**Histon February 2016**

NEWSLETTER

**Methodist**

**Church**

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY Services 10.30am and some evenings

MONDAY Craft Club (alternate weeks, see Diary for dates) 2.00pm to 4.00pm

WEDNESDAY Community coffee shop 9.00am to 5.00pm

THURSDAY Thursday Group (1st Thursday in month) 2.45pm to 4.00pm

SATURDAY Community coffee shop 10.30am to 11.30am

## MINISTER’S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Not many of us will have escaped the news and subsequent stories surrounding the recent death of David Bowie. Whilst he has undoubtedly written many classic songs, I had never been a big fan. But I was blown away just before Christmas when I heard his astonishing single ‘Blackstar’. It is an incredible mixture of jazz, rock, avant-garde, and electronic music. And it is 10 minutes long! It wouldn’t be everyone’s cup of tea, but I loved it.

And so when David Bowie died mere days after the release of his last album, I felt particularly saddened, not because of all he had done in the past, but because he seemed to be on the cusp of some really exciting and innovative work. He still had such potential. And what has become clear over the last few weeks is that Bowie had been aware that he did not have long to live, and so had thrown himself into a really intense final period of creativity, resulting in Blackstar (and more).

For me, this attitude and creative decision making had real resonances with the Methodist Covenant Prayer, which some of us will have recently prayed. In the face of God’s love and promises to us, and at the beginning of a new year, we consider once more what really matters in life, what we want to give our life to, and – perhaps - choose again to give ourselves into the life of faith:

“I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.”

And we are now about to enter the period of Lent; another opportunity for us to make the time and space to reflect on what it means to live our lives for Jesus, to ask what God might be calling us to, to explore the potential for creativity and compassion within each of us.

Unlike David Bowie, most of us haven’t been told when we will die. But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t take the time to consider what really matters in life, what we should be spending our days and weeks doing.

A sentiment like “you should live each day as if it is your last” is probably a bit of an empty one. But to continue offering ourselves to God, to actively seek the fullness of life which Jesus promises us, and to be open to the possibilities the year holds seems to be quite a good way to live!

For anyone who is interested and available, we will be having a short Ash Wednesday service at 11am on Wednesday 10th February…it should be a peaceful and reflective way to begin Lent…

*Simon*

**WHAT’S GOING ON IN COTTENHAM…?**

For anyone who might be interested in some of the initiatives I am involved with at the Cottenham Community Centre Coffee Shop, here is some of what’s happening in February.

Sun Feb 7th 2pm, Family Cinema: Inside Out (£2)

Sun Feb 7th 7 for 7:30pm, Community Cinema: *Suffragette* (£4)…includes introductory talk and the opportunity to stay on for a conversation about the film, life and faith at the end.

Sat Feb 13th 10:30am, ‘Dads Play’: a chance for dads/male carers to hang out with their children, drink great coffee and eat bacon sandwiches!

Sun Feb 21st 3-4:30pm, The Roost’: a great, fun, family event exploring life and faith with arts, craft, videos, music and more…plus the Sunday papers, cake and more great coffee.

Sun Feb 28th 7:30-9:30pm, Arts Night: a small group of musicians, singers, poets, photographers, artists and storytellers exploring life and faith through the arts…

If you want to know more about any of these things or fancy getting involved, please talk to me or get in touch via   
simon.oliver@cantab.net or www.revcoffee.net

*Simon Oliver*

## DIARY DATES FOR FEBRUARY

Mon 1st Craft group 2.00pm  
 *Living with differences* at Haslingfield (see notice) 7.30pm

Tue 2nd Church Council 7.45pm

Wed 3rd Service at Bramley Court 2.45pm

Thu 4th Thursday Group. Members telling about various hymns that are special to them2.45pm

Sun 7th Preacher: Revd Colin Smith 10.30am

Wed 10th Ash Wednesday meditation, in the church 11.00am

Thu 11th Big Issues. Revd Simon Oliver:  
 *Jesus, movies and rock n roll - a theological exploration of the popular arts* 7.30pm

