

Focus on May 2020





WELCOME TO WESLEY CHAPEL IN NORMAL TIMES

We really enjoy welcoming visitors to Wesley Chapel and we hope your time with us will be enjoyable and uplifting. If you are new to Harrogate or just new to Wesley Chapel, we would love to welcome you back and tell you a bit more about what we do here and hopefully get to know you a little more.

If you would like to remain in contact with us please speak to the minister, stewards or the person who welcomed you into the church and let us know your preferred method of contact.

Welcome again!

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The deadline for 'Wesley Focus on June' is 23 May. Please send any notices, news, articles, photographs to Judith Yeats: 01423 506014, judithyeats0@gmail.com. Focus is also on the website. If you would also like to receive the monthly newsletter by e-mail please let Judith know.

MINISTER'S LETTER

Greetings in the name of Jesus the risen Christ.

I have missed seeing you for three weeks as according to our ages and the government of the land we have to keep apart, not just from each other but from the majority of people who do not fit into our immediate group, which in some cases is family and in other cases not even family.

I trust that you are all managing to keep safe and away from dangerous viruses. We missed celebrating Easter together and I hope that you are managing to engage in some style of worship as the season progresses. I am writing this on the Sunday after Easter when the principal Bible reading was the story of the meeting between Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room and I am very aware that next Sunday's reading will be the meeting on the road to Emmaus between two disciples and Jesus.

I have been thinking about my childhood when we frequently met at Easter with family in North Yorkshire. My uncle was a shepherd and he sometimes used my cousin and me to help him with things he couldn't manage alone.

The incident I have in my mind was when circumstances had split his flock into two, Those who had already had their lambs were in one field and in an adjacent field were those who were yet to give birth. He wanted to change them over. We were to drive one flock into the top right hand corner of their field. He and his dog would drive the other lot from the adjacent field into the bottom left hand corner of our field and then we would drive our flock into the second, now vacant field. Don't worry about it, it's not that important.

We, my cousin and I persuaded our flock into the top corner of our field, almost satisfactorily. One of the lambs had not kept up with the others and so was standing alone in the middle of the field.. There was quite a noise from all the sheep and lambs of our flock. I was concerned that one was lost. Then a strange thing happened Above the major noise there was an insistent bleat which was recognised by the "orphaned" lamb who let out a responsive bleat and ran as fast as its little legs would take it to its mother. The rest of the operation proceeded as if by clockwork.

Minister's letter continued

I suggest to you that even though you and I are feeling a little lost in our present circumstances, separated from so much that is precious in our life, sometimes we are like the ewe or the lamb in the flock and sometimes just ourselves.

Nevertheless the message of Easter is that Jesus calls us o'er the tumult and there can be a reassuring reunion, a being together as Lord and Disciple, assured that all can and will be well.

Lord come to us all as we come to you and may your blessing be upon us and all whom we love and all others who are involved in this situation and may we all be safe from life's alarms. Amen

Trevor

PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM BEN

For those who are unable to access the web, here is a message that Ben wrote regarding the situation with Ann's move to the Tadcaster Circuit

Before the lockdown came we were expecting to be saying farewell to Rev. Ann Fox at the beginning of May. With our District Chair and with the interim Superintendent of Tadcaster Circuit (Rev. Ruth Parry), Ann is now no longer moving early. There are some purely practical reasons behind this. Her new manse is currently awaiting the lockdown to lift so that contractors can install a new bathroom and kitchen and also removal firms are only moving people in cases of emergency at present. There is also a spiritual side to this, Ann and her churches have not had a proper chance to say farewell to each other and to bring this season to an end. In this light Leslie, Ruth, Ann and I have all agreed that Ann will now move from Nidd Valley. lockdown permitting, in August 2020. This will hopefully enable us somehow to say a proper goodbye to Ann and to send her on her way. Please do pray for Ann, for the team coping down the road in Tadcaster and for our circuit team as we try to work out the ramifications of this.

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Cover Pictures. Top: Cherry blossom on taken on Ian and Eileen's daily walk. Bottom: View from Maureen & Mike's window.

Pastoral Message from Ben continued.

