

A Letter from the Manse

Dear Friends

It has been said that “It isn’t the mountain ahead that wears you out - it’s the grain of sand in your shoe. Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big worthwhile things.”

Like many wise sayings those words are easier said than done. As someone whose personality prefers looking at the big picture I’m not the best at dealing with the small nitty gritty and often petty annoyances, they drain me of my energy, they take up an amount of time which is inversely proportional to the size of the issue itself.

Most importantly they mean that I have less time and energy to think on my own and with others about the bigger picture, to look at the future and the way forward into that future.

It was good then to be able to spend a morning with people from all our circuit churches in the middle of May when we were guided by Emma Nash to think about our churches, our stories and our ongoing ministries.

We were able to look beyond our everyday existence, the making of rotas, the questions of cleaning and maintenance and all the other very many things that need to be considered for our building and community to continue to run.

Instead, for that time, we were able to centre again on our calling to be God’s people and presence in the midst of our communities both as individuals and as churches. We were able to step back and look at what we do and how we might purposefully better do those things as a sign of God’s love. This wasn’t a call to big wholesale change, this wasn’t a call to doorstep people and impose our views

on others, instead it was a call to be more confident of our story, our faith and to look to see if there are ways to tweak what we do so that God's love may be more evident through us.

But one off meetings with a few people are not of much use unless they are followed up by more conversations and thinking, and that thinking needs to be shared with an ever widening group of people. Some of that has already happened at our Annual Church Meeting which occurred the day after the Inspiration morning, and it was suggested that it should be spread wider possibly in some of our times of worship and so plans are underway for that to happen.

I'm not saying that the small everyday things are not important, of course they are for if they were not managed or didn't happen then we would not be able to function, but it is good to be able to see them in the lens of the bigger picture, to make their purpose clearer as part of the bigger whole.

I am reminded of the story of President John F Kennedy who in 1962 visited NASA. While there he met a janitor walking down the hallway with a brush in his hand. He asked what he did for NASA and the janitor said 'I'm helping put man on the moon.'

I want to say a big thank you to all who help with the running of our community, for all you do in dealing with the necessary jobs to make our building the place it is, from the washing of coffee cups, to the mending of the loos, to the making of rotas, to the management of our finances, to the sharing of love through pastoral encounters, the taking of minutes in meetings.

Thank you all for in all that you do you help us in making the love of God for all people known.

In Christian love,

Andy

Pastoral Care

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

Deaths:-

Pat Knight, Bob Hinton

In Nursing, Care & Rehabilitation Homes:-

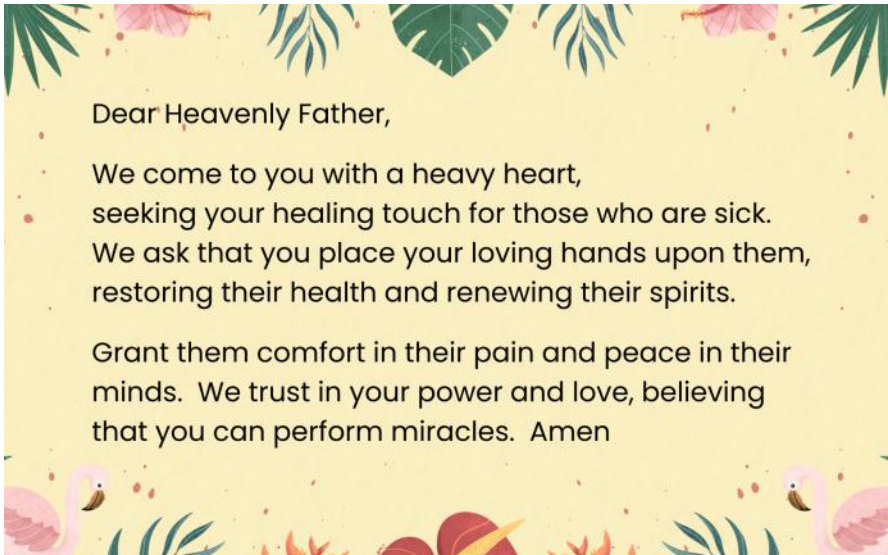
Marian Jackson, Lyn Maine

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



A Tribute to Pat Knight



Pat was an active member of the Wives Club (later known as Monday Club), sharing in all church events and social get-togethers, as well as Sunday worship. Later, she and her husband Bob delighted in joining the coach outings arranged by Alan Cutting. We had some great times there, as we did when joining in with the old-time music shows with John Tudor.

