

# *grapevine*

APRIL 2019  
Issue Number 34



## **Our Calling**

**East Anglia District of the Methodist Church**

## **A Prayer for compassion**

Lord, give me a heart of compassion, for sharing  
Your Love with those who are lost:  
May I be gentle, kind and caring,  
Willing to give whatever the cost.

May I see the sadness  
In another's eyes  
And distil Your gladness  
Into their lives  
With a smile, a word of care.

May I enter the night  
Of another's despair  
And bring Your Light  
To dispel all care  
With listening, time given to share.

May I feel the pain  
Of another's sorrow  
And make Your Joy reign  
Before the morrow  
With a touch, a wordless prayer.

May I be gentle ,kind and caring,  
Willing to give whatever the cost.  
Lord, give me a heart of compassion, for sharing  
Your Love with those who are lost.

# Welcome to *grapevine*

Welcome to the April 2019 edition of *grapevine* which has the theme 'Our Calling'.

George Ginn explains his thoughts about 'Our Calling' which he says presents the people called Methodists a life changing challenge. Steve Acklam tells how children at the Vine School investigated the Quadrilateral in the light of the Nativity and Martin Callam tells us of his own Calling and his journey from being a Street Pastor, to working in Antigua and finally training as a Local Preacher.

There are updates on two projects in the District with information about the regeneration of Swaffham Methodist Church from Sarah Rodgers and further news about Café TMC from Sam Parfitt.

Revd Steve Oliver tells us about the amazing possibility of a Revival in Jesus and Revd Dr Jane Leach explains how important it is to keep on learning.

We celebrate the 350th anniversary of the birth of Susannah Wesley, who is regarded by many as the Mother of Methodism, with an article from Ann Waterhouse. Maddi Ellis tells us how she is helping people in Felixstowe keep warm with her 'Coat Thingy' and Revd James Bamber reflects on his recent sabbatical.

Please remember this is your district magazine. If there is something you would like included, we would love to hear from you.

The next issue is due in September 2019. You will find contact details on page 23 of this issue.

# *grapevine*

*April 2019*

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### **The Editorial Team:**

Julian Pursehouse, Susan Eldridge and Alison Travis

# Introduction

Revd Barbara Garwood, Deputy Chair



Welcome to this issue of the District *grapevine* which celebrates *Our Calling*.

Some of you reading this *grapevine* may think back to 2000 when we were first encouraged to view the life and witness of the Methodist Church as being expressed through four areas of commitment:

*The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.*

*It does this through:*

*Worship*

*Learning*

*Service*

*Evangelism*

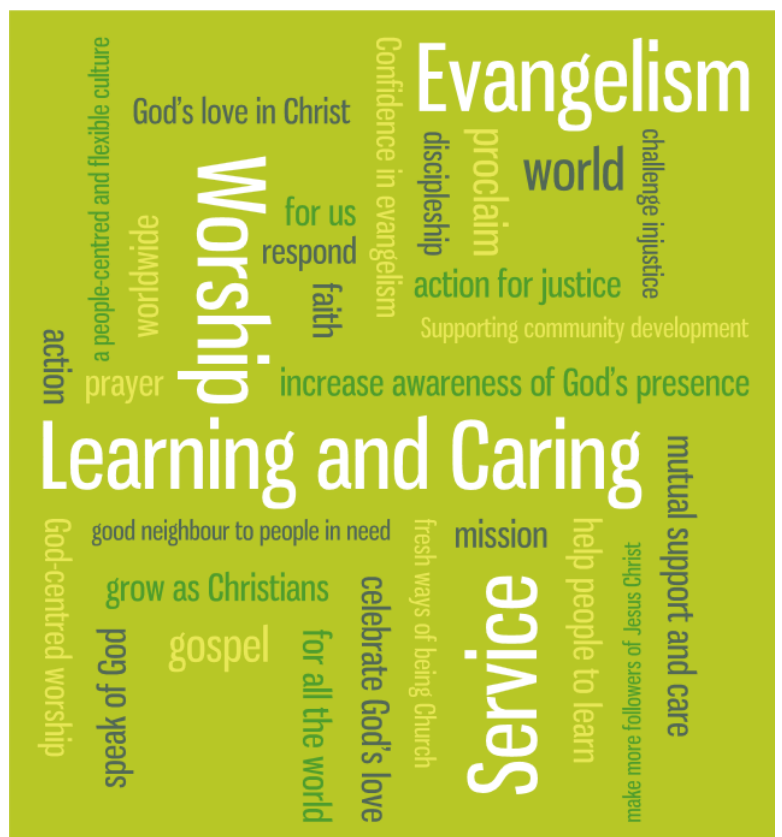
The Methodist Conference of 2018 sought to reaffirm this commitment – so it's good to be able to read what's happening in the life of our District through individuals and groups.