Obviously we were intending to head into a period of transition from 4 May onwards. Gordon and Grace's sections were transforming and we were going to welcome Rev. David Jones (supernumerary in the York circuit) for 4 months to give pastoral cover to Bilton Area and Starbeck. Please do bear with us as the situation is going to obviously be a bit messy. We will somehow cope with being in the new situation whilst still having Ann in the circuit. In reality it could be a matter of weeks that we live in a state of confusion but if in doubt as to who best to contact, please do not hesitate to contact me and I'll work out which minister for you!

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

In faith, we are forging ahead with our plans for Circuit Flourish 2020 - a taste of what happened at District Flourish in Scarborough last October. Our theme is 'Celebrating our Stories' and we look forward to celebrating the stories of our circuit in worship, teaching, word and reflection together at Wesley Centre on **Sunday 18 October 2020.**

Please book the date in your diary now. There is an Eventbrite booking system - all free tickets but just so we have an idea of numbers and just as Leslie did with Flourish last year we're stepping out in fath and praying that 250 people will join us on that day.

We're hoping to have a Youth and Children's programme. Our keynote speaker is booked - we're fortunate to have Rev. Elaine Lindridge who spoke so brilliantly at District Flourish.

Watch out for further information.

Yours in Christ Ben

'Sometimes our light goes out, but is blown again into instant flame by an encounter with another human being.' **Albert Schweitzer**

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PASTORAL SECRETARY

'A friend is someone who listens with the heart'

Dear friends

Well, we are continuing our efforts to protect ourselves and others against the coronavirus and I hope you and yours are all well.

I wanted to say a big 'THANK-YOU' to everyone within Wesley Chapel who are supporting our 'telephone visiting' activities and to encourage you to maintain and develop the links we are all making within the Wesley family.

Personally, I am feeling very blessed and uplifted by the chats that I have been making and receiving in these strange times.

Les and I now take an early morning walk (about 8.00am) but this morning we slept in a bit. Consequently we met quite a few dog walkers.

Upon each approach people and their dogs either crossed the road or dived down a driveway; it reminded us of playing 'hide and seek' with the grandchildren!

Inspite of this, it is encouraging to chat and smile to people as you pass... Hopefully, this openness and warmth will continue when the restrictions cease.

God bless you and yours and thank you again for all you are doing to help people feel connected and remembered; remember stay at home, pray at home and if possible give somebody a call..

Every blessing. Christine Sudron.



Congratulations



Jenny celebrated a special birthday on 14 April. She managed to have a lovely birthday in spite of lockdown, and was able to see (within Government guidelines) lots of the family, and also received many good wishes from friends. Philip celebrated his special birthday in September, but kept very quiet about it. Congratulations to you both.



Congratulations to Geoff and Pat Webber who will be celebrating their Golden Wedding on 9th May.



Mike and Maureen recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They have kindly sent us two photographs showing 'then and now'. We've never seen Mike without a beard and Maureen has not changed a bit!

Congratulations to a very special couple who do so much for so many people both within and without the church.



Congratulations

Janet celebrated her mum's 100th birthday last Wednesday and sent the following message - 'Mum used to come to Wesley Chapel when she stayed with me, but this was last about 5 years ago I would guess. However she is often a topic of conversation when I chat to Wesley folk! I have sent a photograph of mum's 2 special cards, from the Queen of course and her church in Cambridge.'



Many thanks Janet, that is an amazing milestone in your mum's life and it is always lovely to hear you talk about your regular trips down to see her. It will be difficult for you both at the moment; keep going and we hold you and your mum in our prayers. Les.

FOCUS ON LOCKDOWN

Wesley Week

In the last few weeks we have continued to hear and see wonderful stories and examples of the community spirit that is helping so many people throughout the country. In addition, the people directly supporting those who become ill and the wider group of key workers keeping the country going, are being affirmed in their roles by all of us 'self isolating' and disconnected from our normal lives.

Sadly we should also be aware, but not scared, that Coronavirus has led to an increase in scams and false offers of help. Common scams include:

- cold calling homes and offering to help those self-isolating with shopping
- fundraising, door to door or online, for donations to develop a covid-19 vaccine
- scam emails offering fake products such as anti-bacterial gels or a cure for coronavirus.

