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PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE



In January 2020 we would not have had any expectation of the situation that was about to engulf us. Within weeks we saw shops closed, schools closed, working from home, confined to home, social distancing, mask wearing, bans from meeting friends and family and an accelerated death rate. As Christians probably one of the worst consequences of the coronavirus pandemic was the instruction to close our Churches with the result being, in a significant number of cases, that they may not open again.

We cannot predict the future, but we can, even in these troubled times, be confident that it is in God's hands, he is in control and he **'will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus'** (Philippians 4:19)

This reminds us of Stephen in Acts 6 and 7. He was a follower of Jesus in

the early Church and his spirituality led him to be appointed to **'wait on tables'** and provide a caring witness as the Church grew. However, his witness quickly outgrew this, and he performed miracles and demonstrated spiritual wisdom and power in his preaching. This led him to the same situation as Jesus had found himself previously - before the Jewish court accused by false witnesses.

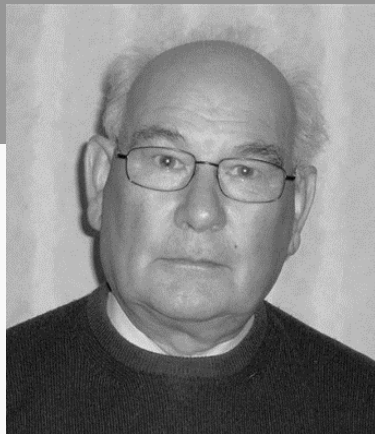
Stephen, as he began waiting on tables, probably had no expectation of the situation about to engulf him but his experience is evidence of God meeting **'all your needs'**. When he came before the court we are told **'his face was like the face of an angel'** and when he was about to be stoned and faced death he had the vision **'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God'**.

We can be confident that whatever the situation we find ourselves in, God will meet all our needs and, as Stephen found, the greater the challenge the greater the divine supply available. I trust that through the last two years of an unprecedented situation for most of us this has been our experience and we can be confident this will be the case in 2022 and beyond.

George Phillips
(WRU President)



WHERE ARE THEY NOW



REV JOHN GOULDER

Where do you live now?

Brackley, Northants

Are you still involved in the Union?

Until it recently closed (2019) I ministered at Souldern.

If not, for how many years were you involved in the Union?

Life-long but first on General Committee in 1968 (until 2000).

Where do you currently worship?

Brackley Methodist Church in the morning and Syresham in the evening.

Describe your current church.

Evangelical, warm, friendly & supportive.

Which of the following do you prefer and why?

Organ, piano or music group?

No preference – happy with either.

Pews or chairs?

Either

Lectern or pulpit?

Pulpit

Refreshments before, during or after the service?

After the service – during tends to be disruptive to the flow of

the service.

Other than the Bible, which book as influenced you the most?

Biographies of C.T. Studd and Gladys Aylwood.

Who would you most like to have supper with (dead or alive, actual or fictional)?

Martin Luther King.

What is your favourite Bible verse?

John 3:16

What is your favourite hymn or song?

“And can it be...”

What is your favourite memory of your time in the Union?

Being inducted as President in 1981.

DRINK UP AND PRAY

I am not a hoarder and in my cupboard where I keep the mugs, there is a delicate china mug from Buckingham Palace, a chunky mug from Cliff College, a couple of comical ones from my friends in Scotland and some very pretty ones from Sainsbury's.

Not like my friend's eclectic mix which are rammed into her cupboard. She must have noticed my raised eyebrows as I caught a glimpse of the contents. She explained: “The Scottish mugs remind me not only of my family history, but also of my friends who currently live there, in particular one from my childhood and another from my college days. **I think of them and offer up a prayer for their continued friendship and any particular situations I know** currently touch

their lives. My prayer day is under way.

The Lindisfarne mug belonged to my late mother and was a gift from our neighbours. I cherish the memories, not only of my Mum, but also the kindnesses shown by these neighbours. **During the time it takes to make a cup of coffee, there is time to give thanks through prayer.** This mug represents my visit to the Abbey. Many feet have trodden the paths of the island; saints and sinners have been drawn there.

Each drink represents an opportunity to give thanks and pray for these particular and associated people and places that form my past, my present and hopefully my future.