Pat was a very loving member of Dorset Gardens and it was very sad that, in later years her health deteriorated and she was unable to travel from Shoreham to DG to continue being part of church life.

We kept in touch and remembered her in prayer. Her family lovingly cared for her, although eventually she didn't recognise them. She was one of those loyal, treasured members who contributed to the life of the church in so many unsung ways. Her funeral on Wednesday 15th April was a celebration of her life and she will be sadly missed.

Cynthia Tudor & Pauline Payne



Where Faith and Football Meet

Football is everything to me. I think about it all the time.

It's part of my faith. I believe God gave me this path, and I wouldn't even be playing without His plan.

Football is part of me.

Keren

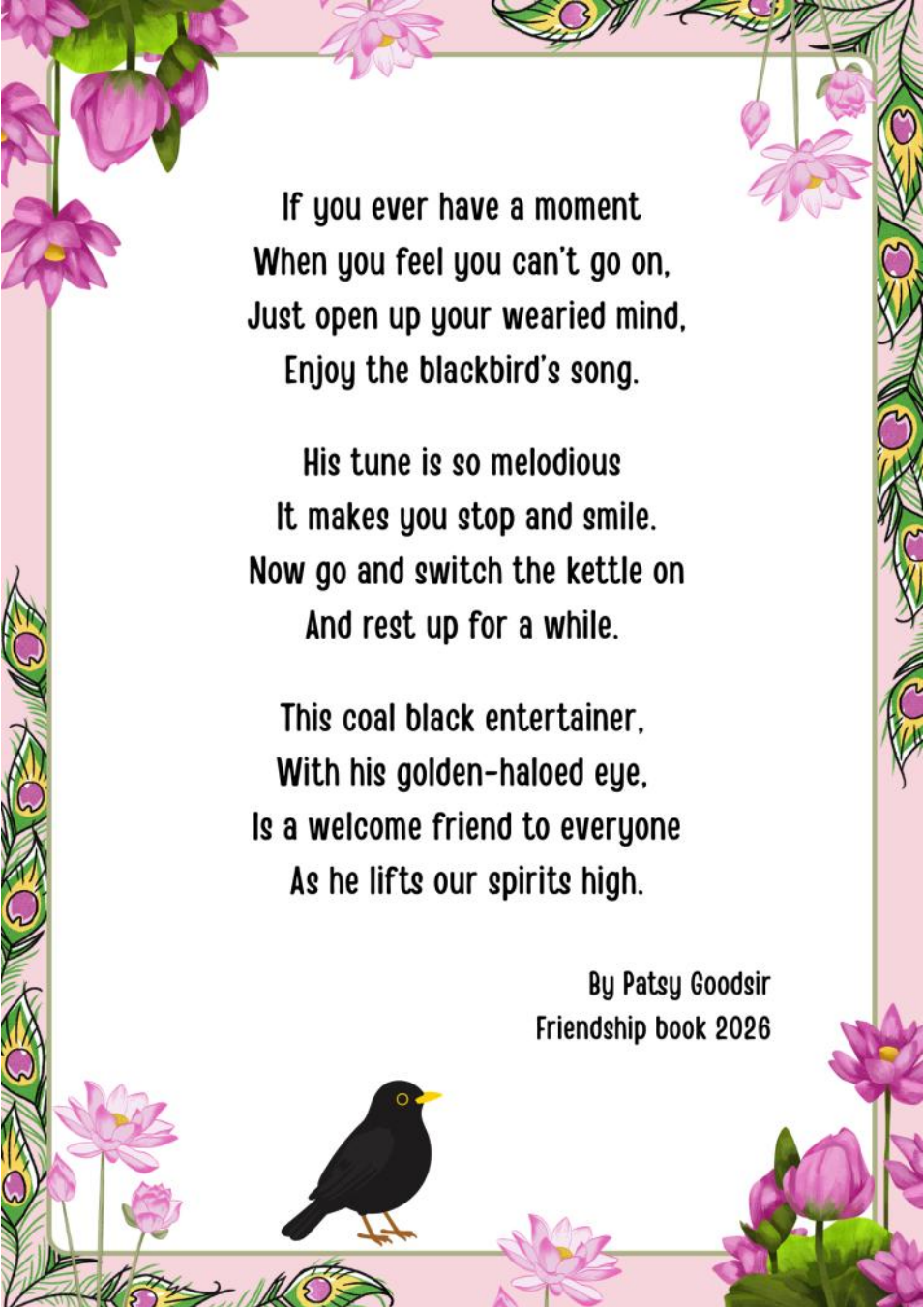
Singing Through Lent: An Afternoon of Hymns and Reflection

