

# Weybridge Methodist Church

Newsletter January 2019





# Getting back to basics!

by Gill Newton.

*"I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you, as and where you choose."*

*Covenant Prayer, Methodist Worship Book*

Although some Methodist congregations celebrate their Covenant service at the beginning of the Connexional year in September, for many, this month of January, provides the opportunity for a renewal of our commitment. Having served in churches where both options have been explored, it has always struck me that, whilst any opportunity to renew our commitment is wonderful, there is something timely about holding this service at the beginning of the calendar year. The commercial Christmas season with all its glitzy advertisements and tempting offers encourages us to focus on what we want and spend more than we have in order to obtain it. So, it's perhaps no bad thing, early in the New Year to have this opportunity to place things back in perspective and for us to be reminded of the sacrificial nature of our commitment as followers of Jesus. After all, it is the time of resolutions, so here's the chance to include some spiritual resolution at the beginning of the New Year.

This Covenant Service is treasured and valued by many Methodists, coveted by many of our ecumenical colleagues. However, like me, you may have observed that many seem to consciously avoid this annual opportunity to renew commitment. Why? And what does this say to us about the nature, language, context and value of this service each year? It was back in 1755 that John Wesley originally created a service which has evolved into the Covenant Service as we know it today. He based the words of the Covenant prayer, which is at the heart of the service, on words from the Puritan tradition which had been so important in the lives of his parents Samuel and Susanna. He included in his original covenant prayer phrases that we would recognise from our marriage service, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, for all times and conditions ...." suggesting that Wesley saw this covenant relationship between God and his people as being like a marriage, an image reflected in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

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Wesley seems to be suggesting that through this covenant relationship, we are, both individually and corporately, partners together with God in his mission in the world. The words of this prayer, in both its traditional and modern forms, offer us a clear description of what it might really mean for us to be disciples of Jesus. We could suggest that it offers a practical description of what Jesus was suggesting when he said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." So, sharing in this prayer helps us to remember what living as Jesus calls us to live really looks like!

There is no doubt that this is demanding stuff, so perhaps people avoid the Covenant service for fear of failure? However, as I reflect upon the words of the covenant prayer in preparation for a Covenant service that I will lead this week I am reminded of the context in which Wesley developed this service. When he and the other early Methodists prayed this prayer, there would have been an expectation that they were all part of a class meeting or band. In that way they were supporting one another and holding one another to account for this challenging way of living and loving – a way of life that is surely only possible in a community where you know you are loved, supported and being upheld in prayer.

Research also suggests that the Covenant service was not some stand-alone event that came around once a year. A whole series of gatherings were held in the run up to the Covenant service so that through study, prayer and sermons, everyone could understand more fully what the Covenant was all about. Then after a day of prayer and fasting, those who chose to, would participate in the Covenant Service, but that certainly wasn't the end of the matter for another year! From then on, everyone was encouraged to think about what the implications of having prayed that prayer might be in their own situation, and through their class meetings were given all the help and encouragement that they needed to sustain this way of life.

How much of that kind of nurture and support is really being offered in our churches today I wonder? Is the lack of gathering together regularly for support and accountability one of the reasons why so many people find this prayer so difficult to say? What difference might it make to our individual and corporate sense of identity and vocation if we really helped each other to live out this prayer?

The Covenant prayer is an extremely important part of our Methodist tradition. It helps us to know who we are and to whom we belong. It reminds us that being a Christian is a way of life which demands much of us, but only in response to the self-giving love of God in Christ. As we share in this prayer again this year, perhaps we could reflect not only on what living out the prayer might demand of us individually, but what it

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might demand of us as a church, if we are to really help one another to truly share in this covenant.

*Our Covenant service is on Sunday 20 January 2019 at 10.30 am*

## **Thank you**

- To Stan and the Smith family for organizing, erecting and decorating the Christmas tree.
- To those who participated in the Circuit Prayer Vigil.
- To all those who supported the 'Reverse Advent' initiative. Two car loads of food were taken to the foodbank depot.
- To all those who contributed towards and helped at the Church family lunch on 16 December.
- To all those who participated in our Christmas Day Service.
- To all those who continue to help out at services by providing music, undertaking readings and providing refreshments. Your help continues to be appreciated.
- To the anonymous donor of the lovely shortbread
- To Sydney Samuel for the tin of chocolates

## **Prayer Time:**

The 'mobile' prayer group is open to all. Please add prayer needs as they occur to you. If you wish to be added to this group, contact one of the stewards.

## **Please pray for**

- Brenda & Keith
- Mary & Stan
- Charlotte
- The Circuit
- Our church

## **Happy Birthday**

Sydney Lake (Jnr) and Allen Weedon who share a birthday on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

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## Posada



In the week before Christmas we had some visitors to our home.

Mary, Joseph with donkey (plus our camel sneaked in!) came to stay for three nights because Tiffany took part in the Posada organized by her place of work.

