

grapevine

April 2021
Issue Number 38



God for All - stories of inclusion

East Anglia District of the Methodist Church

Homeless person on the street

You look at me and what do you see –
Just one more loser in life's headlong race –
A drop-out, a failure who can't stand life's pace?
Choosing to be without a friend
but the dog at my side on a piece of string?
Choosing for comfort my sorrows to drown
in a bottle of Scotch that will make me sing
with a hollow happiness that lasts but a moment –
a boozier, a loser, an empty husk?

I look at you and what do I see?
just an ordinary man, by life's harshness torn,
battered by pain till you feel numb and worn –
huddled alone, all comfort denied,
hungry for food, starved of love and care
and a chance to win back self respect.
I do not condemn you, nor cast you aside –
I reach out to touch you, your burden to share.
For I see not the 'loser' whose life has been wrecked,
but a person of worth and loved by God.

© Helen M Seeley, 2021

Welcome to the April 2021 edition of *grapevine* 'God for All - stories of inclusion'.

We start and end this edition with two poems by Helen Seeley, which beautifully illustrate the theme that God is for all.

In between we have an array of articles, including those about the inclusion of members of the Deaf community, people of all races and ethnicities, same sex couples, children and young people, non-church goers, people unable to attend church in person and people who cannot access online services.

We have 3 articles about how January Light spread the light of God's love during what could have been a difficult month for many.

Our love to all has been conveyed by the awakening of a new project with inclusion as its touchstone, by the handing out of gifts and by sharing friendship and hope, either in person or linking with neighbours and loved ones through the use of online technology.

We all need each other and we can learn how to appreciate other people's differences by exploring different personality types.

Technology has enabled us to extend our services across the globe such as the linking of churches in North Norfolk to a church in Cape Town. It has made us far more inclusive, but when lockdown ends will we adjust to these new circumstances and opportunities or will we just return to life as it was before? The last article affirms that after lockdown we must address our exploitation of the natural world. This leads nicely to our theme for the next Synod in September of Eco-District.

Please remember this is your magazine. If there is something you would like included, we would love to hear from you.

The next issue is due in September 2021. You will find contact details on page 28.

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Introduction

Revd Julian M Pursehouse



Dear Friends,

I am delighted, as the Chair of the East Anglia District, to commend this latest edition of Grapevine that focuses upon the theme of God for All – Stories of Inclusion. I am also delighted that there has been a ready supply of stories and articles that are pertinent to the overarching theme.

Some of you will recall that in 2011 a new hymn book was authorized and distributed for use in the British Methodist Church – **Singing the Faith** along with other hymn / song collections became staple diet in our Methodist worship week by week. Those of you with a long memory will recall the conflicting reactions that are normally provoked by the announcement of a new hymnody – the very act of compiling such a collection is both a work of inclusion (often of more modern and contemporary verse) and exclusion (often the older and more traditional material). There is a delicate balance to be struck on such occasions in the life of the church.

When **Singing the Faith** was introduced, some of the new appearances in the book became firm favourites with Methodist congregations and week by week they were gladly and joyfully sung. One such

hymn was **409 STF ‘Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live’** – I have lost count how many times I have witnessed a Methodist congregation, singing with great gusto, particularly when you get to the words of the chorus:

**‘All are welcome,
All are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.’**

In one sense this is a joyful expression of our naturally optimistic, Arminian view of the Gospel of God’s grace which finds a natural home in the Methodist tradition particularly in the light of the Wesley brothers’ insistence that the Gospel message is for all without exception in opposition to a more Calvinistic view of God’s grace which was prevalent in the eighteenth century.

The stories and articles in this edition of Grapevine should give us pause for thought and reflection – they point to a Church that is becoming more at ease with inclusion and accessibility whether that be the Deaf community, the BAME community, those in same sex relationships or indeed those who feel naturally disenfranchised by the Church.

However, we cannot be complacent, as this is only ever a work in progress and clearly there is some considerable journey still to make if the church is going to be a truly inclusive Church that upholds the free grace of God for all without exception. There are several articles in this edition that hint at the parameters of this ongoing work, not

least the reference, by Charity Nzewgu, to the major Conference **Report Justice, Dignity and Solidarity.**

Happy reading in this Eastertide!

Revd Julian M Pursehouse
Chair of the District

A token of our love for everyone in the community

Aileen Fox



A small congregation gathered socially distanced in The Pilgrim Methodist Church Blakeney. The theme “Love came down at Christmas”. At the end of the service little goodie bags were handed out each containing heart Christmas tree decorations, chocolates, bookmarks to colour, a Christmas nativity silhouette with the words “Love came down at Christmas” and a Christmas card saying, *‘With Love from the Pilgrim Methodist Church, Blakeney’*.



Pilgrim Methodist Church, Blakeney

This was building on the regular ‘takeaway bags’ produced by our Rural Church Planter. Spares were taken to those unable to attend, others took bags for friends and neighbours, but there were still some left over.

A spur of the moment decision was made to wander down to Blakeney Quay and hand out bags. We offered bags to people passing by and the recurrent theme was ‘that’s lovely but we don’t have anything to give you’. It was a struggle to get through to them that this was a gift with no strings attached, we did not want anything back. The gifts were very well received and given as a token of our love for everyone in the community.

