



Keeping in Touch Wesley Place Methodist Church, Alsager

Dear Friends,

Harriet is suggesting some great hymns again this week to keep the choir singing. A great sing to start with, and a classic hymn of praise is StF 83 you can sing along here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3dHeRB2c3g>

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet your tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise the everlasting King!

2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to his people in distress.
Praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia, alleluia! Glorious in his faithfulness!

3 Fatherlike he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia! Widely yet his mercy flows!

4 Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face.
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia! raise with us the God of grace!

This week the Methodist Conference meets in Birmingham in a hybrid fashion, some representatives will be physically present, some will be present via online conferencing. Such ways of being together are here to stay. I was having a conversation with someone recently about the decline in church attendance over the last few years, and they said to me that the trouble was 'there's too much internet around'. Others

The **Methodist Church**

[Home](#) › [Our faith](#) › [Prayer](#) › [Prayer of the Day](#)

Prayer of the Day

O God, since without you we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Gelasian Sacramentary
(7th century)**

Gracious God, the world you have made is one of beauty and bounty, a plethora of colours and textures and sights and sounds, all reminding us of your generous and creative nature. We rejoice that we are part of your glorious creation but confess that we have not always treated it with the love and care it requires.

Forgive us and help us to live in ways that enable us and all your people to care for your world, enjoy its wonders and share its resources wisely. In the name of Christ, Amen.

**Gill Newton, Sheffield
District Chair**

have said the internet has saved the church over the last 15 months. I reflected that the internet, like money, is neither good nor bad, it is simply neutral - it depends on how it is used! The Conference will find many people present of different views, their task, as the ruling body of the Methodist Church is to discern the way God is leading and follow in faith. Two of our own church members Ian White and Daniel Keen are reps at the Conference again this year, we look forward to hearing of their experience. The two biggest headline items are of course the God in Love Unites Us Report, which may pave the way forwards for churches to register for same sex marriage, if they so choose. The background to this decision is a deepening conviction that the Church is radically open to everyone and all people. We are a church with a sense of social justice at our beating heart, God's love for all is a line enshrined in many of our hymns, and radical inclusion is our lifeblood. The Church is recognising patterns of bullying and exclusion and speaking now, not of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, but Justice Dignity and Solidarity. Hence the use of this newsletter, the internet, printing and word of mouth, telephones, and meeting in the street are our ways of communicating. The Bible story set this week, as well as a story from my own experience also follow this theme. We remember that our God walks with us, through every experience, he sets a table to which all are welcome and even through the darkest valleys of prejudice, racism, and bullying, we can fear no evil for He is with us. Harriet suggest a traditional version of the well known 23rd psalm as we don't sing this version very often these days. StF 480

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAqPZQeD-cFs>

1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again,
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill,
for thou art with me and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4 My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes.
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be.

The Bible story set for this week is from Mark's gospel, chapter 5 it's actually a story within a story:

21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23 and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." 24 So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. 26 She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."

29 Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the

whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

In this story Jesus is showing God's love across usual social boundaries with great power. Over 60% of children died before they were teenagers, so this girl's death was sad, but not unusual. The community gathered to grieve and mourn and support her family. A woman, bleeding, was unclean, and to touch her was to violate religious and social laws. She had spend her own money meaning she had probably been a widow, and sunk in social terms by spending all she had. Jesus offended the village mourning by suggesting she wasn't dead.

In crossing all these boundaries, he let love overcome prejudice, and justice for women and children overcome any socially acceptable rules for the way society was supposed to run.

On top of that, a woman was healed - this meant she was now ritually clean and could be included again in society. A girl, similarly was restored to life and given food to thrive. Included again in God's world. In doing these things Jesus showed God's love, he demonstrated a vision for an inclusive and healthy society which was God's vision - the Kingdom of God. Jesus knew he would thus cause trouble, inspire a revolution, and cause the people in power to come after him.

**JESUS
TOOK
NAPS**
— BE LIKE JESUS —
— MARK 4:38 —



Methodist Church

8 h · 🌐

#Prayer of the day:

Let your nourishment seep into our world today through our hands, minds and voices, that we may seek to bring your reconciling love in Christ to the earth in transformative ways.

