

Beech Hill Methodist Church Newsletter

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Minister
Rev. Margaret Newman
07472 185460



May ***2025***

Issue 287



Details of Services

May

4th	10.30am	Roger Owers
11th	10.30am	Ivor Mitchelmore
18th	10.30am	Rev. Terry Wright
25th	10.30am	Rev. Patrick Kandeh

The Beech Hill, Bury Park Good Friday Walk of Witness started at Beech Hill with about 35 people walking the route from Beech Hill to All Saints Anglican Church in Shaftesbury Road and then on to the Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Westbourne Road, Oakdale Methodist Church on the corner of Oak Road and finishing at COGIC in Bury Park. The walk was completed as far as possible, in silence and was led by the local clergy and a large cross carried by members of the churches. At each church there were readings and prayers. COGIC invited the walkers in to join in their act of worship which was taking place when the walk arrived.

On Easter morning at Beech Hill our minister, Rev. Margaret Newman led our worship and communion and we were pleased to welcome the family and friends of Theo Reuben on the occasion of his Baptism.



Thank you to all those who bought extra items or donated money for the Luton FoodBank during Lent. They have all been taken to the depot and they are very grateful for all our donations.



Hosts:

May

6th	Anne & Roger
13th	Sandra & Richard
20th	Joyce & Albert
27th	Sue & Lesley

As 'hosts' please bring milk for tea and coffee and ensure that there are biscuits and cakes available (it's a good idea to check on the Sunday before as we don't want to build up a large stock which may go out of date).

Please don't feel that you have to donate everything, speak to Richard if you would like reimbursement.

Please be at the church in time to open up at 1pm prompt. Never open if you are on your own for any reason. Thank you.

From the Manse

Dear Friends,

In September 2023 the famous Sycamore Gap tree at UNESCO World Heritage Site at Hadrian's Wall and Housesteads Fort in Northumbria was felled in an act of vandalism. You may remember the story from the news at the time. The tree had been planted as a landscape feature in a dell in Hadrian's Wall over a century ago; it was probably 120 years old and in full strength and vigour. Grown to a height of forty-nine feet, the tree was a beloved local landmark and a popular site for marriage proposals, birthday celebrations and scatterings of ashes. Its destruction caused outrage and heartbreak in equal measure.



Ten months later, the first fragile new shoots were discovered at the base of the tree's stump, near the roots. Over time these have multiplied to twenty five new shoots, showing the power of nature to regenerate. From seedlings gathered after the tree's felling, the National Trust has launched a 'Trees of Hope' initiative. Forty-nine saplings, one to represent each foot of the height of the tree before it was felled, are to be gifted to communities around the country. One of these, to be known as Fergus's Tree, will be in a park in Blackwell near Bristol in memory of a young boy who died of bone cancer aged twelve. Another will go to 'Tina's Haven' in County Durham, a planned community nature reserve that is part of a programme helping women recovering from addiction and trauma.

These 'Trees of Hope' remind me of Luton Council of Faiths Peace Garden project, with its commitment to planting a tree commemorating each life lost to Covid in Luton.

These stories reflect the deep truth of Easter, that death and destruction do not have the last word. Hope and new life are at the heart of Christian faith.

As we continue to celebrate the risen Christ during this Easter season, may God open our eyes and hearts to signs of hope, rebirth and renewal in our own lives and the lives of our churches and circuit.

Yours in Christ

Margaret

From the latest Methodist Connexion Magazine, a story about how a church and community came together to save their building

Following a lengthy £2 million restoration and transformation, Malton's historic Wesley Centre is now a vibrant church and community hub fit for the 21st century as Paul Emberley, the Development Lead, explains.

