



Journeying with God

**Forming
Community**

**Celebrating
Faith**

**Deepening
Discipleship**

Dear Friends,

As I was putting away some clothes that had been washed and ironed it occurred to me that it would not be long before they were being got out again, worn and needing once more to be washed, ironed, put away and then.... well you get the idea. I've often had similar thoughts when doing the washing up. No sooner is it all done than it's time to make a cup of tea or start preparing the next meal – to make the dishes dirty again. Most housework has this cyclical dimension. It consists of tasks that are repeated on a daily or weekly basis. Even those things that happen less frequently still come round regularly e.g. Spring cleaning (regular by definition!).

Of course this repetitive pattern is by no means exclusive to housework. So much of life, in all its aspects, is just like that – repetitive. Often this is seen in a negative sort of way, and sometimes it is negative. There are those trapped in a narrow, harsh, choiceless lifestyle by poverty and deprivation who long to be able to break free from its repetitive cycle. The boredom, frustration and constraints of some repetitive types of work can be soul destroying and those of us who are fortunate to have daily variety, flexibility and choice do well to remember how blessed we are.

Even with many of the positive things in life it's not difficult to find the negative aspects of the 'same old, same old' as it comes and goes, round and round. This is particularly so today when our culture seems obsessed with all things new and the boredom threshold is low.

However, we should not dismiss repetition and sameness out of hand. There is a lot to be said for it. At the most fundamental level we rely on God's promise that it underlies his relationship with his creation: '*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.*' Repetition and pattern, hourly, daily, seasonally, annually, give structure and framework to our lives in all sorts of different ways. Often it can be this very aspect of life alone that carries us through those low and dark times when we find it hard to see any way forward. This applies, not least, to our spiritual lives. We are uplifted by the very familiarity of the words as we read and re-read our 'favourite' Biblical passages. The familiar words of an often used hymn or liturgy can enable us to worship when our souls are dry and other words will not come – John Wesley's 'Wilderness State.' And did not Jesus, when his disciples asked him to teach them to pray, give them a compact prayer to repeat, which we still use today almost every time that we gather as his people, be it by Zoom or, thankfully, face to face?

Should you want to reflect further on all this I commend John Keble's hymn '*New every morning is the love*' and/or George Herbert's hymn '*Teach me, my God and King*' (Singing the Faith no's 137 and 668.

In our proper quest for new experience and fresh expression, let us keep a balance, seeking also the positive in what is mundane, familiar and repetitive and thank God for it.

With every blessing
John Wren



*** CONGRATULATIONS ***

Sheila and Phil Dean celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary on 1st July 2021. So, congratulations to them both!

In the same month, after having spent 20 years in sunny Bognor, they have called it a day and are moving to the cooler environment of Perthshire, Scotland.

Our very best wishes go to them. Och Aye!

I wonder if any readers have watched programmes presented by David Olusoga, a social historian? The first I watched focused on particular 3 and 4 storeyed houses that were built around 200 years ago. They were designed to accommodate large wealthy families, their servants in the attics and their wealth thanks to the slave trade! There were instances of shopkeepers doing well for a while, but became bankrupt when fashions changed. One house was a school for a while, a widow with several children took in lodgers. All so interesting, noting that other generations have had collaborated with an American medical scientist on the subject of advances in health matters, including vaccinations and the discovery of antibiotics. It was stated these discoveries have doubled life expectancy in the last 150 years! Isn't that a wonderful fact? For those who are able to 'catch up', see: tests too.

In May & early June, David Olusoga

Extra Life: A short history of living longer : BBC4, 10.00pm on Tuesday during early May & June

To me, these programmes seemed well timed, in that they clearly illustrated that life and our world do not stand still. Adapting to change is often hard to do. As we get older, we have to face up to the fact that things we once found easy are not easy any more. That groan we make when moving hurts! Old or young, we will find a way with God's help to adapt to the new world we find ourselves in after the pandemic.

In conclusion, the first verse of Psalm 57:

***“Be merciful to me, O God be merciful
Because I come to you for safety.
In the shadows of your wings
I Find protection until the raging storms are over.”***

May we all feel God’s comforting presence.

JANET TAPPING

Every day is a new beginning

Take a deep breath, smile and start afresh.

God woke you up for a reason.

Trust His plan.

His timing is always perfect.

He will make a way.

Amen

²² *Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.*

²³ *They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:22-23

FINANCE

The New Envelope Scheme

Thanks to all of you using the new envelope scheme. But could I remind the odd 1 or 2 to remember ***to put your number on the envelope please***, the date is not required.