We hope that as you read the articles in this issue you will see how other people are living out *Our Calling* through their discipleship and will be inspired and encouraged by them.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

*The District Chair, the Revd Julian Pursehouse is on sabbatical.*

Revd Barbara Garwood  
Deputy Chair



# Just a thought ...

Revd Steve Oliver



**W**e live in an age of uncertainties where people have ceased to be sure about anything. Life seems so full, yet deep down right where our lives really matter it is empty. Having no signpost to lead the way, people turn to wealth and possessions. There is, of course, no problem in wealth and possessions, but it needs to be tempered with a spiritual inner self which can help find peace and truth in an unsure world. And this is where I believe a revival in Jesus needs to begin now in 2019.

The band Third Day sing the following:

***Anybody here looking for revival  
In our own hearts and across the land  
Anybody looking for a revival  
Lift up your voice and say Amen  
Lift up your voice and say Amen***

There is no point in fooling ourselves that a revival will just happen; as Third Day continue in their song:

***Ain't gonna find it in a politician  
Not from the government or any law  
Can't get it going by your own religion  
Only by the Spirit and the Word of God  
Only by the Spirit and the Word of God***

Revival is a re-encountering with God through Jesus and if there was ever a time in people's lives to re-encounter God it is now.

I have spoken before about expectation and as we now consider the amazing possibility of a revival we need to expect Jesus to turn up.

***Psalm 85:6 cries out "Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?"***

All this talk of revival may sound a little crazy, especially to those who have never met Jesus, but be prepared because when God moves He will enable all to meet with Jesus and then..... well that will be up to you!

Revd Steve Oliver  
West Norfolk Circuit



## Café TMC—Our Calling

Sam Parfitt



It is incredible to think that March is already upon us, yet the shorter evenings and the emergence of the crocuses and daffodils from their wintry pods tell us that this must be so. Spring brings with it change and new growth for all the wonders of God's creation and can be a time to pause and reflect before moving on.

Indeed, this is what has happened to us at Blakeney Methodist Church as we have reflected on our calling as a church, leading us to a process of discernment, considering how we might nurture new growth within our community. Over the past eight years in which Café TMC has run in the church we have seen its ministry to weary feet and souls grow year upon year and it is to this ministry to which we feel God is calling us to explore further. With this calling in mind we have taken the decision to step forwards in faith and change our service time and structure. Beginning on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Cafe Church will take place every Sunday morning at

10am in the old schoolroom of the Methodist Church. All are welcome to join us for an informal breakfast during a time of relaxed worship where common themes of Christianity will be explored, along with the opportunity to praise through prayer and song. Whether you are new to faith, have a church background or are simply curious you are very welcome to join us. We have good coffee, warm croissants and there may be a bacon buttie (or two!) on the go!

Another small change taking place this spring concerns my role as a layworker within the Methodist Church. From April I will take on a new role as Pioneer Rural Church Planter, working across community-based 'Replanting Rural' church plants in two rural areas. (I'm pleased to say that one of these is Café TMC !!) We have been supported in this by the Our Calling grant fund and the unwavering support of the Central Norfolk Circuit. This is an exciting prospect and has the potential to add to the Methodist Church's dialogue around



the place of contemporary rural churches in our small thriving communities. Café TMC re-opens on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and will then

continue to be open Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays from 11am-4pm offering its regular delights of freshly made sandwiches and homemade cakes, we look forward to seeing you soon!

If you have any questions, thoughts or ideas that you'd like to share I'd love to hear from you! Please contact me on 07725 077810 or email me at [sammi.1980@live.co.uk](mailto:sammi.1980@live.co.uk) or alternately pop into the Café for a cup of tea and a chat !!