The tradition of having figures of Mary, Joseph and a donkey travelling from home to home during Advent is becoming more and more popular in our country. The tradition originated in Mexico where it is called a *posada*. Posada means Inn.

The figures were accompanied by some suitable readings.

Many years ago, Rev Julie Underwood tried to organize a posada in our church but sadly there was insufficient interest and it wasn't a success. I have asked a friend to knit us some figures of Mary, Joseph and a donkey in the hope that next year we will all be willing to provide room at our 'Inn' for a few days during Advent.

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## Prayer Tree



You may or may not have noticed that we have a new prayer tree which stands adjacent to the pulpit. Feel free to write your prayers on the gift tags and hang them on the tree. We will be asking preachers to include these prayers (generically) as part of the weekly intercessions



**Circuit Mission Supper**  
**Saturday 23rd February 2019**  
**6pm for 6.30pm, cost £7**



The circuit will welcome Rev Mike Long, former superintendent of the Woking and Walton circuit and current minister at Notting Hill Methodist church.

Mike will speak to us about his church's involvement in the Grenfell fire disaster and the ongoing work in the local community.

**Trinity Methodist Church**

11 Brewery Lane, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4LJ

# Addlestone Methodist Church

*We warmly invite you to our*

## **Café Style Service**

on Sunday 13th January 2019 at 6.30pm

to be led by Rev Sydney Samuel Lake

with the theme:

*'The Magnificat'*

*God's mercy is on all people that fear God  
from generation to generation (Luke 1:50)*

*Refreshments of Tea/Coffee and Cakes  
will be served from 6pm*

*Our Worship will include:*

Songs of Joyful Praise and Thanksgiving  
with Music Group backing (CD)  
Bible Reading and Prayer

The music format of our previous Services continues as we  
'Worship the Lord with gladness and come before Him  
with joyful praise'

*We hope you can join us as we continue our  
Evening Service Programme presenting the same Message of  
Jesus Christ in a way suitable for all ages in today's society*

## Dates for the diary

Sunday 6 Jan 2019	10.30 am Morning worship	Mrs Rosemary Lee <i>Steward – Pru</i> <i>Music – Jose</i> <i>Refreshments - Paula</i>
Wednesday 9 Jan 2019	Extraordinary Circuit Meeting @ 7.45pm	Merrow Methodist Church
Thursday 10 Jan 2019	1.45 pm Old Folks club	Weybridge Centre
Saturday 12 Jan 2019	10.00 am Coffee Morning	Run by us at Addlestone
Sunday 13 Jan 2019	10.30 Morning Worship	Rev Julia Monaghan <i>Steward- Carol</i> <i>Music – piano</i> <i>Refreshments - Lili</i>
Saturday 19 Jan 2019	Bedding & Clothes Bank	Church Hall
Sunday 20 Jan 2019	<b>10.30 Covenant Service &amp; Communion</b>	Rev Sydney Samuel Lake <i>Steward – Jose</i> <i>Music – Adrian</i> <i>Communion – Linda</i> <i>Refreshments - Carol</i>
Sunday 27 Jan 2019	10.30 am Morning worship	Rev Denis Vernon <i>Steward – Linda</i> <i>Music – Adrian</i> <i>Refreshments -tbc</i>
Sunday 27 Jan 2019	6 for 6.30 Café Church	Rev Sydney Samuel Lake
Thursday 31 Jan 2019	1.45 pm Old Folks club	Weybridge Centre