Giving Through the Bank

A big thank you to those of you who signed up to 'giving through the bank' as it has been essential for the Church to be able to pay our commitments. The two biggest bills are £6,298 per quarter and building insurance £3,500.

This quarter we have had to use £5,000 from the money given to us from the Circuit for the refurbishment of the toilet block. All being well I hope that we will be able to replace this by the end of the Connexional year.

Gift- Aid

Just to keep our records up to date the treasurer will be asking all gift-aiders to fill in a new form which will be at the back of the Church, in a folder. This is to keep us in line with TMCP guide lines. Please hand completed forms to a steward who will pass them on to the treasurer.

The gift-aid contributions go a long way to help pay our running costs, so thank you to all those who are able to contribute.

TONY POLAND

ACTING TREASURER

PROPERTY NEWS

Now that we (hopefully) are reaching the end of the lockdown, as Property Steward I am already getting requests for bookings, some 'old customers' coming back and some new. For instance I have had a request for a booking on July 8th assuming we can go ahead.

Please may I remind users of our buildings that it would be advisable to check with me whether or not the building, and car park, is available before making plans.

We already have the Thursday Fellowship (afternoon) in the John Wesley room, the Friday morning Well-Come Point and the Whist club on a Monday afternoon all waiting to restart when we are given the all clear.

TONY POLAND

The Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021-2022 'A Place for All'

The new Prayer Handbook will be out soon! It is cheaper to order in bulk so please sign the list at the back of the church or contact me directly (T.826425) if you would like one. It will cost about £4.00, depending on our numbers. Please sign by 25th July.

Anita Hayward

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN GOD AND ST. FRANCIS

GOD: Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on earth? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistles and the stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees, and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of color by now. All I see are patches of green.

ST FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there Lord. They are called the Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD: Grass? But it is so boring, it's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, bees or birds, only grubs and sod worms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want grass growing there?

ST FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it has grown a little, they cut it.... sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they bale it like hay?

ST FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: Why do they bag it? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST FRANCIS: No sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now let me get this straight...they fertilize it to make it grow and when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST FRANCIS: Yes, sir.

GOD: Frank, these Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this Lord, but when the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense! At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep the moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. Plus, as they rot, the leaves become compost to enhance the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

ST FRANCIS: You'd better sit down, Lord. As soon as the leaves fall, the Suburbanites rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away. -9-

GOD: No way! What do they do to protect the shrubs and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST FRANCIS: Well, after throwing the leaves away, they go out and buy something called mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST FRANCIS: They cut down the trees and grind them up to make mulch.

GOD: Ok, that's enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. Saint Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST CATHERINE: "Dumb and Dumber," Lord. It's a really stupid movie about

GOD: Never mind--I think I just heard the whole story from Saint Francis!

Introducing Xavier Siatous.....

Xavier came to our Church a couple of weeks ago and spoke to a couple of us about his story. He is keen to share it with us and in fact his story was printed in the Post Newspaper back in January 2020.

Exiled Xavier Siatous says “I’m British and I’m proud of it!” and is delighted to be living in Bognor Regis, despite an international campaign to reclaim his homeland. Xavier was granted the right to British Citizenship in 2002 and came to England in 2005. His first stop was Crawley and then he moved to Bognor Regis in 2013.

Xavier was born in 1948 in Peros Bahnos, one of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean. He grew up on the Island as a member of the *Chagossian generation, until the 1965 agreement in the middle of the cold war, when Britain signed over the Island to the US for a military airbase to be created, and the people were evicted from their islands. The situation resulted in a ruling from the UN’s highest court that the deal by the British Government to lease Diego Garcia to America was illegal. Xavier claims that the agitation for the legal action came from the Mauritius Government. Its authority extended over the Chagossian Islands, of which there were over 60, until 1965 when the British turned them into the separate British Indian Ocean Territory. Those who want to return to the land are Mauritian people.

“But the British Government is my government. I am happy to be in this country. I respect the Government and I respect the Monarchy”, says Xavier. -11-

He continues that “the Chagossian generation were the last in the world to be in exodus as a result of the agreement between the UK and the US. They sacrificed their way of life to give the world security in an age of terrorism”.

Xavier explains that the people understand the reason why they were taken from their Island - “to make sure the world is protected from terrorism by this military base.” He says that the people do not want to return home because it is not safe and there are 3 reasons:

1. It will open the door to terrorism, which will put the world in danger.
2. There is radioactivity on the Island.
3. There is danger of a tsunami.