Our Lent Hymn Singing Afternoon was a joyful and uplifting occasion, attended by 21 people. Together we sang a rich mix of traditional and contemporary hymns - 15 in total - each chosen with care and meaning. The hymns helped turn our thoughts towards the journey of Holy Week, preparing our hearts through music, memory, and shared faith.

A particularly special aspect of the afternoon was hearing individuals share personal reflections on why certain hymns held significance for them. These moments added depth and connection to our time of fellowship and music. We were skillfully supported by Will on the piano and Paul on the guitar, whose musical accompaniment enriched the singing throughout.

We paused midway to enjoy home-made cakes, which added to the welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. A total of £112 was raised for church funds. Thank you to everyone who took part, contributed, and helped make the afternoon such a worthwhile occasion.

Deeptima Massey



If you ever have a moment
When you feel you can't go on,
Just open up your wearied mind,
Enjoy the blackbird's song.

His tune is so melodious
It makes you stop and smile.
Now go and switch the kettle on
And rest up for a while.

This coal black entertainer,
With his golden-haloed eye,
Is a welcome friend to everyone
As he lifts our spirits high.

By Patsy Goodsir
Friendship book 2026



Our Flower Ministry: Beauty, Remembrance and Welcome

Each Sunday, as we gather for worship, we are greeted by the gentle beauty of fresh flowers in our Sanctuary. Their colours and fragrance quietly lift our hearts, helping to create a space that feels prayerful, peaceful, and full of life.

On special occasions throughout the year, this beauty extends even further, as the whole church is thoughtfully adorned with floral arrangements that reflect the joy and significance of the moment.



Behind these displays is the dedication and creativity of Rosemary and her team, which includes Beth and Sam, who faithfully give their time and gifts to this ministry. Through their care and attention, simple flowers are transformed into something that enriches our worship and welcomes all who enter our building.


Flowers are often given in memory of a loved one, in thanksgiving, or to celebrate a special milestone such as a birthday, anniversary, or baptism. In this way, the arrangements become more than decoration, they are expressions of love, remembrance, and gratitude, woven into the life of our church family.

The flower ministry holds a special place in our community. It is a quiet, yet powerful way of reflecting God's beauty, generosity, and creativity. Each arrangement serves as a reminder of new life, hope, and the care with which God surrounds us.






If you would like to contribute to this ministry, either by helping with arrangements or by donating flowers to mark a special occasion, please speak to Rosemary. Your contribution would be warmly welcomed.

Deeptima Massey



Thoughts for Quiet Reflection

-  Day by day, I will trust in God's faithful provision.
-  I feel most connected to God's love when I...
-  I will pray for and comfort others when they are in need.

