

# Contact

## The Magazine of South Essex Methodist Circuit

### Lent & Easter Edition 2024



Crucified tree from – the Agony - Theyre Lee Elliot  
Source: *The Methodist Modern Art Collection*

Sharing the 'good news' that is happening  
across the circuit and in our local communities.

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## Lent Resource

**UNBOUNDED LOVE**

God's love doesn't stay in the lines

40 daily email deliveries of love in Lent

Find out more here or by visiting [methodist.org.uk/UnboundedLove](https://www.methodist.org.uk/UnboundedLove)

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The Methodist Church

Charles Wesley's famous hymn *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (*Singing the Faith* 503) talks about Jesus as 'unbounded love' – a kind of love that cannot be contained, that works in our lives and in our world to free us and heal us. *Unbounded Love* is the theme of the Lent campaign of the Methodist Church in 2024 – holding together our commitments to be a justice-seeking church, and a people who experience and proclaim the good news of God's uncontainable love.

Throughout Lent there be daily email reflections that explore the theme of *Unbounded Love*. Sign up to receive these each day, beginning on Wednesday 14 February and discover a rhythm of reflection over Lent. You'll also be signed up to future reflection series.

The themes are:

**Week 1** - "Unbounded love": Jesus' baptism and wilderness experience – God's love bursts the barriers of heaven, and then bursts into the realms of darkness.

**Week 2** - "Visit us with thy salvation": Losing our life (psyche) to find it – the ways we attempt to insulate ourselves from God's love.

**Week 3** - "Pure and spotless let us be": Turning the tables in the Temple – corporate religious attempts to boundary God's love.

**Week 4** - "Finish then thy new creation": God's unbounded love for the cosmos.

**Week 5** - "Changed from glory into glory": Like a seed that has to die before it bears fruit, death is no barrier to God's love.

**Week 6** - "Till we cast our crowns before thee": As Jesus entered Jerusalem the people responded by taking off their cloaks. What's our equivalent?

**Holy Week** - "Lost in wonder, love, and praise!": As Jesus becomes bound by his opponents, will God's love stay bound?

Sign-up here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/lent-and-easter/unbounded-love/>



## Reflections from the Superintendent Minister

*'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge....'* Psalm 19 v.1

I absolutely love this psalm. From its opening words, it captures the concept of the all-encompassing presence of God through His handiwork in the natural world. This then seems to lead the psalmist to review the whole spectrum of God's provision, and, seemingly overwhelmed by its excellence has the psalmist on his knees, in humble adoration and with the supplicative words, often repeated by preachers; *'may the words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer'*.

Particularly at this time of the year when the winter gloom and darkness is gradually lifting and giving rise to some stunning sunrise or sunset displays, I often find myself repeating the opening lines of this psalm and heartily agreeing with the psalmist that, indeed *'the heavens declare God's glory'*.

As we journey through this quarter of the year in our church calendar we enter into the season of Lent and Easter. Unusually early this year, the timing of Easter itself also bears testimony to God's presence in the natural world.

As far back as 325 AD, the Council of Nicea agreed to set the date of Easter as the Sunday following the sighting of the first full moon of the Spring equinox. This kept the link between the Jewish festival of Passover and Easter, according to the lunar calendar that everyone was using at that time.

It is fascinating, refreshing and humbling to consider that in the increasingly advanced technological world of today, nature should continue to determine the timing for such a key event in our Christian lives. It makes me wonder what would happen if nature were allowed the deciding voice in other events that take place in our lives and in our world? Would it bring greater harmony, greater respect and better care for the natural or would it cause havoc as it contends with our human desire to plan and have things under one's control? Imagine not having Christmas day fixed for all perpetuity!

So Lent is a movable *feast* but one which for all these characteristics provides an element of surprise and a welcome opportunity to make time to refrain from some of the routine patterns and habits of life and choose instead to make a time and space to dwell closely with God, focusing particularly on the ancient prophecies, events and teachings of our Saviour's life over the next

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40 days. Before Lent of course comes Ash Wednesday which offers a deeply spiritual service that invites us to contemplate not only our mortality but our life hereafter, and bids us to turn away from sin and all that distances us from God and turn to Him.