The market town of Malton is the gateway to the Howardian Hills in North Yorkshire and the Wesley Centre is a prominent part of its history. It's a large Grade II* listed preaching chapel designed by the Revd William Jenkins, the itinerant Methodist minister turned architect who was commissioned by John Wesley to build 13 such chapels around the country from 1804 until the late 1820s. His designs were influenced by Wesley's Chapel in City Road, London, on which he also worked. An almost perfect cube in architectural form, the church was designed by Jenkins as an auditory preaching space. It's one of only 40 Grade II* churches in the Connexion and is an important part of Methodism's heritage. Historic England says it's at the upper end of Grade II* and considers it to be of 'national significance'.

DISASTER AVERTED

A quinquennial inspection in 2015 spelled certain change for the 1811 building. The large roof structure had catastrophically failed, and an urgent decision was needed. Should the building be saved? After extensive consultation it was decided to opt for the development of a new vision. It was a brave choice, as we could have more easily closed its doors permanently and thanked God for times that had gone before. A major redevelopment project was instigated, with three out of four phases now completed. Three factors influenced the decision to create such a new vision. First, the population of Malton and nearby Norton-on-Derwent is expanding. In 2015

the combined population was around 14,250, predicted to rise by 50% before 2027. At more than 20,000, the enlarged town and catchment area would be the single most populated area in the district of Ryedale. Malton is thriving with weekly markets attracting large numbers of visitors. The Malton Food-Lovers Festival attracts up to 50,000 people – many of whom pass the doors of the Wesley Centre at the rate of up to 1,000 per hour. Secondly, there were few spaces for the community to use. The Wesley Centre could meet this need and is also particularly suitable as a location for classical music. With its good natural acoustics, the building could be a fine classical concert venue. We're even doing the unthinkable by reinstating a large historic pipe organ as part of the fourth and final phase of works. The final factor is that it could be opened up to the wider community to create a sustainable future. Regular concert programming, conferencing, a new professionally-operated café, and large scale banqueting will each deliver valuable revenue streams.

COMMUNITY HUB

Following its partial reopening before Christmas 2024, the building is now open daily and the vision of it being at the heart of the community is being realised. It provides new spaces for charities and community groups to meet at an affordable cost, welcoming everyone regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, or of their religious or political views. This is a core ethos of the Wesley Centre. One key user is the Malton Free Fridge, which redistributes good food donated by supermarkets and FareShare. Around 30,000 people use it each year, many of whom are on the fringes of society and gather at the Wesley Centre not only for free food, but



for conversation, warmth, fellowship, and for help with social issues. The initiative has strong environmental credentials too, preventing thousands of tons of food from going to landfill each year.

LONG JOURNEY

It's been a long journey and not one for the faint hearted. We've seen the roof repaired, an adjacent building converted for commercial use and fully let, and are nearing completion of the restoration of the large 550-seat main space. It's hoped that the final phase, which includes the reinstatement of a new three-storey annex, will start later in 2025. Methodists in Malton have met continually on this site for 214 years and will do so for many more years to come in a building that's now equipped for the 21st century. The project is an example of responding to the Connexion's call to re-imagine large property assets where there's a

demonstrable case. The Wesley Centre scheme was identified as a model example by the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee and the then Connexional Property Development Committee for how large Methodist property assets might be used for missional outreach in a growing community. Getting the vision right from the outset was critical. There have been plenty of bumps in the road. But we believe that initiatives in Malton will reap rewards, and as a consequence there will be opportunities now for the current church itself to grow.

You can read more at maltonwesleycentre.org
The Property team at the Methodist Church offers support for churches to make their buildings an integral part of their mission plan. Go to methodist.org.uk/property/mission

Reflection on: Genesis 1 (The Bible Society)

The opening words of the Bible are perhaps the most famous ever written: in the beginning, God created. The rest of the chapter unfolds as a picture of every part of creation being carefully made to fulfil its own purpose. There's a refrain that runs through it all: 'And God was pleased with what he saw' or 'God saw that it was good'.

We diminish this account if we treat it as a scientific paper; it's not a sort of alternative to the Big Bang theory. Instead, it's a radical theological statement: the world is what it is because a loving God intended it to be so.

