

The Brixham Summer Lunchtime Concerts ...



... will be happening again every Wednesday in June at 12.30pm. Coffee is served before the concerts, and light lunches are available after. The concerts are free, with a retiring collection to the performer's chosen charity. What better way to spend a summer's afternoon? Put the dates in your diary, and enjoy music, refreshments, fun, fellowship and Brixham! The dates are 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th June. See you there!



Praying in Paignton

The church at Goodrington responded to the Call to Prayer by the Methodist Conference by holding a Day of Prayer on the theme of 'Hope' on 1st May.

The day began with breakfast at 7.00am, enabling people to share in prayer before going to work. Prayer stations were set up in church, and it was encouraging to see a steady stream of people visiting through the day. A meal was served at 6.30, before moving on to 'Prayers and Reflections' in the usual Tuesday's Together format.

Everyone was encouraged, and people felt the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in a powerful way. The day was the start of '20 Days of Prayer' leading up to Pentecost, which coincided with the delivery of the church publicity leaflet in the TQ4 area. There are already calls for more Days of Prayer in the future.

Wendy Forman
Goodrington Methodist Church



Palace Avenue Methodist Church launched a year of prayer at their Covenant Service on 7th January.

Members have been encouraged to pray daily at either 9.00am or 9.00pm as part of helping the church to discern its future path and projects.

Prayer meetings are being held at 10.30am on the third Monday of alternate months – the next will be 21st May, followed by 16th July. Prayers are said for local, national and international concerns as well as for the church at Palace Avenue and for the Torbay Circuit, before the meeting adjourns for coffee in the Church foyer. All are welcome to attend.



Praying across the circuit



This quarter, please pray for our ministers, local preachers, circuit leadership team, and local churches at Central, Victoria Park and St Andrews.

Palace Avenue hold a prayer meeting on the third Monday of alternate months at 10.30am for half an hour, praying for local, national and international concerns as well as for Palace Avenue. Everyone is encouraged to come along.

Southfield continue to hold monthly Friday groups to pray for all the circuit churches and other concerns.

Please send good news stories of worship, fellowship, mission and evangelism to Torbay Methodist Circuit Office by no later than 8th August 2018 to be considered for inclusion in the next issue of *Connected*.

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The Methodist Church

CONNECTED

Newsletter of the Torbay Methodist Circuit—Issue 7: May/June 2018

“Many parts form one body” (1 Cor. 12:12)

We speak your language

Glorious early summer sunshine was a welcome feature of the May Day Bank Holiday weekend. There were at least two events in Torbay to benefit from the weather, B-MAD (Bikers Make a Difference) on the green at Paignton and the Brixham Pirate Festival. Hundreds of people, locals and visitors from near and far, joined in the fun – including me.



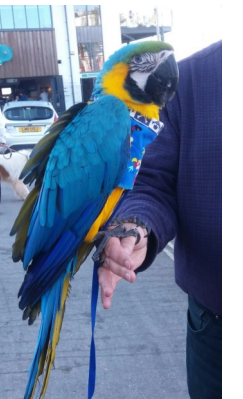
I took a while to look at the *Indian* motorbikes in Paignton – my grandfather used to tell me stories about those – and to admire the *El Galeón Andalucía*, a replica of a 17th century Spanish galleon, used by the Nao Victoria Foundation to offer educational



experiences to young trainees, which was moored in the harbour at Brixham. I also tackled a plate of fish, chips and mushy peas.

As crowds of people milled around me, my thoughts strayed to the crowds of people who met Jesus and later the Apostles in cities such as Jerusalem and Athens. One of the miracles of Pentecost (the Christian Festival that we used to call 'Whitsun') was that the Apostles were able to speak about the wonders of God in a language the people understood.

What are the issues facing people in our society today? I suppose one way to know is to ask them. Such conversations are worth having. In general terms, I think that some of the age-old issues are still relevant today. Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Does anything have lasting value or meaning? Why do bad things happen to good people? Can I truly find faith, hope and love? And, if I can, how?



If you have ever been on a foreign holiday you might have experienced communication problems. I wonder if the Christian church has been guilty of trying to overcome its communication problems with the typical English response – shout loudly and gesticulate wildly! The end result is not dissimilar from travelling abroad – the speaker is frustrated and the listener has given up listening.