If you are ever concerned about this please give your telephone visitor or a Church steward a call straight away.

Back on a positive note again, I have been asked to pass on thanks from a number of Wesley folk who have received telephone calls and been offered help by our team of Wesley Chapel 'telephone visitors'. One commented ' ... it really helps me still feel part of the Wesley Chapel family. God bless you all.'

We continue to be grateful to our Circuit staff team who help us stay connected and worshipping. I would especially like to mention Juliana who works in the Circuit office at Gracious Street Methodist Church and whose job it is to keep Ben and his team under control... impossible she says! Juliana sends out all the communications to all the churches in the circuit.

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If I had a flower for every time I thought of you... I could walk through my garden forever.' – Alfred Tennyson

Wesley Week continued.

During week one I had to queue to get into a supermarket for the first time in my life. I had to find desiccated coconut which I did and chopped nuts, which I didn't. I did buy my mum-in-law a Turkish Delight for a treat and was surprised to find out it was an absolute favourite of hers. (I had decided to give it to Christine if mum had turned it down). I mentioned this to my wife who asked what had I had bought her and I sheepishly had to admit, a garlic bulb...

My story above has got me thinking about your stories. Have you any 'desiccated coconut' events you would like to share. What have you been doing, what special memory do you have from the last few weeks, what unusual thing happened to you. If you would like to share please send to me via e-mail. If you are happy for me to mention you by name that would be great if you would prefer not just type 'Anon' next to your story. I will produce a weekly summary of our 'Wesley Week' and circulate online. Go on don't be shy...

Blessings. Les

Wesley Weeks 1-4

Shelagh sent a message to say that she had seen something on TV that people have done in Lichfield to make exercise more interesting for children; many people are putting bears or other animals in the windows of their house. This allows parents to say to their children lets go on a 'bear hunt'. A different way of mission to our communities.



Les' picture of the bears and Goofy who Christine has placed in their front window for all those children who pass by on a 'bear and Goofy hunt'.

Wesley Week continued.

Jenny and Philip wrote... 'We received this from a friend, not James. We think it is delightful. It was recorded just after the Faroes put in place social distancing. A local radio station arranged a specific time to play and sing a Faroese folk song and invited people to join in and video themselves, and then they put it all together.' To see this video use this link https://youtu.be/mzVvSSwV2ow

From Pat. 'I popped down to the corner shop on Saturday to find the lady there in a terrible state. When I came back I mentioned to Geoff that she was in a bad state. We found a card and today I took it down and she explained that a person had shouted at her and did not respect that she was trying to keep the shop opened. Life can be difficult enough"! (Kindness is always a great response!. Les).

From Molly. 'Caroline, my eldest granddaughter sent me some photo's' I would like you to see the letter one written by her 5year old daughter. (Wow! Your IT skills are developing really well Molly and it was lovely to see the picture of your great-grandsons.). Les).

See Molly's photograhs opposite.

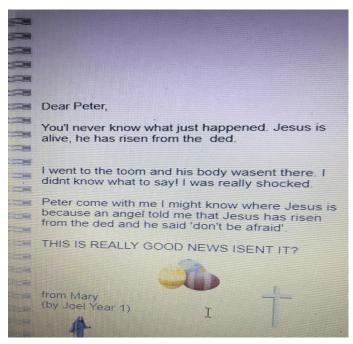
Christine made a Simnel cake for Easter much to the delight of Les and Daniel.

Christine took a picture in the garden showing our heather bush and cherry blossom. I can confirm they both grow without any help from me! Les.



See page 21.

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Top. Letter written by Molly's great granddaughter. Above. Molly's great grandsons.

Wesley week continued.

Rowan Matthew Sudron has also just celebrated his special birthday, (just 76 years behind Jenny.—see p7). The family had a video 'party' with him and Christine baked some special cupcakes to eat while we celebrated. Les.

Shelagh sent the following - 'I was speaking to someone over the phone the other day. I explained I heard the reason so much clapping at the convention centre was because Nightingale Harrogate was finished last Thursday. The person said back to me. 'wouldn't it be good if it was never needed' Wow what a prayer. If we all prayed together for that. (That is indeed a special prayer of hope Shelagh and thanks in case it is needed. Les).

