

## That Friday Thing

That Friday Thing is the name of a new monthly initiative at Goodrington to bring people of all ages into the church. A two-course hot meal is a focal point of the evening and soft drinks, teas, coffee and confectionery are also available. There is an opportunity to play games, including board games as well as badminton and table tennis or simply to enjoy company and conversation.

February's T.F.T. had a Valentine's theme and leaflets with a Christian message and verses from the Bible were widely distributed throughout the church community.

The title Learning to Love was illustrated by 10 Bible verses referenced at the foot of the page (below right). Readers were reminded, I can learn to love by: Listening without interrupting, answering without arguing, speaking without accusing, giving without sparing, sharing without pretending, enjoying without complaining, trusting without wavering, forgiving without punishing, promising without forgetting, and persevering without quitting.



## Learning to love

Sales of cards, roses and chocolates increase in the first half of February as we celebrate Valentine's day. Popular magazines in our supermarkets offer plenty of advice about sex but not so much about love. The advice 'Learning to Love' (front cover) is all drawn from an unexpected source – the Bible. Most people wouldn't go to the Bible to find out about love even though the Bible has a lot to say about it.

## Not all love is the same

There is love that we share with members of our family; there is sexual love that we share with a partner; there is spontaneous, natural affection that so often characterises the love of friends; and there is that love which is dedicated to the good of another whether they deserve it or respond to it. It's the last of these that best describes God's love.

## God so loved

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.' Knowing you are loved is the most special thing in life. What about if it is possible to know that God loves you?

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*Love never fails.*

Proverbs 18:13; Proverbs 17:1; James 1:19; Proverbs 21:26; Ephesians 4:15; Philippians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 13:7; Colossians 3:13; Proverbs 13:12; 1 Corinthians 13:7; John 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

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

Torbay Methodist Circuit Office, Goodrington Methodist Church, Grange Road, Paignton TQ4 7JT

01803 846020 office@torbaymethodistcircuit.org

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# CONNECTED

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**“Many parts form one body” (1 Cor. 12:12)**

## Appointment with Death

*A repugnant American widow is killed during a trip to Petra... Among the towering red cliffs of Petra, like some monstrous swollen Buddha, sat the corpse of Mrs Boynton. A tiny puncture mark on her wrist was the only sign of the fatal injection that had killed her. With only 24 hours available to solve the mystery, Hercule Poirot recalled a chance remark he'd overheard back in Jerusalem: 'You see, don't you, that she's got to be killed?' Mrs Boynton was, indeed, the most detestable woman he'd ever met...*



Greenway. The holiday home of Agatha Christie

Poirot's investigation in *Appointment with Death* is just one of the titles of 66 detective novels written by Agatha Christie (1890-1976), commonly thought to be the best-selling novelist of all time. Agatha Christie, as town-signs proudly remind us, was born in Torquay but that is not her lasting association with Torbay. In 1938, Agatha and Archie Christie purchased the Greenway Estate, on the River Dart near Galmpton. Described by Dame Christie as, 'the loveliest place in the world', the estate is now owned by the National Trust and is a popular destination for visitors from near and far.

*Appointment with Death* is not, we might think, a particularly good reason for a Bank Holiday and yet that is what Good Friday is all about. We know more about Jesus Christ than most figures from the ancient world and we certainly know more about his death – an appalling, painful, humiliating death, which the Romans reserved only for the worst of foreign criminals. Crucifixion, death by being tied or nailed to a cross and left to die, is the word from which we get the English word excruciating and yet the four Gospel accounts in the Bible do not dwell on the physical sufferings of Christ.

Instead the Gospel accounts are interested in two critical questions – who was Jesus and why did he die? The answers to those questions are marked by two great events in our national calendar, still observed as public holidays but no longer widely celebrated as Christian festivals.

Christmas answers the question, 'who was Jesus?' He is uniquely the 'Son of God'. Christ is not a surname but means 'Messiah' or 'Saviour'. Good Friday answers the question, 'why did he die?' He died because he quite literally had an *appointment with death*. Jesus came to suffer and die for people's sins.

In the ancient world of Judea and Israel, priests and kings were anointed to mark them out for their role. Anointing is still part of our coronation ceremony. Unlike Agatha Christie's Mrs Boynton, described by Poirot as, 'the most detestable woman he'd ever met', it appears that the general consensus about Jesus was that he was the most wonderful man that people had met and that he had done nothing wrong and certainly nothing to deem him worthy of death - except he did not deny that he was either uniquely the Son of God or that he was the Promised One, the Messiah.

In fact, Jesus did not die for anything he had done but for everything wrong that we have done. Jesus suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. Good Friday was his appointment with death – Golgotha, Jerusalem, 3.00 pm. The Easter message is that Jesus was crucified for our sins, he died and was buried - but on the third day he rose again! For those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour those events give hope of forgiveness and of life. (For a free copy of one of the four Gospels then please contact the office. We'll simply post it – nothing more.)



Happy Easter

Rev'd John Haley  
Superintendent  
Minister

## Open Schools Worldwide

Pictured (right) are two young people from our circuit raising money for *Open Schools Worldwide* by selling homemade cakes. Their £100 is already helping children around the world to know they are loved by God, can learn, can grow educationally and socially and can have eternal hope.