Strong Roots and a Fruitful Future: Our Church Anniversary

This year's Church Anniversary worship, held on Sunday 10th May, was led by Zoe Agyemang, a local preacher. It was a blessing to welcome her back, especially as she was once part of Dorset Gardens while she was studying Pharmacy in Brighton. Her return brought a real sense of warmth, fellowship and thanksgiving as we gathered to celebrate God's faithfulness to our church family over more than 200 years of ministry and witness.

During her address, Zoe encouraged the congregation to reflect with gratitude on the generations of faithful members, leaders and servants who have helped shape and sustain the church throughout its rich history. She reminded us that as we honour the past, we must also look prayerfully and faithfully towards the future that God is preparing for us.



The main theme of Zoe's message was the importance of keeping our roots firmly grounded in Jesus Christ. She spoke passionately about remaining deeply connected to Him so that He may continue to lead, guide and strengthen us to bear good fruit within the community where God has planted us. Her words were both

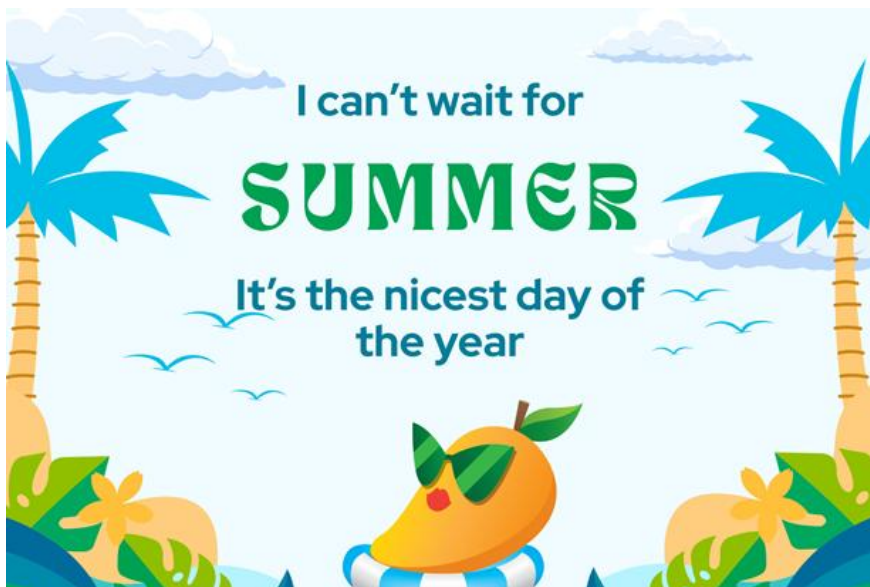
uplifting and challenging, encouraging us all to continue growing in faith, unity, service and love.

Zoe also took time to give a special blessing to the young people, reminding them that they are an important part of both the present and future life of the congregation. Her heartfelt prayers and encouragement were greatly appreciated by everyone gathered.

She was accompanied by her husband, Kojo, and their two wonderful boys, whose presence added to the joy of the occasion.

Following the service, we shared in a delicious Ghanaian meal and time of fellowship together. The spread of traditional food was lovingly prepared by Freda, Olivia and Dora. The morning provided a joyful opportunity for members and friends to reconnect, celebrate together, and continue giving thanks for God's goodness and faithfulness to our church through the years.

Deeptima Massey



JOIN A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME WITH

THE ADVENTURERS

MAY HALF TERM FUN DAY



What Does Our Choice of Hymns Say About Us?

In the village where I grew up in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the local Primitive Methodist Chapel nourished me from Sunday School to adult worship. The hymnal we used was the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book (MHB), the preface to which opens with the words, “Methodism was born in song.” The congregation subscribed wholeheartedly to that statement. Our choir mistress and organist taught us to sing from music in four-part harmony and we were encouraged to express our faith through MHB’s hymns. It is sometimes said that Methodists at that time knew their hymnbooks better than their Bibles, but they were relatively safe in so doing as much of what we sang was deeply rooted in the poetry through which Charles Wesley expressed his theology.