Sam Parfitt  
Manager at Café TMC  
Blakeney Methodist Church

### **Soft the Treading**

**Soft the Gospel voice comes creeping  
To my voluntary ear;  
Come to wake my spirit, sleeping  
In its bed of sin and fear.**

**Soft as steel when steel is needed;  
Sharp and keen as any knife.  
Soft as milk when God is heeded  
God as Spirit – Breath of Life.**

**Soft the step the Church is treading;  
Soft our whisper – gently said;  
Soft the skin the Church is shedding:  
Soft and nice and pink and dead**

**© Paul Beard 2019**

# Learning and Caring: Loving God with our Minds

Rev Dr Jane Leach



**T**he business of learning gets mixed reviews. Perhaps we have bad memories of school? Perhaps it feels like too much hard work? Perhaps we are afraid that learning something new may make us uncomfortable as we try to assimilate a new way of thinking or doing? Perhaps we do not want to be the ‘Hermione in the room’ – the one student in the Harry Potter world who is disappointed that the school exams have been cancelled!

Learning though is key to the Christian life. The disciples of Jesus are literally ‘the learners’, and for the early Methodists the Christian life was all about growing. For John Wesley being a disciple involved learning from Christ – through bible study and the life of prayer (which sometimes meant learning to read – the original purpose of Sunday Schools) – but also learning in a community of learners – with and from others (both from the living in band meetings and from those who have written books). Wesley recognised the importance of loving God, not only with our hearts and souls and strength

(resources) but also with our minds.

**The danger of not keeping on learning is that our thinking gets stuck whilst the world moves on and when that happens we find it difficult to communicate about our faith in ways that make sense.**

How do we talk about the life of faith with our children and grandchildren when many reject Christian faith before it ever has a chance to be considered because the theory of evolution seems to contradict the story of Genesis? How do we keep doors open to the mysteries of life that cannot be measured in test tubes and on balance sheets when the media and popular science dismiss such things? And how do we keep influencing the values of the societies in which we live as more and more people know less and less about the Christian



Lifelong learners take part in Wesley House’s Easter School.



Meeting of International Methodist educators in Puebla, Mexico in 2017.  
You can spot me in the picture if you work hard at it!

faith and its values of truthfulness (in the face of fake news) and justice (in the face of growing global inequality) and care for the stranger (in the face of rising popular nationalism)?

**For John Wesley learning was tied up with mission.** The Methodist missionary movement, following in his footsteps, founded (and continues to found) schools, colleges and universities all over the world in the belief that the fulfilment of human potential is a key part of mission, demonstrating God's commitment to the development both **of healthy individuals and of healthy societies.** 800 of these places of learning are now part of an international association (IAMSCU: <https://www.gbhem.org/sites/default/files/documents/IAMSCU-Bro-2015.pdf>) that supports the preparation and connecting of learners and leaders around the world.

**Leaders come in all shapes and sizes. Some are called to lead universities, some to lead businesses, some to lead worship, some to lead local councils, some to lead by example in the family and at the school gate and at the lunch club. How could learning be part of your Christian commitment this year to loving God with all your mind as well as with your heart, soul and strength as you seek to lead others into the fullness of life that God desires for the whole inhabited earth?**

**If you need some ideas ... visit** <https://www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/study/onlinelearning/> to link up with other lifelong learners from around the world who want to make a difference. Circuits and districts often have training funds that can help with fees. **Find out!**

Revd Dr Jane Leach, Principal  
Wesley House Cambridge

**Susanna Wesley 1669-1742**

**"Wife, mother, educator, pastor and theologian"**

Ann Waterhouse



**Susanna  
Wesley**

**1669 350 2019**  
ANNIVERSARY

**M**any Methodist women of my generation first heard the name of Susanna Wesley when Women's Fellowship (the forerunner of Network & MWiB) opened a hostel for single, pregnant, young women in London in 1960, work that continued in one form or another until 2004. The hostel, Annesley House, was named in memory of Susanna (nee Annesley), mother of John and Charles Wesley.

