

Praying together in Torquay

We have been having conversations about prayer!

That's a good thing as it is easy to settle into a pattern of prayer where we either become passive, just listening to the prayers others say in our services, or clutter up our prayers with words and lists of issues and concerns to keep God busy!

Of course, there is a place for all sorts of prayer, but we wanted to have conversations about the place of prayer in the life of our church, and how prayer should be a vibrant, energy-giving process of listening for the heartbeat of God.

It was Saint Teresa of Avila who said, "For prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God". If that is the case, we need to find time and space to build that relationship – and that isn't always easy to do as a community. So, we decided to try to build up our collective confidence in prayer. We spent time reflecting on what prayer is, and why it is important. At Central, we spent some time in groups during a service both thinking about prayer and praying together. After that, at both Central and St Andrews we used the prayer resource *Nine Days of Prayer: Waiting in Wonder* produced by the Methodist Church. Everybody had a booklet, and in the nine days leading up to Pentecost committed to spending some time each day in prayer reflecting on a daily picture and passage of scripture. What better time than Pentecost to make us focus on prayer?!

To follow this up, and to explore the idea of contemplative prayer and the experience of spending time with God, we set up a prayer room at Central United Church, Torquay. From

Friday 6 to Sunday 8 July, we had a rota of prayer volunteers spending time in the room.

We were fortunate to have the creative energy of Jo Simpson, the District Evangelism Enabler, to furnish the room with a variety of things to stimulate prayer, and to focus our minds and reflect on what it means to us when we seek to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God (Micah 8:6). There was space to pray about the things that we exclude, and space to reflect on how we try to journey with God in our own lives. We wrote prayers, created a mosaic to grow something beautiful out of broken tiles, and we let all our senses be stimulated rather than focusing purely on words.

But most of all, we created a space where we could still our hearts and minds and rest in the presence of God. Volunteers prayed for an hour at a time for the 48 hours of the initiative; many of us felt blessed by finding time to be still and to refresh a sense of spirituality in prayer that was neither rushed nor drowned in words. We will continue to journey in prayer to seek new insight on the Way.

Revd Jon Doble

In the moment

In the moment is new insight,
in new insight is new stillness.
Still seeing breathes new life in feeling
exhaling living light in life.



Praying across the circuit



This quarter, please pray for our ministers, local preachers, circuit leadership team, and local churches at Brixham, St Andrews and Kingskerswell.

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.

Goodrington hold *Reflections & Prayers* on a Tuesday evening once a month.

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

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The Methodist Church

CONNECTED

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

Don't take my word for it!



Leipzig Gewandhaus

The modern, vibrant city of Leipzig, with its prestigious university (founded in 1409) and famous *Gewandhaus* (concert hall) is now home to more than 500,000 people. After nearly half a century of communist rule, the largest city in Germany's eastern state of Saxony is enjoying an exciting period of rejuvenation and expansion. Listeners to *Classic FM* will be familiar with *Gewandhaus* recordings of the music of Bach and Mendelssohn, who both lived in the city, while sports fans might be aware of the football team RB Leipzig and its remarkable rise from its founding in 2009 to second place in the *Bundesliga* (the top flight of German football, equivalent to the English Premier League) in 2016.

My wife and I visit Leipzig regularly for family reasons. It seems that just about every young German speaks flawless English, and that was just my experience at a bus-stop one Sunday lunch time. There, on my way home from the English-speaking Church (an international Anglican congregation), I met Damaris, a young woman aged about 20 years, who had recently moved from North Germany to start work. Damaris was interested to know what I was doing in Germany and why I was waiting for a bus in a less-fashionable part of the city. I was excited to talk to Damaris about her Bible-name and hoping for the opportunity to share something of my faith with her. It was my realisation that often these conversations are not very long that prompted me to set up a website. It's called, simply, 'Don't take my word for it!' www.donttakemywordforit.co.uk



I began telling others about my faith in Jesus Christ when I was 18 years old. That's more than 40 years ago now! Often there is not much time to tell people what I would like to tell them. On the website, I wanted to say a few things that are really important to me, particularly that there is good news for all.

