

Good-News Desk!

The Magazine of Tylers Green Methodist Church



Minister:
Rev. Vida Foday

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October, 2018

I read in an old edition of the “Daily Bread” about an old Chinese greeting – instead of ‘How are you?’ people would ask “Have you eaten until you are full? The greeting likely originated during a time when food was scarce and many people did not know when they would have their next meal. When food was available, it was advisable to eat until they were full.

The ancient Israelite harvest festival didn’t just celebrate God’s gift of the harvest. It was really to celebrate that God had freed Israel from slavery in Egypt, and that God brought the people to the land flowing with milk and honey.

In Deuteronomy 16:17, we read that the people expressed their gratitude to God by bringing their sacrifices to worship. These were “according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you” so those who received more, gave more. They were very much aware of God's presence in the whole of life, so the sun came from Him and the rain and their health and their families; indeed, the very breath in their bodies.

In our present 21st century world, it sometimes appears as if we have lost that sense of God’s presence in our lives. The people of old were thankful, whatever their personal hardships, and they had many, because they recognised that “all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above”, and so should we, giving

thanks to God without ceasing.

During Harvest Festivals, we celebrate our gratefulness for the good things the Lord our God has given us. It's also the time to remind ourselves of the need to share what we have with others around us, especially those who are less fortunate than ourselves, as well as those in our own communities who cannot feed their families and have to rely on the gifts from Charity organisations such as the 'Whitechapel Mission' and the 'Food Bank' among many..

We thank God for all that the Whitechapel Mission does daily for people in need, the volunteers and contributors who help to make the distribution happen, and we pray for God's blessings on them. As our Harvest gifts are taken to the Whitechapel Mission, we pray that all those who receive them be blessed abundantly.

We need to remember, that we will all be called to give accounts to God about how we have looked after His world and shared the gifts He has given us.

Thanksgiving is given through Jesus for everything, therefore let us 'Be grateful for the good things the Lord our God has given us', for God who gives us all good things has come into our world in Jesus Christ who is LOVE, and He will meet our deepest spiritual needs if we ask.

With love and every blessing.

Vida

The fact that there is a highway to hell and only a stairway to heaven says a lot about the anticipated traffic.

Make sure you don't lose your way!

Diary and Notice Board - October 2018

BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP will meet on the following dates in October:

Monday, 1st at 3 Green Street, Hazlemere (Rosemary's home)

Monday, 15th at 131 Cedar Avenue, Hazlemere (Rev'd Angela Singleton's home)

Monday, 29th at 131 Cedar Avenue, Hazlemere

All meetings start at 2.30 pm and everyone is welcome.

ACTION FOR CHILDREN LUNCH SATURDAY, 13th at 11.45 am.

This takes the place of our usual coffee morning. Lunch will be jacket potatoes and puddings. There will also be a bring and buy stall. Please come along and enjoy a friendly lunch time while supporting this worthwhile charity. If possible please let either Chris Oxby or Rosemary Newman know beforehand if you are able to come along.

What a year for fruit!

If you've been out and about in the countryside in recent months, you'll have noticed that there was a bumper crop of blackberries and other fruit this year. That was no accident. It was because, from Spring onwards, there has been just the right amount of heat and cold, rain and sun, to make the plants bring forth their best.

It's the same when we are making Jesus known. Only God knows if the people we meet are ready to respond to the Gospel. We might be simply planting a seed, and that person still has years to go, or it may be that the person is finally ready to become a follower of Jesus.

This autumn, as we prepare for Christmas, let's be intentional – praying for friends and family members who don't yet know Jesus. Let's ask God for opportunities to sensitively share the Good News of Jesus. And let's be ready to serve and speak in Jesus name.

A minister assured his congregation that they should feel free to call him any time they had a problem. That night the minister's phone rang at 3 a.m. On the other end was a dear elderly lady who said, 'I can't sleep.'

'I'm so sorry to hear that,' he comforted her. 'But what can I do about it?'

She sweetly replied, 'Preach to me a while.'

Plastic bag numbers plummet

Congratulations! You are using many fewer plastic bags. On average, you now use about 19 a year – as opposed to 140 a year.

The number of disposable carrier bags issued by the seven biggest supermarket chains has declined by 86 per cent since the charge was introduced in 2015, according to statistics from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Michal Gove, the Environment Secretary, has said it is vital to reverse the 'rising tide of plastic waste finding its ways into our rivers, seas and oceans, and the catastrophic impact this is having on our marine environment.'



ONE CAN Urgent needs

One Can stocks are low on tea bags, rice pudding and custard. If you could pop an extra one of these items in your shopping trolley and donate to one of our food collection points (*Tylers Green Methodist Church*) we would be very grateful. All the usual items are still needed.

