



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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Registered Charity No 1127747

Newsletter

1 August 2021

Message from the Manse from Laura

Before we were, God was. As we travel we can be sure God goes ahead of us. This doesn't mean our journey will be easy. The path may have bends and bumps as well as straight, flat sections; but we can be sure that God will be before, behind and beside us. I hope these words bring reassurance to you as they do to me.

EMC Newsletter 'Message from the Manse': October 2014

It's funny, isn't it, how things come around? They say there's nothing new under the sun and although I don't entirely agree I can see their point. That dress which was the height of fashion 30 years ago is now probably 'in' again – whatever that means! Can anyone remember whether eggs are good for us or not at the moment? I've lost track...

Apparently the same is also true of EMC newsletters. While having a pre-packing sort out I came across a bundle of old editions dating back to when I first arrived in 2014. Oddly, the memory of writing the first 'Message from the Manse' remains with me. What could I say to a group of people I hardly knew; especially when I still needed a satnav to travel

more than three miles from home?! What could I do but speak of God's companionship on our journey?

Our journey together over the past seven years has been rather more winding than any of us could have foreseen – and it hasn't always been easy. We've lost beloved members of our family-community, and rejoiced at the presence of new friends. We've celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Pastoral Centre, and despaired when it temporarily closed due to COVID. We've sung, prayed, talked, Zoomed, joked, laughed and grieved together. It has been an honour to share in that journey, and I am more grateful than I can express for your presence and prayers as I've travelled my own path.

The last sentence of that newsletter, written years before Friday bacon butties - when the red chairs were new and the church was painted a blue colour, and we'd never heard of 'Zoom' or 'social distancing', reads thus:

"I look forward very much to getting to know you all better in the coming months as we seek to find out what God is already doing in this community and to join in."

Things are changing and it's right that they should. Ours is a God who can make wonderful things come out of even the most difficult circumstances. God is already doing amazing things in the life of the Emsworth community. The church's task is to prayerfully discern its own place in those adventures and then to join in.

You'll be in my prayers going forward, and I would be very grateful for yours.

Every blessing,

Laura

The Church Office phone number and email address are not in use at the moment. If you need to contact anyone urgently for pastoral or safeguarding reasons, please use the ministers' contact details shown on the front page of this Newsletter.

Sunday Worship

Some restrictions are still in place: **if you would like to attend worship in church**, please contact Dot by the Friday before each Sunday to book your seat (see page 4).

Services will also be live streamed on Zoom. A recording will be available on YouTube.

Sunday 1 August at 10.00am
Worship led by Revd Bill Stillwell

Sunday 8 August at 10.00am
Worship led by Deacon Laura Evans

Sunday 15 August at 10.00am
Service of Holy Communion led by Revd Stephen Wright

Sunday 22 August at 10.00am
Worship led by Revd Bill Stillwell

Sunday 29 August at 10.00am
Worship led by Geoff Paffett (tbc)

Good news!

We are delighted to share the news that Emily H was awarded a 1st Class Honours Degree in History at Cambridge University. Congratulations to Emily, BA!



Christians Together in Emsworth

Just a reminder that we are in need of helpers on the CTiE stand at the Emsworth Show on Monday 30th August. If you are planning to visit the show and would be prepared to help us for an hour or two, please speak to me or Dot. Thank you.

Sue D

Sunday Services and the way forward ...

The Church Leadership Team met recently and discussed the ongoing practicalities for our worship in church on Sunday mornings. We are going to proceed with caution, as advocated by the Methodist Church nationally, to fulfil our Duty of Care. We feel this is in everyone's best interests and will hopefully be reassuring for many people who are feeling anxious about it.

We will continue to set out the chairs in a well distanced format and recommend that you only sit with people who are part of your family or bubble. We would also like people to continue to wear face coverings.

Whilst we are not up to full capacity, we are still asking you to continue booking your places for the time being. Laura's last service with us will be on the 8th August, and Bill's on the 22nd, and we suspect there may be increased numbers for those services. We may decide to drop the need for booking seats after that, according to how things are progressing.

The good news is that we can sing again! We feel that this is quite safe, behind face coverings, provided people don't get too carried away! This will be a real step forward.

We will review the situation again towards the end of August when we can see how things are going generally across the country and how you all feel about it. But please be reassured that we will continue to do everything we possibly can to keep us all safe and well.

Mobility Scooters

The Vickers family have two mobility scooters which are no longer needed. Both are free to a good home; both are working at present, but have been very little used in past two years, so may need new batteries for best performance. Basic training will be given.

Both scooters come with manuals and have been kept in a garage. They are charged by plugging into an ordinary power socket, so easy access to power is required.



Cordoba Shoprider

A large scooter, to be driven in the road, with lights and wing mirror. It needs someone competent and used to speeds.



Scout Scooter

A small scooter that will take apart into four pieces to go into a car boot for transporting. It has a cover. It is not as comfortable as larger scooters, but that is the compromise. Amy used this one for a while, so can advise interested people

Hilary invites anyone interested to come and see, and to try the scooters. She was a volunteer at Portsmouth Shopmobility for over two years, and she can help you to gain confidence.

If you are interested, please contact Hilary, or Diana Harris, or email the newsletter at newsletter@emsworthmethodistchurch.org

Edward Arthur Brown 1930 – 2021

Many of you may be surprised to read that Arthur's first name was actually Edward, as was that of his father and grandfather. To avoid confusion they were all known by their middle names – hence Arthur. He was born into a Hertfordshire railway family, his father being a signal linesman, whilst both grandfathers were signalmen. This connection created a love for trains and the railways, particularly steam, that would last all of Arthur's life.

As a boy and young man Arthur had many interests. He rode horses, and wanted to join the Household Cavalry, but his parents would not agree. Another great love was cycling and he toured all over the UK and post war Europe. Arthur also belonged to the St John's Ambulance, through which he met Doreen at a local gymkhana. They married in 1954, and had two daughters, Linda and Tricia, and three grandchildren, Louise, Emily and Ben. For Arthur, family was everything and some of his happiest moments were when all of them, including sons in law Malcolm and Alan, were able to get together.

At the time of his marriage to Doreen, Arthur was doing his National Service with the RAF, studying navigation at the Thorney Island base. The pulpit in the Island's church was presented by the RAF and Arthur had a hand in its design. At this time he also took up sailing which was to prove a favourite hobby in later life. After National Service Arthur started work in the drawing office at the Letchworth firm of Meredew, furniture manufacturers, eventually becoming works manager. He was particularly proud of his involvement in helping set up national apprenticeship training, a cause dear to his heart for all of his working life. Whilst in Letchworth Arthur also became a Group Scout Leader.

In 1973 the family moved to West Sussex, where Arthur took up the position of Works Manager with Manhattan kitchen and bathroom manufacturers. Here, he eventually took on the role of Export Director involving frequent travel to Europe and the Middle East. The fact that the factory was based in part of the old Lancing Carriage Works may have played a part in Arthur's decision to take the job, being a devotee of trains and railways. He built a number of model railway layouts and collected railway memorabilia. One of Linda's clearest childhood memories is of Arthur, in pouring rain, noticing an old railway wagon sitting in a field, with its original identification plate. Leaving the others in the car, he asked the farmer if he could have the plate. He laid down, on his coat, by the side of the wagon – at that time being used to house pigs – and wrestled with the plate until it came off.

In 1994 Arthur and Doreen moved to Emsworth, a place Arthur knew from his time in the RAF and from his cycling days. He later said that in moving here he felt his life had gone full circle. Many good friendships were made, particularly through the Methodist Church. Proximity to the Chichester Festival Theatre also allowed Arthur to indulge his love for music. Doreen recalls that the only queue he would join without moaning was for Gilbert and Sullivan at Chichester! He also enjoyed classical and military music, and opera.

Arthur and Doreen travelled extensively in retirement, often on cruises. These took them through the Panama Canal, up the Amazon, around the coast of South America, and to Canada and Alaska. Trains were not forgotten, with a wonderful trip on the Rocky Mountaineer, and another across the Atacama desert. Arthur also fulfilled a dream by visiting La Scala opera house; he was so enthralled he wouldn't leave until the very last moment.

Doreen, Linda and Tricia hope that these memories help to illustrate the long and good life of Edward Arthur Brown.



Vivienne Eileen Vickers 1923 – 2021

Vivienne was born in Wokingham, the fifth daughter of the family. She grew up in a house built by the family building firm, close by the builders' yard. She was 16 and intending to continue her education when the Second World War was declared; she ended up working for the Post Office, sometimes in charge of all the postmen. Her father taught her to drive by getting her to take him to his work sites, memorably saying "Put your foot down!" (without specifying whether on the brake or the accelerator).

After training in London, she spent some months in St Albans transcribing Morse code, which then went to Bletchley Park for decoding. Ill health forced a return home and she worked for the Ministry of Fuel and Power in Reading. She attended Wokingham Methodist Church, where she taught Sunday school until she married. Her parents held "open house" on Sunday afternoons for those away from home, either stationed at nearby military bases or international students at Reading University.

In 1946 John was posted to Arborfield for his National Service; he was introduced to Vivienne's sister Margaret, who said "you must visit my parents". And so he met and dated Vivienne: during a two-year courtship they enjoyed playing tennis, visits to the theatre and concerts including the Proms, and Henley Regatta. They got engaged as John was demobbed and starting a pre-collegiate year as the Circuit Superintendent in Abergavenny. He then studied at Birmingham University and they were married in Reading in June 1952, just a week after his final exams.

Initially they lived near Birmingham University, followed by two years in Swindon. Then they moved to Ipswich, buying their first house. Hilary and Stephen were born here, before John's career took the family to Canterbury for three years, then Wolverhampton, where Michael was born, and finally in 1967 to Bognor Regis, where they stayed for 27 years.

In Canterbury, they lived in a bungalow in the grounds of the Methodist prep school, and Vivienne is remembered for pairing up the basketful of clean socks for the 50 boarders each week. It was here that the family met Charles Young, a historian from Duke University, North Carolina, on a year's sabbatical with his family, and the families remained close friends for 50 years.

Once she was married Vivienne's working life took a backseat to her role as a wife and mother. She supported John by typing first his BD thesis in triplicate, and then the revised version for publication. She also did spells as School Secretary in local primary schools. When they got their first computer, Vivienne used it to support John in his role as an indexer.

She also acted as Registrar for the Wesley Historical Society from 1985 to 1995.

The family enjoyed a long association with camper vans. Retirement gave them the freedom for more travel. They loved visiting Spain and had trips to stay with Charles and Betty in North Carolina, or to travel with them right across the USA. In the 1990s they visited Australia three times, and on their last trip Vivienne enjoyed a swim in the new pool built for the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

She loved TV quiz shows, like Countdown, Deal or No Deal and University Challenge, watching the snooker from Sheffield, and Wimbledon. She loved playing Scrabble into her 90s. In latter years she enjoyed playing digital word games and jigsaw puzzles on her iPad.

The family will remember her for her love of dark chocolate and seedless raspberry jam; making the best blackberry and apple crumbles; the joy she got from the cards from the Queen for their Diamond and Blue Sapphire wedding anniversaries; and whenever we see gladioli, the flowers she carried in her wedding bouquet.

Some Emsworth memories

Vivienne and John came to Emsworth in February 1994 and quickly immersed themselves in the life of this church. Vivienne counted the collection for a number of years, doing the task efficiently and with good humour, and also took on the task of Church Treasurer for one year. Her post office training stood her in good stead when she became a valued member of the team counting the Christian Aid donations.

Vivienne gave her quiet and loyal support to many church activities: Church Services morning and evening both in our church and St James', Lent Communion services and Lunches, Wesley Guild, Ladies Group and Church Council. She and John enjoyed being members of a House Group led by Revd David Bridge, meeting monthly for serious but lively discussion and refreshments afterwards. The Ladies Group benefitted from Vivienne's food when she provided a very tasty rice salad each year to accompany the Christmas supper. Vivienne and John used to change the church banners from time to time, and Vivienne frequently volunteered in the Pastoral Centre. She was an interesting and intelligent lady who was very well liked.

We are grateful to the Vickers family and to Judy for sharing these tributes and allowing them to be abridged here.

John has received this letter from the Revd Sonia Hicks, the President of Conference, and has asked that it be published in our Newsletter so he can share it with everyone.

The Methodist Conference Birmingham 2021

Representative Session

President of the Conference: The Revd Sonia M Hicks

Vice-President of the Conference: Mrs Barbara M Easton

Secretary of the Conference: The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler

Dr John Vickers

1 July 2021

Dear John,

Greetings from the Methodist Conference!

We were deeply saddened to hear of the recent death of your wife Vivienne. On behalf of the Conference and the whole Connexion, we offer our concern and assure you of our prayers, for you and your family.

We trust that you will feel undergirded by God's love throughout, and know God's richest blessings that will strengthen and encourage you in the future.

We also recall at this time your great contribution to Methodist scholarship over many decades, and give thanks to God.

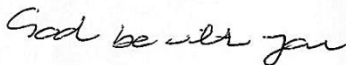
We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song.

Yours sincerely,



The Revd Sonia M Hicks
President of the Conference

Mrs Barbara M Easton
Vice-President of the Conference



Saying our Goodbyes

As you are all aware, Laura and Bill will be leaving us in the next few weeks. Laura will be leading our service on Sunday 8th August when we will be expressing our thanks to her and wishing her well as she moves on. We will also have our deferred special collection for MHA that morning, and Laura will include some stories about their work. See below for how to donate to MHA.

On Sunday 22nd August Bill will lead our service for the last time before his retirement at the end of the month. This will be our opportunity to express our thanks to him and wish him a happy retirement.

Please remember that we are still asking people to book their seats for Sunday services during August: there may be an increase in demand for the 8th and 22nd!

Making a donation to MHA on Sunday 8th August

Please place your cash into an envelope, stating that it is a donation to MHA and place it in the collection plate as you come into church on that morning. If you wish to Gift Aid your donation, please state this on the envelope and print your name or church Gift Aid number.

You can also pay by bank transfer, using the reference <Your Surname> then MHA. The name of the account is:

Emsworth Methodist Church & Pastoral Centre

Sort code: 20-69-34

Account number: 10698334

No cheques, please. Thank you.

An Invitation from Pamela and Geoffrey

Pamela and Geoffrey are pleased to invite all the church family to their garden for tea, cake and fellowship on

Sunday 8th August from 2.00pm.

Having been restricted due to COVID last year, they hope this will be an opportunity to celebrate together once again. It is also our opportunity to express our thanks to Bill, and a chance to chat informally with Jan, Stephen and Louise, and Laura if she is not too tired after leading Morning Worship.

A Circuit Farewell

The circuit is planning an event at Queen Elizabeth Country Park on 15th August to say farewell to John, Janet, Laura and Bill.

The arrangements are as follows:

To gather at Queen Elizabeth Park from 2.30 pm in the area beyond the Visitor Centre to the East of the A3. There will be Stewards to direct you. Please bring your own refreshments, your own chairs, blanket etc.

In the event of bad weather on the day, the organisers will notify everyone on the Saturday evening. The event will be held indoors via Zoom instead – a Zoom link will be provided.

General Church Meeting

Our annual General Church Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 10th August at 7.30pm** and will include a Worship Consultation.

When the Church Council agreed to defer this GCM from March, it also agreed to extend the term of office of our current Church Stewards and Representatives to Church Council from 30th April to 31st August. At our meeting we shall be appointing Church Stewards, and electing Representatives to Church Council, for the period from 1st September 2021 to 30th April 2022.