Christmas time sees the arrival of



additional mugs to the collection, amongst them, a small, very old china one, proclaiming the birth of Jesus, and another two showing scenes from “The Snowman”. **Not only are drinks stirred in these mugs, but memories are stirred too - of the first Christmas and our own Christmases, of the family and friends who have shared and still share with us, of empty spaces at the table and new faces at our table and more prayers are offered.**

They are not just mugs, they are a reminder to pray.

Daphne Hodkinson

DONATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF LWPT, LWPH AND LPMA

The two charities, LWPT and LWPHomes, have been operating independently since 2017. As such, members of the Methodist Church need to be aware that there have been changes in the way individual and church donations are dealt with to benefit LWPT and LWPHomes.

We are both registered with the Charities' Commission with two different, but compatible, purposes, namely:

1. LWPHomes – 'Provision of housing and residential care for those involved in worship/preaching and their dependents/relatives'.
2. LWPT – 'Providing resources, support and grants for those who lead worship and preach'.

Therefore, in accordance with Charity Commission regulations and GDPR database laws, we have not been able to share databases and funds with one another since our legal separation.

In the light of these historical changes, we are asking Methodist Churches and their members to consider where their donations should go: LWPT, LWPHomes or a separate gift to each.

1. Any individual donations (including legacies) or church collective donations should be directed at the

organisation which the donor wishes to benefit. Any donations made out to LWPT or LWPHomes will only benefit the organisation specified.

2. LPMA is now a dormant charity, but the fund remains active to redirect any past legacies left to LPMA by paying out grants in line with LPMA's original purposes.

In whatever way you choose to refine your donation choices in future, both LWPT and LWPHomes thank you for your support over the years. We are both fully committed to benefitting God's people on the front line of daily ministry.

If you would like to donate please use the contact details below:

LWPHomes

Email – homesadmin@lwphomes.org.uk

Phone – 01702 342059

Address – LWPHomes, 1 Winton Avenue, Westcliff on Sea, Essex SS0 7QU

LWPT

Email – lwptoffice@lwpt.org.uk

Phone – 01923 231811

Address – 14 Orbital 25 Business Park, Dwight Road, Watford WD18 9DA

OBITUARY

ANN DOWNING (JUMP WR CHURCH)

Anne left her home on earth and went to be with her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the 23rd October 2021. Anne was a friend, a Mother, a Grandmother, a Sister amongst many other things, but most important of all she was a child of God.

Anne became a Christian, and gave her life to the Lord as a young teenager, and she never looked back, as it says in Ephesians Ch 1:13-14 *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy-*

Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory."

Anne married Ted, they had 2 children, Julie and John, and they lived out their lives in service to the Lord, and for many years in the ministry at various churches in the W.R.U. I could go on to tell you all about Anne's life and the many things that she achieved and did, but I am sure that she would just want to be remembered for someone whose life displayed the love of Jesus to all those whom she met and in all that she did.

But if you were to ask me to describe what Anne was like in three words they would have to be, **"What a Friend"**. A faithful and loyal friend who touched the lives of all those that she met. She displayed the



characteristics of her Lord and Saviour as she went about her daily life, sharing love and kindness to everyone.

As a member of our family at Jump church she was greatly loved and will be sadly missed for her wisdom, warmth, love and friendship, but we rejoice knowing that she is resting safe in the arms of her Saviour.

OUR PRECIOUS SEEDS



I wonder what comes to mind when I say the word **SEED**?

As an amateur gardener there is nothing more exciting to me, than when a packet of seed is delivered from a catalogue order site. Sometimes, I may have ordered them a month or so before they arrive and I have forgotten all about them. The colourful pictures on the packet, can often bear no resemblance to the dried-up husks of seeds inside. (My favourite would have to be beetroot, sunflower and cucumber seeds.) Inside these little beauties though, there is - like within us - so much potential. Given the right growing conditions of nutrition, heat and water, unlimited growth can occur to stir our hearts with joy.