Rev. Ann sent the following - 'On Thursday afternoon my neighbours held an impromptu 'birthday party' for a 14 year old (social distancing). It was quite something - all singing Beatles songs. I joined in by playing a cajon (drum box) that I am learning how to play. They are now talking of holding an Emeraldbury Fest!

(Ann your music ability knows no bounds. A special thanks to Ann for her lovely singing of hymns during the Circuit services offered to us all by the brilliant Circuit team; a whole new 'video ministry' is being developed by Ben, Grace, Ann, Gordon and Moses. Every blessing to you all from all of us. Les.)

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Rev Ann also wrote the following - ' Among the video conferencing meetings and Circuit live videos I made a couple of new friends, baked a cake (I don't bake), and finished the binding on a Readicut cushion cover that has been in a carrier bag for over 25 years...next week I might make the cushion to go with it!

(Love the pictures of your cushion cover and cake Ann, which is which??. Les.) See pictures on page 21.

Wesley week continued

Penny, who lives at Southlands, wrote the following - 'Thank you for all your messages of encouragement and information. Care Homes seem to be in the bad news category today but it is difficult to find out exactly what the position is re. the corona virus cases with us. There are a number of residents being kept in isolation but whether or not they have been tested for the virus we are not told. Fortunately at the moment there are none on the ground floor where I have a room and last Sunday we managed to muster a group of about 9 people (mostly those who normally come to the Southlands church services) to listen the video of the Circuit Easter Morning Service from my Facebook link. Our helpful Activity Coordinator was able to use his own loudspeaker to make the sound loud enough for everyone to follow the words and music, and a few of them had enough eyesight to see the picture on my iPad and recognised Ben from having seen him taking services here. It was only interrupted nearing the end by the noise of the coffee machine - which was drowned out by the exuberant final hymn - and was followed by tea and cake, and an Easter quiz. So the afternoon was made to feel a little more 'special'.

(Thank you Penny, care homes are big families and have increased challenges to remain safe. Like NHS and other key workers, care staff are special people who are now being recognised nationally for their dedication, care and compassion. Les).

Margaret shared this - 'I went into the Valley Gardens a couple of times last week on my scooter and one day while sitting on a park bench under a beautiful tree, a young man stopped (2 metres apart at least!) and we started to chat. He eventually told me he was an NHS Chaplain working in Harrogate. He usually lives with his mum but has had to self isolate and is now residing in a Harrogate hotel. He was lovely to chat with.

(So many people are affected by the virus and it is amazing how people can stay so positive. Hospital chaplaincy and care home chaplaincy such as offered by Methodist Homes is so vital, especially today. Les)

Wesley Week continued

Katharine and Keith sent out an e-mail to some of their Wesley friends:

Dear All, Just a few lines to say 'hello' we are both well as is our son Alan. Looking forward to when we can all meet up again. God bless and keep well. Keith and Katharine.

Mike our Treasurer has sent this important message.

'I've received a number of queries about how to pay the weekly offering while we are not meeting for worship and thought it would be good to offer some guidance more generally. Fortunately we have enough funds in the bank to pay the Circuit assessment due in May and there is nothing else to pay of significance until the next assessment is due in August. However, it would be good to have some money coming in, if only to relieve the stress on the treasurer! If you are able, payment by on-line bank transfer would be best and I will happily supply our bank details. Otherwise, the next best thing would be to save up the offerings until we are back together again and then pay by cash or cheque at that time. If we are not able to meet again in the summer, we'll have to review the situation.'

(Thanks Mike for this helpful message and we should try hard to relieve stress on our beloved and admired treasurer!.) Les.

lan and Eileen have sent photographs during their latest Stray walks. (Absolutely stunning! Les.) See front cover

Wesley Week continued p17

So for those of you who are not online - do share your stories, perhaps by telephone so that we can all still feel part of that great church family that we are . Go on don't be shy...

Wesley Week continued.