I'm happy to note that all around this Circuit there are special programmes for this period which include Bible study, Lent talks, daily prayer, weekly reflection and many other special services (you can find these listed elsewhere in this magazine as well as on the website and in local church notice-sheets).

I hope that you will make the time to avail yourself of what is so richly on offer, and come face to face with God through Christ's awesome redemptive work during this time of Lent.

May God bless us on our journey through Lent.

## **A prayer**

Loving God, you have promised that you will remain with us, always. Even when we are tempted to despair, you still call us by name. You reveal to us the treasures that are all around us; the places, the people who will speak to us words of surprising hope and truth.

Give us the wisdom to value the riches you reveal to us in the everyday, and in the unexpected, in the new and surprising and in the practices of old.

Give us courage to share them, to speak and to show your good news, that your kingdom of joy and peace grows here on earth. Amen.  
*(Kerry Scarlett, Vice-President of the Conference, 2023/24)*

## **A pastoral prayer**

We remember before you Lord at this time all known to us, and to you alone, who are going through times of difficulty, anxiety or sadness. May divine intervention attend them.

We pray also for those who are sick or worried for loved ones who are sick and all limited by infirmity and ask for your healing mercy.

We pray for our neighbours and communities, praying for the kindness and respect that enables all to live in peace and harmony.

We bring you our world, fragile and increasingly torn apart by conflict as we continue to pray for all areas of the world in upheaval. Especially people of

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Palestine, Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of Congo. May they may know peace. And we bring before you all who have been forced to leave their homes and country that they may find a place to call home. We pray for justice and compassion throughout the world.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. **Amen.**

With prayer and very best wishes,

**Rev. Felicity**

## Circuit Goodbyes



On Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> February, St Paul's Church in Basildon said farewell to three of its members who are moving out of Essex. St Paul's wanted to share this with the wider Circuit because these three people, have over the decades, been important to both St Paul's and also the Circuit.

Sally and Jamie Scott after approximately 50 years at St Paul's are moving to Suffolk. Jamie joined Boys Brigade as a young lad and Sally joined a large

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and strong Youth fellowship as a teenager. They have served God and our Church faithfully and loyally as Stewards and youth work. Jamie has been a Circuit Steward for about ten years. He has supported and shared wise word within the Circuit Leadership team.

Sheila Watkins has fond memories of her childhood at Lodge lane Grays, although this was during the war, she says the youth club was a full and happy place. Although she moved away when she got married for a short while to London She returned with husband Peter, to Basildon in 1962 and started worshipping in the Lee Chap North Community Centre whilst waiting for St Paul's to be built. She has shared her love of God with so many people over the decades channelling her faith through the all the roles she taken up.

Margaret Barbero, one of our members has written a poem, that sums up just some of the work Sheila has been responsible for over the years:

Its always hard to lose a friend  
Whose time at St Paul's has come to an end  
That person is Sheila, we will miss so much  
Always there with her caring touch.  
Always there to help and advise  
She had fingers in so many pies.  
Church Council, Brigade and pastoral friend  
Holiday clubs, Toddler group there was no end  
to the time and commitment she would spend.  
St Paul's has known her from the start  
A founder member full of heart.  
It will be sad to see an empty chair,  
every Sunday she was there  
A little late at times – maybe!  
(But no one is perfect)  
And now a new life beckons  
Another church will gain

But memories of Shelia at St Paul's will remain.

**Suzanne Stubbs**

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Last year, from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October, almost 1300 Methodist young people (aged 4-23years) gathered at the NEC, Birmingham, for the Methodist Children and Youth assembly, 3Generate. They, along with the adults that accompanied them and other volunteers, experienced a weekend of celebration, worship and fellowship, with activities as varied as guided meditation, musical workshops, workshops and talks around the Bible and issues affecting young people, craftivism, silent discos, a digital treasure hunt, an inflatable chapel, carpet curling, sporting challenges, gunging theologians, stand-up comedy and lantern making. The young people also elected their Youth President for 2024-25, Bea Hulme, and were given the opportunity to vote for their Youth Representatives to Methodist Conference (the Methodist Church's governing body).

