



The Good News Letter

COULSDON METHODIST CHURCH

www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org

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From our minister

Dear Friends

The month of February is the time when we – and most of the other Churches of the Circuit – will consider “*God in love unites us*”, the report of the Marriage and Relationships Task Group, which was presented to Methodist Conference of 2019. It is a report which suggests some new understandings of relationships and marriage, which may lead to a significant change in Methodist practice. A copy of the Report is available at the church – and there will be multiple copies of the Study Guide available during the month.

Your opportunities to share in this consultation will be on 2nd and 16th February. On the first date there will be a brief session (half an hour) following the morning Communion service. On the 16th, we will hold a Café-style service – and the conversations and discussion will take place during the worship. Tea and coffee will be available at the start of the time – and we will take a full hour and perhaps a little more to explore the various questions the report raises – as well as including things you would expect in a service of worship.

(For those who are uncomfortable with café-style services, we have chosen 16th February because there is the option for people to come to the evening Communion on the same day. Some of us will attend both.)

I think the Methodist Church has done well in choosing the title of the report and consultation – “*God in love unites us*”. We believe that God’s love is at the heart of human relationships – and that God desires all people to flourish in their relationships. The whole report is about God’s love and how we and other people may reflect it. God’s desire is that we be united – both with each other, and within the Church. There is however a recognition that we are dealing with subjects where not everyone will agree. We may need to learn to come to different points of view and still be united in love. That may not be easy – but it is important for us to try – and along the way to discover that God in love unites us!

With every blessing,

Stephen

What is distinctive about Methodism?

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

6. Born in song

Methodists are well known as enthusiastic singers, in choirs and congregations. Singing is still an important means of learning about, sharing and celebrating our faith.

The latest authorised hymnbook of the Methodist Church is *Singing the Faith*. See www.singingthefaithplus.org.uk

The annual Methodist Conference always opens and closes with traditional hymns. Many visitors are inspired by the power of a large gathering singing unaccompanied in harmony.

John and Charles Wesley first realised the power of singing to strengthen faith when they were travelling across the Atlantic to Georgia in January 1736. There was a terrible storm at sea, but a group of German Moravian Christians inspired the brothers with their confidence in God. They preached and

sang hymns together and the Wesley brothers realised their own faith was much weaker. Two years later, back in London, both John and Charles experienced a kind of conversion in which they felt a deep assurance that they personally had received salvation.

Charles wrote in all about 6,000 hymns, and many of them are still sung today, not only by Methodists, but by Christians across the world.

World Day of Prayer

Come to the World Day of Prayer and be part of the largest church congregation in the world, on the first Friday in March.

The Day of Prayer is a global, women-led organisation, celebrated in over 170 countries and is for everyone. The same service, in different languages, travels throughout the world beginning in Samoa, then through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas, before finishing in American Samoa more than 36 hours later.

Women of Zimbabwe have prepared this year's service and they encourage us all to reflect on the difficulties and unrest that have plagued their country over many years. They share the challenges they have met, and the hopes they have for the future.

On the theme of 'Rise, take your mat and walk' they invite us to walk with them as they continue their often turbulent journey towards full reconciliation.

You are invited to join in the service on Friday 6 March at 10.30am at the Old Coulsdon Congregational Church, and afterwards to stay for refreshments and meet friends from other churches.

Floating Shelter report

This year we welcomed 26 people (23 men and 3 women) into the shelter during the course of our seven-week season. Over the season we provided 76 guest nights of accommodation. We got to know about a dozen of the guests very well with a few of them staying all or most of the season with us. A few moved into shared accommodation with the support of their referring agencies and the possibility of additional support from the CCFS who could help with the purchase of start-up essentials. Several guests chose to stay only a short time in the shelter before leaving voluntarily and a few more had to be excluded as they were unable to adhere to the basic agreement of behaviour that they had signed up to at the start. For those who used the shelter well it was a realised opportunity to take a step forward in their lives along a more stable path of employment and a valued home life.

(This is a very brief summary – there is a copy of the full illustrated report at the back of the church.)

Church diary

Sun 2 Feb.	10am <i>followed by</i>	Holy Communion (Rev. Stephen Mares) discussion on "God in love unites us"
Thu 6 Feb.	10.30am 1.30pm 8pm	Open church (Prayers at 11.45) Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>) Church Council (<i>in Chapel</i>)
Sat 8 Feb.	9am	Working party (<i>cleaning and maintenance</i>)
Sun 9 Feb.	8.45am 10am	Bible study breakfast Morning worship (own arrangements)
Mon 10 Feb.	12.30pm 8pm	Forum lunch (<i>at the Fleeting Brook, Caterham</i>) Open to Question (<i>at Sanderstead M.C.</i>)
Thu 13 Feb.	10.30am 1.30pm	Open church (Prayers at 11.45) Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sun 16 Feb.	10am 6.30pm	Café church (Rev. Stephen Mares) Holy Communion (Rev. Stephen Mares)

Mon 17 Feb.	10am	Craft Club (<i>Plastic canvas chicken</i>)
Thu 20 Feb.	10.30am	Open church (Prayers at 11.45)
	1.30pm	Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sun 23 Feb.	10am	Morning worship (Peace Furusa)
Wed 26 Feb.	2.30pm	Time for Tea
Thu 27 Feb.	10.30am	Open church (Prayers at 11.45)
	1.30pm	Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sun 1 Mar	10am	Holy Communion (tbc)