



The Good News Letter

COULSDON METHODIST CHURCH

www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org

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From our minister

Dear Friends,

About this time of year – give or take a week – I become very interested in the Methodist Conference. This interest is assisted by live streams of most of Conference which I can watch on my computer. My first very clear memory of doing this comes from a year when I was due to be a representative at Conference – but suffered an attack of cellulitis. I ended up having one night in hospital – followed by 5 days of return visits to receive half-hour infusions of the necessary drugs. As I had cleared my diary, I returned home with plenty of time to watch the Conference I should have been attending in person. Last year even representatives to Conference attended from their own computers – and this year it is a mix of some physically present and a lot still at home.

The big debate of this year is likely to be around the “God in love unites us” report – with its attempt to consider many relationships experienced by members of the Methodist Church. As you will remember from our own conversations – or before the first lock-down – the report is wide-ranging and attempts to answer some of the questions raised particularly by our young people. For example, is cohabitation acceptable – before or as an alternative to marriage? I suspect in the end most parts of the report will be forgotten and the debate will be mainly about whether partners of the same sex are allowed to marry in a Methodist church. If such permission is granted, it will be up to each local church and local minister to decide if they want to make use of that new freedom.

I spent part of this morning watching some of the preliminary skirmishes, but the Conference returns to the substantive debate in a few days’ time. That will be too late for this Good Newsletter – but you will doubtless get to hear the outcome. It may even make the national press!

What I have also listened to were the speeches of the President and Vice-President for the start of Conference. Both are still available via the Methodist church web-site. This year’s President is Revd. Sonia Hicks, who is the first black woman to be our President. Her speech made extensive use of her own experiences and those of her family – not all of which reflected well on the British Methodist church. Some of our failings are from long ago, but I am not sure that we have got issues of race and inclusion right yet. Positively she held up before us the idea of God’s Table: An Invitation for all. One of the Biblical passages she shared thoughts about is the Phoenician woman who comes to plead for healing for her daughter – and has quite a robust discussion with Jesus before he would do so. The following extract captures well her plea for inclusion: *“How do we acknowledge the place that others are entitled to at God’s table? What are we willing to give up in order to give them space? What does this look like in terms of Black people, young people, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community? If we think that their rights have nothing to do with us, then we do not yet understand this Gospel reading. As Christians we are to mirror the grace and the mercy of God. We are to find ways of issuing God’s invitation of acceptance to those we meet on a daily basis. No ifs, no buts.”*

I leave you with those words to consider our common life at Coulsdon and whether we truly allow everyone “a place at the table.”

As this Newsletter covers 2 months, I feel I must also mention that the Young Christian Climate network are carrying out a prophetic action to bring home the message of our climate emergency. The young people have begun a relay walking from Cornwall and the G7 meeting last month all the way to

Glasgow in time for the COP26 climate summit which takes place in October and November. According to information I heard at Churches Together in South London, the young people on this relay will be passing through London in early August. There will be some events available for all to share in – one I think at Southwark Cathedral. Perhaps you will want to show solidarity with these young people as they try to persuade our leaders to do the right thing.

With love and prayers,

Stephen

STOP PRESS...

The Conference has consented in principle to the marriage of same-sex couples on Methodist premises and by Methodist ministers and other authorised officers. And, yes, it did make the national press – it was the first time the editor had heard the Methodist Church mentioned on the Radio 4 six o'clock news for ages, though coverage might have been slightly more extensive but for some football match or other... If you missed it, you can read the story at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-57658161

Leroy Logan meets Hannah Scott-Joynt

on Saturday 03 July 2021 at 5.30pm on Premier Radio and then at www.methodistlondon.org.uk/the-podcast-place/travellers-tales

Leroy Logan is only too aware that to be played by A-list actor John Boyega is pretty amazing! His story, was told in 'Red, White and Blue' as part of film director Steve McQueen's *Small Axe* drama series for the BBC last year... and it's quite a story - of 30 years' service in the Metropolitan Police, entering the force when it was a significantly hostile work environment for a black officer, starting his training just after his father had been brutally assaulted by two police officers, and, very much as a result of an acute awareness from his own and other BAME officers experiences, becoming one of the founders of the Black Police Association. Leroy absolutely recognised that charge of 'institutional racism' in the Met, declared by the Macpherson enquiry after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, but stuck with it through some very challenging times, rising to the rank of superintendent, with a strong belief in working to change the culture from within. He's always had passion for 'good policing', and in mentoring and empowering marginalised young people to be a positive force in their communities. For Leroy, policing has never been 'just a job' - his strong faith has helped him persevere, and be a real catalyst and driver for fundamental change in the Met, and he says, now he's retired, that despite the massive toll his 30-year career took on him, he can look back and it all 'makes sense'.

Interviews still to come include:

Rev. Sonia Hicks, President of the Methodist Conference 2021/2022

Episodes still available include:

Rev. Michaela Youngson, a Chair of the London District of the Methodist Church for the last nine years.

Church diary

Where possible, Sunday services will also be streamed to YouTube live or Facebook live.

Both can be accessed via the Church website www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org using the appropriate tab.

After the service a direct link to the service will be sent to members whose email addresses we have.

This is correct at the time of writing – please check our church website for up-to-date details, or contact one of the stewards.

Sun 4 July	10am	Holy Communion (Rev. Stephen Mares)
Thu 8 July	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 11 July	10am	Morning worship (Curtis Juman)
Wed 14 July	7pm	Circuit Easter offering service
Thu 15 July	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 18 July	10am	Morning worship (<i>local arrangements</i>)

Thu 22 July	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 25 July	10am	Morning worship (Cheryl Baker)
Thu 29 July	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 1 Aug.	10am	Holy Communion (Rev. Stephen Mares)
Thu 5 Aug.	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 8 Aug.	10am	Morning worship (Brian Brooks)
	3pm	Circuit celebration service (Revds. Faith Nyota & Stephen Mares) (<i>final service at Hurst Green Methodist Church; space may be limited</i>)
Thu 12 Aug.	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 15 Aug.	10am	Morning worship (Rev. Stephen Mares)
Thu 19 Aug.	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 22 Aug	10am	Morning worship (Rev. John Nyota)
Thu 26 Aug.	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 29 Aug.	10am	Morning worship (<i>local arrangements</i>)
Thu 2 Sept.	11am	Open Church; 11.45, Thursday prayers
Sun 5 Sept.	10am	Holy Communion (Rev. Stephen Mares)