It's worth comparing this to other creation stories around at the time. In Babylonian mythology, the world was created out of a violent conflict between deities. Human beings were made to be the gods' slaves. We live by the stories we tell. Imagine the difference between a whole culture founded on the belief that the world was built on murder and enslavement, and one based on Genesis 1. God made the world out of love, and blessed the human beings he created.

So this chapter has much to teach us. The world was made good, and we aren't entitled to spoil it. People are made to be blessed. God was 'pleased with what he saw'. Is he pleased with what he sees today? Some of it, but not all; and that's where his people are called to witness to a better way.

Pray

God, thank you for creating a wonderful world. Thank you that your love is eternal, and that you continue to care for your creation. Help me to care too.



May Church & Circuit Calendar

1	Thu	
2	Fri	
3	Sat	
4	Sun	10.30am: Morning Worship led by Roger Owers.
5	Mon	Bank Holiday Monday
6	Tue	10.00am -12.00 noon: Cakes & Company at Aley Green. 1.00pm: Welcome Space
7	Wed	
8	Thu	
9	Fri	
10	Sat	11.00am: Spring Bleu Dementia Café
11	Sun	Start of Christian Aid Week. 10.30am: Morning Worship led by Ivor Mitchelmore.
12	Mon	
13	Tue	1.00pm: Welcome Space
14	Wed	
15	Thu	
16	Fri	
17	Sat	
18	Sun	Aldersgate Sunday 10.30am: Morning Worship led Rev. Terry Wright.
19	Mon	
20	Tue	1.00pm: Welcome Space
21	Wed	
22	Thu	
23	Fri	
24	Sat	Wesley Day 11.00am: Spring Bleu Dementia Café
25	Sun	10.30am: Morning Worship led by Rev. Patrick Kandeh.
26	Mon	Bank Holiday Monday 7.30pm: Aley Green Coffee Evening in aid of Christian Aid.
27	Tue	1.00pm: Welcome Space
28	Wed	
29	Thu	Ascension Day
30	Fri	
31	Sat	

Sunday Bible Readings from the Methodist Lectionary

4th May

Acts 9:1-6 (7-20)
Psalm 30
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

11th May

Acts 9:36-43
Psalm 23
Revelation 7:9-17
John 10:22-30

18th May

Aldersgate Sunday

Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 148
Revelation 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

25th May

Acts 16:9-15
Psalm 67
Revelation 21:10, 22 – 22:5
John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9



Insults

Once there was a disciple of a renowned Greek philosopher who was handed an odd assignment. He was commanded by his master to give money to everyone who insulted him, for a period of three years. Wanting very much to progress, this student did exactly what he was told. When this rather lengthy trial was over, the master summoned the young man to his quarters and said to him: 'Now you can go to Athens, for you are ready to learn wisdom.'

Elated, the disciple set off for Athens. Just before he entered the great city, he saw a certain wise man sitting at the gate insulting everybody who came and went. Naturally, the moment this fellow saw the disciple he insulted him, too. 'Hey!' he cried out to the student, 'How did you get to be so ugly and stupid? I have never before seen anyone as ridiculous looking as you.'

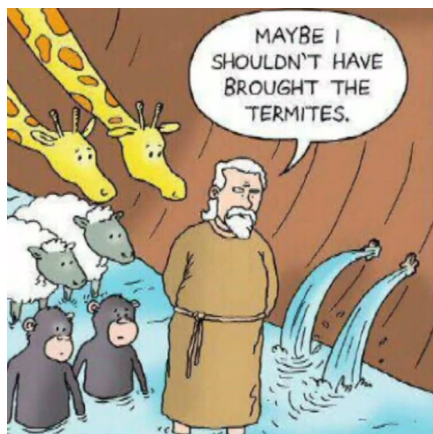
But instead of taking offence, the disciple just burst out laughing. 'Why do you laugh when I insult you?' asked the wise man. 'Because,' said the disciple, 'for three whole years I have been paying for this kind of thing and now you give it to me for NOTHING!'