Founder of *Open Schools Worldwide* (Hope through life-changing learning) Dr Alan McIlhenny is a member of our Goodrington church. Alan sent us some pictures from Ethiopia, just one of the African countries where *Open Schools Worldwide* works.



Korah is the main rubbish dump for Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Over 120,000 people live here and are considered outcasts, the poorest of the poor. Many live off what they can collect from other people's discarded rubbish. Crime and disease including leprosy is a huge problem. There are many orphans, and children in danger of becoming orphaned, with just one government school.

*Open Schools Worldwide* in partnership with a local Christian organisation have started a school beside the dump for 20 children. The children are able to take a break from scavenging on the dump to attend our programme daily as our partners are giving them two meals a day and also some clothing, shoes and school bags.

One of our volunteer teachers wrote about the first time the children played our Route 86:11 game: The goal is to help the children find God's direction and purpose for their lives through discussion of the situations that arise naturally as they play the game. One conversation that came about during this first time playing was about child trafficking. One young girl playing had basically been experiencing this before entering our programme. Her mother saw *Open Schools Worldwide* as a way out for her child! Praise God! We also discussed drunkenness, as a couple of our children have parents who are constantly drunk. We had some very good discussions! I absolutely love getting to know these children more personally."

**Alan McIlhenny**  
Co-founder *Open Schools Worldwide*

## Introducing our new Circuit Pastoral Assistant

I grew up attending the Church of England, went to a Roman Catholic boarding school and eventually, along with my mother, started worshipping at the Salvation Army. I became a Salvation Army soldier when I was 17 and entered their training college when I was 20. Following two years of training I was commissioned as an Officer. I served with my husband Paul, in Corps, at Divisional Headquarters as a Youth worker, and on Territorial Headquarters in the Church Growth Department. It has been an enjoyable and varied life, including bringing up three children, Kay, Claire and Marc. I was widowed in 2001.

In 2010 I arrived in Paignton to run the local Corps. I had a very happy five years before retiring in 2015. In that time I met and married Mike. Following my retirement I had a cancer scare which resulted in surgery and now am 3½ years cancer-free. Following my diagnosis Mike too was found to have cancer. Sadly his was too far advanced for any treatment to be successful and he lost that fight in December 2018.

My faith has been very important throughout and has given me the strength not just to cope with all that has happened but to continue walking the Christian path with hope.

In 2015 following my retirement from leading Paignton Salvation Army I started leading Sunday services at Methodist Churches in the Torbay Circuit. I have now preached at all churches in the circuit. In October 2019 I started working 12 hours a week for the circuit. This includes weekday activities and one morning and two evening services each month. It has been good getting to know members of the different churches and having both faith conversations and pastoral conversations.



My weekday work includes the Goodrington Toddler group every Thursday morning where I chat with the 'grown-ups' and interact with the children, often in the craft area but especially during the singing time. Also at Goodrington I help with the setting up for 'That Friday Thing' and during the evening try to

spend some time getting to know those who don't attend church but have come along for the evening. I hope as people get to know me and I get to know them these conversations will become significant.

At Victoria Park, with the space and facilities available, it was agreed that I started a group specifically based on singing and interaction between the children and the grown-up who brings them along. Every week we spend 30 minutes singing and then while the children play with toys we have tea and coffee and time to chat. The group has slowly been growing in numbers and it has been good to be part of the conversations and build relationships. Margaret, a Church Member at Victoria Park, helps every week, and thoroughly enjoys the time we are there.



Also at Victoria Park I have started 'Singing By Heart', a group for those living with dementia and their carers. The group has been slow to take off but at the last session Lucy a young woman who brings her friend's Granddad said she couldn't understand why more people don't come. Hopefully with the help of Usha, the community worker for Plainmoor, we will be able to attract and serve more people. Mavis, another Church Member from Victoria Park, comes along to help.

My brief is to help develop new work in each of the three towns. At Brixham Revd Doug Rix and I met to talk through ideas for encouraging more people to attend the new Sunday afternoon service (3:30pm) which I lead regularly.

Our hope is that we might be able to take opportunities to show the love of God through our service, our relationships and our conversations.

**Denise Brine**  
Circuit Pastoral Assistant

## New Kids on the Block



About two-thirds of Sunday services in Methodist Churches are conducted by 'local preachers'. Finding three of our newest local preachers in one room was an opportunity too good to miss! Adam Hills (left) works for Sainsbury's. He was encouraged to preach by a school friend. He says, 'I didn't feel I would be suited to being a preacher but I am encouraged by my faith.'

Will Matthews (centre) is 'Assistant Head of Maths' at an Exeter secondary school. He says, 'through helping at a church holiday club and taking small services for children, I knew that God was calling me to preach the gospel. I am excited by finding new ways to express the Christian faith, by seeing occasional visitors becoming regular worshippers, learning more about Jesus and growing in faith.'

Ian Lister (right) works as a technology project manager for a social care charity that supports adults with learning disabilities. Ian says, 'my call to preach came through the gentle prompting of others. It is exciting and humbling to think that God is able to work through flawed messengers to share his love for all in Jesus.'