Christian faith does not mean knowing the answers to everything. It means believing some things are true despite not knowing the answers to everything. *God loves you - whatever circumstances you are in, whatever you have or have not done. God has shown this love for you by coming to the world in person - in Jesus. Jesus fulfilled God's plan for saving you by dying for you on the cross - not just by dying but by dying for you. Jesus has shown that he is victorious over everything, including death, by rising again. God wants you to believe this and live your whole life, every minute of every day, with him and for him.*

Christians believe in a revealed faith – that is God has made himself known to us. He does this through the world around us (creation), through the Bible and supremely in Jesus Christ his unique Son. The best summary of the life and work of Jesus is in the Bible and a good place to start reading the Bible is in one of the Gospels. But don't take my word for it – have a look at the Bible for yourself. Can you really meet Jesus there? You'll just have to try it and see.

If you would like a free copy of Luke's Gospel in modern English, please contact the circuit office (details are on the back page) with your name and address. We will not store your details or contact you in any other way. We will just send you the book, with a prayer that you will meet Jesus there.

Revd John Haley
Superintendent Minister

Witamy!

In September, Goodrington Methodist Church is welcoming two visiting ministers from Poland. Revd Krzysztof Wolnica and his wife Ewa (from Wrocław) will be in England on Sunday 9 September, and Revd Krzysztof Kłusek (from Gliwice) will be in England on Sunday 30 September. The Methodist Church in Poland was established in 1920 following missionary and humanitarian work by American Methodists. Nationalisation of church buildings during the communist era hit the church hard, and today, there are 37 Methodist congregations in Poland with just over 2,000 members and 24 ministers.

He's one of our own

Councillor Ian Doggett, a regular worshipper at Palace Avenue Methodist Church in Paignton, was elected Chairman of Torbay Council for the Municipal Year 2018/2019 on 14 May. Councillor Doggett and his escort, Mrs Maggi Douglas-Dunbar, are having a busy year. Among other duties, they attended the 200th Anniversary Service at Southfield Methodist Church conducted by the Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District, Revd Graham Thompson and the celebration lunch at the Palace Hotel, Paignton. Our superintendent minister, Revd John Haley, is Councillor Doggett's chaplain for his year of office.

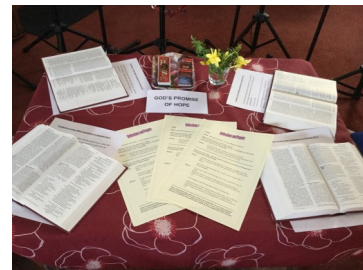


Reflections & Prayers at Goodrington

When we undertook to organise the prayer sessions within *Tuesdays Together* at Goodrington, we had no idea how much we would learn about the Bible, the love of Jesus, and prayer— and we are so very grateful for this great opportunity.

We eventually decided to call the sessions *Reflection and Prayers*: we wanted to give people the opportunity to read a Bible passage relating to the theme for which we were praying, reflect on it, and then pray. We encourage people to use the prayers which we set out, and also to pray their own prayers as well.

We want to emphasise that we do not pray out loud, so there is absolutely no need for anyone to worry about having to do this. The theme for the evening is distributed around 5 or 6 stations, which people can undertake at their own pace, usually in about an hour.



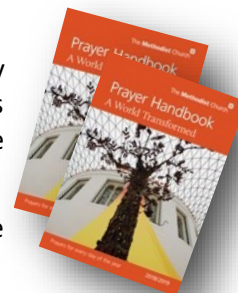
Susanne Turner and
Maddy Jeffery,
Goodrington
Methodist Church

Praying for our District

Each quarter, the back page of *Connected* asks for prayer for one section of our circuit. Many members also use the Methodist Prayer handbook to pray at home for the Methodist Church across the country and the world. (If you don't normally have this but would like one, please contact the Circuit Office: we may have spares.)

We're now invited by the District to consider praying for the Plymouth & Exeter District through the month, with one circuit or group of people each day:

1st Plymouth & Devonport Circuit	17th Chrissie Slaney - District Safeguarding Officer
2nd Plymouth Mission Circuit	18th South Petherton & Crewkerne Circuit
3rd Exeter, Coast & Country Circuit	19th Treasurers in our Churches and Circuits
4th Andy Jerrard - District Rural Worker	20th Ilfracombe & Barnstaple Circuit
5th All Church and Circuit Stewards	21st Those who work with the elderly and infirm
6th Jo Simpson - District Evangelism Enabler	22nd South Molton & Ringsash Circuit
7th Tavistock Circuit	23rd Torridge Circuit
8th Torbay Circuit	24th West Devon Circuit
9th Those who work with children and young people	25th West Somerset Circuit
10th South Devon Circuit	26th Mary-Ann Martin - District Support Officer
11th Bude & Holsworthy Circuit	27th Ringsash Circuit
12th Rachel Mitchell and Rebecca Campion - District Finance	28th Teignbridge Circuit
13th David Clitheroe and Jane Allin - Synod Secretaries	29th All Pastoral Visitors
14th Graham Thompson - District Chair	30th Property Officers in our Churches and Circuits
15th Taunton Deane & South Sedgemoor Circuit	31st Anyone whom you feel has been forgotten!
16th Tiverton & Wellington Circuit	



I am Great Uncle Bulgaria!