The Chagossian Islands were made a British Territory as a result of Queen Victoria going to war with the French Colony in 1835 and winning the war. Xavier speaks with huge respect about Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth I and our present Queen and attributes his freedom and British citizenship to them and the British Government.

Welcome to Bognor Regis Methodist Church Xavier and thank you for sharing your story.

Chagossians are an exiled group that lived in the Chagos Islands, specifically Diego Garcia, Peros Banhos & the Saloman Island chain. Today, no Chagossians live on the Island of Diego Garcia as it is the site of military base **Camp Justice.*

THEY'VE GONE

Yes, they've gone. Those in the BRMC fellowship, and those not in it, will no longer be able to join in social gatherings which some have taken for granted, have enjoyed and which have formed part of their lives.

Gone are the monthly Quiz nights, the fortnightly Friendship Club, the monthly community luncheons and coffee mornings in support of some charitable cause, and the melodious endeavours of the choir.

Gone are donations to charities, gone are financial contributions to the work of the church, gone are the opportunities to meet and talk with visitors from West Meads, Portchester and other places who supported these occasions. Gone are fund raising ventures held in the Church hall, Church car park, garden parties, and elsewhere.

The reason for their loss is that the organisers of these events and their helpers have found that they can no longer operate to bring these 'happiness-raising' activities into the lives of many who look forward to the events to give them reality to their social lives.

No more will those interested, find out about *Tangerine farming in the Gobi desert* or *The case of the missing speaker*.

Those who have supported these ventures have much appreciated all the hard work and time which has gone into making them possible and for the friendships and fellowship which have developed. We've had fun!

What is left?

To date - probably only the Monday afternoon Whist Club and the Friday Well-Come Point coffee mornings.

COLIN J WHITMILL



COG's (Community Outreach Group)

When COG's began, the Church finances were in a very poor state indeed. The Church had just survived the possibility of closure and some of us thought we should do something to make the building a part of the community, and COG's was born.

We began fund-raising events, but it soon became apparent that the old kitchen wasn't adequate and its position wasn't helpful. Working with the Property Committee we planned the new kitchen in its present position (which had been a stage). I am so proud to be part of the team that has welcomed many people into our building. We have had so much support and made so many new friends, some members of other Churches, and some non Church goers.

In hindsight, although I wasn't too happy at the time in having to take a 3 hour exam in Basic Food Hygiene and bi-annual inspections as food distributors, I was quite happy to accept the congratulations of the Quinquennial Inspector, who wished "all Churches would do this".

Now we are all older - (and wiser) and feel we can't go on at our previous pace. The bank account has now been closed and the remaining balance transferred to the Church. I know some of you will be thinking that Tony and I went on a cruise with the cash, but Covid stopped that, ONLY JOKING!

The fellowship will continue I'm sure, in different ways, but apart from the Whist Club, the regular events will cease, but watch this space for 'specials'.

So, again thank you so much to the team and our wonderful supporters from far and near. We didn't dream, when we began, that we would be so lucky.

Now, to quote my Grandma, a devout christian:

“TRYW DDIRGEL FFYRDD MAE'R UCHEL LOR”

VAL POLAND

Today is a beautiful day

May God take care of all your needs
Touch your life with joy and contentment
Bless your heart with love and faith
Comfort your soul with Gladness and inner peace
And, grant you health,
lasting comfort
and relief from the burdens of life!

God is good all the time

Amen

*Psalm 145:9 The LORD is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made*



A MILLION THANK-YOU'S FROM US ALL



Talking to Val recently I discovered she & Tony have led a group of faithful volunteers for around 15 years, bringing people into the Church hall for fun, fellowship, quizzes, coffee mornings, music, interesting evenings with speakers and much more. And of course bringing in the much needed funds! As you have read, they are now stepping down from their work.....well, apart from the odd special surprise for us now & then, I expect.

So Val & Tony, we want to say a huge thank you to you and the **brilliant team** you led for so many years, bringing us such a wide variety of things to join in. We know that there were more than our own BRMC people in your team, bringing, for example, copious amounts of food/cakes, etc into our Church hall on a regular basis. Our heartfelt thanks extend to each and every one.

So **BRMC**, we now have the opportunity to get our thinking caps on and bring our community into our building once again. What would you like to see going on in our Hall? Can you offer 2 or 3 hours a week/fortnight? Have you always wanted to run an 'open door' coffee morning? Have an indoor craft fair? We have a fantastic kitchen which we mustn't let go unused. We have a wealth of experience in Val and Tony and others in our Church, who would be more than happy to share their experiences with us. Let's start planning now so we can continue serving our community as soon as those doors can be opened!

