



# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2025

No. 284

Brighton & Hove Methodist



Circuit of Sanctuary

**Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton**

**Dear God,**

**In this season of vitality, we pray for  
the gift of good health and happiness.**

**May our bodies be strong,  
our minds at peace,  
and our hearts filled with joy.**

**Bless us with the energy to embrace  
every moment and the gratitude to  
cherish each day. Amen**

## A Letter from Heather

Dear Friends

I have just heard the news that a special chimney has been erected in the Vatican, ready for when the Conclave meets to elect the late Pope Francis' successor, but by the time you read this, we will probably already know the name of the next leader of the Roman Catholic Church. I confess that I still have not read Robert Harris' book "Conclave" or seen the film adaptation, despite both having been on my wish list since last year. However, I was struck by this quote from one of the lead characters, Cardinal Lawrence, that was shared at our recent District Synod:

"My brothers and sisters, in the course of a long life in the service of our Mother the Church, let me tell you that the one sin I have come to fear more than any other is certainty. Certainty is the great enemy of unity. Certainty is the deadly enemy of tolerance. Even Christ was not certain at the end. *'Eli Eli, lama sabachtani?'* He cried out in His agony at the ninth hour on the cross. 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Our faith is a living thing precisely *because* it walks hand in hand with doubt. If there was only certainty, and if there was no doubt, there would be no mystery, and therefore no need for faith."

To paraphrase the theologian Paul Tillich: certainty is the opposite of faith; doubt is an element of faith. During the Easter season we are reminded of this faith-doubt partnership when we read the Gospel accounts of the disciples' responses to Jesus' death and resurrection.

We are living in uncertain times, and many (perhaps all) of us have concerns about matters of global significance that are outside our personal control, including climate change, the economic impact of recent decisions by the US Government, and the recent Supreme

Court ruling. Sometimes people look to political parties, or to a religion or faith community, to provide a clear, unambiguous message that they can hold on to amidst such uncertainty. Some of these people or groups appear to offer simple answers to complex challenges, but in my view, their certainty usually comes at the expense of nuance, tolerance, inclusion, and unity.

It's nearly 20 years since the Methodist Church produced the "Living with contradictory convictions" report, and now, more than ever, I find it an encouragement to be part of a church that recognises the importance of faith and doubt, and allows us to continue to explore what it means to follow the way of Jesus in our time and place.

That report reminds us that: "Whilst we may not all agree about everything, we recognise the importance of the truths which bind us together as well as the issues which currently divide us. Therefore, we resolve: to engage with each other openly, honestly, prayerfully and graciously; to treat each other with respect and dignity, recognising the sincerity of the faith of those who may see things differently; to seek to learn from one another as we travel together as fellow pilgrims; to renounce all language and behaviours that attempt to coerce others to change their views or beliefs; to seek, as far as conscience allows, to preserve the fellowship of Christ's Church; to unite under the authority of Scripture as we seek to live as authentic Christian disciples in our own generation."

Those who proclaim certainty rather than faith tend to see anything other than certainty as weakness, but I agree with the fictional Cardinal Lawrence that it is in faith-doubt, rather than certainty, that we find unity and strength. Let me know what you think!

With every blessing

**Heather**

## Pastoral Care

Please pray for our friends who need our support at this time:-

### Deaths:-

Andy Saunders, Janet Morgan (Sheila & Alan Morgan's daughter)