<http://ow.ly/Tprv50Fdjng>



The Methodist Church must never be too respectable! Wesley Place has a history of seeking out Justice, buying fair trade, and supporting those in need in our community. Our Mission team are looking into the future and plans are afoot in the autumn to reach out with God's love - we may just be surprised at the people and places where we meet the Lord!

I want to tell you the story of Tim. It's a gospel story, and I'm sure the love of God, the purposes of God, and the challenges of God come through the story.



I first heard about Tim when, in the church I was minister of, someone said there was a guy who had been pitching his tent behind the church. His tent wasn't very good any more and when it rained his sleeping bag got wet. So, could he use an empty room in church to dry it out? 'Of course, Why ask me? But I'm sure that wasn't a problem.' This was a fairly large church, in the middle of a small town, it had a cafe and was used to being open throughout the week for folks to drop in for coffee or to pray. It meant we were used to being vigilant to members of the public coming in.

We all soon got to know Tim, he used to stand outside a shop opposite the church selling the Big Issue. Many of us decided that one way we could help Tim was to buy the magazine, and so we started to, and to read it - articles about poverty, injustice, and government policy that affected some of the most disadvantaged members of our society; yet the magazine also had amazing stories of lives transformed by human care and love - it soon became evident to me that this magazine was the voice of a community of people who faced many challenges in life, and yet, together, they were overcoming them, helping each other, and keeping in touch.

Tim used to come over into the church cafe for a coffee - he always paid for it, and never asked for anything free. Sometimes after a coffee he'd just sit until his feet had thawed out, and he felt warm enough inside to go and stand in the cold again to sell his magazines.

We never put any pressure on Tim but he used to sell his magazine on a Sunday, and so would come into church on a Sunday morning, after the services for a coffee, the cafe was shut, but the congregation were having coffee before and after worship. Tim got to know us, and many of us got to know Tim - he was a real gentleman, with a life full of stories that were interesting, nay, fascinating! One lady that Tim got to know particularly well was a Jewish woman who came to our church, she was quite feisty and very friendly, the two of them used to sit right on the back row of the church services sometimes and talk together about religion and faith from their perspective.

Without noticing the subtle changes the two of them became integral members of the congregation, as well as the church community throughout the week in the cafe. As conversations deepened and relationships developed, Tim joined in more conversations about faith, and said he'd never been baptised - neither had his Jewish friend. He asked if it would be possible, and so I talked to him about it. But with a glint in his eye he said he didn't want to be baptised in a service behind closed doors in a little church font, he wanted to take the congregation down to the local river (where there was a safe bathing beach, often used by families in the summer) and be fully immersed by baptism there. It was arranged. As I stood waist deep in the river, and Tim was lowered fully under the surface, I pronounced the words of baptism in the name of the father, Son, and Holy Spirit nice and loudly. There were crowds on the bridge and the opposite bank watching, as well as our own congregation on the beach supporting and worshipping. One of the church members who had particularly befriended Tim became his godfather, as did his unbaptised Jewish friend (I wasn't going to argue - both these people had guided and accompanied Tim into faith!).

When the church went on a pilgrimage to Iona, Tim went with them, paid for by the church the first time. It marked the moment in his life when he'd had the strength of character to take himself off methadone. Speaking of his faith, this is what he said:

I had to find my own way. It's like doing detox. You can tailor do it when you want to. Now I say that I'm a reforming addict. I'm not reformed. No one ever is. People who have used drugs will always miss it, and if they say they don't miss it they are either still dabbling or they are lying. The temptation is always there. The highs – that's something you can't replace.

Tim was featured in his own magazine once, and in his story he told of his violent childhood, diagnosis of bipolar, and time in prison. He ended up homeless, and that's how he came to sell the Big issue. Tim found a flat, enjoyed reading westerns and Chinese philosophy, got help with various health issues, and became a member of a church congregation where he loved as much as he had been loved. He continued selling the Big Issue, paying for his own coffee, and his smile was infectious.