DEBBIE DEAN

-17-

WE ARE PEOPLE OF HOPE

As Christians we are different. We don't have to live like those who wonder if everything will be okay. We don't need to tie ourselves up in knots with worry about tomorrow. You don't have to worry about the unconditional acceptance of your family, the promotions at work, your baby's health, what college to go to, what city to live in, what life insurance policy to buy. While you and I will indeed still make those choices as active participants in our lives, our decisions don't dictate our futures. We can rest because our choices don't actually have the final say in any sphere—***God has the final say.*** Remember, all things are through him and for him (Colossians 1:16. ***All things.***

We are people of hope. We have one—and only one—hope. But it's a huge hope, and it changes everything. It's the truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and we will too. We are people of the resurrection. Rooted, built up, and established in Christ—***this is our identity.***

Jen Oshman

For I know the plans I have for you
Declares the Lord,
Plans to prosper you
and not to harm you.
Plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29:11

GENERAL CHURCH MEETING

At the time of going to print, we were still awaiting Government guidance regarding Step 4, and of course Dan's return from his Ordination leave. But we are working on plans to hold a face-to-face GCM when it is realistically safe and practical to do so. We will let you know the arrangements as soon as we can. In the meantime, below are a number of reports on the various activities/groups that take place at BRMC.

FOR GENERAL CHURCH MEETING:

1. The Church Council
2. Pastoral Report
3. Layworker
4. Thursday Church Fellowship
5. Anita Hayward's House Group
6. Christine Taylor's House Group
7. Stewards' Report
8. Worship & Spiritual Formation

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council has been unable to meet in the usual way this year but we have used zoom, telephone and post to do essential tasks. We have discussed ways of keeping the Church safe from Covid and have approved the accounts. We agreed a safeguarding policy for children and young adults. Our hall was let to the Food Bank but the Church was able to be open at least some of the time and the Church Fellowship and Anita's House Group met there when we could.

With the doors wide open we have had several visitors and we are delighted some have continued to join us in worship.

ANITA HAYWARD

PASTORAL REPORT

Our Pastoral Visitors have attempted to keep in touch with everyone by telephone, texting or post. This has often enriched our fellowship as there has been time for longer conversations. Sadly some of our older folk died during the year and others now have health problems. We have gained two new members on transfer from South Africa and we hope some of our new friends may wish to become members. At Christmas we all received a lovely plant. We thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this a loving and caring Church.

ANITA HAYWARD

LAYWORKER

With Wellcome-Point at BRMC, and Parent & Toddlers Group at Westergate, and of course visiting people in their homes all out of the window, there's not much to report, except that my job changed greatly over the past 14 months!

I have used my hours to keep in touch with people on a regular basis, praying with them on the 'phone, where needed/wanted. Prayer has been welcomed by many during lockdown as many I am in touch with have struggled living alone and missing family & friends.

With regard to **Well-come Point**, I see a number of those who came regularly, in town and they're all very keen to come back. Here's hoping it's not much longer!

I know 'technology' isn't everyone's cup of tea, but through the magic of private group messaging (Whatsapp), I've managed to keep the **Westergate Parent & Toddler group** in tact, with all the mums/grandparents posting pics of their little ones growing up fast! The group are keen to get back to our Tuesday sessions.

As the world begins to open up again, I am starting to meet one or two people in town for coffee, which has been great. Plans are beginning to be made 'to get back to normal'!

DEBBIE DEAN

THURSDAY CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

During 2020, there were a couple of short 'windows' where we were allowed to meet in a group of up to 6. We were studying Actsand we still are! We've just started meeting again, at the back of the Church (masked/gelled & doors open) and we're up to Acts 13. Please contact me if you are interested in finding out about this group. You would be very welcome.

DEBBIE DEAN

01243 870807

ANITA HAYWARD'S HOUSE GROUP

Anita's group has also started meeting again recently, in Church, well spaced and ventilated. We are studying The Letters of James.

CHRISTINE TAYLOR'S HOUSE GROUP

Christine's group hopes to restart when she has recovered from her operation.

STEWARDS' REPORT

This has been a difficult year or so, for face to face worship. As the steward team contact this has been very difficult for me, along with some other stewards, as being vulnerable people we had to shield.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our minister Dan for his excellent leadership during the pandemic so far. Also I would like to thank Hazel and Roger for all the hard work they have done as stewards. Also not forgetting Duncan our organist for his dedication to playing the organ each Sunday.

