



What a year 2020 has been so far! Life has certainly changed as we've all become accustomed to the "new normal". Our prayers and thoughts are with each and every one of you, our amazing NHS and care workers, education, right through to retail and charity work. Everyone's wonderful efforts, hard work and goodwill during 2020 will forever be remembered.



Youth Genesis has been working across Devon offering activities of support and learning for young people aged 10-25. Youth Genesis works to connect churches with local communities to transform the lives of young people through a range of activities and sessions designed to challenge, innovate, and inspire the next generation in our local communities. We offer training and support to community

groups, churches and local residents to equip volunteers to work with young people, enabling them to make a positive transition into adulthood.

Throughout the pandemic, Youth Genesis has been working hard. We launched online youth spaces and daily messaging services, an important channel for young people to gain advice, support or simply chat with our experienced youth workers. We have extended our branches of support; including "Parent Access", which gives parents/guardians the opportunity to talk, be listened to and access tools to support young people. Our "Empower Packs" include useful information and materials for young people to get active. The activities within the packs tie in with some of our online activities so our young people can stay better connected.



For more information visit www.youthgenesis.org.uk
Keep staying safe, staying well, and we'll see you soon!



The Methodist Church

CONNECTED

Newsletter of the Torbay Methodist Circuit—Issue 16: September 2020

"Many parts form one body" (1 Cor. 12:12)

Execrable Villainy!

It was a murder that shocked the world – on 25 May 2020 at Minneapolis, Minnesota, George Floyd, aged 46 years, died after being arrested by police outside a shop for allegedly passing a counterfeit \$20 bill. Video footage showed a white police officer kneeling on Mr Floyd's neck while he was pinned to the floor. George Floyd's tragic death turned into an opportunity for people of all political persuasions to try and use what happened to advance their cause and thugs and thieves found a pretext for violence and stealing.

Sadly, the racial injustice that is so prevalent – not only in the United States but also all around the world including, regrettably, within the United Kingdom – is nothing new.

éxécrable a. Abominable, detestable; hence
~LY² adv. [ME f. OF, f. L. *execrabilis* (as foll.;
see -ABLE)]

Sin is not a fashionable word either inside or outside of the church – nevertheless, it is the word that most accurately describes humanity in a state of rebellion against God. 'Sin fundamentally twists the ways in which we view one another' (Mika Edmondson). It is this same rebellion against God that has resulted in the closure of churches and the imprisonment of Muslims in China, the sexual violence against Yazidi women and girls by ISIS, the murder of more than 600 Christians in Nigeria since the start of this year!

When we as individuals consciously or unconsciously consider ourselves to be superior to others (whether that be because of ethnic origin, nationality, place of birth, social class, education or anything else), we fall into sin.

A key-lesson for Christians in the present global pandemic has to be what it means to be Christian without retreating into the security of our buildings. Has the church building become a castle – where worshipping Christians can be left alone and ignored by society – or a prison, which confines the message of Jesus within the familiar four walls?

Today's world is a challenging, some would say 'scary', place. Our mission – challenging what is wrong, speaking up for what is right, teaching and living the values of the kingdom of God, grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, justice, reconciliation, faithfulness, faith, hope, love, joy, peace, truth – must be rooted in the Bible and the person of Jesus. We should end with a warning: we need not expect to be popular if we stand for these things – think how it ended for Jesus. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (*The Bible*, Matthew 5:10).

Revd John Haley
Superintendent Minister



The founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, was a prolific writer and correspondent. Six days before he died, Wesley wrote his last letter. Famously, it was to William Wilberforce, M.P. – its subject was the abolition of slavery which Wesley called 'that Execrable Villainy, which is the Scandal of Religion, of England, and of Human Nature.' Before we excuse ourselves, Baptist minister from Houston, Texas, David A. Gundersen, wisely observes, 'we speak as though "racism" is a simple binary, a "pass/fail" diagnosis that ignores the layered, subtle, deceptive, enculturated ways sin works in our hearts and communities.'

We don't have to read very far in the Bible to find the foundation for the Christian understanding of humanity. The understanding of mankind being created in the 'image of God', male and female, shapes Christian belief about humanity, its uniqueness and its relationship with God, with each other and with the whole of creation.

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.
(*The Bible*, Genesis 1:27)

Connecting with Choice Words



Our friends at Choice Words in Newton Abbot (who deliver Christian books, media and resources for everyone in the community) extend their greetings to us at this difficult time and remind us that we can continue to place orders by telephone 01626 334027 or email shop@choicewords.co.uk which can be posted or delivered to our home addresses. www.choicewords.co.uk You can also order Bible notes through the circuit office, which is supplied by Choice Words.