'Enter the city,' said the wise man. 'It is all yours.'

If someone should insult you, don't be angry, be wise!



I APPRECIATE THE EFFORT, BUT THE WHOLE 'SITTING ON MY RIGHT HAND' THING IS NOT AS LITERAL AS YOU SEEM TO THINK



Seaside tour Puzzle

Mary Dear,

We are ideally suited with a pub right on the beach. Its prices are the lowest of three we tried, and everything is good - notably the food. All bedrooms, even the cheapest one have new foam mattresses - the softest I've slept on - so we do very well.

Both casino and pub lack pools for swimming, but there are walks along the coast or quayside and, when not shovelling sand, the children are climbing fences and gates - snagging their clothes on thorns each time.

Last night met Eric on way to casino where we lost every sou then danced a sort of fox-trot he says he invented himself - nearly pulled my arm out however.

Hope we are not now hit by bad weather. Never does to bank on it.

Love. Marilyn, Tony

P.S. We've now visited twenty seaside towns on our tour and I've mentioned all of them. You'll even find 'Ryde' in the first two words if you look closely enough. How many of the others can you spot? M



Thank you for your offertory contributions towards the work of Beech Hill.

If you Gift Aid your offertory, the best way to give is by standing order directly from your account into the church account.

This means that the church does not have to pay any bank charges on the transaction. If you have internet banking this is very easy to set up. If you do not have internet banking, then just keep putting cash into your envelope.

If you do not Gift Aid, then cash is still best. Please avoid paying by cheque if you can as these incur extra bank charges.

If you wish to pay your collection by bank transfer or standing order, the church account details are:

Account Name: Beech Hill Methodist Church

Sort code: 40-30-32

Account number: 10561304

Please put your envelope number and/or name in the reference box when you make a payment.

Prayer Page

O God,

We are thankful for the fresh start of a new month! We come to Your throne of grace and ask Your blessing upon the month of May.

May we see each good thing as a gift from You, our dear God! May we embrace the new opportunities You give us, and serve You with great devotion.

Whether we see lots of success or struggle through difficult times, we pray that we would bring You all glory and honour and praise!

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



O God, sometimes it is as if You are hiding in plain sight; we sense Your presence like perfume in the air or movement in the stillness, but fail to see where You are at work. You have revealed Yourself in cloud and fire, in miracle and majesty, in sacred word and precious law, but most of all You reveal Yourself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Be with us now as that Word made flesh is exposed and proclaimed in ancient and contemporary words, that the scales may fall from our eyes, and we behold You face to face. Amen.

Even when we try our best, we are human and so we make mistakes.

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, but if we confess our sins God who is faithful and just will forgive us.

We know and trust that you are indeed a God of forgiveness and second chances, always ready to show your unending compassion.

Therefore confident in your grace we think of things we have done which we regret; times when we have been too busy to listen to your voice, times we have judged other people, or jumped to conclusions without knowing the whole story, times we have been unkind and hurtful, times when we have failed to act for justice but remained complicit in unfair systems, times when we have been a part of making the Church exclusive and unwelcoming.

We admit all these things and more, and yet we celebrate the good news that through you our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God, and we pray that we can do better with your help. Amen.

Faith Matters

by David Jonathan, Grassroots & Luton Council of Faiths

Five years on...Remembering all those who died of Covid-19 in Luton



Gail Bennett (L) and Jenny Spoue (R) the crafters and instigators of the Luton Covid Memorial were pleased to re-dedicate it at a special event held recently. In it, there is a flower for every person who died of Covid-19.

In this 5th anniversary year since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Newland (Wigmore) Church on Crawley Green Road invited members of the public and different faith communities to a Memorial Service to remember all those who died of Covid-19 in Luton.

During the service, Revd Jenny Spoue introduced people to the Luton Covid Memorial frame, on which a flower each for every person who died of Covid-19 in Luton was knitted and crocheted.