Are we as Christians seen by others as always asking for money? We could have given lots more bags out, and we learnt later that those given out by the congregation to neighbours were equally appreciated.

Aileen Fox
Member of the Pilgrim Methodist Church
Blakeney and Walsingham

The Hive – a place of creativity, spirituality and well-being

Sarah Rodgers



Where do we begin to talk about, 'inclusion'? As a same-sex couple who have been together for 34 years, questions over inclusion have been a constant thread through our lives. We became civil partners in 2006 with our Minister and his wife as witnesses, and married in 2013 although not, as we would have wished, in church. Our common bond has been not only our love for one another, but also our love of music which has been the source of



Geraldine Allen and Sarah Rodgers

our professional lives, together with our shared faith and spiritual journeys.

With that backdrop, and as members at Swaffham, we are now part of Pioneering Pathways, and deeply involved in the new mission and outreach of Methodism, with a heart and passion for new places for new people.

So what exactly is The Hive? Well, we don't exactly know, but we find ourselves called to help to bring to life a project which has inclusion as its touchstone – inclusivity of people, of ideas, of activities and of aspiration. It's a blank canvas which, we think, will be coloured by the talented, questioning, energetic and thoughtful brush strokes people make upon it. Located in Great Cressingham, Norfolk, at a small Methodist church which, despite its vibrant history, no longer sustains a congregation, The Hive is poised to become a place of community and encounter.

We launched in December last year to 50 plus people in socially-distanced bubbles spread around the chapel's

grounds, giving three performances of a son et lumière called The Christmas Story. Following this, we planned to adopt one of the January Light strands, 6 for 60 minutes. Then came the full lockdown and so we moved online, with a weekly series of chats called, 'Rummaging Through'. Meantime, we have created a Facebook page and put ourselves into 'listening mode' with partners from Swaffham, David and Susan Jones.

The gospel narratives demonstrate

many times over how Jesus made it possible for the people he met to find their way to God, through parable, miracle, example or personal encounter. He met them where they were and communicated in their language, speaking to their situation and identifying their need. He was creative, he was spiritual and he was concerned for their well-being.

In trying to discern and determine the purpose of The Hive, we have been inspired by these gospel characteristics and are describing The Hive as, 'a place

of creativity, spirituality and well-being, connecting to people in today's world.' We hope music will be important at The Hive, together with dance, poetry and story-telling. We look to many and varied spiritual traditions - Celtic, Ignation and the Desert Fathers and Mothers.



David and Susan Jones

We seek balance and well-being through holistic practices such as yoga, and outdoor adventures with astronomy and rewilding.

Simply by being human, each and every person is on a spiritual journey; we hope that at The Hive, we can give a welcome to people who are searching for a deeper meaning in their lives, for safe spaces and enduring values. Our aim is to create an inviting, accessible, inclusive place, indoors and outdoors, for reflection, meditation, discovery and wonder. With God's help, we will.

Sarah Rodgers
Central Norfolk Circuit

All are created in God's image and all are one in Christ Jesus

Revd Charity Nzegwu



Over the last year I have been involved with the development of The Methodist Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity alongside others. As we came to the Anniversary of Lockdown, I lamented the loss of life in such large numbers and the disproportionate numbers of deaths of Black and Asian healthcare workers to COVID 19. Secondly the death of George Floyd in the USA which led to global protests. Strangely, I also found myself reflecting on Racial Justice Sunday on the lectionary. This led me to consider our coming together in our Churches once a year to reflect on the issue of racism in our country as well as in our church. It struck me that most of the Racial Justice Sundays I have attended; the invited speaker was a black person. As I reflected on this further, I questioned whether such an assumption, which seems to suggest that black people know what racism is, in a way that white people don't, or as if somehow black people have an ethnicity while white people don't,



always serves our shared vocation. Of course, as a Methodist I believe that there is only one race, the human race, and therefore, I wondered whether, even in our modern world, we still see race and ethnicity as interchangeable. Ethnicity is a significant part of anyone's identity because it is based on observable characteristics, but these are not fixed biological differences that imply hierarchy or superiority. In effect, we are all ethnic, whether that means we share characteristics, such as language, cultures, geography, nationality, or a shared history. On the other hand, there are those who want to downplay the historic injustice of racism. This is done by presenting an imbalance in relation to black and white by setting it in a wider context of other critical issues as they relate to other social and political concerns. So, rather than focusing on issues pertaining to racism, given the murder of George Floyd, we end up also looking at questions pertaining to many kinds of difference, from class, disability, sexual orientation, and

others, all under the general, and interminably malleable label of diversity. Consequently, these people continue to argue that all lives matter. They are right, but it is also important to underscore the fact that all lives matter when black lives matter too! We are all made in the image of God, and therefore the image of God is incomplete without black lives!