3Generate offers a unique opportunity for young people in the Methodist church to encounter God in new ways, meet with other young Methodists from all over the country, and to make their voices heard on issues that are important to them. To hear more about it from those who attended last year see the link



below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsiYMhXqlo8> This year 3Generate will be happening again from the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October. If you know any young people who would be interested in attending, or if as an adult you'd like to volunteer to help take a group of young people, please let me know. As a young person I really valued the opportunity to meet up with other Christians of my own age and experience a whole different side of church. And as a young adult I volunteered at 3Generate, and, even though the event was much smaller then, came away with ideas about faith and worship that have

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stuck with me and informed how I live out my Christian faith to this day. It would be great if our young people could have the same opportunities.

You can find out more information about 3Generate on the Methodist Church's website, including answers to frequently asked questions.

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

**Revd Fiona Smith**

## **News From Linford Methodist Church**

If you are a regular reader you will know I am slowly progressing through my Worship Leader Training. During the completion of a piece of coursework I used the following prayer that could be used in a variety of ways. I found it in a book given to me by a vicar friend, from The States, called *Canyon Road - a Book of Prayers*, compiled by Kari Kristina Reeves.

Quicken us Lord God, with power from on high.  
Infuse our talents with your Holy Spirit.  
Give us new gifts.  
Cover and anoint our work, enable us to serve you in miraculous ways.  
Surpass our abilities with your mighty grace.  
Ignite us, we pray, with the glory of grace.  
You do more than we could ask or imagine; so, as we ask, and imagine, dear Lord, do more.

Dear Lord, do more.  
Do more, dear Lord, do more.  
We are asking and imagining, dear Lord, do more.

In the book the above appears in the section entitled 'Personal Prayers' but it touched me so much that I wanted to share it with others. Initially I used this as a prayer with visiting preachers in a quiet place before the service they were going to lead.

On one occasion the preacher suggested I shared it with the entire congregation, thus making it a Gathering Prayer.

Other times it could be used are at Pentecost; introducing Prayers of Intercession; even a Sending Out Prayer as we go out to do God's Will in our community.



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As a musician I like to add background music to prayers. I find this tends to make the speaker pray slower, thus enabling the congregation to take in the words. The way the prayer is written suggests there should be pauses in between the sentences; as the prayer nears completion the spaces become longer, thus suggesting longer, contemplative silences for our own personal prayers. In a service setting the music gives a sense of continuity to the prayer sentences.

Personally, I would suggest using a slow, gentle, familiar tune such as an instrumental version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's version of 'Pie, Jesu' or Bach's 'Canon in D major'.

**Cathy Beckwith**

## My Lent Playlist

For the last edition of Contact I contributed an Advent Playlist, it only seemed right to me that for this edition I should include a playlist of some of my favourite Lent songs. So here is my pick of 4 Lent songs and a bonus one for Easter.

1. ***God Be Merciful to Me (Psalm 51)*** by Keith & Kristyn Getty and Cindy Morgan. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKQgZZIGz4k>

Psalm 51 is one of the Bible passages most associated with Ash Wednesday. This penitential psalm, set in the aftermath of David's affair with Bathsheba, sets the tone for Lent with its emphasis on David's sinfulness and his desire for forgiveness. This modern version of the psalm sets it to a strong and steady beat which gives a stubborn, almost demanding, air to the psalmist words. You get the feeling that the psalmist is not leaving until God grants them the mercy they seek. This might seem arrogant or irreverent, but it also shows a willingness to confront their wrongdoing, not deny it or shy away from it. They know God's mercy is their only hope and they are willing to admit that plainly to God. Repentance is not an easy thing, it takes strength and determination to admit our faults, and to take responsibility for them rather than blaming them on our weakness and others leading us astray. But repentance for sin is the only way back to a right relationship with God. Are there any sins you need to repent of this Lent? Could this psalm help give you a model to do it?