Sadly I heard recently that Tim had died. His life was greatly celebrated, and he will be very fondly remembered. As well, of course, as the rejoicing in Heaven at his arrival! This was his message to the people who bought his magazine:

Thank you for buying the magazine or just stopping to talk to me, which I'm grateful for because it enriches my own perspective on life, even if I don't agree with them. It's good to see other perspectives and everyone has a right to their views and a right to express them.

Here's a few questions to think about. Why not take them to your house-group for conversation?

- 1) What would have been your reaction at various times in the story if you'd been involved?
- 2) Would your reaction have taken the story in a different direction?
- 3) This is in many ways a dramatic story, but what are some of the 'ordinary' things in the story that we can learn from?
- 4) What do you hear God saying to you thorough the story?
- 5) Which Bible stories come to mind as you read Tim's story?
- 6) Have you ever bought and read a copy of the Big Issue?

Caring Cakes

During lockdown, I felt called to make cakes for people who were struggling. Sometimes it was people who were ill, sometimes bereaved and sometimes lonely. I felt privileged to be able to do this, especially when you could see how much it brightened someone's day and it also gave me a purpose.

This is something I would like to carry on and I was talking to my daughter Helen about it. She told me that in Brighton, where she lives, they have a cake club, where lots of people make cakes and they get delivered all over the city to those in need. They also make cakes for the foodbank. This got me thinking. Is this something that we could do as a church? Wesley Place is renowned for its catering and food making abilities and I think that we could spread a lot of joy and love to many. What do you think? Perhaps we could start off small with Wesley Place's own pastoral groups and see how we go?

Please let me know if you can make cakes, deliver cakes or give me names of anyone who could benefit from this service.

My phone number is 01270 876393 or email sandramoors108@gmail.com.

Thanks, Sandra x

Shirley Keen's funeral takes place at Wesley Place on Friday 2nd July at 9.45 am. You are welcome, but need to book in - please see the booking details on the Church website on Saturday morning 19th June.

<https://www.wesley-place.org.uk>

We hold Daniel, Janet, Ruth, Andrew and Alison in our prayers.



Prayer requests this week:



For Geoff White who had to visit hospital this last week, and for Hilda as she continues to coordinate the care that he needs.

For Jonny and all those involved in the planning and preparations for our upcoming Holiday Club during the summer holidays.

For the Walking Fellowship Group which has re-started.

For all of us as we have more opportunities to meet families and friends again, especially those living far away, as we emerge from the Covid restrictions.

The following people have asked to be remembered to the Wesley Place Church family:

Irene Challinor, Mary Allen,
Iris Barker, Sheila Walker.

Rob has visited Bernard and Carole this week too, both of whom wish to be remembered to everyone.

We hold each other together in prayer through these times. Godbless.

Weekend of	Service in our Church building	Service on Zoom or Youtube
4th July	Led by local worship leaders - and Mr Daniel Keen	
11th July	No, not this week	Preacher - Roger Hunt on Zoom
18th July	Mr Paul Jackson	
25th July	Rev Malcolm Lorimer with HC	

JOIN US

**SUNDAY
AFTERNOON
WORSHIP**

**Live at 5
Sunday Afternoon
Worship**

**It's always the last
Sunday of the month**

It's always on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting
[https://zoom.us/j/83777505999?
pwd=Mk5PS29QM3liUXNwdjVlQTBNS2VCdz09](https://zoom.us/j/83777505999?pwd=Mk5PS29QM3liUXNwdjVlQTBNS2VCdz09)

Meeting ID: 837 7750 5999
Passcode: 082913

THIS WEEK!

This message will change over the next few weeks, and will not be produced every week. Please be patient, and if in doubt, contact your pastoral visitor for any details. Godbless, Rob

WP On-site 10.30 Morning Worship

To book while restrictions remain, please follow the link from the church website, or phone: 07598 580541 and leave a message.

All bookings must be made by 12 noon on the Friday before the service.

**Apparently I snore so
loudly that it scares
everyone in the car I'm
driving.**