Contact us

During the current restrictions
the office remains closed to visitors.
Temporary phone 07380 638244
office@torbaymethodistcircuit.org

Master, (said a slave at Liverpool to the merchant that owned him) *what if some of my countrymen were to come here, and take away my mistress, and master Tommy, and master Billy, and carry them into our country, and make them slaves, how would you like it?*

His answer was worthy of a man: *I will never buy a slave more while I live. O let his resolution be yours! Have no more any part in this detestable business. Instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches, "Who laugh at human nature and compassion!" Be you a man! Not a wolf, a devourer of the human species! Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy!*

From *Thoughts upon slavery*, by John Wesley (1703-1791) Founder of the Methodist Church.



Emancipation Badge (1787), commissioned by the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade from Josiah Wedgwood, in the Fitzwilliam Museum collection.

© Fitzwilliam Museum

Please send good news stories of worship, fellowship, mission and evangelism to Torbay Methodist Circuit Office by no later than 27 October 2020 to be considered for inclusion in the next issue of *Connected*.

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Keep Connecting During Covid

John and Janet Haley worship with friends old and new

Every day our superintendent minister, Revd John Haley, and his wife, Janet, have joined their friend, Revd Steven Wild for his short *Daily Reflections* on YouTube. John and Steve were at Wesley College, Bristol, together for three years (1980-83) and have been good friends ever since. Steve has used his God-given gift in evangelism to great effect, becoming President of the Methodist Conference in 2015. Each week they have listened to a podcast from a friend of a friend, David Robertson, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, currently working in Australia, who broadcasts under the name of 'The Wee Flea'.

John and Janet Haley have used Sunday mornings as an opportunity to share in worship by YouTube and now join with the congregation of Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, for a professionally prepared service on YouTube. John remembers the superintendent minister, Revd Tony Miles, when Tony offered as a candidate and John was on the committee. John says, 'I voted for him—that was the right decision!' Janet says, 'it's been encouraging to share in the kind of service that we would like to attend in person.'

John and Janet have also joined Truro Methodist Church and Highfields Church in Cathays Cardiff, where their friends Nigel

and Esther are members. Cathays is a Victorian suburb of Cardiff, very densely populated, with older terraced houses that are now home to a cosmopolitan community. The church reflects this. John says, 'the standard of the music is very high and there are items for all ages.'

John encouraged Nigel and Esther's son, Matthew, to attend St Helen's Bishopsgate, in London, when he left John's church in Barry, South Wales to become a student. In time, Matthew offered for the Church of England ministry and is now Vicar at St Stephen's, Prenton, Birkenhead. John says, 'Matthew has a gentle style of presenting the message of the Bible.'

John also found Dundrum Methodist Church just outside of Dublin, when looking for something else! He heard a good sermon from the minister, Revd Stephen Taylor. The church says, 'in our community we seek to be a God-centred, loving and vibrant witness.' John and Janet have also joined services from Truro Methodist Church and Fulwood Free Methodist Church, where they have worshipped with friends old and new..

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If you have YouTube on your TV, computer or smart phone all these are easy to find.



Fellowship in 'Shielding'

It has been a strange few months – having to 'shield' could have led to feeling cut off and isolated from worship but *YouTube* and *Zoom* have come to the rescue!



Revd Steve Wild

My daily favourite has been Steve Wild who gives a short, inspirational thought and prayer on YouTube (just search for Steve Wild). We have been encouraged to think about various Bible-based topics including the Fruit of the Spirit, the 'I Am' sayings of Jesus and people of faith, to name just a few. These have been a real encouragement and I always look forward to seeing them.

Although it has been a different experience of worship, I have been so blessed to be able to join in Sunday worship with the congregation of Truro Methodist Church. Joining in prayers for our nation and the world and to hear testimony of God's loving care and his work in the lives of other Christians has been a blessing too. It has been great to recommend 'Sunday Praise' to friends and to see the greetings they send.

Despite the disappointment of Easter Day being locked down, it was wonderful to join in a Zoom Service from Goodrington. Our friend Revd Dr David Hull preached a great sermon that brought the resurrection of Jesus to life in a real and meaningful way and although we couldn't celebrate the resurrection together it was good to join with friends locally and from much further afield in worship. I was especially pleased that we were joined by our daughter Fiona and her family from Leipzig. A very special service for us!

Janet Haley

Connecting and continuity: Ian Lister, Local Preacher

I usually attend Palace Avenue Methodist Church but whilst the church has been closed I have been joining online Zoom services hosted by Staines Methodist Church (the church I went to when I lived in Surrey). Around 100 people join each week from across the Staines and Feltham circuit, and much further afield. Zoom has allowed the congregation to meet virtually and many different people have participated in leading prayers, preaching, reading, and leading junior church. The services have provided a sense of continuity and a degree of normality during lockdown, and it looks likely that they will continue for a while longer.

