

Tremendous Technology and Fabulous Facebook

I don't know about you, but I am always left in awe at the power of modern technology. I can remember our first family computer, which ran Windows 95 and I thought that it was excellent as we were able to 'dial up' to the internet, but not when we wanted to use the home phone! Today, I have more computing power inside the mobile phone in my pocket than on that first computer and technology has advanced at an exceptional rate.

Social media, in particular, is an area that has positively exploded in recent years. Teenagers are talking about *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Snapchat* and *Twitter* to name just a few. Here within our circuit we are fortunate to have a very positive social media presence through our circuit *Facebook* page. Regularly sharing news from our circuit churches, alongside the daily prayer from the Methodist Church, you can keep up to date with what's happening in our circuit by simply 'liking' Torbay Methodist Circuit to see our posts on your *Facebook* timeline which include some introductions to ministers and other post holders!.



Will Matthews

Circuit Treasurer

John Haley has green blood. He inherited his lifelong love of Plymouth Argyle F.C. from his Dad. He and his wife have season tickets. Before training for the Methodist ministry, John worked in the club offices. John likes playing 'spot-the-intro' or 'name-that-tune' with chart hits from the 70s. He reckons he can beat all-comers. John enjoys driving and commenting on other people's driving. He learned how to drive a double-decker bus and enjoyed taking his members on coach trips. He likes most dogs, especially Collies.



Article taken from Facebook

My name is **Doug Rix**, I was born in Bournemouth and a joiner by trade. I entered the ministry in 2002 having trained with the Congregational Federation. I am married with 3 children and 2 grandchildren. I joined the Torbay Circuit in September 2015 and currently I have pastoral oversight for Brixham, St. Andrews and Kingskerswell.



Article taken from Facebook

This is **Jenny Page**, our new Torbay circuit secretary, with her five year old Golden Retriever, Amber.

Jenny and Amber love long walks on the beach and in the local Torbay countryside.

Jenny is married with two children who love to accompany Mum, Dad and Amber on extended walks over Dartmoor at weekends. Amber is such a clever and obedient dog and has won prizes at the local fetes in Cockington.



Talking Jesus



Talking Jesus is a six-session course which encourages Christians to share their faith in ordinary conversations. It is available on DVD or USB format and can be used individually, in small groups or larger church meetings. Talking Jesus is introduced by Roy Crowne, former director of Youth for Christ, and now executive director of HOPE Together. It is endorsed by The Methodist Church, Evangelical Alliance and The Church of England. It is advertised on social media and will feature in short-term campaigns such as the #40acts challenge to make a difference during Lent.

The 'chatty' style of the sessions involves the viewer in the conversation and encourages them to realise that they, too, can 'talk Jesus'!

Wendy Forman

Goodrington Methodist Church

Further information can be found in the Circuit Office

Please send good news stories of worship, fellowship, mission and evangelism to Torbay Methodist Circuit Office by no later than

7 May 2019 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)

An Experience of Grace

I took one of my Polish friends to see a production of Shakespeare's *As you like it* at the theatre. About half way through he leaned over to me and said, 'I don't understand much of this'. 'Don't worry,' I replied, 'Neither do I!' Like most English children, certainly of my generation, I had to study the works of William Shakespeare at school. It's hard going, even for native English-speakers, let alone friends with English as a learned language. My set text for my exams was *King Lear*. I recently watched a fantastic adaptation of this at home on DVD with Anthony Hopkins as *King Lear*. It is, perhaps, Shakespeare's greatest tragedy. For a few minutes, you are moved by the sadness of the story, but then you get up, make a cup of tea and carry on with your day.

Today, a growing number of people are unfamiliar with church services. I encouraged one of my friends to attend a church service near her home. 'How did you get on?' I asked, brightly. 'Not so well,' she replied. 'I got a bit lost half way through, after that I didn't understand much of the rest of it.' To people familiar with attending church, it's a bit easier to follow. In the spring, we journey with Jesus through the familiar stages of the Christian year – the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, his Last Supper, his death on the cross and the glorious accounts of his resurrection and his appearing to ordinary men and women.

Sadly, for millions of people, even when they hear or read the story of Jesus, perhaps attending church on Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Day, they are touched by the sadness of the story or even uplifted because they feel it has a happy ending, but then they get up, make a cup of tea and carry on with their day. Added to those, of course, are even more millions of people who never hear or read the story of Jesus and hardly ever set foot inside a church.

