



**Histon
Methodist
Church**

29th June 2020
(Service sheets for Sundays 5th & 12th July are below)

NEWSFLASH: new link and telephone details for our **Wednesday Coffee Mornings** on Zoom! Please contact webmaster@histonmethodist.org if you would like the details of how to join.

Dear Friends,

we are still living in days when the old certainties are no longer fixed. Taxes, normally paid by the self-employed in July, are deferred! Examinations have been overlooked (making me wonder if they were ever truly necessary, and certainly not to the extent that towards school pupils have to endure). Even the Methodist Church Conference is not singing as usual, although thanks to modern technology, it will be meeting. On Zoom, of course. By the end of all this, I will need to check with the optician to see if my eyes have finally become square as my mother warned due to excess screen-time.

It was thinking about singing, or the lack thereof, that made me pull out my hymnbook to check the words of the hymn sung at the beginning of Methodist Conference. Written by Charles Wesley, I found its words moving and fitting for our current circumstances: "And are we yet alive, and see each other's face? Glory and praise to Jesus give for his redeeming grace!" As we begin to emerge from our homes and gardens, for now still wearing our facemasks, we look forward to the moment when we will "see each other's face". How joyful it will be. But how sobering too, because in the comment "And are we yet alive", we remember those who have died, who are absent. The hymn continues: "What troubles have we seen, what conflicts have we passed". What troubles indeed - haunting images of hospital staff in hot cumbersome PPE labouring to save lives of patients prone and motionless, or reliant on oxygen, needing medical knowledge and human care combined.

"Fightings without" – against the virus, or against racism;

"and fears within" -our own anxieties for each other, for ourselves, for our communities, for our world, so many that at times they have felt quite overwhelming; "since we assembled last" –which seems long ago, and although it is becoming possible for us to assemble, it is still difficult.

The hymn moves to reassuring words: "But out of all the Lord has brought us by his love; and still he does his help afford, and hides our life above." The current advice is that we will not be singing together anytime soon. For me, singing hymns draws me close to God and God's love, hymnody touches my heart and soul in a way that music

alone or words alone does not achieve. We are beginning to think through returning to corporate worship, when we can it will be another reminder how we are all reliant on love. God's love, the love of our family and friends. It is love that has brought us thus far through these times of troubles and fears. It is love that has enabled us to help each other. It will be love that will bring us together again, to "see each other's face".

With best wishes, Alison

Re-opening for Public Worship: We are beginning to plan for a return in September and a phased and gradual take up of our normal activities. We hope to have one or maybe two outdoor gatherings during the summer, subject to the usual caveats about the government guidance. This gives time for the Methodist Church to produce guidance and for us to implement any physical changes to the chairs, perhaps the use of face masks, and the necessary risk assessments. There may be changes to the guidance between now and September. There is quite a lot of work to do before we can return to our church building, but we continue to be church where we are, and be together online and on the phone.

There will be a **Church Council meeting** on Tuesday 1st September (on Zoom) and a combined **General Church Meeting and Church Council** on Sunday 11th October.

In the meantime you may like to **join Castle Street on Zoom every Sunday, 11am** to follow through the service sheets prepared by the Methodist Church (approx. 30 minutes).

Thursday evening Bible study, 8pm on Zoom 2nd, 9th and 16th July. Book of Ruth. For details see the advert circulated 2 weeks ago.

Histon Methodist Church Notices

Sunday 5th July 2020

Services that we can all take part in:-

8.00 am Sunday service on Radio Cambridgeshire.

8.10am Sunday worship on Radio 4

BBC 1 Songs of Praise. (check TV guide for times)

Zoom Bible Study of Ruth Thursdays at 8.00pm.

This week we pray for Anne and Gillian and all in their pastoral groups.

New Church Recipe Book for 2020.

A church recipe book was created in the year 2000 and has been used often by many people in the church. Given it is now 20 years since publication it is time for a new one ! We have all been in lockdown over the past few months so will have lots of recipes we have revisited. Sue Watson has agreed to pull together and publish the next version called 'Lockdown Treats' . Please can you send your recipes that you would like included in the book directly to Sue Watson via email (or to Rosemary).