Just like these seeds we are given new birth at regeneration and can grow into the image of our Saviour and Creator, When, we come to faith there is kernel of Christ planted within our hearts. We are told in the parable of the Sower that the seed can spring up and produce: thirty, sixty or even a hundredfold. What a bumper crop that would be for our Saviour. 'Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty sixty or even a hundred times. Mark 4.8

THE RIGHT NUTRITION:

There is phrase that went around a while ago: 'You are what you eat.' If this is true of our physical selves then how much more true this is of our spiritual state of health. Just like the seed when it is planted in the earth we need those times when we are hidden alone with Christ, feeding on the word and the spirit through prayer, asking for the sustenance that only Christ can supply, so that we many share our seed with those who are in great need spiritually. Our daily discipline of reading the word and prayer nourishes us. Christ feeds us with his word so that we may share the good news with others. Our Saviour wishes for all to know his great love for themselves. Those who are spiritually sick and impoverished need to know of a loving Saviour who created them to relate to him. What a blessing it is to learn more about our Saviour each day. His assurance, peace and the Holy spirit who prods us to walk more closely to him each day. Guiding us and leading us onward.

THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE:

When our log burner goes low, we can feel the difference in temperature. WE need to stoke the flames within our hearts for the Lord. Is there anything which we would not do for him? When there is a challenge in our lives from the Lord, we may turn away thinking it is too difficult for us. Again, and again the Lord will challenge us though. When the Lord decides, we can rely on his provision of grace for us to face those new challenges ahead. Young Timothy in his epistle was encouraged by the apostle Paul to: 'Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you.' 2 Tim 1.6 Was young Timothy feeling discouraged in the work for the Lord? We are not told but this may have been the case.

When my new seeds are planted in their pots in my tiny greenhouse,

each time I go outside I check on them. It often looks as if nothing is happening. Often, the temperature is not right for growth to occur. They were planted according to the packet but they need the warmth of the sun just like we need to know the warmth of God's love for ourselves to grow. As soon as the warm sunlight comes along my seeds put on a growth spurt. When we know the love of God for ourselves, we can bask in the joy of my Saviours love to us.



LIVING WATER:

Watering my plants on dry days can be quite a chore. Thankfully in our lives we are irrigated daily by the Holy Spirit. He is the third person of the Trinity and promised to each of us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said; 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' Jn 7. 37-38. The Holy Spirit waters the good seed planted within us so that our character grows more like our Lord's. He has created each one of us in his image and that image is liberated by the Holy Spirit working away within us. How wonderful this is.



OUR PRECIOUS SEEDS (continued)

To conclude then. Seeds have a life span, some only last one year, others thrive for many years. This difference is with the eternal seed which has been planted in us the lasts forever. We don't need to worry about the world in which we live and its environment. It is awaiting the day when our Lord Jesus himself returns. We are told the creation is groaning to see the day when we as sons of God are revealed. (See Romans 8.20-21) Yes, of course we need to be good stewards of all God has given to us. We are a seed of heaven planted on the earth. 'The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power, it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' This means that for each believer the best is yet to come. However, it means too, that we need



to share the good news with all. Carrying seed to sow may mean tears when we sow, let us look to return carrying our sheaves with joy as we are promised in Psalm 126.

*Pastor Jacky Clark
(Church on the Rock)*

CESA VALUES DAY 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE – WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH ME?

Did you take interest in the coverage of Cop26? In simple terms it was a United Nations conference to discuss climate change. Each country present (almost 200) presented their own plans. The website says that it had four aims:

- ***Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach***
- ***Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats***
- ***Mobilise finance***
- ***Work together to deliver***

Perhaps you wondered what climate change has to do with you, and should Christians take a particular interest in it? There are of course different views across the Christian

spectrum. Overall though, it is clear that as Christians we have a duty to care for God's creation. Our mandate is in the creation account, 'The Lord God took the man and put him to work in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.' (Genesis 2 v 15). That hasn't changed, but as Adam can't do it, who is the responsibility left to now?

The CESA Committee (Christian Ethics and Social Action) have chosen this subject for Values Day 2022. ***The Sunday set aside is 6th February.*** However, it's not limited to that date. Could you ask your preacher for that day to focus on this? Maybe a midweek Bible Study Group could tackle it. At least, would you include it in your prayers for that Sunday. A document will be to all churches

by email (or a hard copy if you don't have email facilities) which has a reflection on Climate Change from a Christian perspective, a sermon outline and prayers.