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, America led to a global outrage witness by the many protests standing by the Black Lives Matter movement. I draw encouragement from knowing that, throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, he calls us to compassion. Jesus' compassion reached out to those who were weak, the despised the oppressed, the dispossessed, and those on the margins of society. For many centuries Black people have been devalued, dismissed, and disregarded in all aspects of society. The Methodist Church in Britain has had a long history of being an advocate for social justice and challenging injustice. Work on racial justice was brought to the Conference in 1962, long before the Government's

introduction of the Race Relations Act (1976). These are just a few examples. Underpinning all this work, is our firm belief that all are created in God's image and all are one in Christ Jesus. The Methodist Church continues to call out injustice and to work towards justice. It is encouraging that the Methodist Conference voted to make the Inclusive Church Strategy a priority.

And in this moment of our history, as in many other moments gone by, Black people are hurting, crushed by the weight of racial injustices and inequalities. Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are hurting. In this struggle against the evil of racial injustice, Jesus calls us to love one another as he has loved us. Jesus calls us to reimagine a new paradigm that models human flourishing. That is an offer to all, which is life giving, life protecting and life enhancing. Micah 6:8 aptly articulates our part in all this: "The Lord has shown us what is good - to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God".

Revd Charity Nzegwu
Minister in the Cambridge Circuit
District EDI Officer

Racial Justice Symposium
Sat, 15 May 2021
10:00 – 12:30 BST, Online

A time for listening to people's experiences of racism in the Church and community.

A time for sharing our experiences and visions for action.

This gathering is led by the East Anglia District of the Methodist Church in Britain.

All are welcome!

Tickets and further information available on www.eventbrite.co.uk

A Foretaste of Heaven

Revd Anne Richardson



I dream of a day when everyone who wants to come to church, and be part of the Church community, can do just that, and be loved and accepted as they are. I don't believe we are there yet.

Part of my ministry is with the Deaf community. Whenever I talk about Deafness, I know that some of the people in the group will tell me their own stories of hearing loss. Many people struggle. Hearing loss increases social isolation - add in a global pandemic, masks and screens, and the situation worsens considerably! When so much in our church life and worship depends on being able to listen, losing hearing can cut you off. I do not want to belittle what folks go through. Hearing loss can be devastating, something which the RNID claims affects 1 in 5 people. In the average congregation, how many will that be? We need to take this seriously as a Church, ask hard of hearing people how we can help, so they know they are noticed,

considered and valued. A little thought really makes all the difference for so many.

When I talk about the Deaf community, I am referring to the small minority of profoundly Deaf people who use BSL as their language of choice. They always joke that they are the last to know any information and the last to leave any venue! They are frequently the last to ever consider attending church too. They are not included. They don't even have access. Wouldn't it be amazing if in every circuit, there was one church where BSL was used and recognised, so that Deaf people can come whenever they want, just the same as hearing people? Would it not be amazing if circuits supported a few members to learn BSL to a high enough level to make this happen? It will take a few years, but it would be possible!



Screenshot taken when using a hymn on ChristianBSL
(Reproduced with permission of ChristianBSL)

In March, the District Day of Prayer fell on the same day as our monthly Deaf church service. We were on Zoom, so it felt



that voice be heard. That day, for that hour, we belonged together.

God for all. Absolutely!

I pray for that day when, what we declare now by faith, we will see in truth in our churches and circuits, week by week.

Revd Anne Richardson
Minister in the Central Norfolk Circuit,
and with Sign the Cross Deaf Ministry

appropriate to open our virtual doors to others, and provide an interpreter to interpret the BSL into English. As we prayed together, Deaf and hearing, in BSL and English, it was a foretaste of heaven. It's been said that diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice and belonging is having



Beatitudes for Friends of the Deaf

Author unknown

***Blessed** are those who seem to know
that lipreading is difficult and slow*

***Blessed** are they that shake my hand
and write notes to help me understand*

***Blessed** are those that know that I long
to hear voices, music and song*

***Blessed** are they who seem to see
when I'm lost in a group of two or three*

***Blessed** are they who take time out
to explain to me what they're talking about*

***Blessed** are they who are patient and kind
that give me comfort and peace of mind*

***Blessed** are they who have a smile
that makes my life seem more worthwhile*

***Blessed** are they who make it known
by faith in God's promise, I'll not walk alone.*

***Blessed** is each who understands
as I travel to the city 'not made with hands'*

January Light

Spreading the light of God's love in January



It's been a tough time for many with Covid 19 and January can often be challenging anyway.

January Light was a response from the Methodist Church in East Anglia and in Bedfordshire, Essex and

Hertfordshire.

The following articles describe how January Light was spread around the District, sharing friendship and hope and embracing whole communities to feel welcome in our churches.

January Light at Acle

Sara Edwards



throughout the month of February.

This had a great response from all age groups, with many crafted, knitted and sewn hearts submitted. An artist painted over 60 stones with cheerful messages and images which were gradually left around the village; one was found by someone who had just lost a family member to Covid and they thanked the church for 'this lovely act of kindness during these crazy times.' The church Facebook page was used to connect with those in the wider

Acle Methodist Church used the January Light project to reach out to the local community. Members had been decorating the church windows each month on a theme, as a reminder that the church was still active despite the building being closed for worship. In January a 'heARTwork appeal' was launched, encouraging people to make hearts which would be displayed



community by posting uplifting messages and images which significantly grew its number of page likes. Since the start of the pandemic, the church had missed those families and friends who came to Café Church, so invitations, some by personal

postcards, were sent to an online 'Light Service' of informal worship and interaction, and even a fledgling online choir. This was so successful, it was agreed it should continue on a regular basis.