Connecting with power: Wendy Forman, Goodrington

I have shared in a variety of online worship during this time of isolation. I regularly join with Truro Methodist Church and have been moved by the powerful Bible-based preaching of Revd Mark Dunn-Wilson. I have also connected with my contacts around the country through Easter People and have joined the international congregation at Westminster Methodist Central Hall led by Revd Tony Miles. I have heard sermons by Revd Dr Martyn Atkins and Revd Dr Howard Mellor. Revd Dr David Hull, another Easter People friend, leads a weekly prayer meeting on Zoom on Sunday evenings and is minister of the Free Methodist Church in Bristol. The daily reflections led by Revd Steven Wild help us to focus on Jesus every day of the week. There is a wealth of treasure to be found online - it's just a click away. God is using the present circumstances for his glory. Hallelujah!

Reconnecting Worldwide

I have actually been joining a worship service every Sunday on YouTube since our church closed under lockdown. It's been a special time for me visiting churches I have been connected with in the past.

I have watched services in my two favourite churches in South Africa: Christchurch, Midrand (between Johannesburg and Pretoria) and Tokai Community Church, Cape Town. Both these churches have outstanding musicians, a great balance between old and new in their choice of worship songs, and excellent teaching/preaching.

I've also joined services at a church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where my close friend, who helped me start Open Schools, attends. I have been in person many times over the last 18 years.

My most frequent visits have been to two Methodist churches in Northern Ireland which again are part of my personal history. Movilla Abbey Church in Newtownards is a jointly owned by the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland. They have been sharing their weekly service and

lockdown has really helped to bring the two separate congregations together. I was the first society steward when the church was planted in 1980.

The other church, Trinity Methodist Church, Lisburn is also a church plant that I was involved in from its early days. I was society steward there before I moved to Paignton. The Lisburn Circuit had a service on YouTube each week but now churches in Northern Ireland have been reopening the service comes from Seymour Street Methodist Church, Lisburn, where I was married 38 years ago.

One of the reasons for choosing these churches is that I know many of the members. When I worship, I feel connected because I know most of the people on the screen. I think what is important is that watching a service is to make sure that it does not just become Sunday entertainment but I have to confess I check who is preaching before I choose which church to "attend"!

Dr Alan McIlhenny is founder of Open Schools Worldwide and a member at Goodrington Methodist Church



Connecting by Zoom

Revd Gordon Chambers

On Sunday mornings we have been joining a Zoom service with friends at St Marks, Yeovil, which was my first church 60 years ago!

It's a fairly conventional form of worship, usually singing led by guitar, or sometimes, hymns from broadcast media, sermon and Bible readings and family time before and after worship. As Zoom enables live, face to face encounters, it feels very personal and has filled a big gap for us during lockdown—the link with friends is wonderful.

This year our annual church camp and caravan rally, which has met for 51 years and brings together families from all my five Circuits, had to be cancelled. But we join in worship together, using the Yeovil connection and link Methodists in Yeovil, Chandlers Ford, Worthing, Bexhill and Torbay. This new means of sharing worship and fellowship opens up tremendous possibilities that can continue even when churches can re-open.

Gordon is one of our retired ministers living in Brixham with his wife, Enid.

Connecting by Facebook

Darren Stibbs, a local preacher, is doing fortnightly sermons on a Facebook page called 'stibbs weekly Sunday supplements' (broadcast at 2.00 pm).



Connecting by YouTube: Steve Lemming, Circuit Steward and Carol Lemming, Goodrington Steward

Carol writes: Steve and I have been so pleased to share in services from Truro Methodist Church, Ridgeway Methodist Church (Plymouth) and Upton Vale Baptist Church (Torquay) – some we have joined live and others we've caught up with later in the day. Being able to do this has been a real blessing especially as we haven't had to travel to join in and we have even been able to worship while enjoying coffee and croissants!

Lockdown has been difficult for many people for a variety of reasons but knowing that we have been able to share on a Sunday has been so important as we learn where God is in the midst of what has been and still is, the strangest of times.

Strangest Day of the Week: Kathryn Trotman, Circuit Steward

To my mind, during this time, Sundays have been the strangest day of the week. The day has just been nothing like a Sunday! Having realised that the computer/ tablet / iPad / iPhone might now come into its own, we have discovered all sorts of services in all sorts of places with people worshipping God in all sorts of ways! After a while we settled and now regularly attend Westminster Central Hall at 11.00am on a Sundays. We really look forward to it and enjoy sharing in inspiring worship with a culturally diverse membership right in the centre of London! It's amazing! We sing new and traditional hymns, share in the Bible readings, and enjoy the puppets "Hymn and Her" (pictured right) who give us an up to date message in a fun way.

We listen to reflections from various ministers who are connected with the Central Hall and we feel part of a global community too as there are messages from people all over the world! Sunday mornings are good! If you can, try it out for yourselves at YouTube—search: mchwlive

Did you know that there is a Daily Service each weekday at 9.45am on Radio4 Long Wave and digital radio ?

There's also a Sunday service every week at 8.10 am.

AND if you ring 0800 804 8044 you can hear prayers and hymns each day with a message from the Archbishop of Canterbury 0800 numbers are FREE!