Recipes can be for anything at all, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, cakes and biscuits - the more the merrier so don't be shy if you want to include more than one.

Our Church Building is currently CLOSED but it is being used to help the village with the food bank.

An incredible, much loved Methodist!

Not me.....but so glad to have known this special person!

I was called into ministry unexpectedly and, after training, I had my first appointment for just 5 years. The church wanted me to stay and I was very happy there but the chairman of the District moved me to Alton in Hampshire where I was to be the Circuit Superintendent. I'd met a few of the people for discussion and then, on the first Sunday in September 1997 I arrived for my first service at Alton and was welcomed by several members in the entrance hall. One member was a tall, elderly gentleman called Bob Weighton. I wouldn't have guessed his age but it soon became apparent that everyone loved Bob, he had a deep faith, a great sense of humour and when I first arrived he was still

preaching occasionally and doing well. Before long I was told he was 89 and Michael and I began to learn about his life.

Bob was born in Hull in Yorkshire in 1908 and worked in many different countries both as a teacher and an engineer. His knowledge, language ability and teaching skills enabled him to have experience in many countries including Taiwan, Canada and Japan but then, in 1935 he worked in China for a while and took with him his young wife and son who was just a toddler. All seemed well until Chairman Mao, the communist leader who was thought to be the greatest mass murderer in the world, started marching his troops into China and Bob knew he had to get his family home. Fortunately he managed just in time and perhaps that's when he settled down in Alton.

When I arrived in Alton Bob was retired, his children were all grown up, his wife had died and he had ten grandchildren so he had moved into a flat and filled his life with continual learning, reading, writing poetry and doing helpful work. It was a two bedroom flat so the spare room was turned into a workshop! If he found wood he either made really lovely toys for children, little windmills etc. that our church sold at the Christmas fair, or he chopped wood for elderly folk's fire places! He also wrote poetry, read a great deal, got his own shopping, cooked his own meals and added another language to the ones he already knew! We wanted to raise more money for the Methodist Children's homes so we arranged a fun evening where – in his mid-nineties - he pretended to be an old man! Everyone roared with laughter!

At one point, the local museum organised a display of pictures, photographs, maps, things he had made, poems he had written and details of his life story. Everyone in Alton must have known our Bob!

I remember very clearly the celebration of his 100th birthday. It was held in our church which was full of many folk who loved him and quite a few great-grandchildren! I'll never forget him standing by the lectern and, with no notes, speaking to us for a long time about his life and his faith. It seemed strange that we were all comfortably seated and he stood up for quite a while and you could hear a pin drop....between the times he made us laugh of course! Every year, he received a birthday card from the Queen but later, after receiving 10 cards he wrote to thank her and said that she really didn't need to send him any more as he felt it was not fair because of tax payers' expenses!!

Bob had so many friends and he viewed everyone he knew like a brother or sister. He read a great deal about theology, ecology and politics and loved to talk about them, about poetry which he wrote as well as read and the lives of folk in other countries which really fascinated him.

A few years ago he discovered that there was a man called Alfred in Perthshire who was born the same day and they became great friends. Every year they exchanged cards on their birthdays but Alfred died last year. Newspaper reporters and photographers have called on Bob on his birthday for several years lately but he was often asked about the secret of his long life and every year, "I've just avoided dying!" he would say! Fairly recently the oldest man in the world was living in Japan and was also 112 but he died and so Bob was only the

world's oldest man for a very short time as he died at the end of May. As well as his sons he leaves behind 10 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren and each great grandchild had a poem written for them. All of us who knew him will never forget him because of his deep faith, his broad interests and his fun and friendship.

Jean Simmonds

This week's saying:

If you do as you always did, you will get what you always got.

Thank you to all our contributors. If anyone would like to write an article for a future issue please let me know.

John (on behalf of the stewards).