Sara Edwards
Worship Leader, Norfolk Broads Circuit

January Light at St Ives

Revd Heather Walker



Our house is on a crossroads where the verges are wide, so we feel rather remote from our immediate neighbours. However, lots of cars drive past and quite a lot of people pass us on the pavement on the way to the shops or out walking. So when the idea of January Light was raised, I could see that we were in a good spot to put lights in the window.

A good look at the District website gave me the idea of making 'stained glass' panels including my lighthouse. We put them in our front bedroom window with lights on all day and into the evening to draw attention to them. We left the lights in the garden we had over Christmas, and created a 'prayer tree' next to the pavement with a tub of ribbons and an invitation to passers-by to tie on ribbons and make a wish for 2021 or say a prayer.

Our church had supplies of the postcards, and I sent one to each household nearby where we have had some contact with neighbours since we moved here. With a mention of our concern for them, I invited them to use the prayer tree if and when they were passing.

We have a sense that our small effort at outreach has made a difference. Several of our neighbours made a point of thanking us for the postcards when we saw them next. One sent us a note in response. Ribbons appeared on the prayer tree. People waved and smiled as they passed the house. Perhaps we did bring just a tiny ray of brightness and hope into a few people's lives through the dark January days.

Revd Heather Walker, Supernumerary Minister
St Neots & Huntingdon Circuit





January Light at Histon

Joy McCombie and Rosemary Watson



At Histon in the Cambridge Circuit our initial supply of 50 Lighthouse postcards were given to our church members inviting them to send personal messages to anyone they wished.

A further 75 folded cards using the same design, including our own church logo, were ordered from Vistaprint. These were sent to our local doctors' surgery, schools, churches, funeral directors, and community groups. Greetings were also sent to regular attendees of our coffee shops.

Our outreach widened by sending cards to Critical Care Units at Addenbrookes and Royal Papworth Hospitals. Wishing to include all hospital staff, the Chief Executive was contacted who circulated our message via their internal newsletter and media channels.

This response encouraged us to contact Ambulance, Police and Fire Services.

As more cards were needed we contacted Vistaprint who generously donated 50

cards, saying they felt honoured to be part of what we were doing and applauded the delight we were spreading in these difficult times.

A coastal display in our church window included a lighthouse, seagulls, lifeboat etc. RNLI postcards, coloured by

children in our church family, have shared light and hope in our High Street.

We were moved by the appreciative responses we received and we are pleased that a positive message of hope has radiated from our church so widely.



Joy McCombie and
Rosemary Watson
Cambridge Circuit

God for All in Elmsett

Liz Cope



Almost twelve months ago we were plunged into darkness, having to close our doors and stay at home. For many of us the inability to gather together on a Sunday morning was disorientating. The doors may have been closed but the church was very much “open for business”.

We couldn't meet together in person to worship, however we were able to meet in spirit every Sunday morning at 10am. One member of the congregation, particularly those who were self-isolating, was asked to choose a favourite hymn. People were then invited via our weekly notices to either sing along to a recording of that hymn or read the words written out in the notices. This was followed by saying the

“Together @ 10”, our first attempt at engaging with the community in a new and different way. We even had videos of members saying the Lord's Prayer, whilst walking in the fields, along the seashore at Felixstowe, or whilst observing a beehive.

We have been very much aware that, although many people have access online to worship via Zoom or Facebook, there are those who do not have access to the internet or computers. We have maintained recorded worship via DVD or a written worship Service included in the weekly notices.

Over these past months of Lockdowns, we have reached out to our local community in a whole variety of ways beyond regular worship, delivering meals to the lonely and isolated, Christmas hampers and regular flower deliveries.

During advent we joined with the local Anglican



Lord's Prayer at 10am, in the knowledge that many others from the congregation were doing the same. We called this



Church to build an Advent calendar of stars in windows around the village, as well as on our tree and in the church car park, culminating with a star in the church porch on Christmas Eve ready to welcome Christ into our lives again. We even had a loo roll Christmas tree continuing from our earlier “loo roll challenge”.

Being unable to invite people to our Carol Service, we took our Carols out onto the street along with members of our Fellowship Band. We even had “groupies” following us from one stop to another – all socially distanced of course.

Our doors, unfortunately, remain locked at the time of writing, but the church continues to be very much open and reaching further than ever before. We



managed to share a little love on Valentine’s Day, inviting the local Primary School Children, the congregation and village community to “hang a heart” on the Lent Cross which braved the icy wind and snow!

Liz Cope
Circuit Representative, Ipswich Circuit

A Story of Unplanned Inclusion

Drew Robson Martin

I love to read stories about how folk felt God calling them to some work. I would like to share a story of wandering into God’s work. 2020 will be remembered as the year of lockdowns. I, like many, have found the year challenging but I give thanks for the limited impact we experienced here in Norfolk.