She said: "First erected in November 2020, it hung on the outside of the church so that everyone could see, and one passer-by told us 'My Dad's on there'. Another resident who went to see it felt

that one of the green flowers represented her husband with his love of gardening."

These flowers have now been washed and re-attached to the trellis, and the renewed memorial was dedicated during the event. The church is researching a permanent and weatherproof casing, and when a suitable option and the funding have been found, it will be remounted outside the church as a lasting memorial to those we loved and lost.

Thanks to Gail Bennett and Jenny Spoue – the crafters and instigators of the Luton Covid Memorial for conceiving this idea of remembering the deceased in this beautiful way.

At the Covid Memorial Service, friends from different faiths said, "In our coming together we have stated today that they are not forgotten."

Quoting from the Sikh eternal Guru Granth Sahib Ji, a young Sikh girl Avneet Kaur reflected, "Whoever has come shall depart; everyone has their turn to go. Life is temporary. Every soul that comes into this world must one day return to its true home. Though this truth is difficult to accept, the Guru teaches us that death is not an end—it is a transition. The body perishes, but the soul merges back into the Divine, into the eternal love of God."

She encouraged all by saying that even after the darkest night, the sun must rise. Even after the harshest winter, spring must blossom. Let us move forward with the love of God in our hearts, with kindness in our actions, and with hope in our souls. May God bless everyone with strength, peace, and eternal hope!



Seaside tour Puzzle Solution

Answers are underlined

Mary Dear,

We are ideally suited with a pub right on the beach. Its prices are the lowest of three we tried, and everything is good - notably the food. All bedrooms, even the cheapest one have new foam mattresses - the softest I've slept on - so we do very well.

Both casino and pub lack pools for swimming, but there are walks along the coast or quayside and, when not shovelling sand, the children are climbing fences and gates - snagging their clothes on thorns each time.

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List of towns in the order they appear: Ryde, Deal, Brighton, Lowestoft, Blythe, Stonehaven, St. Ives, Dover, Blackpool, Torquay, Hove, Sandgate, Hornsea, Conway, Southend, Rothesay, Yarmouth, Whitby, Oban, Lynton.

A cat dies and goes to Heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, "You have been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours, all you have to do is ask."

The cat says, "Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors."

God says, "Say no more." And instantly, a fluffy pillow appears.

A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer that He made the cat. The mice said, "All our lives we've had to run. Cats, dogs and even women with brooms have chased us. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run anymore."

God says, "Say no more." And instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently wakes him and asks, "How are you doing? Are you happy here?"

The cat yawns and stretches and says, "Oh, I've never been happier in my life. And those Meals on Wheels you've been sending over are the best!"



Christian Aid Week
11th - 17th May 2025

'With high heat, there is little we can do but adapt.'

Meet Amelia

A resourceful and determined 24-year-old farmer who lives with her husband and their two children, from the Indigenous Q'eqchi' community of the Alta Verapaz region.

As the river runs dry and water becomes scarce, the vital crops that Amelia depends on wither and die before her eyes. It's a heartbreaking injustice, when no more than a mile away, industrial plantations are taking the last of the region's natural resources to feed the world's richest countries.

Climate and farming

Amelia's farm, first and foremost, feeds her young children. She tries to grow a range of crops and root vegetables that will provide her children with a balanced diet.

In this way, Amelia can protect them from malnutrition and the irreversible developmental damage it can cause.

But recent harvests have failed, and now the family's diet largely consists of rice and tortillas. Fruit and vegetables have become unobtainable locally, depriving the children of the vital vitamins and minerals they need to thrive and grow.

As increasingly intense heatwaves and storms ravage Amelia's farm, her ability to protect Lázaro and Yakelin is slipping away.

It's not fair that people are exploiting our resources and benefiting. We are the ones affected, but we don't have anywhere else to go.

Amelia.



PEACE

My Soul, there is a country
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skillful in the wars;
There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits, crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend
And (O my Soul awake!)

Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.
Henry Vaughan (1621 -1695)