At home, I was exposed to a wide variety of music for worship, including Hymns Ancient & Modern, the MHB, Methodist Sunday School Hymnal, the Salvation Army Song Book, Sankey’s Sacred Songs & Solos, Cliff College Choruses and Billy Graham Song Book. As time passed, I came to realise that the hymns we choose directly reflect our theology at a given point in time, so will need to change as our faith and theological understanding grows and develops. That having been said, I still feel strong emotional ties to certain hymns and sacred songs that I learned in my formative years.

I was delighted when Singing the Faith (STF) was chosen as the title for Methodism’s latest hymnal as it clearly emphasises our musical heritage. As a Circuit Steward I remember taking part in a workshop at Synod, before STF’s publication, led by a member of the working party tasked by Conference with producing the new hymnal. We had a lively but enjoyable debate about what should be included or left out, with vigorously expressed views about both words and music. Traditional versus modern never really divided us. The main problem arose from those in whose view our faith was exclusive and those of us for whom it is not and cannot ever be.

In my eighty-seven years of life to date, I have been a member of thirteen different Methodist societies covering the length and breadth of the country. In some of those societies I encountered prejudice, intolerance and discrimination. Such attitudes invariably stemmed from the holder's views on race, gender and/or sexual orientation, their opinions being mainly sustained by selective Scriptural quotes, usually from the Old Testament.

In 2010, I chose to transfer my membership to Dorset Gardens Methodist Church because the ethos of DG most closely reflects my own views on what it means to be a Christian in the 21st Century. Having experienced rural, urban and inner-city Methodism across England, I feel more at home at DG than anywhere else. Why should that be? For me, one word sums it up – INCLUSIVENESS.

No matter when, how or why I read the New Testament, I am inexorably brought face to face with an itinerant Jewish preacher who lived, mixed and ate with the downtrodden and the outcast; people excluded by the religious leaders of his day as sinners. He welcomed everyone, he ignored the rigidity of man-made rules, he regularly worshipped in the synagogue and dutifully followed the essence of Torah: love God and love your neighbour - all else is secondary. He did not call us to worship him but to follow him which, hard though it is, I try to do.

After transferring to DG, I learned a great deal from Revd Cynthia Park. I well remember her firm, but gentle, response to someone from another church in the circuit who was objecting vociferously to the appointment of a gay Minister, quoting verses from Leviticus and Romans. "We Christians do not worship a book;" she countered, "we worship a living and loving God." Thankfully, she also introduced me to hymn 409 from STF, "Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live." I seem to remember her saying that she hoped one day it would become the unofficial

anthem of Dorset Gardens Methodist Church. I believe that has already happened, for its verses epitomise everything DG stands for. I see that when I look round at my fellow worshippers on Sunday mornings and when I consider the work taking place here throughout the week.

For me, being a Christian is not about what we claim to believe, it's about who we are and what we do; how we live our lives as followers of Jesus. I don't pretend that all is sweetness and light at DG, we are as fallible as any other collection of human beings, but I do know that "God in Love Unites Us" and truly, as hymn 409 joyfully proclaims, "ALL ARE WELCOME IN THIS PLACE."

Long may that continue to be so!

Dr Tony Leonard



Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton are registered with **easyfundraising**, which means you can help us for FREE.

Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you shop with them through **easyfundraising** – at no extra cost to yourself!

All you need to do is sign up and remember to use **easyfundraising** whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations can really mount up, so please sign up to support us at: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/dorsetgardens/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=en-n1

Please note: Easyfundraising will only ask for your name and email address and you can choose not to receive their promotional emails.

Word Search Challenge ~ Find 10 English Counties

Devon; Sussex; Norfolk; Cumbria; Surrey; Dorset; Kent; Cornwall;
Essex; Somerset.

S	O	M	E	R	S	E	T	N
C	X	E	S	S	U	S	N	O
U	E	D	E	U	R	Y	E	R
M	S	O	F	I	R	O	K	F
B	S	R	G	A	E	M	T	O
R	E	S	R	D	Y	C	E	L
I	D	E	V	O	N	I	S	K
A	X	T	L	L	A	W	D	L
C	O	R	N	W	A	L	L	O

Prepared by Kushma Massey



Facts About Trees ~ Did You Know...

