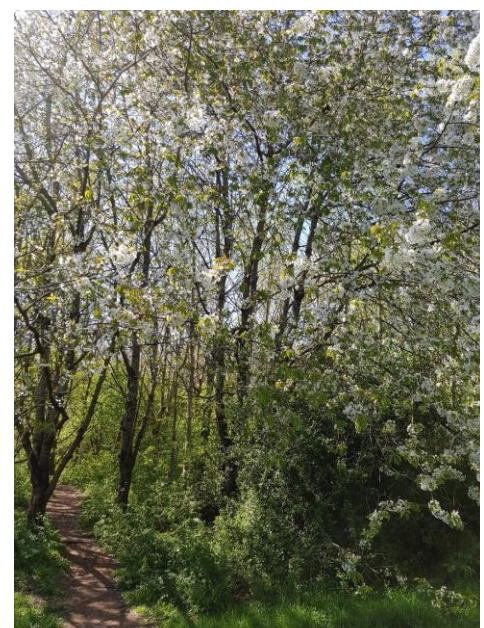
The other interesting thing is technology. Phone calls, emails, texts, passwords, online shopping, WhatsApp, facetime, Zoom. It's brilliant when it works but I've lost count of the time I have needed to change a password as it hasn't been recognised. Sometimes I have to get up and walk away!! I have appreciated it for talking to friends and far flung family, I've had virtual "Afternoon Teas" and lunches and the latest is "Nanny School", when I have spent upwards of 50 minutes interacting with my two younger grandchildren, trying to remember what came so naturally to me 16 years ago. Still we've had fun and I've learned a lot about Manchester United!

My skill is ongoing but I'm not ready to disclose that yet.

I think that I have been most delighted with my daily walks. Dundridge playing fields/park is less than 5 minutes from home. So I can walk around all the fields and venture down into Conham Valley, well within half an hour and it's about a mile and a half in distance. I have a set route and feel slightly disorientated if I veer from it. It also involves some woodland. The most amazing thing for me is how nature has transformed my walk over the 4 weeks. When I started the woods were bare but gradually before my very eyes the leaves and blossom have transformed my walk into a wonderland. The most amazing part is the bluebells, anemones, cow parsley, cuckoo pint and blossom. I spotted the first two bluebells the first Sunday in middle March, now there is a veritable "Host" to quote a famous poem and today I noticed the candles on the Horse chestnut trees. And the birdsong! I'm not good at recognising birds or bird song but have seen robins, blackbirds, tits, finches and loads of pigeons. Two days ago I heard a woodpecker and alerted several other walkers to the sound. We all gazed but the foliage was too dense to spot him. I think that I can honestly say that I am thoroughly enjoying nature and am desperate for any rain to pass. I hasten to add that I am not just a fair-weather walker, in March I went huddled in thick scarf and gloves, in early April cut offs and tee shirt, and occasionally armed with an umbrella! This has been a bit of a ramble but it's my way of coping, everyone's will be slightly different, I shall continue to enjoy nature whilst dealing with enforced isolation and look forward to a brighter future. Stay safe.



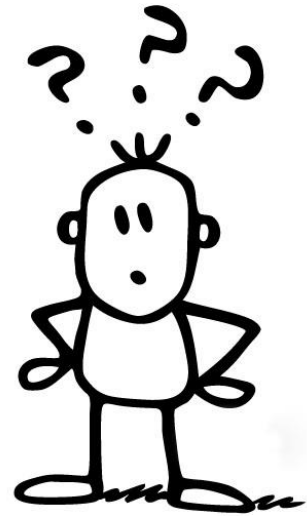
Pam B



Puzzle Page

All About 'EVE': each answer contains EVE

1. Close of day
2. Part of a coat
3. English river
4. Hot or cold drink
5. Clerical person
6. At last
7. Go back
8. Double glazing
9. Flat
10. Local seaside town
11. Mints
12. Smart Alec
13. Put a stop to
14. Cotswold Town
15. More than one
16. To accept as true
17. Strict
18. Grow up
19. Get your own back
20. Hot illness



How did you do? The answers are on page 14.

A Time of Reflection

As we enter a further period of lockdown, it gives us chance to reflect on the changes going on around us. It's a time of so much sadness and worry for many, but as always at a time of crisis, we are forced to consider what's really important to us. Many of us – and I'm the biggest culprit of all - spend too much of our time rushing around between work and family and hobbies, without ever really taking the time to stop and appreciate what we have. We tell ourselves that there is so much that we must get done, and I am usually constantly checking my watch, judging if I have time to squeeze in that extra task that just can't wait.

And now, we've stopped. Stopped jumping in our cars for that quick errand, stopped popping to the shops because we need that one item now and it just can't wait, stopped chasing our tails and feeling stressed that we're letting someone down if we can't take on everything that is thrown at us. I don't even know where my watch is now!

I feel so fortunate to be in the position I am in - I am able to work from home which has kept my days in some sort of routine and I'm grateful to work for an employer whose key message to us all has been: "just do the best you can do; work when you can, step away when you need to." I feel blessed to have both children home with us - our ongoing family card game of gin rummy is now entering its 5th week and we're approaching our 100th game! I've spent more time in the garden this month than I have in the last year and I'm sure the birdsong is louder than ever.

I've loved exploring Hanham in our daily family walks and seeing the trees and flowers bloom day by day. And of course, the spell of beautiful weather has helped!





And further afield, how amazing that, for the first time in 30 years, the Himalayas can be seen from India, more than 125 miles away, as pollution levels drop.

The canals in Venice are the clearest they have been in 60 years, with dolphins being spotted enjoying the tourist-free waterways. So while we're all having a difficult time adjusting to self-isolation measures, Mother Nature has taken a short breath of fresh air, unimpeded by incessant global travel.



We have realised who the true heroes of our society are, and the “Thursday clap” is growing week on week – it’s humbling to hear it echo around Hanham. It’s just a small thing we can do to show our appreciation for all those who are continuing to put themselves at risk to ensure that the rest of us can be provided for.

When lockdown is lifted and life returns to “normal”, my note to self is to ensure that I remember these lessons learnt, continue to appreciate the world around me and find a new normal to live by.

Katrina

Quiz answers:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Evening | 11. Everton |
| 2. Revere or sleeve | 12. Clever Dick |
| 3. Severn | 13. Prevent |
| 4. Beverage | 14. Evesham |
| 5. Reverend | 15. Several |
| 6. Eventually | 16. Believe |
| 7. Reverse | 17. Severe |
| 8. Everest | 18. Develop |
| 9. Level | 19. Revenge |
| 10. Clevedon | 20. Fever |