Back in April, a dear friend, Zephney,

who is a semi-retired Presbyterian minister from South Africa, sent an email to friends telling of the struggles of the church family at St Andrew’s church in Cape Town. Facing lockdown and loss of employment, falling outside the racial categories for unemployment benefits, seventeen families were facing starvation. It was an easy decision to make to send a donation to the church

to help with their projected food relief programme, after all, it did not cost me much and involved no real effort. If only I had remembered the words, “Do not give to charity, take charity to the people.” Or even the words from Corinthians, “If I have not love, I gain nothing.”

One morning a young Congolese refugee, despairing and starving, hung himself at the front gates of the Presbytery. Unknown to the church family, nevertheless they decided to accept a responsibility for Calvin, fighting to claim his body and arranging a funeral. For Calvin’s family, travel to South Africa was beyond their means, and I was privileged to be part of getting the family to Cape Town and attending the funeral by Zoom. And this was when I started to stop giving to charity and learned to love.

From greetings sent on Facebook, a friendship developed. I wrote a poem, *Jerusalema akhaya lami* for my new friends, and they in turn recorded their *Jerusalema* dance challenge. And then, we hit on an idea – what about joining together in worship? We chose Racial Justice Sunday and gathered by Zoom. The service sheet I prepared included English, Afrikaans, Chichewa and Shona to represent the most spoken languages. Rev Natalie Barnard from St



Andrew’s preached. One reading was read in Shona, and one in English, prayers were in English and Afrikaans, one hymn was in Zulu and the blessing was read in Afrikaans and English.

Afterwards, friends from all over spoke of their reactions. Many had said how deeply moving they had found it all, and how it had brought news articles to life. For me, I was able to share that I had felt humbled, renewed and encouraged through the whole process, but the

words that brought tears to my eyes were from Rev Natalie and the elders – “You made us feel so welcomed and so valued.”

I have been reticent about writing this – I tend to avoid the limelight where I can, and I certainly do not want to make out I am some sort of saint. But I hope by sharing our story, I can encourage you to stop giving to charity, but instead take your love where it is needed and draw others in.

Drew Robson-Martin
North Norfolk Circuit

This article gives a personal view and we would like to encourage readers to not stop giving to charity but to also take their love to where it is needed and draw others in as has been suggested.

The Grapevine Editorial Team

Appreciating differences in other people

Revd Adam Stevenson

I was an undergraduate at Bangor University when I first came across the theory of personality types. I found it such a powerful framework that made sense of why I did certain things in certain ways that I continued to be involved in research with my colleague, the Revd Prof Leslie Francis. Many people, when they think of personality types, know of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and tell me they did it once (often at work) and they were told that they were an, “ISFJ”, for example. Their experience was of being put in a box.

If time is given to the underlying principles and theory grounded in preference, then it can be a wonderfully freeing and inclusive framework. I think it is more like a house - we each choose to spend time in just a few rooms, but there are many we can inhabit and explore, but let's begin in a different place.



Bangor University

Genesis 1:27: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”.

Here we find that our human differences are part of the created order. Difference is built into what makes us human and by extension our differences in race, sexuality and personality type are part of our humanness within the image of God. This is a theology of individual difference. With that as a starting point, we can see that the theory of type also helps us to explore those differences, because all types are valid, and no one type is better than any other. It just helps us to see what we prefer, one way over another.

Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung, first introduced the concept of personality types in 1921 and his theory is based on understanding two mental processes. A decision making process and an information gathering process. In order to make decisions people use both:

- *Thinking - being logical, objective, task-focused, and*
- *Feeling - seeking values, harmony, relationship,*

but have a preference for one over the other, meaning that preference will also be more developed.

In gathering information, people use

- *Sensing - looking at facts, detail, in the here and now, and*
- *INtuition - imagining ideas, big picture, future-focused.*

Jung also suggested that each person gained energy from either:

- *The outside world of objects and people - Extroverts, or*
- *The inner world of reflection and contemplation - Introverts.*

Katherine Briggs added a fourth dimension to Jung's work that she had observed concerning how people approach the outside world. Again, people prefer one attitude over the other:

- *Perceiving describes those who approach the outside world with spontaneity, and who go with the flow, keeping their options open, and*
- *Judging describes those who approach the outside world with planning and by coming to conclusions.*