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## 2. *I Have Hidden Your Word - Psalm 119:11 & 9* by Steve Green

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TT0Ccl5g2p4&list=PLdxFI5-sxh1X0140y86ONLvOaJ2nXFoVV&index=41>

I wonder how many Bible verses you know by heart? When I was a child we had a tape of bible verses set to music by Steve Green which included the above. That tape taught me how to spell 'friend' and 'brother' through Proverbs 18:24, sent me to sleep when I was scared to Psalm 4:8, and is still my go to when listing the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The verses ended up 'hidden ... in my heart', just as the psalmist hid God's word in their heart, and just as Steve Green intended. Lent is traditionally a formational time, when those new to the Christian faith were taught what it means to be followers of Jesus, and where those who were already believers sought to grow in their faith through spiritual practices like fasting, and more frequent Bible reading and prayer. I include this rhyme as a prompt to encourage you to consider how you might grow your knowledge of the Bible and God this Lent, and perhaps to return to some of the tunes which have helped you grow in your faith.

## 3. *Greater Than All My Regrets* by Tenth Avenue North

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgn14PrvXo8>

In my life I have tried giving up various things for Lent and have generally found it a positive and lifegiving experience. However, when choosing to give things up for Lent, there can be a danger that this can end up being less about letting go of things that get in the way of our relationship with God, and more about trying to buy forgiveness. Either that or showing others how holy we are. In this we are setting ourselves up to fail. We can never earn God's love or become holy on our own. This song reminds me that God's mercy is always greater than anything I can do. That even if I end up failing in my attempts to give up chocolate for Lent, or to stay up to date with my Lent reading, God's love for me won't change. That however big the mess I make when I try and fail, God will not give up on me, but will be there helping me to get up and try again.

## 4. *Go to Dark Gethsemane* by James Montgomery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yg40TNIRaI4>

Jesus' time in the Garden of Gethsemane can often be overlooked in all the significant moments in Holy Week. The Triumphal Entry, the Last Supper, Jesus' Crucifixion and death, these are all moments that are central to our faith and rightly draw our attention. But for me, the heartbreaking humanness

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of Jesus' words in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the weakness of the disciples, make it one of the most compelling scenes in the whole Easter story. 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me' Jesus asks. And yet, three times he returns to find the disciples sleeping. The first verse of *Go to Dark Gethsemane* invites us to stay awake and learn from Jesus' prayer in the garden, to learn to submit to God's will, as Jesus did, but also to learn to sit and pray with those who are hurting, and to watch and wait in the darkness even when you can't see the good it could do. This embodies for me the spirit of Lent more than anything else. Everything we give up, and everything we pick up, everything we do and fail to do, is an attempt to show our commitment to not closing our eyes to Jesus in his hour of need, but instead to draw closer to him.