If the Jesuits claimed 'Give me the child for the first seven years and I will give you the man,' I think it was Susanna's father, Dr Samuel Annesley, a Dissenting minister, who shaped and delivered the woman she became. Born in 1669, near the site of the recently burnt-out St Paul's Cathedral, the last of a large family, Susanna was highly educated and her 'native air' from birth was that of a deeply religious Puritan household. Born in the same decade as Queen Anne, Susanna had a privileged upbringing, but life was very different after her marriage in 1688 to the Rev. Samuel Wesley, after which they lived for almost four decades in wild, rural Lincolnshire, and Epworth must have

been something of a culture shock.

Within twenty years of marriage, Susanna had given birth to 19 children, of whom ten reached maturity. They encountered every family hardship you could imagine, from babies not surviving birth, to vicious attacks on their property including two major house fires, to the ever-present shortage of money, and Samuel spending time in debtors' prison. The surviving children matured but life was still hard with bad marriages and wrong decisions being made. No wonder she suffered depression at times.

It was important that Susanna's children were given the best possible education and of necessity she became their teacher. She taught all the children their letters on their fifth birthday; she educated her three sons to public school entry level, and the seven daughters not far short of that. Throughout that tumultuous life, Susanna led a disciplined prayer life,

likened to that of a woman in Community. She was mindful of the spiritual needs of the congregation and, on one occasion, displeased her husband while he was away in London, by conducting services herself when she felt his curate was neglecting the spiritual needs of the parish. Samuel was angry with her for the intervention to which she replied: "Don't ASK me to stop, Command me....' He did not. Samuel left things as they were.

Susanna is known today because she was the mother of John and Charles Wesley, and it seems to me her disciplined devotional and orderly domestic life profoundly influenced their lives and laid the foundations of the Methodist church.

#### **Recommended Reading:**

John A Newton, *"Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism"*, 1968, 2nd ed, 2002  
Mary Greetham, *"Susanna Wesley. Mother of Methodism"*, 1988, available from Wesley's Chapel, £4.50

#### **More information:**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/350th-anniversary-of-susanna-wesleys-birth/>

#susanna350

Sometime after her husband died, Susanna's life turned full circle and her final home was back in London, living with son John at the Foundry, Moorfields, where his work was based, and there is evidence of her influence, not least in her encouragement of using lay preachers.

Susanna, regarded by many as the Mother of Methodism, deserves to be remembered and honoured in this year. The Rev Dr John A Newton described her as "wife, mother, educator, pastor and theologian". Surely taking a closer look at that life of deep faith and devotion would be a good way to celebrate her 350th anniversary.

**Ann Waterhouse  
Norwich Circuit**

#### **BENEDICTION**

**I heartily pray God that you may continue steadfast in  
the faith,  
and increase more and more in the knowledge and love  
of God,  
and of His Son Jesus Christ.**

**That Holiness, simplicity, and purity may recommend  
you to the favour of God incarnate.  
That His Spirit may dwell in you, and keep you still, as now,  
under a sense of God's blissful presence.**

***Susanna Wesley Devotional Journal***

# Every journey begins with a first step

Sarah Rodgers

**B**eautiful! 'What a sensitive redevelopment.' 'The building is full of light and the mural is a wonderful addition to the interior.' These are just a few of the appreciative comments we have received as people have responded to their first glimpse of our regenerated home at Swaffham.

he talked us through his ideas and took on board fresh suggestions. Eddie himself said, "The finished mural has long outstripped my original study both in content and symbolism. I have learnt a lot on this three months' journey, about Swaffham itself and the Wesleyan faith, mostly from members of Swaffham Methodist church."



The Swaffham mural which covers the East wall

After a 6-month absence, we returned to the church for the start of December 2018 and marked our return by opening the church every morning throughout the Advent season. One of the absolute delights of being back at home has been being able to share with artist, Eddie Goodridge, the emergence of the new mural. Right up to the last brushstroke,

From the outset of our regeneration project, we have been aware and tried to be attuned to how our plans would reflect the wider calling of Methodism. To have the background of the 2018 Methodist Conference paper, *Reaffirming Our Calling*, as a reference point will continue to inform our prayerful exploration of how we can

come afresh to the four touchstones of worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism.