For nearly 2,000 years, the experience of many men and women, boys and girls too, has been different from that. The story of Jesus, his death and resurrection, has become not only an account of things that happened long ago but also a gripping reality in their lives. It is because they believe that, by faith, they have met the living Jesus in their own experience and their lives are being transformed by knowing him.

Meeting Jesus? Is that possible? Jesus lived 2,000 years ago! However, the information about Jesus we have in the Bible includes not only stories of his birth, of his life and of his death but also the amazing account of his resurrection. Since then, millions of people have believed that Jesus is alive and have devoted their lives to worshipping and serving him. More than that, they have experienced his grace in forgiveness and hope for life not only in this world but also in the world to come.



Journeying with Jesus through Good Friday and Easter Day will bring us to the cross, to the empty tomb and his appearing. I think these invite us to consider two very important questions: *Who is Jesus?* and *Why did he die?*

Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, had his ideas about Jesus for he put a sign on the cross that read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. What he had written was true and yet Pilate did not really believe that for himself. What it shows was that Jesus was condemned to death not for

what he had done but for who he was – the King of the Jews, the promised Saviour, the Son of God. Surely God, the Father, could have intervened and stopped the death of his Son. Instead, Jesus died as an offering, a sacrifice, one whose supreme self-giving could enable him to head a new people to whom he would give eternal life

Can you meet Jesus this Easter-time? I believe you can. Take a while to read the story of his death on the cross (*Luke* chapters 22 and 23). Before you begin say, 'God, if this is true, touch my heart with your grace.' Realise that when Jesus died on the cross, he did so for you. Ask God to forgive you. Take a while to read the story of Jesus' resurrection (*Luke* chapter 24). Before you begin say, 'God, if this is true, let me know the risen Jesus.' God bless you with his grace in forgiveness and hope for life not only in this world but also in the world to come.

God bless

Revd John Haley

Superintendent minister

www.torbaymethodistcircuit.org

The love-walk

The Youth President of the Methodist Church 2018/2019, Jasmine Yeboah, reflects on the duality of her experience of walking with Christ

My life has been a journey, and throughout this journey there have been ups and downs. At times I made wrong turns, but through it all God, who I call Daddy, has never left my side.

Let me give you some background to my life. I grew up knowing the concept of God, but I never had a personal relationship with God. However, when I accepted Christ Jesus into my heart, according to Romans 10:9, I believed that I had received my salvation. I wish that I could say the journey has been easy and that as soon as I spoke the words “Jesus is Lord” I turned into Super Holy Jasmine, but I can’t.

In all honesty it seemed as if everything got much harder. I felt as if my whole life was turning upside down. The more I read Scripture and prayed, the more my eyes were opening to certain truths about myself. I did not really believe that God loved me. I thought that God only loved the good people, and I was far from good. But the biggest truth was that I did not even love myself.

I could not even forgive myself; how could I forgive other people? The saying is true; you cannot give what you do not have. But Daddy-God really began to work in me, dealing with issues that I thought I had already dealt with. At times it brought me to tears. I just wanted God to let go and give up on me because I found it easier to give up on myself.

On one occasion a child I know hurt their friend. The child was upset and scared that she would get in trouble. It was as if the child felt that her actions were unforgivable and that I would hate her for a mistake I knew she did not make deliberately.

I corrected her in love and gave her a big hug. At that moment it was as if God was saying “Now you understand”. Tears flooded my eyes because I had always felt like that little girl – but now I understand that nothing can separate me from the love of God (Romans 8:31-39).

The more God revealed the truth of Calvary and the price that Christ had to pay to save humankind, the more I was able to receive that love and give it to others; to the gangsters on my estate, the homeless people on the road, the young people at church, people from other religions, those with no religion at all and even the people who had deliberately hurt me.

On this love-walk that I have been journeying on with God, I have learnt I must give God first place in every area of my life and my identity. In the photo you can see two pictures of me, and at first glance you might think that girl in the white dress is the better version of me.

Truth be told, the girl in the tracksuit is the me who is walking the love-walk physically; she is the one who has felt pain but keeps smiling. She is the one who prays for people on street corners and always remembers where she has come from and how much God loves her.

The girl in the white dress, on the other hand, is the spiritual me – righteous through Christ, joined with the Holy Spirit. She is the one who wants to spread the love of God to everyone! These two girls work together, and in the midst of all of this is God doing God’s perfect handiwork.

Throughout my journey there have been countless moments when God has used my friends in church to share a word from their experiences, or a prayer or even a hug, and it gave me the strength to continue the journey when things got hard.

So you may ask “where is God leading the Church?” My answer is simple: walk with love, and you will see.