China— persecution of Christians soars as new laws kick in

It is now eight months since tough new restrictions on religious freedom came into force across China. Release International, which supports Christians under pressure around the world, says persecution has been rising dramatically.

According to Release partner Bob Fu, the persecution of Christians in China is now at the highest level since the Cultural Revolution. He told the *Washington Times* that in 2017: ‘We documented persecution against 1,265 churches, and 223,000 people.’

According to Fu, of China Aid, persecution against Christians has increased further since the new religious regulations came into force: ‘Thousands of churches have been banned.’

As well as closing churches, the authorities have destroyed them, torn down their crosses, arrested and imprisoned their pastors, and detained lawyers trying to represent them in the courts.

A US State Department report on religious freedom has described China as carrying out a ‘far-reaching strategy to control, govern and manipulate all aspects of faith.’ That includes torture, forced confessions and compelling Christians to renounce their faith.

Since the new regulations came into force in February this year, churches in Luoning County in Henan Province have had their windows smashed and property confiscated. Preachers have been prevented from giving sermons. Officials have removed crosses, cut power to a church and arrested its pastors.

All churches in Xinyu County have been ordered to display the national flag as well as a picture of President Xi Jinping and posters extolling socialist values.

In Jiangxi Province, more than 40 churches have been made to hang up notices banning non-locals from preaching and underage people from attending services. The government has also threatened to cancel the welfare of low-income residents should they attend church.

What the UK Church looks like in 2018

The church is both declining and growing! There are 270 different denominations in the UK, 95 of which exist in Scotland. For simplicity these are put into 10 groups, the three largest of which are the Anglicans, Catholics and Presbyterians. Between them, these three Churches account for one fifth, 20%, of all the denominations. But sadly, three-fifths, or 60%, of all the members, and of all three Churches, are declining.

Two smaller groups, the Baptists and the Methodists are also declining. Together, they represent 4% of the denominations and 7% of the members.

That leaves five groups: the Independent Churches (such as FIEC and the Brethren), New Churches (such as Vineyard and Newfrontiers), Orthodox, Pentecostals and the Smaller Denominations (such as the Salvation Army, Quakers, Seventh-Day Adventists, all the many immigrant churches, and so on). Each of these five groups is *growing* in membership terms. They account for 76% of the UK's denominations but only 33% of church members. Unfortunately, the decline by the larger denominations is too great to be offset by the growth.

The faster growing denominations fall into roughly three equal groups:

1) *Immigrant churches* (especially Poles, Romanians, and Filipinos and Koreans in England and Chinese in Scotland). Most of the Poles are Roman Catholic; many of the Romanians are Orthodox, but the others are mostly Evangelical.

2) *The Pentecostal churches*, which are mostly Black, although welcoming all nationalities. The largest of these is the Redeemed Christian Church of God [RCCG] (planting 800 churches in the UK in the last 20 years). The RCCG uses a mantra straight out of Nigerian bush country, "Plant a church within 10 minutes walking distance" (of where people live), which is equivalent to about a ½ mile circle. *ominations* include Hillsong, Churches of Christ, the FIEC, Vine-

3) *Other growing denominations* include Hillsong, Churches of Christ, the FIEC, Vineyard, and Messy Church. These churches are planted where there is a need or an opportunity.

Interviewer: 'If you could have dinner with any person, living or dead, who would it be?'

Applicant: 'The living one.'

Fresh From the Word 2019 – the Bible for Change

Edited by Nathan Eddy, Monarch, £9.99

For a few years now I have recommended Fresh from the Word as a daily aid to reading your Bibles. The Parish Pump recommends as follows:

The pace of life is unrelenting, and even the church can feel driven and rushed. So this coming year, consider life in the 'modern' desert – a place of stillness, waiting, and hoping – which we will explore next Lent with our unique blend of writers from around the world.

Apart from the desert, you are invited to take the Bible with you to the movies as we explore biblical themes in recent films. Music in the Bible, cosmic waters as a biblical theme, sacred space, gossip, and familiar quotes from the Bible all feature as topics for lively reflection. Finally, there is a consideration of 'Plan B' -- when life doesn't go as planned.

Fresh From the Word will inspire your reading of the Bible in a changing world. Theologians, scholars, creative writers, church leaders, and activists from around the world offer notes, prayers, and further thought suggestions for every day of the year.

The forward to the 2019 edition is written by the Rev Dr. Leslie Griffiths, a regular broadcaster and former President of the Methodist Conference.