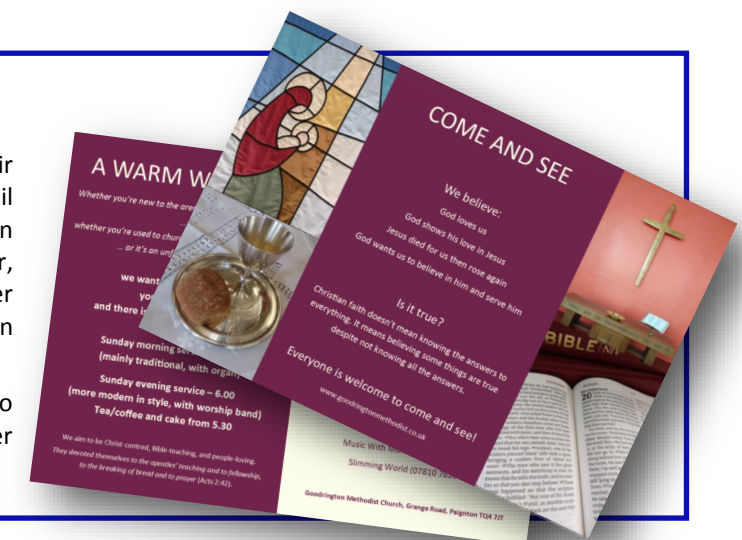
How reassuring it can be, especially when things are going wrong, to go to a desk, to read the sign 'we speak your language', and to be met with a friendly smile and a helping hand. The early Christians found hope and meaning, faith and love in the person of Jesus – not least in his death and resurrection. Sharing this in conversation – that's listening and speaking – is important today.

Rev'd John Haley
Superintendent Minister

Reaching Out

Goodrington Methodist Church have reached out to all their neighbours in the TQ4 area with a flyer delivered by Royal Mail to each house with the post. Using this system meant that in just a few days nearly 10,000 households received the flyer, which gave details of events and groups at the church together with a brief summary of the gospel message and an invitation to come along to find out more.

The church also prayed on 11th May for everyone who received the flyer that week, as part of its 20 days of prayer leading up to Pentecost.



Women's World Day of Prayer

After a week's delay due to snow, Brixham Methodist Church finally hosted their Women's World Day of Prayer service on 7th March.

In the tradition of Women's World Day of Prayer, the ladies leading the Brixham service took on the role of the women from the country that prepared the liturgy –and this year the country was Suriname. We were pleased that the whole service went really well.

We are looking forward to next year's service prepared by the women of Slovenia – hopefully without the snow!

Kathryn Trotman
Brixham Methodist Church



Learning from the daffodils



'The simple purpose of daffodils is to be a blessing to others — we must do the same.'

This was the theme of the annual Daffodil Rally at Brixham, early in March. The speaker was Mrs Anne Browse, Vice-President of *Methodist*

Women in Britain and a member of Halberton Methodist Church near Uffculme in East Devon, where she and her husband live on a farm.

Anne, who worked for 34 years as a secondary school teacher, confessed that before she retired and became involved with Methodist Women in Britain four years ago she had never been to a women's meeting, and had no idea what happened at a daffodil rally. However, she told the rally, she had since learned that, in the words of Revd Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, it was about giving: 'To give and give and give again.'

Members from the circuit churches and from other denominations answered the roll call – for an occasion that now welcomes men as well as women. Choral pieces were performed by the Riviera Singers, and a cream tea was served afterwards.

In her address, Anne reminded members that we love God because he first loved us, and gave Jesus, the ultimate gift. 'For us, it is about offering the love of Christ,' she said. To express the love of Christ in a practical way, an offering was taken. Half of the proceeds went to *All we Can* (often still called by the more familiar but rather longer name, *The Methodist Relief and Development Fund*) and the other half went to *Marie Curie* which offers care and support through terminal illness.

Southfield's snowy celebrations

Southfield's weekend of anniversary celebrations was a great success, despite the arrival of snow which threatened to strand the President of Conference in Devon! Revd Loraine Mellor led the Sunday morning service at Southfield on 18th March in a well-filled church, though at times the congregation could not help but be distracted by the snow falling heavily and unseasonably outside. The President also dedicated the banner made by member Veronica Roberts. Loraine and Alison Thompson, wife of the District Chair, navigated through the snow to Newton Abbot station and made it safely back to Exeter.

The previous day, the blue plaque had been unveiled by the Chair of Torbay Council, Cllr Anne Brooks, with Deputy-Chair Cllr Ian Doggett, and Ian Handford from Torbay Civic Society. Church members were joined for the ceremony by civic and ecumenical guests, as well as representatives from circuit churches and the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District. Following the ceremony, members and guests enjoyed refreshments in the church hall.

The weekend also saw the re-launch of the chapel's history booklet in a revised and updated edition. Celebrations continue with an anniversary service on Sunday 15th July (10.30am) when Revd Graham Thompson, Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District, will be the preacher. This service will be followed by lunch at the Palace Hotel, Paignton.



President of Conference Revd Loraine Mellor with the anniversary banner and its creator Veronica Roberts



Cllr Anne Brooks unveils the plaque, with Cllr Ian Doggett, Ian Handford of Torbay Civic Society and Revd John Haley



The plaque unveiled!