1. The wood from Elm trees was used for water mains in many English towns before metal was widely available.
2. Holly trees are dioecious. That means male and female flowers occur on different trees. Most other trees are monoecious, meaning that each tree has both male and female parts on them.
3. Ash trees are the third most common tree in Britain. However, they are currently being affected by Chalara dieback and we have lost around 85% of our Ash trees in Sussex to the fungal disease.
4. Beech trees are associated with femininity and are known as the queen of British trees.
5. Birch trees are used to make besoms; a broom made of a bundle of birch twigs.
6. Yew trees are the oldest living organisms in the UK. The oldest yew is the Fortingall Yew in Perthshire which is estimated to be between 3,000 and 9,00 years old.
7. Oak trees do not produce acorns until the tree is at least 40 years old.
8. Plane trees are planted for their ability to adapt to urban conditions and its resistance to pollution. There are more Plane trees in London than any other species and have come to be known as the London Plane.
9. The botanical name of Sycamore trees is *Acer pseudoplatanus*, which means 'like a plane tree'. Sycamores and Plane trees are not related, but the leaves are superficially similar.
10. During the war, flower blossom from Lime trees was used to make a soothing tea. The flowers provide nectar and pollen for insects particularly bees.

A Call to Gentleness

In our busy and often demanding lives, it is easy to overlook the quiet struggles that some among us may be carrying. Within our church community, and beyond, there are those who may be feeling more fragile: perhaps coping with failing health, living with memory loss, or experiencing anxiety that isn't always visible to others.

Often, these challenges can make everyday interactions a little more complicated. Names may slip away, stories may be repeated, and worries can surface unexpectedly. If we're honest, many of us have had that "Why did I walk into this room?" moment; some experience it more often than others. In these moments, we are gently reminded of the importance of patience, kindness, and understanding. Our Christian faith calls us to love one another deeply and to treat each person with dignity and compassion. Jesus showed time and again that gentleness is not weakness, but strength expressed through care.

Small acts can make a real difference: a warm smile, a few extra moments of conversation, listening without rushing, or cheerfully hearing the same story again as if it were the first time. These simple gestures help create a community where everyone feels valued and at ease. And perhaps there is grace for all of us here not just for those who feel frail or anxious, but for each of us as we navigate life's ups and downs. A little patience, a little humour, and a lot of kindness can go a long way.

Let us continue to build a church where gentleness is at the heart of how we relate to one another, where everyone is met with compassion, respect, and the reassuring sense that they truly belong at Dorset Gardens.

Deeptima Massey

Worship Programme at Dorset Gardens

Sunday 7 June

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion - Led by Andy Lowe

Followed by Food & Fellowship - You are all invited!

Sunday 14 June ~ Refugee and MHA Sunday

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Paul Steadman

Sunday 21 June

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Geoff Harrington

(Please note, it is the London to Brighton Bike Ride today)

Sunday 28 June

10.30 am, Local Arrangement Service

Led by members of our congregation and featuring Shirley Veater who will share the stories, symbolism, and spiritual significance behind four of her paintings.

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

Sunday 5 July

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

Sunday 12 July

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Andy Lowe

Followed by Food & Fellowship - You are all invited!

Sunday 19 July

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Stella Goddard

Sunday 26 July

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Terry Fish

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Andy Lowe

Sunday 2 August

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Andy Lowe

*(Please note: It's Pride Weekend, but you will still be able to access
DG from the Edward Street side)*

Sunday 9 August

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Paul Richards

Sunday 16 August

10.30 am, Morning Worship - Led by Andy Lowe

Sunday 23 August

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Beulah Fletcher

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Karen Bell

Sunday 30 August

10.30 am, Circuit Together Service

Led by Andy Lowe & Karen Bell - At Dorset Gardens

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