We would also ask that you give us feedback regarding this, and especially the literature we send. If you use it, how? What improvements could improvements be made. If you don't use it because of a specific reason, that would be helpful to know too. This will help to inform us as we consider Values Day 2023.

May God bless you, however you use the material – and if you don't!

Phil Hearson
On behalf of the CESA Committee

OVERSEAS MISSIONS

New Project for 2021/22

Greetings in the name of Jesus. Give thanks to God for His purpose, plan and provision!

As we journey together in this New Year, on behalf of the WRU Overseas Missions Team, we would like to thank you all for your continued support. Please continue to pray for all Missions Personnel.

As we are raising funds for our 'Love Russia' minibus project, I would like to use an analogy that will make you think!

"Are you at the Bus Stop?"

"Yes, I am waiting here."

"What are you waiting for?"

"I am waiting for the bus of course, that seems a silly question when you can see I am at the bus stop!"

"You could be waiting for a friend getting off the bus, or you could just like being at the bus stop."

If we do not ask questions and wait for answers, we cannot assume what a person is thinking or doing!

Are you at the heavenly bus stop waiting for God to call you home? Thinking you have done enough or are tired of the journey and just waiting?

Well, while you're waiting, God has plenty of work for you to do! God will continue to use you for His Glory when we, "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His Face always" (1 Chronicles 16:11).

While you are waiting at the bus stop, you can pray for others, you can pray in every situation, wherever you are, for the people around you in the community that you serve in, when you're shopping, driving, with family, close friends or with your beloved brothers and sisters in Christ.

God can use us in many situations, when we are willing to be used by Him. So, at this time we can pray for the people who will benefit from this minibus, for the people waiting to use the bus, and people who will be sitting on the bus, and for their

MINIBUS



destinations. We can pray protection over this minibus.

So, my prayer today is, as we're collecting funds and donations for the Love Russia Overseas Missions project, that this minibus will be a blessing to many. **But as we stand and look within ourselves, we can realise, that there is plenty of work for us to do, and that God can use us, no matter how long we have been walking with Him, how old we are, or where we are in our journey.**

Blessings,
Lindsey Hedley
OM Secretary

HOW GREEN...

...is my (chapel in the) valley?

During the last few weeks, we have been led and steered through what it means to be a Christian and to whether we should have a concern about climate change and global warming.

We have been watching some really interesting and challenging videos on YouTube, produced by Tear Fund and led by Katharine Hayhoe (look her up).

And it led us to think about our situation on a local scale, even a personal and church centred one.

What is our standpoint – do we even have one?

If God is in control, isn't it all going to be alright anyway (at least for some of us!).



"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" (Genesis 1:26)

Dominion over..." – well that's good isn't it, that means we can do as we like surely.

But with dominion doesn't also come responsibility? True dominion isn't just another word for exploit, it's a word which carries a sense of responsibility towards that which is dominated, be it a nation or a planet. And this isn't about earth worship either, it's about being a steward of that over which we are given dominion by the Creator Himself.

As He cares for us, how much more then should we also care for all that He has created.

Cliff Darby

MINISTERS AND PASTORS RETREAT

It was good to be able to share with ministers and pastors recently.

Unfortunately, some people were not able to join with us because of travelling difficulties due to the shortage of fuel.

As you might well expect prayer was a top priority and we spent time sharing with each other about our experiences during lockdown and what was happening now that we were able to meet more freely. After each update we prayed for that church and its particular joys but also its concerns.

In the evening we shared a meal in a local restaurant before travelling home or joining our local hosts and sharing fellowship in their home.

The following day we were joined by a representative of Christians Against Poverty and spent a very interesting time learning more about the very valuable work they do, especially given the impact of Covid at this time.

The day finished as we shared around the Lord's Table.

Thank you to everyone at Dodworth for making us so welcome.

REFLECTION

As Christians we are called to 'love one another as I have loved you'
St Paul wrote of sixteen aspects of love:

Love

- *is patient*
- *is kind*
- *does not envy*
- *does not boast*
- *is not proud*
- *is not rude*
- *is not self seeking*
- *is not easily angered*
- *keeps no record of wrongs*
- *does not delight in evil*
- *rejoices with the truth*
- *always protects*
- *always trusts*
- *always hopes*
- *always perseveres*
- *never fails*

As you consider the love you share with family, friends and others, ask God to help you share that love positively and in accordance with His will. Think and pray in particular about those aspects of love which you find it most difficult to show.