### In Nursing, Care & Rehabilitation Homes:-

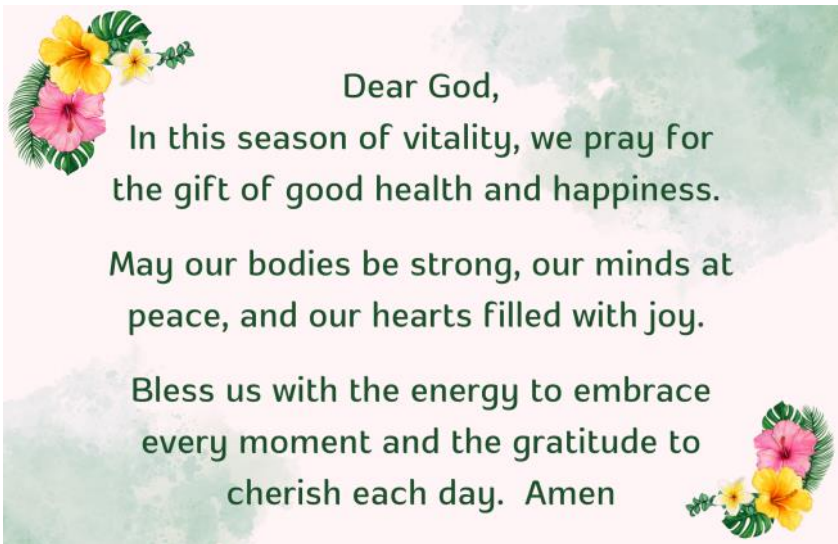
Val Boyd-Pain, Marian Jackson, Pat Knight, Ian Parker.

### Please continue to pray for:-

The future of our church and circuit, its vision and mission. We also pray for those who are in bereavement, those who are frail, housebound or experiencing long-term health conditions.

### Prayers for the World:-

We pray for our worldwide family thinking of those troubled by conflict, persecution, hatred and natural disasters. We ask that God works through us to bring peace and compassion into this broken and suffering world. Amen





Our Ken looking very fetching on Palm Sunday!

Beth's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration



Selwyn on a river boat in Bath, celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **A Lifetime in Methodism**

I have now reached the ripe old age of 86 years, which means I have been a regular attender at one form or another of Christian worship for 83 years.

I know that many of you have lived in Brighton all your lives, so I thought I'd share a different background with you. My family attended the Primitive Methodist Chapel in the West Yorkshire village where I grew up. Mum and Dad, as former Salvation Army Officers, became local preachers. There were two Methodist chapels in the village, one Primitive and one Wesleyan. In very broad economic terms (subject to some notable exceptions) the less well-off in the village attended the Primitive chapel whereas the more affluent members of the local population supported the Wesleyans.

The Huddersfield (Northumberland Street) Primitive Methodist Circuit flourished from 1870 until 1967. At its peak it consisted of 17 chapels scattered over a wide geographical area. Because only well-to-do people had private cars and local bus services on Sundays did not begin until 12 noon, services were held at 2.30 pm and 6 pm to enable preachers to reach their various locations by public transport. I can't remember a single Minister or Local Preacher who had a car.

The Sunday School structure mirrored that of day school. The Primary section catered for those under school-age, Juniors covered 5 to 11-year-olds and Seniors 11 to 15 years of age. Each Sunday morning all three age groups met together at the chapel for a service from 10 am until 10.20 am led by the Sunday School Superintendent and then split into their different age groups for teaching in classes until 11 am. I was enrolled into the Primary

section at the age of three and progressed through the full range until considered too old for Sunday School.

Juniors were expected to attend morning Sunday School and afternoon adult worship. As a senior I attended three times, morning Sunday School plus afternoon and evening worship. Afternoon services always included a children's hymn and address. Both Sunday School and adult services were well attended at that time. In my home chapel, services were only led by a Minister once a quarter for Communion. Rural areas had to rely more on local preachers than urban congregations, and some local preachers were authorised by Conference to administer Communion.

Eventually I left home, joined the Police Service and got married, moving around the country with my family as my career progressed. I have been an adult member of ten different Methodist societies spread across seven counties spanning rural, urban and city environments. The size of congregations was usually dependent upon the size of the population being served. Some rural chapels had single figure membership whereas in urban and city chapels attendance could vary between tens and hundreds. Theological positions ranged from Conservative Evangelical through Charismatic to Radical, often within the same society.

Each time we moved home, finding a new Methodist church became one of our most important tasks. It provided us with an entry into the local community and helped us settle and make friends. Unfortunately, not all Methodist churches are welcoming to strangers. One Sunday morning we arrived at the nearest chapel as a family, but no-one spoke to us on our arrival. We were left to find our own seats and, although it must have been obvious that we were accustomed to the hymns and worship, no-one spoke to us after the service. We didn't darken their doors again.