And talking about 'absolutely stunning' Margaret sent this message and photograph (see page 21). 'On Sunday afternoon Les accompanied me, on my scooter, to the Stray to admire the beautiful avenues of cherry blossom. On a sunny day is there anything more beautiful than the pink blossom against the blue sky? Quite a few people were about, all keeping their distance from one another. Children were riding their bikes, one small girl was valiantly trying to fly a kite. A couple were practising their kick boxing skills, and people were walking their dogs. It was uplifting to see that despite this sad and troubling time there is beauty in the world and if we have faith, hope and trust in God all will be well'.

(I enjoy my walks with mum, I say "walks" but it is only me walking as fast as I can to keep up with mum on her turbo charged machine; she does occasionally wait for me to catch up! Amazingly while we were out we bumped into Mike and Maureen, not literally, we kept our social distance but it was lovely to have a short chat. Hope you like the photo. Les.



SO WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

We have been asking our church family members to share their stories and Mike and Les have already shared stories in previous editions. Here, Christine tells her story.

I first started to feel a little under the weather round about the 11th March 2020, just after Boris Johnson had given his first speech to the nation but before we had gone into lockdown. I felt very tired and couldn't seem to find the motivation to do much. I had a hint of a headache, but put it down to being a bit depressed by the prospect of being shut in the house for weeks and also the after effects of a very busy week just passed. Two days later I started to feel slightly shivery and then suffered a mild stomach upset, nothing so unusual for me!

As the following day, Saturday, progressed, I realised I had a raised temperature and couldn't eat so started to become a little concerned as I am sole carer for my husband who is at increased risk from infection. Sunday saw no improvement and if anything I felt worse again. When Monday dawned, my raised temperature was causing concern and I phoned 111 for advice. After a long wait I spoke to a clinician who then arranged for me to receive a call from the out of hours doctor on duty in Harrogate. She advised me that all cases of fever were being treated as potential Coronavirus infections as research had shown it could manifest itself in different ways. This made me rather worried especially about passing it on to Graham, my husband, from whom I could not self- isolate completely, though we could keep further apart some of the time. My family were very concerned as they could not come near, and anyway Liz was down in London, though David was closer to hand in Knaresborough. The Doctor also advised me if I became worse I should dial 999 and tell the ambulance controller I had a fever and they would know what to do.

I passed a sleepless night from Monday into Tuesday, with my temperature raging and slowly sipping my way through a jug of water by my bedside. I felt very alone, with only Classic FM for company but realised there was something else I could do, and that was to pray. I passed the hours of darkness praying intermittently and rather incoherently for strength to fight this infection and for the strength to continue to care for my husband.

Christine's Story continued.

I asked God to spare me as my work here was not yet done. Around 5am I went to the bathroom and splashed water on my face which helped lot. I then fell asleep until 8am and realised my temperature had gone down a bit and I felt a little better. I rested in bed for much of Tuesday and slept soundly that night. I woke on Wednesday about 7am to the sound of birdsong and the sunlight streaming through the window. I realised I felt much better and the first thoughts that entered my head were the words of the hymn:

New every morning is the love our wakening and uprising prove; through sleep and darkness safely brought, restored to life, and power and thought.

New mercies, each returning day hover around us while we pray; new perils past, new sins forgiven, new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

Now this is a hymn I had always associated with school assemblies and I had always regarded as a bit dreary, but on this morning it felt to reflect perfectly what I had come through and the words were packed with meaning. It took a good while longer for me to fully recover, but these words will forever remain seared on my memory. I shall probably never know whether or not I did have Coronavirus but I will always be thankful to God for bringing me safely through this experience and for keeping my husband safe and well.

I now have the challenge of keeping my promise to God to keep up his work here and now! I also have to give thanks to friends at Wesley who supported Graham through this time and to friends and neighbours who continue to help with shopping and in other ways. I do indeed feel truly blessed to have a loving family and so many good friends.

'Holy Spirit, thank you that you are living in me, showing me God's love and helping me share that love with others'. Prayer Journal – Thy Kingdom Come.

WESLEY GUILD



If only I was writing a report on our April meeting about the work of the Harrogate Lions. Unfortunately this is the second time this particular topic has had to be rescheduled and I would like to thank Carol Houseman yet again for her forbearance.