## Advance Dates

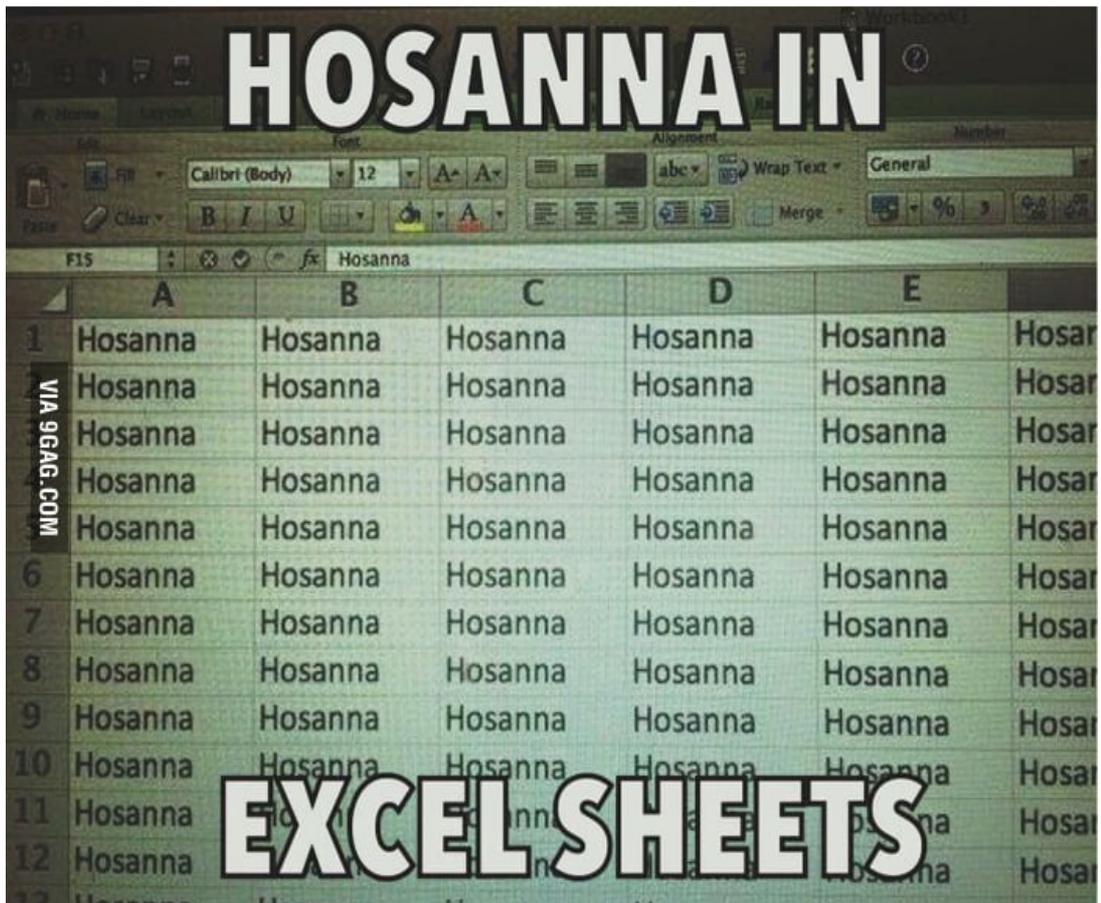
Tuesday 5 February 8.00pm 2019	Church Council	Vestry
Saturday 23 Feb 2019 - 6 for 6.30pm	Circuit Mission Supper	Trinity Methodist Church
Friday 1 March 2019, 2.00pm	Women's world day of prayer	Hosted by us.

**Weybridge Old folk club dates for 2019:**

**10/01, 31/01, 21/2, 21/3, 11/4, 16/5, 30/5, 13/6, 11/7, 19/9,  
17/10, 14/11**



Amusement for the Accountants amongst us.



# QUIZ EVENING

**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2019**

**7.00 PM**

**TO RAISE FUNDS FOR**



**ST NICOLAS ROOM, CRANLEIGH,  
GU6 8AS**

Teams of 6 - £10 per person  
To include soup, ploughmans and dessert

Selection of Prizes

*Please bring your friends along to  
make up a team*

**For more information please contact  
Glenda on 01483 273037**



## The Twelve Days of Christmas

How many times have you sung 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'? It's a jolly tune and usually causes amusement by the time the last round is reached and the count down from 12 Drummers drumming to the Partridge in a pear tree is speeded up. But have you ever wondered about the words? They mention a strangely eclectic selection of gifts and at first glance not a selection that would be universally acceptable to a lady (except for the gold rings). The carol was believed to have been written in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> Century and research has come to light which suggests a deeper meaning.

After the death of Mary I of England and the accession of Elizabeth I, it became illegal to worship or teach as a Roman Catholic, a law which remained on the statute books until it was repealed in 1829.

The Twelve days of Christmas was written as a way of teaching children of the Roman Catholic persuasion the teachings of their religion without being prosecuted, hence

1. A partridge in a pear tree represents **Jesus Christ our Lord.**
2. Two turtle doves represents the **Old and New Testaments.**
3. Three French hens represents **Faith, Hope and Charity (Love).**
4. Four calling birds represents **the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.**
5. Five gold rings represents **the Torah or Law – the first five books of the bible.**
6. Six geese a laying represents the **six days of creation.**
7. Seven swans a swimming represents the **seven fold gifts of the Holy Spirit; prophesy, serving, teaching, exhortation, contribution, Leadership and Mercy.**
8. Eight maids a milking represents the **eight beatitudes.**
9. Nine ladies dancing represents the **nine gifts of the Holy Spirit: Love, peace, Patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**
10. Ten lords a leaping represents the **10 commandments.**
11. Eleven Pipers piping represents the **11 faithful apostles.**
12. Twelve drummers drumming represents the **twelve points of belief in the Apostles creed**

Next time you hear or sing this carol think of the true meaning behind the fun.

## The Methodist Church

The calling of the Methodist church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. It does this through:

**Worship:** the church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.

**Learning and caring:** the church exists to help people grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care

**Service:** the church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.

**Evangelism:** the church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.

### **As we approach our annual Covenant service later this month we reflect on the Covenant prayer of John Wesley**

I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing, put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you, or brought low for you;  
let me be full,  
let me be empty,  
let me have all things,  
let me have nothing:  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things  
to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.  
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.