## 5. *Greatest Day in History* by Tim Hughes

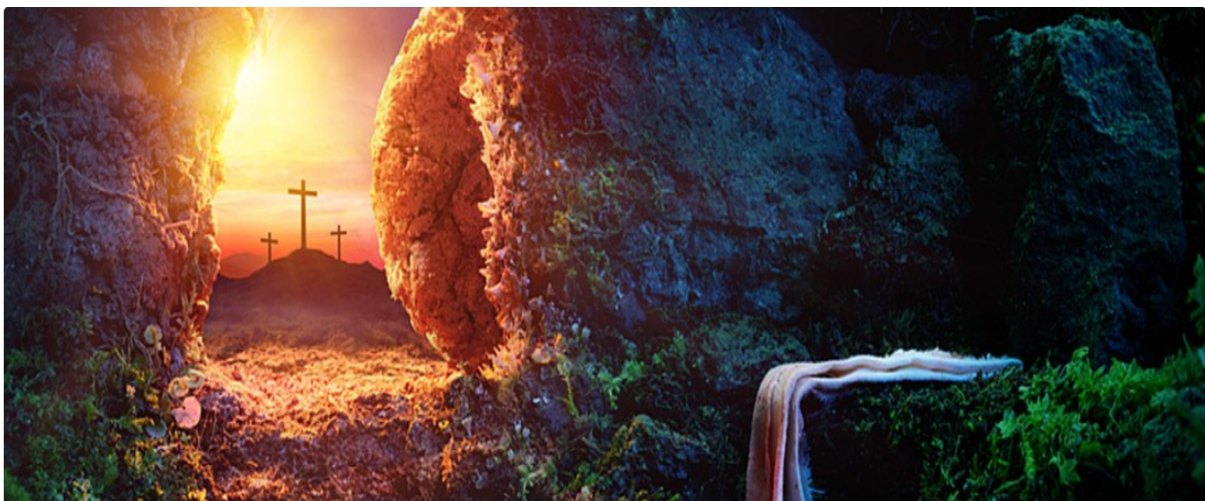
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOiIW8nrw5g>

My last song leaves Lent firmly behind for the joy of Easter morning. No time of testing lasts forever, and, at the end of Lent, Easter reminds us that Jesus' resurrection promises freedom from sin and death, and new life for all, 'O Happy Day!' This is one to let loose and dance along to!

I hope you've enjoyed listening to my Lent playlist, and if you have any favourite Lent or Easter songs I would love to hear them.

Revd Fiona Smith

## **Attending to the 'In-Between': *Reflections on Holy Saturday***



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We struggle with Holy Saturday, and we find it odd because properly speaking it is about the 'in-between' – in between the first day and the third day – and naturally speaking, we don't do 'in between'. That is why many of us have naturally reduced the whole of Easter to Good Friday and Easter Sunday and no more.

We think that reducing the drama of Easter into this dualistic stricture – Good Friday and Easter Sunday, cross and resurrection – best describe how we view life generally, even if there is a mismatch between our perception and lived experience.

We have figured that in the journey of life the scheme that best make sense to us are disorientation and new orientation: suffering and hope, lament and laughter, darkness and light, death and life; triumph of love over hate, the triumph of good and evil; despair and joy, defeat and victory, the end and the beginning – these are the dynamic cycle of human condition.

We tell stories using this device. There is a lively debate in the Mishnah about the Jewish way of telling a story. And the Mishnah tells us in few words – an axiom of Jewish narrative – you begin with the bad news and end with the good news, you begin with disgrace and end with the pride, victory, glory, redemption, resurrection.

Dante, in *The Divine Comedy*, showed us how this can take a poetic turn when he introduced the distinction between tragedy and comedy: 'Tragedy begins softly, imperceptibly, and almost "at random", like a marvellous promise; yet it ends tragically, in violence. Comedy, conversely, begins with a cruel reality and yet ends up happier and more joyous than it began', comments Gunjević. Boris Gunjević, the Croatia priest-philosopher, thinks that Dante's distinction can be, and indeed has been (eg. Žižek and Milbank), pushed further into a distinction between revolution and theology. In this way, says Gunjević, 'a revolution begins "softly, imperceptibly", and ends in violent tragedy, while theology, like comedy, begins with a cruel act of incarnation but ends in the New Jerusalem'.

But it is precisely here that our dualistic schema proves inadequate and falters because it is simplistic and out of sync with lived reality; we tend to leave out the 'in-between'. Yet this is where, properly speaking, we experience life in all its complexity. Between cross and resurrection lies, says Gunjević, 'the paradox of a relationship tension'.

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Another way of saying this is to say that Holy Saturday is a ‘boundary’ between Good Friday and Easter Day. Alan E. Lewis, who wrote the only best book on Holy Saturday, called *Between Cross and Resurrection*, says this about boundary: ‘A boundary, after all, is an invisible line, anonymous and ambiguous, easy to ignore and belonging nowhere. Yet it exists to create identity and to assign belonging. The division it marks – visibly with a wall, invisibly with a map line – actually creates entities on either side, by at once separating and relating them’.