What an awful time we are living in just now and I do hope that all our members, their families and friends, are keeping well and symptomfree from Covid-19. We must all continue to pray for our Circuit Ministers and Stewards who are working tirelessly in the background to care for us all and keep us together in faith with all their online activities. As mentioned in the Ministers' lovely letter to us this week, never has it been more evident that the Church consists of the people. We may miss meeting in our lovely buildings but we are being kept together in fellowship in a rather different way. Daily, at the stroke of 10.30 a.m., and with cups of coffee at the ready, Barbara (Lister) and I chat on the telephone. It may be a case of "Morning. How are you today? Did you sleep well" but it is good to hear a friendly voice and to know that somebody loves you and cares. Our evening conversations are pretty similar - 'Hello there. What sort of a day have you had?' but these are helping to keep us sane in these insane times. It is good too to keep in touch with our families, friends and Wesley family and all the caring telephone calls are very much appreciated.

It is good when the unexpected gives you a smile like the gentleman on the radio who said "Well now. Life in lockdown. The garden has never looked lovelier. The house is spotless and every cupboard and drawer has been turned inside out. Is it too soon to put the Christmas decorations up?"

Or, the little girl of seven who was concerned because she had a wobbly tooth and the Tooth Fairy might be under lockdown. Quick as a flash, her ten year old brother said 'Don't worry. She's a key worker'.

Continued p21

Wesley Guild continued.

Like all Guild members, I am saddened that our Guild Anniversary Weekend will not be happening as we were so looking forward to welcoming our very good friend Rev. Tim Simms to lead our Anniversary Service. I only wish I could tell you all when our next meeting will be but, in the meantime, it is my earnest prayer that you all stay safe and stay well and keep up with the social distancing.

Looking forward to LAWKI (I am told this is the latest buzz word for "Life as we knew it") - if that ever happens. If only!

God Bless you all in these troubled times.

Lynne Harvey



Left: Margaret taking a stroll







Left: Ann's cushion cover

Right: Christine's cherry tree and heather bush with no help from Les



FOCUS ON BOOKS



Our latest book for discussion was Ben Elton's *Two Brothers*. We decided that it would be better to discuss it face-to-face rather than have one of those Zoom meetings which have become so popular in the past few weeks. We'll report back once we have had our meeting. But do read *Two Brothers*, it is not a 'happy' book, but very well written.

Further reading:

Friday 12 June. A Brand from the Burning. The Life of John Wesley by Roy Hattersley

Thursday 20 August. The Painter of Silence by Georgina Harding.

We don't know at this moment in time whether or not we will be out of lockdown and back to normal, but get reading anyway just in case.

FUTURE DIARY DATES

WELCOME SERVICE FOR REV. LESLEY TAYLOR

Friday 3 September 7pm at Wesley

Welcome Service for Rev. Lesley Taylor who will be joining the circuit to be minister at Starbeck, Bilton and have pastoral oversight of Wesley.

ADVANCE NOTICES ABOUT FLOURISH

- There will be a Circuit event of 'Flourish' on 18 October. Different types of service will be held throughout the circuit on that day and will include lunch at Wesley.
- The next District 'Flourish' will be 17-19 September at Scarborough 17-19 September, 2021, at Scarborough.

FOCUS ON PRAYER

Please remember in your prayers all our ministers Ben, Grace, Ann, Gordon, Moses and Trevor together with all our Lay workers and friends in the circuit who continue to work and pray on behalf of so many people. And for our Chair of District, Leslie who has worked tirelessly so that we may be a different church during these difficult days..

Also remember those members of our families and our friends who are on the front-line, including our nurses, teachers, shopkeepers and all those helping our most vulnerable in society.

Also remember Les and his team of Wesley stewards and pastoral visitors and telephone friends who are working so hard to keep us connected at this difficult time.

Loving God, If we are ill, strengthen us. If we are tired, fortify our spirits. If we are anxious, help us to consider the lillies of the field and the birds of the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders.

Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves.

Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.

Help us always to hold fast to the good, See the good in others, And remember there is just one world, one hope, One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer, The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life, In whom we trust these days and all days, Amen.

The Revd Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference

