



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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Newsletter

August 2025

The opening sentence of *The Road Less Travelled* by M. Scott Peck seems to be eternally true. 'Life is difficult.'

We have personal difficulties and difficulties we have to navigate for our family and friends. The constant stream of news letting us know of difficulties on the national and international stage also heightens this sense of life being difficult. Even global events, from war in Ukraine, the Middle East and so many other places, to climate change, have difficult implications for individuals.

No one ever said life would be easy, and Jesus never pretended that his followers would find it any easier than anyone else.

There is a strain of literature in the Bible which is designed to help us navigate through the difficult waters of life as we find it. This is called the Wisdom Tradition. In the Old Testament we find it especially in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job. In the New Testament there is much from the teaching of Jesus that speaks with this kind of voice, and the Letter of James offers much wise advice on how to live well under whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

Probably the most frequently revisited question that touches the Wisdom Tradition is: 'Why do bad things happen to good people?' The answer often comes at very great length. The Book of Job is 42 chapters on this one question. To put it in six words: 'because bad things happen to people.'

It is not 'being good' that makes life easier. In some ways it makes it harder, especially when all around are not making the same effort. The point which the Book of Job comes back to is that it's not all about *me*. Job is confronted by God. Jesus, in his own person, also confronts us with God, who looks different in him from the vision Job had. Jesus extends the point that it's not all about me by pointing to the Kingdom of God. The nature of the Kingdom, and the reason why perseverance in being a 'good person' is important, is that the Kingdom is not just something that is a far-off possibility that might eventually put everything right – the Kingdom is also in the here and now. Jesus was the embodiment of the Kingdom, and he gave the Holy Spirit to us, his followers, that we might also be the vehicle for the Kingdom to come *on earth* as in heaven.

David Muskett



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Church Services in August

3 August	10.00am	Café Church led by Revd David Muskett
10 August	10.00am	Morning Worship led by Revd Bruce Watson
	6.30pm	Evensong at St James to which we are invited
17 August	10.00am	Service of Holy Communion led by Revd David Muskett
	6.30pm	Evensong at St Thomas à Becket to which we are invited
24 August	10.00am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Wendy Corney
	6.30pm	Reflective Evening Service led by Revd Dave Faulkner
31 August	10.00am	Morning Worship led by Revd Julie Price
	6.30pm	CTiE United Service at St Thomas Roman Catholic Church

Revd Bruce Watson is a pioneer minister at St James and St Thomas à Becket.

A pioneer minister in the Church of England is someone called by God to engage with communities outside of traditional church settings and establish new forms of Christian community. They are essentially missionaries, who go into new contexts and create church where it does not yet exist, often focusing on those who are not currently part of any church.

fun and friendship

Thursday mornings at 10.30am in International Hall

7 August Knit and Natter

14 August Quiz

21 August Arty Crafty

28 August Show and Tell



Image by MiM326 from Pixabay

From Stephen and Gillian

Dear Friends,

A sincere word of deepest gratitude for all our cards, generous words, gifts, flowers, cake and so much more. Goodbyes are never easy, and you have been so sensitive and gracious to us both at this time. We hold treasured memories of our time together over these last three years. It was a joy to share with everyone just one last time at our Café Style Church; some of you may remember our first service at Emsworth was Café Style, when Revd Stephen Wright led us and we shared in lunch together.

Thank you for your prayers, support and kindness. May we ask you hold us in your prayers, and rest assured we will be praying for you all.

In Christ,

Stephen and Gillian

Finding God in the waves – Ian Stimpson and Sea Soul

In the cold waters of the North-East coast, Ian Stimpson has found a unique form of ministry that blends his passion for sea swimming with spiritual contemplation. Sea Soul, his pioneering project with the Methodist Church, represents a fresh approach to connecting with both nature and the divine.

‘I’m one of the many who took up sea swimming during COVID,’ explains Ian, who began in June 2020. ‘I’ve always enjoyed the sea and swimming, but I was a bit scared about swimming in the cold sea. Through a friend, I got started and I was hooked.’

What began as a personal hobby has evolved into something more profound. As an evangelism enabler who splits his time between Grace Place coffee shop in South Shields and the Sea Soul project on the North Tyneside coast, Ian was approached by the Mother House – a Methodist network supporting pioneers in the Newcastle upon Tyne Methodist District – with an unusual proposition.