What do you know about Bulgaria? That's a question that our superintendent minister, Revd John Haley, spent much of June asking. It was part of preparation for a week's visit from Revd Ivan Morunov, minister of the United Methodist Church at Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria. The truth of the matter is that English people generally don't know very much about Bulgaria, though with its summer sunshine the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is becoming a more popular holiday destination.

The church community at Goodrington Methodist Church was delighted to welcome Pastor Ivan and his wife, Anna from 27 June to 4 July.



After landing at Bristol Airport, Ivan and Anna's first port of call was the New Room in Bristol. This is the oldest Methodist Chapel in the world, and steeped in the history and tradition of the movement which has spread all across the globe – a worldwide church rather larger than the worldwide Anglican communion. During

their stay, Ivan and Anna also visited historic Methodist sites at Trewint (near Altarnun) and Gwennap Pit (near Redruth). John Wesley, the founder of the modern Methodist Church, preached at Gwennap Pit on 18 occasions from 1762 to 1789. Using the shelter afforded by a depression in the ground (possibly created by mining activities) John Wesley preached to congregations so large that he said he would not see a greater crowd until he was in heaven. At Gwennap Pit, Ivan, Anna and John met other tourists from across Britain and from Sweden. None of the tourists were practising Christians – a good opportunity for some gentle witness and testimony.

Ivan and Anna's first full day in England was Thursday. After an afternoon in Brixham, Ivan and Anna were welcomed by the leadership team at Goodrington and treated to fish and chips. On Friday, they went to Exeter for the day and attended Choral Evensong at the Cathedral. In the evening, they shared greetings from Bulgaria at *2B1* an additional interdenominational praise and prayer event, supplementing the monthly Tuesday evenings. At the Saturday coffee morning, Ivan and Anna brought cheese, nuts and sweets from Bulgaria and in the evening shared a meal with circuit treasurer, Neil Edwards, and his Russian wife, Olya – conversation being conducted in Russian, a language well-known in Bulgaria.

The highlight of Ivan and Anna's stay was the Sunday. Pastor Ivan took part in the morning service, which began with a stirring recording of the Bulgarian National Anthem. He brought greetings from his congregation at Veliko Tarnovo and shared a little about his work, not least with the Roma community (which has a number of children from very poor families). He also shared in Holy Communion, leading the Lord's Prayer, a scripture reading and post-communion dismissal prayers in Bulgarian. On Sunday evening, the contemporary service concluded with an appeal for people to come forward for prayer and anointing with oil – Ivan and Anna prayed (in their mother-tongue) with those who went forward. It was a time of great blessing for all.



An eccentricity of the Haley-household is Janet's ability to produce Christmas dinners at all times of the year. Joined by a few guests from the Goodrington Church, Ivan and Anna dined on roast turkey (with all the trimmings including stuffing and pigs in blankets – happily no Brussels sprouts) followed by Christmas pudding with clotted cream and/or trifle. Christmas crackers with paper hats for all completed the unseasonal scene.

A busy day out on Monday was followed by a restful day on Tuesday, walking along the seafront in Paignton and browsing in the shops. Ivan and Anna benefitted from the exceptional spell of dry, sunny weather – dispelling the rumours they had heard at home about it often raining in England in the summer (surely not!). The Goodrington Church continues to explore how best to promote a partnership with the church in Veliko Tarnovo that will include a commitment to the core elements of faith, prayer, Bible study, worship, evangelism and service.

Every morning, Pastor Ivan and Revd John Haley would take John's dog, George, for a walk. Frequently, John would ask other dog-walkers what they knew about Bulgaria, hoping that this would be a prelude to a significant conversation, which it often was. In reply, one young woman offered the information that she knew there was a Great Uncle Bulgaria. Having been duly educated about The Wombles of Wimbledon Common (courtesy of internet recordings), Pastor Ivan stepped forward and said in his wonderfully resonant voice, 'I am Great Uncle Bulgaria!' Truly a moment to cherish.