This tension between separation and relation, between visible and invisible line, anonymity and ambiguity describe the way that Gospel writers’ themselves approach the mystery of holy darkness. They only allude to Easter as a three-day drama but offers no detailed excursions. Holy Saturday is left as ‘a silent nothing which says everything’. Indeed, John, who has been described as a theologian of ‘dualism’ (because of his constant insistence on light and darkness, below and above, etc) almost nearly leave out the second day (Jn. 19:41-20:1). But Caravaggio’s painting, *Mary Magdalene Grieving*, tells us that this is yet another way in which Holy Saturday is being enacted.

Only Matthew touches on Holy Saturday directly, and even here, we get a passing comment: the Pharisees and the priests goes to Pilate on the morning of *Shabbat* and begs for custodial measures to be put in place to ensure that nothing happens at the tomb that weekend (Mt 27:62ff).

We tend to forget that the early Christians lived out Easter backwards, from resurrection to the cross. And they also read scripture backwards, from the new to the old (testament) and looking for ways in which the old fulfils the new.

The three-day story of Easter reminded them of the story of Jonah in the belly of the fish. Indeed, this is how Jesus himself described his crucifixion, burial, and rising: ‘For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth’ (Mt.12:40). But Jesus also described it in terms of the temple’s rebuilding: ‘Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”’ (Jn. 2:19; Mark 8:31; 14:58).

We know that by the time Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians the three-day narrative of Easter was already part of early Christian tradition: ‘For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures’ (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

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Yet, it is in the Apostle's Creed, written around c. 390 that we gain further insight into Holy Saturday. The Creed tells us that far from being a 'nonevent', something significant, in fact, happened on Holy Saturday: 'he descended into hell'. The idea of 'descent into hell' is traced to two texts in 1 Peter which speaks of Jesus going to preach to the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3:19), and of the gospel being preached to the dead (1 Peter 4:6).

Scholars still debate the precise meaning of these texts. Lewis notes that some take it as referring 'to the fathomless depths of Christ's suffering on the cross and in his death'. Another view is that Jesus' descent into hell 'makes the point not where his humiliation is intensified and made most hellishly complete, but, on the contrary, where that humiliation ends, to make way for exaltation'; in other words, it speaks not of defeat but victory; it is about *completeness* of what Christ achieved, and its *scope*.

Which ever way one interprets the idea of the descent into hell, the key point must surely be that Holy Saturday is integral to the whole drama of Easter. According to Lewis, the scandal of the Christian faith and the ultimate point of its central three-day story must surely lie in this: 'for who else is the Resurrected One but he who has been crucified and buried?'

Early Christians insisted again and again that we live in the 'in-between': between cross and resurrection, between joy and lament, between the kingdom dawn and inaugurated by Jesus and the kingdom fully to come. It is often those on the margins and borders, who are less triumphalistic and who insist on hope without optimism, that calls us to attend to the 'in-between'. This is why Emmanuel Katongole, the Ugandan priest, reflecting on the Rwanda genocide, can write this: 'The resurrection of the church begins with lament' (with Mary weeping at the tomb on Easter morning).

Today, we live in the 'in-between'. The world is in the place of 'in-between': our lived tension between silence and speech, suffering and prolonged hope and resurrection, between isolation in dark days and the longed-for liberation and freedom. Holy Saturday naturally forces us to ask, '*How long did Jesus' pain last?*' If we practice Easter backwards, as the early Christians did, in inversion, from resurrection to the cross, the answer will be that Christ's pain still continues long after Easter Day.

After Easter Day – our mountain top experience - we will come down to the world of war and conflict, of cancer and death, of pain and suffering, of social inequality and violence. Holy Saturday will always be with us as long as the world is in the place of 'in-between'. This is where we must now find the risen Christ – in the 'in-between'.