‘They were looking for pioneers but, instead of starting with a project and asking somebody to staff it, they did it the other way around. They started with the person and said, “What do you want to do?”’ recalls Ian.

Mentoring from Anglican minister Revd Susan Blagdon of Coastal Expression Pioneers helped Ian develop a practice of beach contemplation, discerning how God speaks through creation. His routine now includes visiting the beach twice weekly, often in darkness.

‘I usually go early morning. I like to go just while it’s still dark, pitch black. I have a rock and I sit on it and watch as the sky turns into pre-dawn, half-light, first light, sunrise. It’s magical.’

These moments have yielded profound spiritual experiences. Ian describes watching a ship departing at dawn: ‘This massive ship was going out and it was ablaze with light, like the biggest Christmas tree you’ve ever seen. On the funnel, it had an X that looked like a cross.’

Later, as the ferry from Amsterdam approached, ‘the sun was coming up behind it and the sea in front was flat calm with a gentle ripple, but the water behind the ship was like glass. It looked like it was towing peace.’

His recent eureka moment came when he noticed others engaging in similar contemplative practices on the beach. ‘I feel my calling is to start something around this beach contemplation.’

As Sea Soul continues to evolve, Ian remains excited about its potential: 'I'm on a really important transition. I think God just puts the right stuff in place at the right time.'



Also on a nautical theme: **Wendy** has contributed this picture of a lifeboat. She writes, 'How much we have to be thankful for in a seaside, sailing town like Emsworth – for the men and women who manage and run the lifeboat service, and all who contribute to it in anyway and who risk their lives to save others. And all of it totally unfunded by government, in contrast to the other emergency services.'



Harvest Service

This year we shall celebrate Harvest on Sunday 14 September. Our preacher will be Revd John Illsley, a retired minister who lives in Liphook. He took a morning service at Emsworth a few years ago, and also led our Mission Development afternoon in March this year.

If you wish to bring a Harvest gift to the service, please bring items for the Food Bank.

The service will be followed by a salad lunch, with fruit crumble as dessert. There will be an opportunity to make a donation to cover the cost of the lunch, with any surplus being given to the Food Bank. In due course, a sign-up sheet will be available to give us an idea of numbers for the lunch.

Veronica Hickox



Christian Aid

We will be holding our **Home Produce Sale** with Coffee and Cake on Saturday 30 August from 10.00am until 12 noon in the church. If you have surplus fruit or vegetables, or have made too many jars of jam or chutney, we would be pleased to take them off your hands.

We are hoping to have a selection of bird and bug houses made by the Men's Shed. A percentage of their takings will be donated to Christian Aid. Looking forward to seeing you on 30 August.

Gill, Margaret and Marian

Christians Together in Emsworth

We have received a request from Lizzie Davidson, who is a curate in the Anglican ministry team, for help on the CTiE stand at the Emsworth Show (Monday 25 August). If you are able to help for an hour slot during the day, please complete the 'Doodle' link below.



They need both people who are willing to stand and chat to adults and people to supervise the craft activities for the children. There will also be a simple interactive prayer station/question board.

<https://doodle.com/sign-up-sheet/participate/f96b6556-90bc-4dc5-b278-f8e2af10a25e/select>

For any questions, please contact Lizzie:
email curate@warblingtonwithemsworth.org, tel 07704 051635

Marilyn Carroll

From The Methodist News

Tolpuddle Methodist Chapel was at the centre of the annual Tolpuddle festival on the weekend of 18–20 July, sharing the story of Methodist labourers seeking justice.

The President and Vice President walked in the footsteps of 'the martyrs', and visited the great sycamore tree where the martyrs first met seeking fair wages for their co-workers.

The President, the Revd Richard Andrew, spoke of the Methodist Church's rich history of seeking justice for people from all parts of society, and our determination to continue to walk alongside those seeking justice, just as the martyrs did 'with God as their guide'.



Here I raise my Ebenezer

Many of you will be familiar with my eccentric dislike of hymns whose words have been changed when they were written perfectly well in the first place.

