



The Good News Letter

COULSDON METHODIST CHURCH

www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org

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From our minister

Dear Friends

This edition of the Good Newsletter will be published in time for the first Sunday in November. That is, as is traditional in Coulsdon, the Church Anniversary. (It is also the day of the Veteran Car run, and I always associate the Anniversary with seeing the cars going past on the way to church – and coming out at the end to see if any have broken down by the end of worship.)

It comes after a month during which I have conducted Church Anniversaries at Mitcham Methodist Church and at Hurst Green in this Circuit. Mitcham is much older than Coulsdon – celebrating their 234th Anniversary – whereas Hurst Green has only got to their 58th. Coulsdon falls in between at 108!

I shared with those churches that I have been involved with celebrations with greater numbers even than Mitcham's. In Taunton we were able to visit and hold an act of worship in the first Methodist Chapel in the town – 240 years to the hour after John Wesley had opened the building. But even that was a far smaller number than the Anniversary I preached at in Taunton URC. They had reached their 349th Anniversary – having been formed by a group of people who left the local Church of England following the publication of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662. I think that is likely to be my all-time record, as that local church was older than the entire Methodist Church!

For these Anniversary services, I started from the final words of an Anniversary sermon at Coulsdon some time back. I picked up the idea of the different directions a Church is likely to look at an Anniversary. I came up with the following list of five:

Backwards - to celebrate those who have gone before.

Forwards - to engage with the world as it is now and into the future.

Upwards - or Godwards to recognise the source of all life - and particularly our life as Christians.

Inwards - to establish love and commitment to each other, a true sharing of life.

Outwards - to share the good news we have found in Jesus with all the world.

May we be a church which looks and works in many directions.

Yours in Christ

Stephen

Methodist Conference commends marriage and relationships report

A new set of principles outlining the qualities of good relationships has been commended by the Methodist Conference for prayerful discussion and response across the Church over the next year.

The report, "God in Love Unites Us", makes a number of proposals, including:

- principles or qualities of good relating

- an understanding of cohabitation
- to allow same-sex couples to marry in Methodist churches
- providing resources and liturgies to celebrate civil partnerships
- prayers for when marriages end in divorce

The debate, which took place in July at the annual Methodist Conference in Birmingham, passed a series of provisional resolutions on the proposals set out in the Report. After District Synods have had the opportunity to consider the proposals, final resolutions will be voted on at the Conference in 2020.

The Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, President of the Conference who presided over the debates, said:

“The debate was full of grace and prayerful thought. There were many personal, often painful, stories shared and representatives listened with great care and attention.

“My prayer is that this spirit of generosity and love shown today will be reflected as the proposals are discussed across the Church.”

(Conference is the body that agrees policy for the Methodist Church. It meets annually as a group of 306 representatives, along with ecumenical and World Church associate members.)

What is distinctive about Methodism?

(The fourth in a series of short articles, reproduced from the website of the Methodist Church)

4. A grassroots movement

It is a strong feature of Methodism that ordinary lay people play a major part in the running of the Church.

Local lay people called 'stewards' take responsibility for the fabric of church buildings and manse and for the handling of money. They share with ordained ministers the role of setting direction for the churches in a particular area or 'circuit'.

Worship each week is not always led by an ordained minister, but often by a local preacher - a lay person who has been trained and authorised to lead worship and preach.

At all levels of the Methodist Church, lay people are involved in decision making, and the vice-president of the Conference is always a lay person or deacon.

This emphasis goes back to the roots of Methodism. John Wesley was very much a folk theologian who wanted to speak 'plain truth to plain people'. He took seriously the working people of his day. He addressed his preaching to them, and drew great crowds in the street or on hillsides.

He also trusted them with responsibilities. In building the local Methodist groups or 'societies', he trained many lay people who then maintained the meetings and gave pastoral care and challenge to the members. He also trained preachers, who led worship locally, rather than travelling the country like himself.

Church diary

Sun 3 Nov.	10am	Church anniversary (Rev. Faith Nyota)
Thu 7 Nov.	10.30am	Open church
Sun 10 Nov.	8.45am	Bible study breakfast (<i>Colossians</i>)
	10am	Morning worship (Rev. Stephen Mares)
Mon 11 Nov.	8pm	Open to question (<i>at Sanderstead M.C.</i>)
Thu 14 Nov.	10.30am	Open church

Sun 17 Nov.	10am	Morning worship (Brian Brooks)
	6.30pm	Holy Communion (<i>at Whitethorn Avenue</i>)
Mon 18 Nov.	10am	Craft Club (<i>Christmas wreath</i>)
Thu 21 Nov.	10.30am	Open church
Sun 24 Nov.	10am	Morning worship (Nellie Showers)
Wed 27 Nov.	2.30pm	Time for tea
Thu 28 Nov.	10.30am	Open church
Sun 1 Dec.	10am	Holy Communion (<i>tbc</i>)