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This explains why in recent times, as an alternative to the traditional Easter vigil and the liturgy of the paschal triduum, Holy Saturday is now being used as Easter alternative to 'Blue Christmas' by those who feel not ready and who cannot yet get to the resurrection joy of Easter Day.

Holy Saturday – the place of 'in-between' – requires us to be patient with God as he lifts the suffering and the pain that lies upon our world and release us into liberation and freedom. But patience itself is a resurrection virtue born out of 'inbetween'.

For as Adel Bestavros beautifully puts it: 'Patience with others is Love, Patience with self is Hope, Patience with God is Faith'.

**Rev Moses Agyam**

## *Lent & Easter Services Across the Circuit*

### **Thurrock**

28<sup>th</sup> March 12:30pm Maundy Thursday Service  
– Linford Methodist Church

29<sup>th</sup> March 6:30 Good Friday Service  
– Horndon-on-the-Hill Methodist Church

March 31<sup>st</sup> 10.30am Easter Celebratory Service (AAW)  
– Linford Methodist Church

Wednesday Mornings 8:30-9am Morning Prayer – Zoom  
Friday Evenings 8:30-9pm Evening Prayer – Zoom

Contact Rev Fiona Smith for Zoom details to join: [fiona.smith@methodist.org.uk](mailto:fiona.smith@methodist.org.uk)

April 1st (time to be arranged) Easter Activity Day for Children  
Includes Easter Bonnet Parade, Easter Egg Hunt, Easter Crafts,  
Live Music (please contact [kdbeckwith3@gmail.com](mailto:kdbeckwith3@gmail.com) for details)

### **Basildon**

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28th March, 7.30pm- Maundy Thursday Service  
– Trinity Methodist Church

29<sup>th</sup> March, 10.30am Churches Together in Basildon  
Ecumenical Walk of Witness

29th March, 3pm- Good Friday Messy Church Service  
– St Paul's Methodist Church

## **Christ Church, Wickford**

28th March 7:30 pm - Maundy Thursday Service (Holy Communion)

29th March, 10: 00am - Ecumenical Walk of Witness

31st March, 10:30 am Easter Day Celebration with Holy Communion

## **Billericay**

### **The Passion of Joy: Enjoying God in Lent**

The Annual Lent Lecture

Sunday, 18 February 2024,

6:00 pm to 7:30 pm, at Western Road

### **Holy Week Midday Meditation Services**

Monday, 25 March through Thursday, 28 March 2024 at Western Road

Reflective 45 minutes services with sacred music throughout the Holy week to help us reflect on the life, ministry, and death of Jesus as we look towards a promised resurrection.

*Holy Monday 25 March, 12:00pm*

**Revd Jonathan Evens**

Dean of Basildon & Team Rector of  
Wickford and Runwell.

*Holy Tuesday 26 March, 12:00pm*

**Revd Moses Agyam**

The Minister

*Holy Wednesday 27 March, 12:00pm*

**Revd Celia McDonald**

Supernumerary Minister

*Holy Thursday 28 March, 12:00pm*

**Mr Jim Rose**



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Anglican Reader in the Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry  
and chair of the Board of Trustees of the Billericay Foodbank

## **Seven Actions:**

### **A Service of Prayer and Holy Communion**

Maundy Thursday, 28 March 2024, 7:30 pm, at Western Road

### **Stations of the Cross**

### **The Gift of Tears in a Desperate World**

Good Friday, 29 March 2024, 11:15 am,  
At Queens Park

### **Easter Sunrise Service**

Sunday, 31 March 2024, 6:30 am *\*(NEW TIME)*  
At Mill Meadows followed by Breakfast at Western Road.

### **Easter Day All-Age Services**

### **Alleluia! He is Risen!**

Sunday, 31 March 2024, 10:30 am at Western Road

## *Dates for Upcoming Circuit Meetings*

### **CLT Meeting**

- 24th February 2024, at Trinity Methodist Church, 10:30 a.m.

### **Circuit Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting**

- 3rd March 2024, St Paul's Methodist Church, 7:30 p.m.