Muriel Stonehewer
(Coal Aston WR Church)



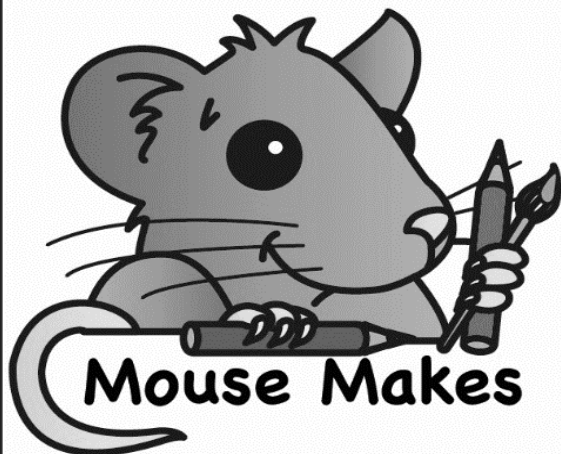
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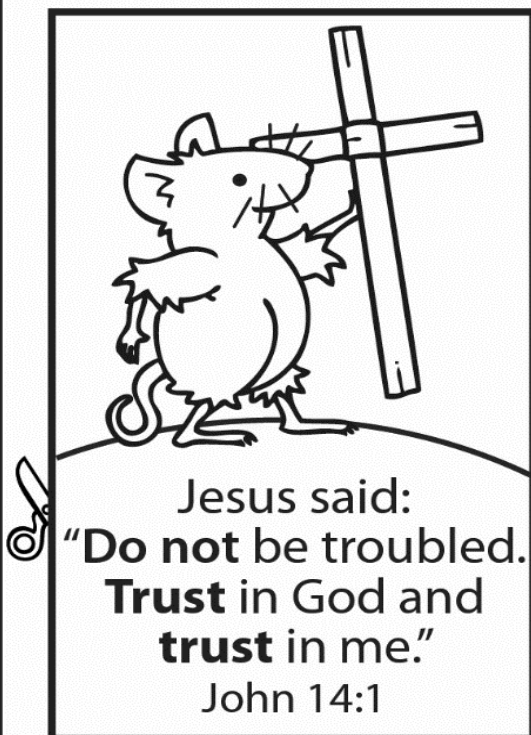
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N R E H T U O S S R H R
E E N I T S E L A P E E
A L A N N E A O O I R T
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S S C H O L A R S H M O
V M M B L R H I R E S S
S C A R A V A N O B A S
U R T A M H O S W A N I



But I **trust**
in you,
O Lord;
I say,
"**You are
my God.**"

Psalm 31:14



Cut out and colour these cards to
help you to **thank** and **praise** God.

When I am afraid
I will **trust** you,
I praise God for
His word,
I **trust** God, so
I am *not* afraid.

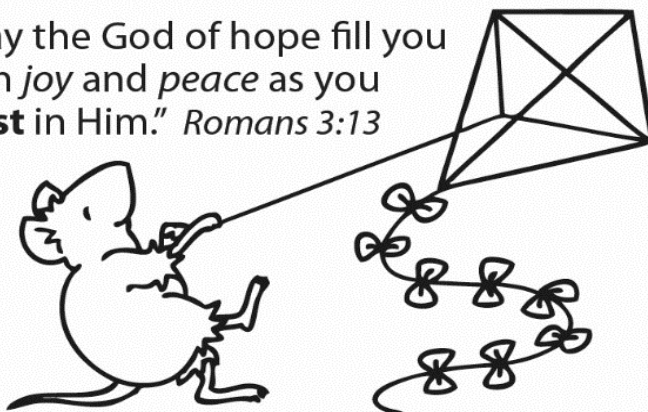
Psalm 56:3-4



The Lord is good,
a refuge in times
of trouble.
He cares for those
who **trust** in Him.

Nahum 1:7

"May the God of hope fill you
with joy and peace as you
trust in Him." Romans 3:13



Trust in the Lord with
all your heart and
lean not on your own
understanding.
In all your ways **submit**
to Him and He will make
your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