For some time now, we have had only two Church Stewards, Dot Warren and David Sawyer, and Dot is now in her sixth year as a steward. We really do need to welcome at least one more person into the team. Please give prayerful consideration as to whether you are being called to serve our church in this way and do make every effort to join us for this important meeting in the life of our church.

Nominations for Church Stewards and Representatives to Church Council should be received in writing by Alan Hickox, Church Council Secretary, or by Revd Stephen Wright, by Sunday 8th August.

News from the Methodist Conference

The Methodist Church has become the largest religious denomination in Britain to permit same-sex marriages.

A vote to change the definition of marriage at the Methodist Conference overwhelmingly passed by 254 in favour with 46 against. Freedom of conscience clauses mean ministers will not be forced to conduct such weddings if they oppose the move.

The Revd Sonia Hicks, president of the Methodist Conference, said: "The debate today and our wider conversation has been conducted with grace and mutual respect.

"As we move forward together after this historic day for our Church, we must remember to continue to hold each other in prayer, and to support each other respecting our differences."

A pastoral letter from the President and Vice-President following the Conference vote on Marriage and Relationships

We wished to take this opportunity to write to you after the Conference voted on the resolutions contained in the marriage and relationships report.

We very much appreciate that these decisions will stir up many different emotions for our siblings across the Connexion. There will be some who will be deeply hurt and others who will rejoice by what has been decided.

Our Presidential theme this year is God's Table: An Invitation for All, and God's invitation is for every single one of us. The Methodist Church has held tension for many years and as a Church and a family, we must do all we can to live with contradictory convictions.

This work was first reflected on back in 1992 and we have been on this journey together since that point. During the past years we have continued to listen to and to pray for each other and remaining true to what God is saying to us. We must remember in all this, to continue to hold each other in prayer, and to support each other as we find a way forward, respecting our differences.

It is perhaps helpful to remember that there are other issues, some of them discussed at the Conference, on which we hold differing and

sometimes strong opinions. We live with them and we do not allow them to impair our communion with each other. We respect each other's consciences, we exercise judgment in when to speak and when to be silent, and we hold one another in prayer. We do all this not for our own sake but for the sake of Christ and the sake of the world which urgently needs to know the power of Christ's reconciling love.

Our prayer for you, beloved siblings, is that in joy or sorrow, in pain or excitement, we might continue to live within that reconciling love.

The Revd Sonia Hicks
President of the Conference

Mrs Barbara Easton
Vice-President of the Conference



Prayer Diary

I shall shortly be placing an order for the
Methodist Prayer Diary for 2021-22.

This year it is entitled ***A Place for All*** - encouraging us to offer all a generous welcome and listen to voices on the margin.

If you would like a copy, price £4.50, please let me know before 15th August. If anyone would like anything else from Methodist Publishing I can order that too. No money needed until they arrive!

Pamela Eardley



Prayer Prompts

You are invited to use the suggestions listed below in your prayer times.

Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

*Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits which you have given me,
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
follow you more nearly, day by day. **Amen***

Pray for: anyone you know who is still cautious and fearful of Covid; young people looking ahead to September: a new class, new school, college or university; teachers as they face problems caused by Covid, working with pupils having gaps in their education. All who face change in life, perhaps frightened by change; refugees showing immense courage, wanting to work, to help families far away survive. The leaders of the nations, that they will work with honesty and humility for peace and justice in the world.

Give thanks for: the ministry and gifts we have received from **Laura** and from **Bill**, asking God to bless them as they work with change in their lives; for **Stephen Wright** our minister and the Circuit Staff, each taking on more responsibilities this year. The **Pastoral Centre** as it moves forward, guided by God and the community we serve; the opportunity to **meet together** at the Annual Church Meeting and share in decision making; the **Church Stewards** and **Leadership Team**, for all the work they do for us.

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 email c.walters5@homecall.co.uk

Please send contributions for the September newsletter to
newsletter@emsworthmethodistchurch.org
by **Saturday 28 August**
Good news is especially welcome!