Editor: *The Rev Paul Hardingham writes:*

Psalm 121 – the God who knows and cares

A man asked a friend about the two greatest problems in the world. The friend responded, *'I don't know and I don't care!'* *'You got them both!'* the man replied.

Psalm 121 presents a God who both knows and cares about our problems. As the first Song of Ascent (Psalms 120-134), it was used by pilgrims going to the great festivals in Jerusalem. Just as this road was full of dangers, this psalm speaks to our problems and set-backs, whether illness, family or work issues, or fear.

Where do we look for help? *'I lift up my eyes to the mountains...My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.'* (1,2). The hills speak of a Creator God, who is bigger than our troubles, for whom nothing is beyond His reach.

What is His care like?

It is constant: 'He will not let your foot slip - He who watches over you will not slumber' (3). God is never off duty in His care, as we are constantly His concern.

It is close: 'The Lord watches over you - the Lord is your shade at your right hand' (5). God is not watching us *'from a distance'* as the songs says! His care operates at close quarters, to take the heat out of situations, or when circumstances are dark and uncertain.

It is continuing: 'the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore.' (8). God's care is all encompassing, through life and eternity. We are not immune from difficulties, but in the bigger picture, God will use these in His eternal purpose for our lives. The psalm is fulfilled in Jesus, who has secured eternal life for us.

So let's trust His care for us, and not be like the lady who asked: *'why pray when I can worry?'*

Whose fault is it, anyway?

In a small town a businessman put in planning permission to build a nightclub complete with dancing girls. The local church started a vigorous campaign to block it from opening. The church launched a petition and held prayers in public. Work progressed, however, right up until the week before opening. Then one night a bolt of lightning strike hit the nightclub and it burned to the ground.

The church members were rather smug after that, until the nightclub owner sued them all -on the grounds that they were responsible for the fire. Loudly protesting their total non-involvement and innocence, the church members were all taken to court.

As the case began, the judge looked over the paperwork and observed: 'I don't know how I'm going to decide this. It appears that we have a nightclub owner who believes in the power of prayer, and an entire church congregation that doesn't!'

✝

To be a
Christian without
prayer, is no more
possible than to be
alive without breath-
ing.
Martin Luther



Rock

Matthew 7:25

In the changing seasons,
in the terrifying, changing world
where landscapes are no longer recognisable,
where things spin so quickly out of control,
You are the one still point.
You are unchanging,
always faithful,
always present.

In a world of shifting sands
You are the rock on which I stand,
I am secure in You alone.
You are the rock on which I stand,
Jesus,
My Saviour.

By Daphne Kitching

And finally...

My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 62. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he ventured: 'Did you start at 1?'

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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Minister: Rev. Vida Foday* - 📞 562788 (Vida's day off is Friday)

Worship Leaders: Geraldine Nelson* and Chris Oxby*

Senior Church Steward/LP : Peter Stevens*— 📞815256

Church Stewards:

Toyin Akinwale— 📞 817792

Martin Hellewell— 📞 816168

Geraldine Nelson – 📞 815631

Chris Oxby – 📞 814982

Church Treasurer : Geraldine Nelson - 📞815631

Church Council Secretary: Sue Horley Sue.horley1@gmail.com

Room Bookings: Geraldine Nelson – 📞 815631

Pastoral & First Steps: Christine Stevens - 📞815256

Property : Peter Stevens— 📞815256

*** Church Leadership Team**

Church Premises

Please mention anything requiring maintenance or attention to any of the Property Stewards: Peter and Christine Stevens, Martin Hellewell or Rosemary Newman.

Good-News Desk

Items for the next Good-News Desk should reach Peter Stevens by the 14th October for the November edition, either on paper or emailed to psredkite@googlemail.com or 📞815256

Note: Some items in Good-News Desk are included by subscription to Parish Pump—the resource site for Church Newsletters.



SERVICES DIARY - SERVICES AT 10.45 a.m. unless otherwise stated.

Date	Preacher/Service Details	Vestry Steward	Welcome Stewards If you are unable to do your turn,
7th Oct	Rev Angela Singleton	Geraldine Nelson	Christine Stevens & Jenny Crayford
14th	Deacon Richard Goldstraw	Chris Oxby	Angela Davis & Chris Oxby
21st	Rev Vida Foday	Martin Hellewell	Christine Stevens
28th	Pamela Sweet	Toyin Akinwale	Margaret Hallam & Rosemary Newman
4th Nov	Linda Lovell	TBC	Christine Stevens & Jenny Crayford

Please pray for....

For all ministers and deacons who have moved into circuit for the first time at the beginning of September, and for all minister and deacons who have sat down from circuit ministry.