Also I would like to thank all those involved in marshalling and cleaning etc. Without them there would be no face to face Sunday worship. God bless

MARTIN LAVER

WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The Worship and Spiritual Formation group last met in February 2020, its activities then being overtaken by the Covid-19 pandemic and a series of lockdowns that has meant that the Church has been closed for much of this time. During Advent we were able to be open for Christmas Day only, and during Easter the church was open for prayer on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

In place of services, **Working Together** (a Circuit based outline for online/telephone services) has been implemented to provide opportunities for virtual worship both during periods of closure and as a potential ongoing opportunity for those unable to attend church.

After the third lockdown, the church reopened on the 2nd May 2021 with reduced length, socially distanced services supported by projection of the order of service and words for hymns (while singing is not allowed in buildings). These measures followed guidance from the Transition Oversight Team (TOT) contained in the church risk assessment. Full sanitisation of the church has been required following each use of the building and we are most grateful for all of those who have volunteered and carried out the cleansing requirements.

At this time, some plans are being put in place for services to return to 'normal' in the autumn, provided that Step 4 of the Covid-19 plan is able to go ahead. This would mean no masks or social distancing, and congregational singing would be allowed. All remains at the mercy of satisfactory control of the virus and a population protected by the vaccine.

HAZEL DENMAN

Thoughts on Property & Finance

During this lockdown I have had plenty of time to reflect on my journey since joining the Church in 2002. In 2004, the Rev Philip Seaton asked me to become a steward, and in 2006 I took over from my good friend Doug Clark as treasurer. Despite Doug's efforts, I'm afraid the finances were not in a good place, but with the help of COG's, things improved and they have been, until lockdown, in a healthy state. In the early days I shared responsibility for the property with Peter Hayward and then Tony Packman, finally on my own. Since becoming involved with the building it has undergone several changes. The first big change was removing the stage in the hall and putting in 2 big cupboards. We also refurbished the old kitchen, but as COG's got more involved in fundraising, it was realised that a new kitchen was needed and one was built using the 2 cupboards, but even this was upgraded to comply with health & safety regulations, becoming a registered food outlet with Arun District Council.

Over a 5 year period we helped with the rehabilitation of people who found themselves on the wrong side of the law. We had great success with Trevor. When he came he wouldn't speak or trust anyone but special thanks to Doreen Baldwin who through her kindness, broke down the barriers, and he left us prepared to meet the outside world, having painted the inside of the whole building.

Another of our friends from Ford, was Alan, who practically, with a little help from me, built the John Wesley room. Finally, replacing the pews with chairs, double glazing the whole building & changing the old boiler, these changes have helped to change our carbon footprint. There are 1 or 2 more jobs, but overall I think my colleagues & I have produced a building fit for the 21st Century!

TONY POLAND

Extracts from DAY BY DAY with Billy Graham

A man and his wife visited an orphanage where they hoped to adopt a child. In an interview with the boy they wanted, they told him in glowing terms about the many things they could give him. To their amazement, the little fellow said " *If you have nothing to offer except a good home, clothes, toys, and the other things that most kids have - why, I would just as soon stay here.*

"*What on earth could you want besides those things ?*" the woman asked.

"*I just want someone to love me*" replied the little boy.

There you have it !

Even a little boy knows that 'man shall not live by bread alone' Our deeper yearnings and longings can be met only by a renewed fellowship with the One in whose image we were created, God.

When you find yourself up a blind alley, not knowing which way to turn, if you are willing to do His will, He will reveal Himself. Remember that:

*where God guides, He provides
Where He leads, He supplies all needs*

You have a soul - and a body.

The body is the house in which the soul lives. When Oliver Wendell Holmes was in his 80th year, a friend hailed him and asked "How are you?" Holmes replied "I'm fine. The house I live in is tottering and crumbling, but Oliver Wendell Holmes is fine, thank you".

We often forget that the real abiding part of us is invisible - but at the resurrection, we shall be with Christ - forever.

CJW



Just a passing thought.....

Why do we call it face to face worship when we can only see the back of each other's heads?

JW

THE METHODIST CHURCH WORLD MISSION FUND

In the last financial year we gave £558.47 to this fund and this year so far we have given £628.43. It is not too late to give! The fund enables the Methodist Church to maintain long term mission partnerships around the world and provide support in many ways where it is most needed.

ANITA HAYWARD