Sun 14th Holy Communion. Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver 10.30am

Mon 15th Craft group 2.00pm

Wed 17th Service at Etheldred House 11.00am

Sun 21st Preacher: Revd Jean Simmonds 10.30am  
 Material for March *Newsletter* please

Thu 25th Big Issues. Revd Dr Roger P Abbott: *Since when have disasters ever been natural?* 7.30pm

Fri 26th Country Dancing. Everyone most welcome 8.00pm

Sun 28th All age worship. Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver 10.30am  
 Lunch at *Rose and Crown* (see notice) 12.30pm

Mon 29th Craft group 2.00pm

**Revd Michael Jackson**

We were sorry to hear of the death of Revd Michael Jackson, who passed away on 18th December. His funeral service was held at Selly Oak Methodist Church, Birmingham on the 6th January. We extend our sympathy to his widow Mary, daughters Caroline and Helen and their families. Michael was minister of our church, and also Cottenham, Oakington and Willingham, 1972 to 1976, quite a challenge for a probationer minister.

Many of us have fond memories of his time with us as he shared our joys and sorrows, and was a big influence on our young people.

He returned here to preach during our Centenary Year in 1996 and the paragraph below is the message he sent which was included in our Centenary booklet.

*“Ministers remember different churches for different reasons. The Histon section of the Cambridge Circuit was where I 'learnt the ropes' of circuit ministry and so it has a special place in our affections. I remember a strong youth club with some wonderful MAYC weekends, a willingness to break ground with the formation of a Boys Brigade, a strong and well run Sisterhood, a lively Junior Church, a choir that would always give a lead, an enquiring Bible Study Group, a congregation that came to worship and the dedication and commitment of a lot of people.*

*May God bless you out of the abundance of His riches as you go forward to worship and serve Him into the next millennium.”*

Let's hope that future ministers looking back on their time with us can also speak of a lively forward looking church, let us rise to the challenge!

*Rosemary Watson*

**BESOM**

As the Besom “champion” of our Church I would like to express a big thank you to all who donated food for our Christmas Hampers. An amazing 23 hampers were assembled and delivered to people in need in the village. This really made a difference to many and helped them have a better Christmas than would otherwise have been the case. This along with all Besom is an extraordinary outreach, showing love and care to some of those needing help at particular times in their lives. We wish you all a very peaceful 2016.

*Wendy*

**Community Coffee Shop**

Wendy and Colin Toates have been running the coffee shop on Wednesdays since April 2012, arriving early in the morning to set up, and clearing up after a long day.

However Colin is no longer able to do the heavyish work involved, putting up tables, setting out toys and books, and flags, and we urgently need volunteers to set up before 9am (much work can often be done Tuesday evening).

Wendy and the stewards have a list of what is involved and it would be good to have as many helpers as possible to ease the burden.

This is an urgent appeal; please respond if you can. The coffee shop attracts so many people and is so much appreciated.

We thank Colin for all he has done every week to support Wendy and I'm sure we will still be seeing him in the coffee shop.

*Stewards*

**THURSDAY GROUP**

A reminder that this meeting is now open to everyone – both men and women. On February 4th we don’t have a speaker but would like members to tell us about various hymns that have meant something to them. We hope to sing some and listen to recordings of others. I also have books which tell the story of how/why some hymns were written.

To help in planning the afternoon, would you please let me know what hymn(s) you’ve chosen. Thanks.

*Jenny*

**Lent and Easter services**

As a new venture, there will be a short Ash Wednesday meditation at 11am on 10th February in the church, led by Rev’d Simon Oliver.

At 7pm on Maundy Thursday, 24th March, there will be a communion service, also led by Simon, and there will be an Easter day communion on 27th March.

Good Friday details will be given next month.

Our coffee money during Lent (Saturday and Sunday) will go to *All We Can*, (formerly known as *Methodist relief and development fund*), subject to approval by Church Council.