Many ideas have sprung up and this in itself could have become a challenge to people time and people resources: where to begin, how often and for whom? We discovered a way forward by asking the question: 'Do you have a passion for your idea?' Immediately, two or three passions have emerged and we now have a twice-weekly 'drop-in' for company and chat; a TraidCraft stall is available after each Sunday service and once a month at the 'drop-in'; and a plan has been set in motion for a family film night. Add to this our daily Lent series, *Simply Psalms*, and we have the shape of an evolving programme.

We recognise that wherever there is output, there has also to be input! In March last year, two of our members took the Cliff College short course leading to the Certificate in Pioneer

Ministry and towards the end of the

year, nine members embarked on Worship Leadership training and were commissioned by our Minister, Revd Andrew King, in January this year.

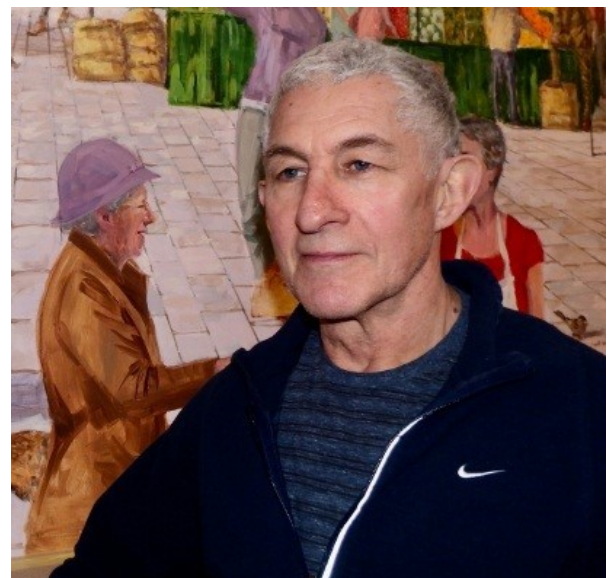
Throughout these new journeys, we have had the invaluable company of the District Mission Enabler, Dr Yasmin Finch, who has supported, suggested and shaped our thinking and helped to widen our horizons.

The concept of journey, the need for vision and a plan has been at the forefront of our thinking and is captured in the words on the pelmet which houses the new projection screen, and states, "Every journey begins with a first step." Who could read that, at whatever stage on their life or faith journey, and not have it resonate with them? While for some the first step may be making themselves available to participate in a new form of outreach, for others, the first step may be simply to enter our church. And when they do, they will be very welcome.

Sarah Rodgers  
Central Norfolk Circuit



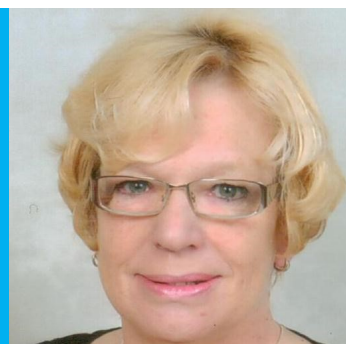
Company and chat at the twice-weekly drop-in



Artist, Eddie Goodridge

# My Coat Thingy

Maddi Ellis



Way back at the beginning of 2017 I received a Facebook nod from my daughter, Abby, about an initiative that had started in Colchester. It was set up by a paramedic who I contacted to ask if I could 'pinch' her idea. She was very happy to share as she had 'pinched' the idea from Yorkshire.

It consisted of a clothes rail and donated coats along with banners stating, "Need A Coat? Take One; Want To Help? Leave One" I'm thrilled to say as soon as I posted the plea on Facebook, and prayed like mad, I was inundated with offers. Of course, I met some opposition and negativity but my feeling was that as long as I helped just one person to feel warmer this winter then my prayers would be answered.

So the fun started. My partner and I went all over the Ipswich/ Felixstowe area collecting coats along with hats and scarves, too! I dug my old clothes rail out, made the posters and by January 12<sup>th</sup> we went public, outside Trinity on Coffee Morning. Our very first "customer" turned up just 10 minutes later! The gent told me that he only had the coat in which he stood!

He was so pleased to take 2 free coats, one waterproof and one warm. Since then I think we have given away over 60 coats to a variety of people who have all been so glad to be warm.