Kathleen and I held a variety of offices in the various churches we attended ranging from Communion Steward to Society Steward, Sunday School teacher and Superintendent, MAYC Youth Leader and house group leader. We also encountered some strange views. At one church there was an objection to me being nominated as Church Steward because I had only been a member there for a few months. A lifetime in Methodism elsewhere was considered irrelevant. The person objecting outlined his own hierarchical viewpoint: the Minister is next to God and the Steward is next to the Minister. He hadn't known me since birth therefore I could not aspire to the post. Fortunately, the majority did not support that view. I was told by a local preacher at one church (not in Brighton I must add) that I could not be a Christian because I did not accept the Virgin Birth or the doctrine of Original Sin. He also stated that I was destined for Hell because I had not received the Holy Spirit.

Much has changed within my lifetime. I am not nostalgic and do not look at the past through rose-tinted spectacles. We can't turn back the clock and neither should we try. I know what it is like to be "on plan" as a preacher and I do not envy those within our churches responsible for organising and leading Sunday worship. It often seems like an impossible task to try to meet the varied expectations and needs of contemporary congregations. I am glad, however, that things have changed.

Perhaps we should just try to follow John Wesley's advice to "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, for as long as you can."

***Dr Tony Leonard***



# **SERVICE OF HEALING AND COMMUNION**

**At Dorset Gardens Methodist Church**

**Fourth Sunday of every month  
at 6.30 pm**



**MATTHEW 15 vs 30 & 31**

**GREAT CROWDS CAME TO HIM, BRINGING THE LAME,  
THE BLIND, THE CRIPPLED, THE MUTE AND MANY  
OTHERS, AND LAID THEM AT HIS FEET; AND HE  
HEALED THEM.**

**THE PEOPLE WERE AMAZED WHEN THEY SAW THE  
MUTE SPEAKING, THE CRIPPLED MADE WELL, THE  
LAME WALKING AND THE BLIND SEEING. AND THEY  
PRAISED THE GOD OF ISRAEL.**

## **A Prayer for Mental Health Awareness Week**

When we feel isolated and lonely  
 God of faithfulness, be our companion.  
 When intrusive thoughts disturb and overwhelm  
 God of peace, quieten our minds.  
 When we feel distraught and struggle to face the day  
 God of eternity, be our light.  
 When self-doubt and shame feel overwhelming  
 God of hope, sustain us.  
 When we constantly crave to be more  
 God of truth, help us accept we are enough.  
 Loving, life-giving, life-transforming, God You are our Rock,  
 our Refuge and Salvation. Amen

***(Taken from the Methodist Church Pastoral Care webpage)***



Most of us have to pay something for the place we live in. It might be a big house or a single room, but there will usually be some sort of rent or mortgage attached to it. We might wish it was different, but that's just the way it is with property. What, then, should we pay for our larger accommodation: this beautiful, awe-inspiring world?

Sir Wilfred Grenfell, who was awarded his knighthood for his work as a medical missionary, is credited with what must be the perfect answer. "The service we render others," he wrote, "is the rent we pay for our room on Earth"

***(Taken from the Friendship Book, 2025)***

## Tearaway Tots

On Bank Holiday Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> May the Tearaway Tots team decided to trial a Baby & Toddler group with primary school aged siblings allowed to join in. We hoped it would meet a need in the community for a low-cost option on a bank holiday.



We provided drinks, fruit, and biscuits, and the children could enjoy playing with the baby and toddler toys or, for the older ones, doing some crafts. We had 28 children attend, and it turned out to be a great success!

**Sam Dyke**  
**Children and Families Worker**

*Please continue to hold Sam and the team in your prayers as they lead and expand this initiative, while ensuring that each child feels valued, loved and supported as they explore their creativity and make new friends.*

## A Heartfelt Afternoon of Hymn Singing



On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May, we enjoyed a wonderful gathering at our Hymn Sing at Dorset Gardens, bringing together folk from across the Circuit. The event was an opportunity to connect

through music, as participants shared how the hymns carried messages of hope, comfort, and strength.

We sang a selection of 14 hymns, chosen for their uplifting words and melodies that encourage reflection and spiritual renewal. The sense of community was truly felt as voices joined together, fostering a deeper connection to our faith.



