



Emsworth Methodist Church & Pastoral Centre



a serving and worshipping Christian church in the heart of Emsworth,
working closely with other churches and with the local community

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Monthly news sheet

February 2017

Message from the Manse

One day a very strong woodcutter got a job working for a timber merchant. He was an honest man and determined to do his best.

On the first day, the woodcutter brought down 18 trees. "Congratulations," his manager said. "Go on that way!"

Happy to have pleased his boss, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he could only bring down 15 trees.

On the third day he tried even harder than before but by the end of the day he had only ten trees to show for all his hard work.

"I don't understand what's going on," he told his manager. "I must be losing my strength."

"When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" the boss asked.

"Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I have been very busy trying to cut down trees..."

(Based on a short story by Stephen Covey)

'I had no time to sharpen my axe...'

This is, at its heart, a very simple story. It's based on a popular saying attributed to Abraham Lincoln: 'Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.'

I know that there are many ways that this story could be interpreted. But the one that pops into my mind immediately is about resourcing. The woodcutter is conscientious, willing and able. He does his best but fails to realize that just a few moments spent in preparation would make all the difference to the task in hand. So he goes on.... becoming increasingly tired and frustrated with himself.

In all of our lives there are tasks that we need to complete. Some are easy. Some bring us great joy. At times some can feel hard and long.

As Christians we are called to pour ourselves out before God and others; to worship, serve and love. But we can't pour out unless we take the time to do the things that 'fill' us; if we don't take time to 'sharpen our axes' as the story says we run the risk of becoming 'blunt'.

What resources you? How do you sharpen your axe?

The answer, of course, varies from person to person and according to the seasons of our lives. Prayer may well be high on the list; so too may be certain people, places, music or books; maybe you're a walker; or perhaps you love nothing more than sitting in a quiet place.

In a world where there is a lot of 'doing' to be done try not to become so busy that you forget about these things.

Every blessing
Laura

Lent Communions

We will be holding our Lent Communions again this year at 1 p.m. in International Hall, beginning on Ash Wednesday, 1st March. These will be preceded by Lent Lunches in aid of Christian Aid in the Pastoral Centre. Full details next month.

Christians Together in Emsworth Meeting 12th January 2017

Care for our Common Home - This paper had been circulated by Maureen and Stuart Thompson from the Roman Catholic congregation following a conference they had attended discussing the Pope's recent encyclical, particularly focussing on care for the world. They wondered whether the local community/churches would appreciate a day or a course on the same theme. They agreed to write to each church to see the level of interest for such a venture.

Christian Aid Report – Christmas carol singing in the Square had collected £220 resulting in a total of £7901 being sent to CA for the year, an increase of £700. Lent lunches in the Pastoral Centre will start on March 1st. The Methodist Church was having a retiring collection for the Disaster Emergency Committee's Yemen appeal and TearFund have also launched an appeal.

Women's World Day of Prayer – Janet Baker explained that this was a programme prepared by women from around the world highlighting areas of injustice and inequality which still exist for women. She stressed that this is an ecumenical movement where ideally all denominations are able to contribute to the act of worship but unfortunately only two denominations were able to contribute to this in Emsworth. After much discussion it was suggested that this year's event should go ahead as planned but that it might be possible to join with churches in Havant and Hayling Island in future years.

Review of Christmas Card – This had been well received. More distributors are needed for the Easter cards – please speak to Sue Dudman if you are able to help.

Arrangements for Easter – Maundy Thursday – an evening Service of Foot Washing at St James at (a time to be confirmed). The Good Friday Procession will start at the Catholic Church at 9.30am, then to Baptist Church at 10am, Methodist Church at 10.30am, URC at 11am, St James at 11.30am followed by soup in the Parish Hall. The Easter Sunday Sunrise Service will start at 6am on the foreshore and will be led by Rev'd Bill Stillwell.

CTE presence at Emsworth Show – It is hoped this might happen this year and some of the younger members of St James might be prepared to help. We hope to hand out free bottles of water as a new way of outreach but before any arrangements are made, permission will be sought from the Show organisers as this might be a potential conflict with commercial ventures.