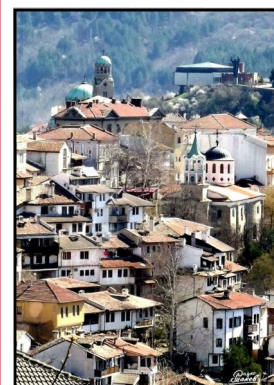
Revd Simon Leigh, Deputy Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District, reads a short scripture passage during the plaque unveiling

Welcome to our visitors from Bulgaria!



Goodrington Methodist Church are welcoming Revd Dr Ivan Morunov, lead pastor of the Veliko Tarnovo Methodist Church in central Bulgaria, and his wife Anna, from 27th June to 4th July. Ivan has been a Methodist minister since 1997, and before that worked for 15 years as a missionary for Campus Crusade for Christ. Ivan and Anna have two children and one grandchild.

The visit was arranged after Revd David Hughes, then minister of Paignton Baptist Church in Winner Street, met Ivan while on holiday in Bulgaria; Ivan asked David if there was a Methodist minister in England with whom he could be in touch, and David gave Ivan's details to Revd John Haley. John and Ivan corresponded and, as a result, Ivan and his wife, Anna, will visit Goodrington Methodist Church for a week. Ivan will be at the Sunday services (1 July, 10.30am & 6.00pm) and at Tuesdays Together (3 July, 7.30pm), as well as some other special events. All are welcome.



In the middle ages, the walled city of Veliko Tarnovo was the capital of the Bulgarian Empire, and a highly important strategic location because it sat on both the road from the Eastern Balkans to the Black Sea, and the road from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. It was one of the great European centres of culture, and remained an important administrative, economic and cultural centre after its capture by the Ottoman Turks in 1393, through the period when Bulgaria was under Ottoman rule until 1878 (when it was a regional capital and centre of resistance to Ottoman rule), and right up to the present day. When Bulgaria regained its independence, it was the first capital city.

It's no surprise, then, that Veilko Tarnovo was the location of the first Evangelical Methodist Church in Bulgaria. The church was founded in 1859 by an American missionary and Methodist minister, Dr Albert Long. Dr Long's mission was supported and funded by the Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA. (The Methodist Episcopal Church was one of the Methodist denominations that came together in 1968 to form the United Methodist Church. Most Methodist Churches in Europe are related to the United Methodist Church.)

In the second half of the nineteenth century, migrant workers returning home to Europe from the USA took Methodism with them. The Methodist Church in America also sponsored missionary efforts in Bulgaria, believing it was important that the Bulgarian people had worship in their own language (rather than the Greek that the Orthodox Church insisted on). As well as starting Protestant services, Dr Long was involved in making Bulgarian-

language Bibles available, and helped to revise a translation produced and printed by the Bible Society.

Methodism in Bulgaria developed steadily from its foundation until the communist era (1947-1989). Under the communists, informers and spies infiltrated congregations and some pastors were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and even murdered. Faithful preachers were replaced by others chosen for their political affiliation, who watered down the message to make it politically acceptable. Church buildings were confiscated, and simply belonging to a church made life difficult for members. The church in Veliko Tarnovo was used as a warehouse and as housing for the poor.

At the end of the communist era, only three of the original 16 congregations existed and only five Methodist ministers. Since then, the church has slowly grown. The church buildings taken from the Methodist Church were returned to them in 1995, and the congregations began to reform. The Veliko Tarnovo congregation refurbished its church and has been worshipping there again since 2008.

The Veliko Tarnovo church currently has about 35 members, including 12 children, and has weekly Bible studies and a Sunday school as well as Worship services. It has a strong relationship with the local community, and with students at the large university in the city. Students help with various ministry projects, and the church has been building a kitchen, dining room and training room to help feed very poor Muslim children from the nearby school.



About 85% of the population in Bulgaria is Orthodox, but the proportion attending church is less. The Bulgarian Methodist Church now has 27 congregations, 1,189 members and 19 active ministers, and across the country it works with Armenian and Turkish speaking people and Roma (gypsy) people. It provides soup kitchens, literacy courses, out-patient clinics, prison work, and creative or play times for neglected children and young people.

The name for the central conference of which Bulgaria is a part is complicated because it uses the word 'central' in both the Methodist sense (meaning a four year conference) *and* the geographical sense (the part of Europe in which it is situated): the United Methodist Central and Southern Europe Central Conference (www.umc-cse.org). It also includes Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, French-speaking parts of Switzerland, Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, France, Serbia, as well as French-speaking work in Algeria and Tunisia.



'Grace is the source, faith the condition, of salvation.' John Wesley