The hymns included beloved classics and modern favourites: All things bright and beautiful; Be thou my vision; From heaven you came; Lord for the years; In Christ alone; Great is thy faithfulness; One day at a time; Give me joy in my heart; Rock of ages; And can it be; One more step along the world I go; Let us build a house; Guide me, O thou great Redeemer; I serve a risen Saviour.

The afternoon left us all feeling uplifted, inspired, and grateful for the shared experience. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined and made it such a memorable occasion. We look forward to more opportunities to sing together and celebrate our faith.

***Deeptima Massey***

## Celebrating Our Church Anniversary on 11<sup>th</sup> May



Rev. Will Fletcher leading the service.



Our youngsters looking very cool indeed!



### Thoughts for Quiet Reflection

- ✝ Today I will pause and listen for God's voice.
- ✝ I can trust in the Lord amidst changing seasons.
- ✝ Each dawn God shares love and presence with his worldwide family.

## **A Passion for Gardening**

I spent over 40 years of my working life as a self-employed gardener until I retired at the end of April 2021. I started working with a friend from Sompting Village Morris in May 1980. We spent that Summer mostly cutting grass and doing general garden maintenance at blocks of flats and we managed to get enough work to see us through the winter. The following year Bill decided to head off to Australia, so I was left to continue the contracts at the flats for the Summer, but when I got to the winter I struggled to get enough work until I got a lucky break through my involvement in Scouting.

One of the Cub parents, David Hinton, was also a self-employed gardener and offered me some work alongside him. David had worked for Standens of Ditchling, a landscaping firm, but he had left and set up on his own but was still doing a lot of sub-contract work for Standens. David and I got on really well and I learnt a lot about pruning from him.

I decided that I needed to get more horticultural knowledge, so I started going to evening classes at Plumpton Agricultural College and eventually passed a GCE O level in Horticultural Science and the RHS Exam in General Horticulture. I spent another two years studying Advanced Horticulture at Plumpton, but decided that I had learnt enough to carry on with the work I was doing.

I had also started doing some sub-contract work for Standens, maintaining gardens they had landscaped. The business was run by Barry Standen who was also the Chair of Ditchling Scout Group. He took me along to Wild Goose Cottage in Ditchling, the home of Professor Rowland Emmett and his wife. Rowland was a famous cartoonist and constructor of whimsical kinetic sculpture and designed and built the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Car at his workshop

at Streat. Mrs Emmett had a garden full of roses and I spent two days pruning, mulching, removing and planting new roses in the garden. The following Summer Mrs Emmett told Barry Standen that her roses were the best they had ever been and that no one but me would ever be allowed to deal with them.

From that one job I became the go to gardener for roses and I soon took on two jobs that became the main gardens I worked on for a number of years. One was at the home of Mrs Charlton who lived in Ditchling with a four-acre garden and around 750 roses. Her gardener, George Harber, had worked for her for 40 years and was now in his 70s so I took over the management of the whole garden. George still came in two mornings a week and I learnt so much from him, particularly about fruit and vegetables. There was also an orchard in the garden with 27 varieties of apples and nine varieties of pears plus various plums and gages. It was working there that I got my passion and knowledge for apples.

The other garden was at The School House in West Dean village in Friston Forest. John & Gill Bunce lived there and after I pruned and retrained the climbing roses on the front of the house, they asked me to take on the maintenance of the whole garden. John was also Churchwarden at the village church and I soon took on the maintenance of the church grounds. I realised that this was old unimproved grass and persuaded John that some of it should be left uncut to see what grew. That first summer there was a wide variety of wild flowers that grew, but most notably early purple orchids and bee orchids.

Gardening is still my passion and now I am retired I try and spend as much time as possible in my own garden whilst also volunteering with the Friends of Blakers Park and also Brighton Conservation



Volunteers each week. I was lucky to meet some brilliant gardeners along the way who I learnt a great deal from. It turned out that gardening runs in my family. My paternal grandfather worked as a gardener as did my maternal great-grandfather. So, it seems it was the job I was destined to do!