Update on Church premises security – There was no particular update. It was requested that any future plans be shared.

Lent Groups – Each church was asked to send details of any open courses they might be running to our Chairman and he would produce a poster to advertise them.

Dates for fifth Sunday evening services – April 30th Catholic, July 30th Baptist, October 29th URC.

News from around the Churches

Catholic: Nothing particular to report.

URC: Guides and Rangers are now meeting on their premises as well as Brownies and Rainbows. Graham Dadd's time as an associate minister has been extended. Paul O'Connor has a position to take up in Christchurch. The future of the local church is being contemplated.

Anglican: Healing and reconciliation are a priority. Warblington Church hopes to have toilets installed.

Baptist: Another building phase is about to start.

Methodist: A new café style service has been started on second Sundays.

Our Chairman said he was keeping a check on Havant Borough Council's Plan as it might affect churches in the borough. 16,000 new homes are planned over the next few years.

Date of next meeting and AGM – May 4th 2017.

Sue Dudman

Cake Stall

The cake stall in 2016 has been amazingly successful; our average monthly takings are just over £88. This is the best year we have had and we are grateful to all who support this monthly effort. To those bakers who give of their time and ingredients to make such a delectable variety of items for sale a very big thank you. I know just how time consuming baking can be and your efforts are much appreciated.

Of course our success would not be possible without those who come to buy, many of whom have regular items on order each month and enjoy our home cooked goodies. Tastes are changing and we find that savoury items are becoming more popular but there is still demand for the varied and delicious cakes we have on sale, so thank you to all who support our cake stall.

From this year it has been agreed that the monthly cake stall will be held on the fourth (4th) Thursday in each month, I hope this regular date will avoid any future confusion.

So if you are a baker or a buyer please accept my grateful thanks, we look forward once again to your support in 2017.

Jean Dyke



General Church Meeting

At our General Church Meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 7th March we shall be electing representatives to the Church Council and appointing our Church Stewards.

We may elect up to 15 representatives to Church Council. We currently have 9, of whom 7 are eligible to be re-elected for a further year.

Our Senior Church Steward, Geoffrey Eardley, will be stepping down with effect from 30th April. Neither of the remaining two stewards is in a position to take on the rôle of Senior Steward, and the Church Leadership Team is currently considering how the particular responsibilities of the Senior Steward might be dealt with in the future.

The Church Stewards are supported by our Associate Stewards, appointed by Church Council, who undertake stewards' Sunday duties, but do not have the wider responsibilities of Church Stewards. However, having had five Associate Stewards two years ago, we now have only two.

There is an urgent need for more Church Stewards and Associate Stewards. Please give prayerful consideration as to whether you might be able to offer, or who might be appropriate persons, to serve either as a steward or a representative to Church Council. Do have a word with any of the stewards if you would like further information about what is involved.

Nominations for Church Stewards and representatives to Church Council should be received in writing by Alan Hickox, Church Council Secretary, or by the Reverend Bill Stillwell, by Saturday 25th February. Alan would also be pleased to hear of any persons willing to be appointed to serve as Associate Stewards.

Compass Course

Bill and Laura will soon be running a 'Compass Course', open to anyone who wishes to learn more about the Christian faith or who would value the opportunity to 'refresh'. The course will begin on Friday 24th February at 7.30pm in the Wesley Room, and will run for six sessions. There will be publicity and further information available nearer the time.



Prayer Prompts - February

You are invited to use the suggestions listed below in your prayer times. The monthly diary is also an aid for our prayers.

As we approach the start of Lent: our own walk with Jesus; honesty when we face doubts; integrity in our journey of faith in God; fellowship when we need others to care. Those known to us who are dealing with health issues, those growing frail.

All Churches in Emsworth, for: the work and ministry shared at the Pastoral Centre; our friends at St James as they seek a new Rector; the worship we share together; for our own church seeking leaders, Church Stewards; for work with young people.