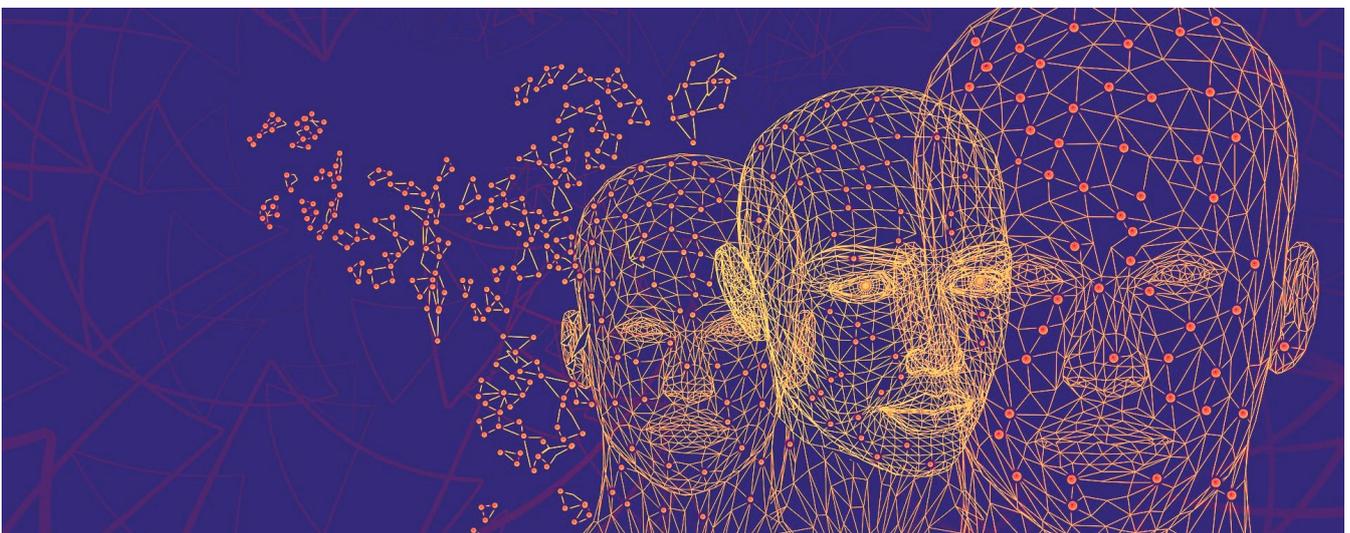
It is a combination of these preferred ways of being that give the four letters of someone's personality type,

creating sixteen types in all.

By understanding our own personality type we can see what are our most natural ways of behaving, and understand how that might not always fit with other people or expectations. Thus we can also come to appreciate the differences we see in others, and not jump to blame, but learn to see the value of approaching something differently.

We all need each other's preferences too – for instance, the Minister with a preference for intuition may well have many ideas, but will need others with a preference for sensing to ground them in reality and see which will work well in their context. Exploring personality type can be a healthy pursuit for us all, as individuals and as teams, and even as churches. We all need each other, thank God for our differences.

Revd Adam J Stevenson is the Superintendent Minister of the Fens Circuit, a certified MBTI Practitioner and is available for 1:1 and team MBTI feedbacks as well as running MBTI days focused on spirituality and prayer, team building, or tailored to specific needs.



District Agricultural Chaplain's Report

George Frost



Day of prayer, children back to school, Brexit delivered (more on that later) and more rain forecast.

I can't remember a year when there have been so many challenges and I suppose it has been the same for everyone. Apart from two services at chapel in October and a vaccination I have been nowhere. I thank God for the technology which is available so at least we can make contact and exchange views. I wonder what will happen when we are allowed to meet for worship in our buildings again. Some might say do we need to return and maintain our buildings when those on Zoom have been so active and stimulated by the online worship?

From a farming angle it has been yet another wet Autumn, even more than the previous Autumn. Drilling was done with fertiliser spreaders rather than conventional drills, and I must say that some crops are looking quite well.

Sugar beet is being harvested in March, in appalling conditions. Thank goodness the factories understood the conditions, and they need the beet anyway so are keeping some factories open. It will be interesting to see if the land, especially the heavy land, will be dry enough for spring drilling.

We all know that 'Brexit' was rushed through at the last minute, and the outcome is not really satisfactory, especially for the fishermen, who had hoped for a larger share of the fishing rights, and certainly more protection of our borders. The pig industry is struggling with exports to Europe being cut back. Germany used to buy a lot of pork from us, but has created other markets, hence a lot of pork without a market. At least Morrison's have promised to obtain all British commodities, including meat. So perhaps there could be some good news for farmers. Please encourage your colleagues and friends to buy food with the little Red Tractor logo on.



Any cereal grower without livestock has had a better year, with prices for feed wheat around £200.00 but yields were down because of the dry spring last year. With the contrasts in the weather in this country I thank God for his promise in Genesis, that summer and winter, seed time and harvest shall not

cease, with the rainbow to emphasise that.

Looking back over the last 12 months I can appreciate that we all need a time to reflect and although we have had difficulties keeping in contact with some farmers, the support organisations RABI (The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution), FCN (Farm Community Network) and YANA (You Are Not Alone) have all responded with support during these difficult times. Mental health and finance have been very challenging issues to deal with. Prayer is a great healer, but it doesn't put money in

the bank.

From October to 13th January my wife Muriel was in hospital and I know a lot of you were aware of that and I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the prayers and support during those times. With the pandemic rife this was an additional concern, but thank God, although showing a positive test result, she had no other symptoms.

May we keep praying and listening to God's calling.

George W Frost
District Agricultural Chaplain

Lockdowns reaching parts not previously reached

Revd Jacqui Horton



Church life used to be pretty straightforward. You were part of the church by going to church; the existence of Methodism in a place was defined by a building – however much we insisted that ‘the church is the people’. The pandemic has changed all that. Something had been needed to shake us all up and Covid-19 has done that. Now, being part of the church means receiving Worship at Home sheets, or newsletters, or watching YouTube, or participating in Zoom services. Loving each other and our neighbour has taken place by email and telephone and communication on social media, far

more than ever before. We have extended our reach and so become hugely more inclusive!