A classic example is STF 494, *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, which we sang at the end of the morning service on Sunday 29 June.

The first line of the second verse is 'Here I raise my Ebenezer' which, as I'm sure you know, refers to the biblical story in 1 Samuel 7:12 where Samuel erects a stone called an Ebenezer, meaning 'stone of help', to commemorate God's help in delivering the Israelites from the Philistines. The phrase signifies a grateful remembrance of God's past blessings and a commitment to rely on Him in the future.

It has now been changed to read 'Here I find my greatest treasure'. Why? (apart from the fact that 'treasure' rhymes with 'pleasure' in line 3.) Surely we do not need to protect our congregations from any wording that might possibly be obscure to some? After all, a quick 'Google' will immediately provide an explanation.

As we travel around in the countryside and notice mysterious standing stones, we might well find ourselves reflecting on this hymn in its original form.

And what of other hymns where the wording has been changed – including those that have been altered for reasons of 'political correctness'*? Don't get me started.



Jane Gregory

Image: Below Trevalgan – geograph.org.uk – Creative Commons

*See, for instance, STF 11, where 'Though the eye of sinful man' has become 'Though the sinful human eye'; or STF 39, where 'Songs of sinful man' has become 'Sinful woman, sinful man.' And there are many more – just look out for those three little letters (*alt.*) after the writer's name.

Adapted from The Methodist News

The Methodist Conference, which met in Telford, heard from the Youth President that last October's children and youth event, 3Generate, was the most successful yet, but that the Church needs to make a greater commitment to encourage young people to remain as they grow.

3Generate 2024 was attended by 1620 children and young people, 520 leaders, and 310 volunteers. When asked about inclusivity, children and young people identified two groups where the Church could improve accessibility, for those with neurodivergent conditions and those unfamiliar with Church.



'We have a great opportunity. Young adults are showing more interest in spirituality and faith, but we are not doing a good enough job to nurture that interest and engage meaningfully,' said the Youth President, Bea Hulme. 'From talking to the young people, it is clear that retention remains a challenge in our churches. It's very easy to get children and youth engaged and attending events, but it takes more effort to adequately engage older teenagers and, where this does not take place, we are seeing them disinterested and not eager to stick around.'

'The Methodist Church needs to change to be more accessible to its children and young people. Children and young people do not even feel able to invite anyone to church because it is difficult to understand and alienating without prior experience. Things like explaining when to sit and stand, going over new songs, and having the words of The Grace or the Lord's Prayer on the screen can help massively.'

The Conference received the report and encouraged churches and worshipping communities to find ways to make their services more accessible and relevant, by updating resources in order better to welcome those who are not familiar with church practice. They urged Circuit Local Preachers' Meetings to consider how they can involve children and young people in the planning and execution of acts of worship, and recommended that Circuits and Districts bring together dispersed youth populations, especially in rural communities for activity-based sessions.

Photo of Bea Hulme from the Methodist Website

Prayer Prompts

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

PRAYER POINTERS

1. Jesus came to Bethany... There they gave a dinner for him.

What kind of meal would you like to invite Jesus to?

What would you talk to him about over food?

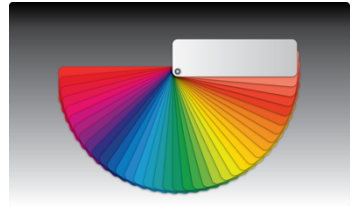
What do you think he would be saying to you?

2. Take a blank sheet of paper and colour it with just one colour – perhaps using different shades of light and dark.

What does that colour represent for you?

What are you grateful for that is represented by that colour?

Thank God for those things.



3. As you move around your local area, what do you see?

Make a note, sketch or take a photo of places or objects to remind you of places and people you want to pray for.

As you walk/run/cycle/drive, take a few moments to pray (eyes open if you're moving) for them and their needs.

We have a small **Prayer Chain** working within the church. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of prayer, please do contact Judy Emerson on 02392 474656, or email ajemerson113@gmail.com

Please send contributions for the **September** Newsletter to jane@janegregory.co.uk or newsletter@emsworthmethodistchurch.org by **Saturday 30 August** – or earlier if you can!

Image above by Giuseppe Canale from Pixabay



Dorset sheep