The homeless and hungry: the homeless on our own streets and the causes that make people homeless including mental health issues; those who produce and sell the Big Issue; migrants coping with a bitterly cold winter in Europe; areas of the world short of food, on the cusp of a famine, the people of Yemen.

For people struggling with communities divided: the results of the Brexit vote as they affect us, divides caused by the language of the new President of the USA; division in families and church communities; that there be honesty in listening across the divides; that all things be done in love; that the love of God will lead us all to peace and reconciliation.

We have a small **Prayer Chain** working within the church. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of prayer please do contact Chris Walters on 01243 379254 or c.walters5@homecall.co.uk

Church Calendar continued:

Wednesday	22	7.30pm	Ladies Group. Rachel Caruthers: 'West Sussex Waste Recycling' (IH)
Thursday	23	10.00am 7.30pm	Cake Stall Wesley Guild. Rachel Aslett-Clarke: 'The Work of the Apuldram Centre' (IH)
Friday	24	11.30am 7.30pm	Bacon Butties Compass Course, Wesley Room (see page 6)
Sunday	26	10.00am 6.30pm	Morning Worship led by Mrs Milly Aquilina-Gray United Evening Worship Led by Rev John Mills
Monday	27	10.30am	Chair-based Exercises (IH)
Tuesday	28	10.00am 2.00pm 3.00pm	Standing Exercises (IH) Activity Afternoon: Table Games and Pancakes Bible Discussion Group (Wesley Room)

CHURCH CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2017

All events in Emsworth Methodist Church & Pastoral Centre unless stated otherwise

IH = International Hall, URC = United Reformed Church, Bath Road

Wednesday	1	6.15pm	Ecumenical Prayer Fellowship (URC Hall)
Thursday	2	10.00am	Thursday Market: Children's Items (IH)
		7.30pm	Wesley Guild. Sue Tinny: 'New Sustainable Development Goals' (IH)
Friday	3	11.30am	Bacon Butties
Sunday	5	10.00am	All Age Worship led by Mr Andrew Wilcock Followed by coffee and Traidcraft stall
		6.30pm	United Holy Communion at St James' Celebrant Rev Damon Draisey, Preacher Deacon Laura Evans
Monday	6	10.30am	Chair-based Exercises (IH)
Tuesday	7	10.30am	Standing Exercises (IH)
		2.00pm	Activity Afternoon: Beetle Drive
Wednesday	8	7.30pm	Ladies Group. Valerie Norman: 'American Hooked Rugs'(IH)
Thursday	9	7.30pm	Wesley Guild. Wendy Chappell: 'The Chaplain Services at QA' (IH)
Friday	10	11.30am	Bacon Butties
Sunday	12	10.00am	United Holy Communion at St James' Celebrant Rev Bill Stillwell, Preacher Rev Bill McCoubrey
		10.00am	Second Sunday at the Centre led by Mrs Margaret Sawyer
		6.30pm	United Evening Worship Led by Mrs Margaret Sawyer, preacher Rev Brian Hammond
Monday	13	10.30am	Chair-based Exercises (IH)
Tuesday	14	10.30am	Exercises (IH)
		2.00pm	Activity Afternoon: Knitting for Charity
Thursday	16	10.00am	Thursday Market: Closing Down Sale (IH)
		7.30pm	Wesley Guild. The Music Group: an Evening of Music and Verse (IH)
Friday	17	11.30am	Bacon Butties
Sunday	19	10.00am	Holy Communion led by Rev Geoffrey Senior
		6.30pm	United Evensong at St Thomas' Warblington led by Rev John Pilkington
Monday	20	10.30am	Chair-based Exercises (IH)
Tuesday	21	10.30am	Standing Exercises (IH)
		2.00pm	Activity Afternoon: Spring Colouring and Conversation

Church calendar continued on inside back page

Items for the February news-sheet should be in the folder in the post rack or emailed to dianaharris@btinternet.com by **Saturday 18th February**