The big question is – will we simply go back to where we were before? The cork has been let out of the bottle, will we push everything back and attempt to cork the bottle up again? Or, difficult though it will be, will we – for the sake of inclusivity and mission and reshaping the Church for the twenty-first century – be challenged and guided by the Holy Spirit into a new world of Church defined by community, digital as well as physical networking, and choice?

Revd Jacqui Horton
Superintendent Minister, Central Norfolk Circuit

What is 3Generate 365?

Ben Orton



3 Generate 365 is a year-round process of engagement with children and young people in their local setting, to enable them to listen to God, find out what God is saying, explore their own faith and feel confident to begin sharing their faith with others. 3Generate 365 will explore topics of prayer, being one body in Christ, prophecy and covenant. 8-23 year olds will be encouraged to take part in different ways through activities with groups, using the 3Gen App, attending the 'Tune In' events and sharing their thoughts and their views for the future with their District Ambassadors who are supporting 3Gen 365 locally.

The 3Generate App offers a lot of resources such as different prayers and advice on returning to school, and it also offers a daily prayer. You can also create a journal entry to express and note down your journey with God and explain how your relationship with God has developed. There are also sections to have your say on things and when the time comes, help the rest of the

young people vote for who they want to be the next Youth President and the representatives for different jobs.

An event run as part of 3Generate is called Fridays@5.17. This is an opportunity for all children and young people across Britain to come together, stop what they are doing and pray at the same time. This can be individually

or as a group. This also gives young people time to come together and listen to what God is saying to them.

During the coming weeks District Ambassadors will be in contact with groups and young people to find out about the types of things they get up to and discover more about their journey with God. There will also be opportunities for young people to join in with discussions on what they think their future should look like.

For more information on 3Gen and the app, always check the website:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/3generate/3generate-365/>

Ben Orton
3Generate Ambassador





Revd Rebecca Rogers, a minister in the West Norfolk Circuit, has set up a JustGiving page to raise £2,000 by crowdfunding to help people in low-income countries access the COVID-19 vaccine:

"I'm sure, like me, you are hugely grateful that your loved ones will be receiving the COVID vaccine soon. Some already may have had it. What is sure, is that by the end of the year, everyone in the UK will have been offered this potentially life saving treatment, so that we can go back to doing the things we love.

Tragically, this is not true for millions of people in the world.

It is estimated that only 10% of people in low-income countries will receive the vaccine this year. Many will have to wait until 2024.

The inequality in our world is desperate, but there are things we can do..."

Please visit Rebecca's JustGiving page if you would like to find out what you can do to help: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/donatethecostofyourvaccine>

At the time of writing, Rebecca has raised £25,076.



Zoomers' Lament



Ten little Zoom screens, all logged in on time.
One had a power cut and then there were nine.

Nine little Zoom screens, starting a bit late.
One pressed the leave button. Then there were eight.



Eight little Zoom screens, all set to go-then
One felt the call of nature, and then there were seven



Seven little Zoom screens, thrown into the mix.
One ought not to be there. Then there were six.



Six little Zoom screens all on line and live.
One took a sneaky phone call, and then there were five.



Five little Zoom screens finding it a chore.
One took a hissy fit, and then there were four.

Four little Zoom screens (one of them was me).
I thought we'd gone on far too long. Then there were three.



Three little Zoom screens. Chair wondered what to do.
Then noticed they weren't quorate. Then there were two.



Two little Zoom screens couldn't get the business done.
They gave themselves a virtual hug and then there was one.



One little Zoom screen feeling very glum.
Then she pulled her plug out and then there were none.



Revd Dr Mike Wilson
Supernumerary, Cambridge Circuit

Rural Chapels after Lockdown

Ann Waterhouse

Forty some years ago a young man from a farming family in the Yorkshire Dales came to the Manse about his candidating for the ministry. On 6th March this year, that same man, Richard Teal, now President of the Conference, preached at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, speaking warmly of the Methodists who brought him to ministry. When he was 14, from a non-churchgoing family, Richard used to play the organ for Cononley Methodist Chapel; he went with a book to read during the sermon. One Sunday he forgot to take a book, and, as he said, “I had to listen to the sermon, and I was converted to Christ.” Nine years later he began serving as a circuit minister.

In his address at Central Hall, he said that, in that small rural chapel, he met the most loving people he had ever known “whose DNA was personal holiness”; through them he came to know Christ. He has written that a small rural chapel is not a failed large church; it is a small community important in building the kingdom of God.

Like the teenaged Richard Teal, I was part of a village chapel, but I married the probationer minister and, for the next forty years, lived in manses in

northern cities. When we returned to Norfolk and were reunited with rural Methodism, I appreciated anew its contribution to local communities. I admire the people who have lived faithfully for decades in the same small community, known every day of their lives as chapel folk.

But rural chapels have been hit hard by COVID-19 and lockdown – through deaths, through the enforced closure of buildings for worship as well as other uses and through loss of income.

So many long serving church members have died, leaders and stalwarts of chapel life. We feel the loss with sadness but also with gratitude for their decades of service and witness and for the legacy they have left.