It is outdoors that I feel closest to God, seeing and hearing all that is living around me. The hum of insects, the singing of birds, the changing seasons, the ancient trees and the beautiful flowers. I definitely agree with Dorothy Frances Gurney's poem that "One is nearer to God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth".

***Ian Lamb***



"Seeing God means being ready to see him  
in unexpected people, places and ways.



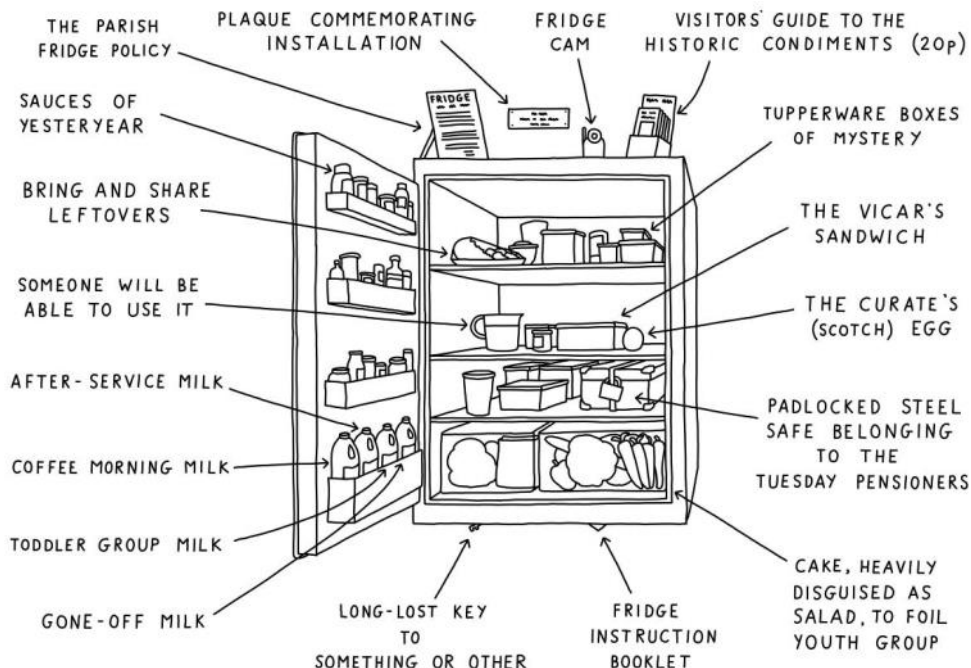
It means living with our eyes and our hearts open.  
Because wherever you are, there is your Emmaus."  
- James Martin, S.J.

Faith is a place of mystery,  
where we find the courage  
to believe in what we cannot see  
and the strength to let go  
of our fear of uncertainty.

Brene Brown



# THE CHURCH FRIDGE



CartoonChurch.com



The Autumn 2025 edition of Newsletter will be published on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Any items for inclusion must reach the Editor, Deeptima Massey, **by Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2025**. Email: [office@dgmc.org.uk](mailto:office@dgmc.org.uk)

## **Worship Programme at Dorset Gardens**

### **Sunday 1 June**

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Paul Steadman

### **Sunday 8 June ~ Pentecost and MHA Sunday**

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Stella Goddard

### **Sunday 15 June ~ Trinity Sunday**

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Bob Winton

*(Please note it's the London-Brighton Bike Ride today)*

### **Sunday 22 June ~ Refugee Sunday**

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Ken Smith

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

### **Sunday 29 June ~ Conference Sunday**

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Heather Leake Date

### **Sunday 6 July**

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Deeptima Massey

### **Sunday 13 July ~ Action for Children Sunday**

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

### **Sunday 20 July**

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Jonathan Gravestock

### **Sunday 27 July**

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Deeptima Massey

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

### **Sunday 3 August**

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Michael Hydes

*(Please note it's Brighton Pride Weekend)*

### **Sunday 10 August**

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Andy Lowe

### **Sunday 17 August**

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Paul Richards

### **Sunday 24 August**

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Andy Lowe

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

### **Sunday 31 August**

10.30 am, Circuit Together Service - At Hove

Led by Andy Lowe & Karen Bell

*Disclaimer: "The items contained within this newsletter are personal views and not necessarily the views of The Methodist Church".*