### **Circuit Meeting**

- 6th March 2024, St Paul's Methodist Church, 7:30 p.m.

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## 3 BIBLE month



## BIBLE MONTH TRAINING DAY

**FOR MINISTERS, LOCAL PREACHERS, WORSHIP LEADERS  
AND THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

Genesis is the starting point for all Christian theology and explores many of the foundational questions of life and faith. Through the book, we get to journey with many different characters as they wrestle (sometimes literally!) with finding answers to these questions in the midst of the messiness and uncertainty of life.

Join us at our Hub for a day exploring this strange and fascinating text, and get equipped for helping your church discover its many treasures.

Trinity Methodist Church, Basildon, SS16 4NN

10AM - 3PM / SAT 16 MAR



**At our Hub**  
See above for details



**Online (at home)**  
Via YouTube / Zoom

**BOOK NOW**

BM24-Training  
.eventbrite.co.uk



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## Lent Course

Thursdays Throughout Lent at Queens Park

Our Lent course this year is based on N. T. Wright's book, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, published by HarperCollins in 2006. N. T. Wright offers a fresh presentation of the timeless truths of Christianity, making the case that faith is reasonable and rewarding for us today. In this course, he expands on themes of the book in an inspiring and informative video lessons.



"This will become a classic."—ANNE RICE, author of *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*

### SIMPLY CHRISTIAN



Why Christianity Makes Sense

N. T. WRIGHT

- Do you usually think the world is a basically good or evil place? Does good or evil seem to be 'winning' today? Why?
- What is the purpose of religion?
- What beliefs do you regard as essential to Christian Faith?
- Which of these beliefs do you find hardest to understand or to accept?
- What behaviours do you regard as essential to Christian life?

<b>15</b>	<b>February</b>	10.30 am - 12:00pm	<b>Thursday</b>	<i>Simply Christian</i> Introduction
<b>22</b>	<b>February</b>	10.30 am - 12:00pm	<b>Thursday</b>	Justice & Spirituality
<b>29</b>	<b>February</b>	10.30 am - 12:00pm	<b>Thursday</b>	Relationships & Beauty
<b>7</b>	<b>March</b>	10.30 am - 12:00pm	<b>Thursday</b>	God
<b>14</b>	<b>March</b>	10.30 am - 12:00pm	<b>Thursday</b>	Jesus
<b>21</b>	<b>March</b>	10.30 am - 12:00pm	<b>Thursday</b>	The Holy Spirit

**Join the course and find out more – Thursdays in Lent at Queens Park**

# Contact

## Lent Course 2024 Exploring The Stations Of The Cross



Picture taken by S.Lissenden 01/11/2014,  
Polish Chapel of the Third Station of the Via Dolorosa

**We are exploring this Lent the Stations of the Cross through imagery, Bible readings and reflection.**

**Running for 5 weeks starting Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 10 am – 12 pm, at Christ Church, Wickford.**

**And in the evenings on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February at Janette and Andy's, 01268 763132.**

**All are Welcome.**

# Contact

## Circuit Easter Offering Service

Sunday, 7 April 2024, 3:00 pm at Western Road.



We gather as a circuit to share in this year's Easter offering, **Let Justice Roll**, using the worship resource by the Methodist Women in Britain. The service includes the dedication of the Easter Offering, all of which goes to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain, supporting and working with over 100 Partner Churches and organisations around the world.

Take a fresh stand for justice and support the **World Mission Fund** this Easter

The service will be held at .....  
.....  
.....  
on .....starting at.....

 **Methodist Women  
in Britain**  
for women, for justice, for Christ

 The **Methodist** Church

# Con+act+

# JOIN

# THE

**Celebrating the past,  
inspiring the present...**

# CELEBRATION

## Billericay Methodist *100*

— CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION —



All are cordially invited to join our  
**Centenary Celebration Service**

The service will be held at **Western Road  
Methodist church**, on **Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024,**  
**3:00 pm**, followed by a Finger Buffet