Our Story for You

I am Susanne, 46 - and I am Swen, 50 years young. We have been married for 22 years and we live in the Black Forest in Schönwald which has a maximum height of 1148.45m.

I - Susanne, am a personnel consultant in medicine and nursing and I write as a hobby on the internet and Facebook. I grew up in a Christian family and already had a faith as a child. Consciously, I once again decided to believe as a teenager.

I – Swen, am an employee at *Deutsche Post* and I came to the faith as a young adult. In October 2017, I joined the Catholic church choir because there was no offer from the Protestant church for local reasons. I am grateful that God has given me back my health and that I found a full time job after nine years of early retirement.



In Germany we are members of the Evangelical Church and through our attachment to England we are still guests of the Anglican Church in Freiburg. However this is 65 km away from us and only accessible via high mountains.

We visited Devon 20 years ago (we love Devon) and had a very warm welcome at Fairplace Church, Okehampton. There we met our long-time friends - Peter and Shirley - with their homegroup - and Brenda, the former church secretary. During our last holiday we had a great day out in Dawlish at the Smuggler’s Inn and saw the black swans. We stayed in a holiday flat near Totnes belonging to a Christian family. We searched for an accessible Methodist Church and found one in Paignton. We went to the Sunday Evening service and the Revd John Haley welcomed us in German so we felt right at home. On Sunday we attended the Sunday Morning Service at



Goodrington Church and were then invited to the Sunday Meal by Janet Haley.

We have always had a very affectionate welcome in England in the Methodist Church, both in Devonshire and in the New Forest and have won long-time friends. Without the community connection to a Methodist Church in England our holidays would be only half as nice!



Susanne und Swen Treiber

Recovering the Core Message



I have been doing some time travelling recently. I’ve been delving into Christian history to try and gain a perspective from the vantage point of our already turbulent 21st century. Amid the restlessness of many nations today – our own included – is it possible that we are witnessing, painfully, the birth of a new world order?

When I first studied seriously the history of Christianity, it was the late 60s, and another period of rapid social change. The old loyalties were breaking down, the cult of the teenager was born, the tempo of technological change was beginning to undermine the traditional experience of working life, and the whole culture was being shocked into new ways of understanding both ourselves and the world.

Not for the first time, the Church too was being shaken out of complacency by the challenges of the day. It had become short of breath through encrusted traditions and over-organisation. To rediscover its reason for being became imperative and how to respond to the social revolution raging all around it.

Recovering the core message was essential. While the attempt was made to reason all this out, to find the thread that would lead the new non-religious society to take notice, a powerful movement erupted, unexpectedly, rooted in an intense experience of the presence of God. Many lives were changed for good, and new energy came to many parts of the Church.

Similar things had happened before: like the spiritual ‘big bang’ that initiated the Church, or when Martin Luther unintentionally ignited the Reformation, or when John Wesley, a disillusioned clergyman, felt his heart strangely warmed and his sins forgiven. God’s Spirit was on the move once again.

The message hadn’t changed - hope for humanity through the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. In the confusions of rapidly changing times, people in large numbers found an anchor, acceptance, kindness and community - and they shared it.

We need not be surprised, then, that God, who once shattered the finality of the grave, is again giving new life to the Church – but not for its own sake, for the world’s.

Edgar Daniel

Revd Edgar Daniel served as a Methodist minister in Luton, Liverpool, Cornwall and Devon. He is a regular visitor to the Torbay Circuit from his home in Plymouth.

Why do we celebrate Pentecost the way we do?

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them (Acts 2:1-3).

Sunday 9 June 2019

Today, celebrating Pentecost in the way we do – a special day marking the descent of the Holy Spirit and the ‘birthday’ of the church – seems like an obvious thing to do. But the ‘day of Pentecost’ referred to in Acts 2 is a feast day akin to harvest festival, marking the end of the Passover season: the grain harvest lasted seven weeks, beginning with the barley harvest at Passover. Pentecost was the name given by Greek-speaking Jews to Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks. At the time the New Testament was being written, the feast was also coming to be associated with the giving of the law to Moses at Mount Sinai, 50 days after the Passover and the escape from Egypt.

It took a couple of hundred years for a Christian celebration at Pentecost to become a notable part of the year – the writer Tertullian is one of the first to talk about it, in about A.D. 200. The way it was celebrated varied, but in many places, it was the conclusion of a 50-day period of celebration which began at Easter. Like Easter, it became a popular time for baptisms because of the associations with celebrating new life, resurrection, and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