Yet, despite the deaths of saints we love, despite missing our fellowship together, rural chapels have continued



Peter Blackburn, who died in January aged 94, was for his entire life part of Pulham Market Methodist Church. A retired farmer who loved to travel Peter adjusted well to travelling in his mobility scooter to local events in the village

to serve and care and witness. Pastoral care and provision of food and other necessities has increased and spread far beyond church members. As we come out of lockdown, village chapels will have a valuable ministry in helping families and communities who have not been able to remember, mourn and celebrate the lives of people who have died. As we are again allowed to open our buildings, they will be places where neighbourhood activities and community spirit can be renewed. People who previously were not church members or attenders will have been drawn into Christian life, as Richard Teal

was four decades ago, by the care of loving people during the pandemic. There will be congregations where members cannot pick up their responsibilities with the same energy they had a year ago. There will be chapels where there are no longer the people or the funds to sustain the life and witness they had before COVID-19. Let us pray for wisdom to adapt to new circumstances, for faith to continue loving and witnessing and for grace to persevere in the different post-lockdown world.

Ann Waterhouse
Norwich Circuit

District News

A District Day of Prayer and Reflection

Our first ever 'at home' Day of Prayer and Reflection was successful from many points of view. Around 120 people from across the District joined in the online opportunities throughout the day and, whilst we have no way of knowing how many people joined in offline, we know that many did. It was successful because the aim of the day was fulfilled – to generate prayer from Methodists at a critical time in the pandemic, prayer for our churches, and for the world.



However, other benefits included a real sense of community across East Anglia, a chance for people to punctuate their day with times of reflection and encounter with God, and an opportunity to pray in

different ways including liturgical, reflective, creative, meditative, group extemporaneous, and through poetry, and music. We are still

welcoming comments and suggestions for the future. Of the feedback received so far, there is a repeated suggestion: 'Let's do it again!'

Revd Jacqui Horton,
Superintendent, Central Norfolk Circuit

Building Back Better

Frances Middleton



As the year unfolds and Spring shows the primroses and violets which will give way to the bright blooms of summer, it will be a summer the other side of the most horrendous year most of us have experienced. We may look back on the months of suffering and isolation which we have all endured to a greater or lesser degree, and wonder what God has to teach us from the pandemic. What indeed! We are really only just beginning to realise what we have lost and how it was so lost. The coronavirus is closely, too closely, linked to our exploitation of the natural world - God's gift of our beautiful, enigmatic and intricate planet home - that we must address.

We must realign our priorities, rewrite the agenda, shift our default setting of back to normal, and look steady and unblinking at a new and better world, which we can build. It is our Christian responsibility, as part of the reparation needed to re-jig our environment and bring justice to all God's creatures. It is not enough to say sorry. Zacchaeus, whose story we know so well, did not just apologise for the lives he had ruined by his greed, he paid reparation in huge measure from his riches, to ameliorate the damage he had done. We must follow suit. Jesus applauded

Zacchaeus (re-read Luke 19!) and calls us to do the same, now.

We must re-wild our gardens, re-think our everyday, reduce our use of plastic, and join the campaigns which will rescue God's Earth from being plundered and destroyed - Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund and all the others we know about, making reparation for past excesses, in our own neighbourhoods and elsewhere.

We must buy more, many more, fairly traded goods, for our family birthdays, our gardens, our kitchens and living rooms, our bedroom, searching out companies who will show that they trade for a different result - people's livelihoods instead of larger profits. The flora and fauna of the world need us to be more aware of their needs and alongside that go the lives and choices of the families who live (mostly) in the global south. Fair trade takes account of the important things we have come so close to losing in this pandemic. We can and must build back better.



TRAIIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

It is quite easy in our churches to find fair trade to support, regularly. Many

churches have a Traidcraft rep and a stall at the back of the church. Put that stall at the front of your church, centre stage as a practical way of building back better! And then use it, every month or whenever. Get used to regularly buying stuff we need every day. Never mind that it costs a little more. Count it as your tithing! Buy on-line from Traidcraft's website, and others similar.

Our post-pandemic world needs that sort of trading - fair to God's people world-wide.

I would be happy to tell you about my Traidcraft travels where I saw the appreciation of the people who have received support from Traidcraft, such as in Thailand.

As the summer unfolds, I pray that our world will be re-invented, as we all build back better with greater vision and creativity, bringing joy and dignity back to all God's creatures.

Frances Middleton
Local Preacher
Norwich Circuit

The measure of God's Love

**It is a love that
Reaches the unreachable –
I know because it reached even me.**

**It is a love that
Touches the untouchable –
I know because it touched even me.**

**It is a love that
Loves the unlovable –
I know because God loves even me.**

**It is a love that
Forgives the unforgivable –
I know because He forgives even me.**

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Contributions

We hope you have been inspired by the articles in this edition of *grapevine*. If you would like to make a contribution to the next edition, we would love to hear from you. Please send any news items, letters and photographs, which you would like to share with others in the district to:

eagrapevine@gmail.com

**or post to 'grapevine'*

District Office,
Chapel Field Road Methodist Church
Norwich, NR2 1SD

** For further information, please contact
the District Office on 01603 625765*

Unfortunately we cannot guarantee inclusion of all contributions.

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rules have ended and the District Office can be used again.*

grapevine

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If you would like to request a copy,

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