**Living with Differences: Marriage and Relationships**

Christians have always had to live with differences unless severe repression has been in place. In the 20th century British Christians took very different views on pacifism and warfare or on divorce. Today they have conflicting views on same sex relationships. With the sudden introduction of legal same-sex marriage, how does the church cope with different views on such a major subject. How does it affect our view of marriage?

The Revd Colin Smith (Superintendent) and the Revd Carole Irwin (Wesley House) will speak and lead a discussion on this subject on Monday 1st February 7.30pm Haslingfield Methodist Church

The format for the meeting will be the same as to the one held at Histon. There will be time to introduce the themes and encourage conversation to provide useful feedback to input into the national consultation process. This is the second and final evening in this series.

**Church Family Meal** at Rose & Crown, Histon on   
Sunday 28th February 2016 at 12.30pm All welcome – menu choices and cost to be given later. Names to Judy Wynn please.

**Big Issues**

We are delighted that on 11th February our own minister, Revd Simon Oliver, will be leading one of our spring Big Issues evenings, his subject this time is *Jesus, Movies and Rock n Roll – a theological exploration of the popular arts.*

Then on 25th February *Since when have disasters ever been natural?* is Revd Dr Roger P Abbott’s subject. Roger is research associate in natural disasters at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, St Edmund's College, Cambridge.

We do indeed have a broad spectrum of topics, we thank all our speakers and look forward to seeing you at our February evenings.

*Helen Allen*

**DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The two concerts in December raised £230.66. Thank you to John and Rosemary Clarkson, to Rex Freeman and friends, and to all who supported the events. We are planning a quiz in March, a Beetle drive in April, and a yard sale in May.

We are pleased to report that we have just received another external grant, this time from the Joseph Rank Trust, who have awarded us £10,000. We are also hoping for grants from South Cambridgeshire District Council and from Histon and Impington Parish Council from their 2016/17 budgets. Other grants are also being applied for. You will be receiving a survey sheet to fill in soon; this is needed for two of the grants, and the one we did in 2009 is no longer suitable.

We are in current discussions with the architect about detailed requirements for the various rooms in the refurbished and extended building. By the time you read this, the Development Committee will have met and we shall be meeting with the architect again in February to advise him of our preferences.

We hope that further plans and drawings will be available for people to see, in the near future. In the meantime, please continue to support as fully as possible with your prayers and your giving.

**Our tasks as Christians**

* To speak a healing word to a broken heart,
* To extend a hand to one who has fallen
* To give a smile to those whose laughter has been lost,
* To encourage the dreamer who has given up,
* To share the painful solitude of one who is alone,
* To ease the burden of the bent low beneath a thankless task,
* To reassure the doubter and reinforce the believer,
* And to light the candle of God’s word in the midst of another’s darkest night.

And finally:  
Don’t leave it all to others. There are no others.

**QUIZ**

Many thanks to everyone who purchased a quiz. I hope you had fun sharing it with family and friends during the Christmas season. The winner was Ann Peters of Stafford (daughter of May Tiplady), who was the only person to get all answers correct.

*Rosemary Watson*

**HEAVENLY NEGOTIATIONS ON LIFESPANS**

On the first day, God created the dog and said “Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this I will give you a lifespan of twenty years” The dog said “That’s a long time to be barking. How about only ten years and I’ll give you back the other ten?”

And God saw that it was good.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said “Entertain people, do tricks and make them laugh. For this I give you a twenty year lifespan” The monkey said “Monkey tricks for twenty years? That’s a pretty long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the dog did?”

And God again saw that it was good.

On the third day, God created the cow and said “You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer’s family. For this I will give you a lifespan of sixty years” The cow said “That’s kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. How about twenty and I’ll give back the other forty?”

And God agreed that it was good.

On the fourth day God created humans and said “Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. For this I’ll give you twenty years.” But the human said “Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back, that makes eighty, okay?”

“Okay” said God, “you asked for it”.

So that is why for our first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone. Life has now been explained to you. There is no need to thank me for this valuable information. I’m doing it as a public service.

If you are looking for me I will be on the front porch.

*Anon*

*(Submitted by Kathryn Coles, copied from her brother’s church magazine)*