I was thrilled to be interviewed by James Hazel for BBC Radio Suffolk to publicise the scheme. James and Zac came to Trinity to do the interview and I had a hilarious time. We also filmed a short, amusing video for their website and I was staggered to see it had



The Coat Thingy on day one

over 2000 views! Famous? A legend in my own lunchtime! After this, and a follow up interview, the scheme really gathered pace. My poor old rail gave up under the strain but after a plea on Facebook, Basic Charity Shop kindly loaned me a much sturdier one. I've had a lot of clothes given in too so these have gone over to Basics. We've had every style of coat along with children's and babies.

It's quite an undertaking taking the rail in and out of church each day so I had to turn to the Church family for help. I'm indebted to Rev'd Diane and my friends at Trinity for their help and support. It is such a thrill to bring the



The new coat rail

rail in each evening and find empty coat-hangers. Coats are coming in all the time so as fast as the rail empties we can refill it.

For me it's a real way to practice my faith. In the third chapter of the book of Luke Jesus tells us that if we have two coats we should give one away. In today's world we have to take our church out into the community if we are going to survive. One result of my "Coat Thingy" is that people have come into church to see if it really is true: that we are letting folk take one and be warm. They have then returned with more coats for the rail and a deeper insight into what we are trying to do.

The people of Felixstowe have been amazing and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I will keep going whilst the weather is so cold so if you have any coats lurking around in the back of your cupboards then, please, drop them off at Trinity.

Philippians 4: 13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Maddi Ellis, Ipswich Circuit

*grapevine*

is available in large print and on CD (audio)

**If you would like to request a copy, please tell your church distributor or contact the District Office:**

01603 625765

[eadistrict14.office@btinternet.com](mailto:eadistrict14.office@btinternet.com)

# Rediscovering a call to be...and so realise the echoes of God everywhere

Revd James Bamber

I wonder if you've ever anticipated a gift so eagerly that when you received it you weren't quite sure what to do with it? As my sabbatical began last year I had mixed feelings...I was excited by the prospect but what was I going to do? How was my calling to be lived through the hotchpotch of seemingly disjointed events that formed my sabbatical calendar? A blogger at the outset provided some advice which shaped my experience and released me – 'Being alive is enough...don't make the mistake of seeing Sabbath as a project!' Being and connecting were to become the defining words of my sabbatical, golden threads running through the entire experience which continue to help me reimagine my calling.

I have rediscovered that seeking to live reflecting God's love in all sorts of ways in different contexts is enough. As followers of Jesus we are called primarily to connect with God and from that relationship to connect with others and ourselves. Our calling is to take time to be – to live alert to the signs of God's presence; to signpost others to that presence through our lifestyle of loving kindness; and to take each

opportunity, however small, to share the difference Jesus makes to our everyday lives.

My sabbatical took me to liminal places, both in terms of geography, spiritual experience and physical activity so that I connected and reconnected with family, friends and other pilgrims in a Franciscan Friary in Alnmouth; on the remote Holy Isle off the Isle of Arran; creating and being community with the excellent 5 day Community for Spiritual Formation in Leeds; taking photographs in Huntingdon town centre; and running with others in Godmanchester Running Club leading to my first half-marathon right at the end of my sabbatical!



St Cuthbert's Cross, Alnmouth



Mountains on the Isle of Arran

Another activity which renewed my understanding of calling was typing up my Granny's recipe book which I inherited when she died. She was someone who simply lived God's love in quiet unassuming ways. She inspired me so much with many of my memories of times spent with her involving cooking together. As I typed the words of various recipes I sensed

afresh her presence and was transported again to her kitchen and reconnected to a myriad of emotions. One of my favourite recipes which I rediscovered is for Milk Loaf which I have printed below. It is refreshingly simple, though wonderfully nourishing. As you enjoy it may you know that in essence our calling is a call to love, connect and nourish as we know

ourselves loved always, connected to and nourished by God.

For the opportunity to be on sabbatical and reimagine who I am called to be I am grateful to the Church – local, District and Connexion for an amazing gift.

Revd James Bamber  
Superintendent Minister  
St. Neots and Huntingdon Circuit

## Milk Loaf

1 cup (225g) of sugar  
1 cup (240ml) of milk  
1 cup (200g) of sultanas  
2 cups (300g) of self-raising flour  
¼lb (115g) of margarine  
1 egg

Place margarine, sugar, milk and sultanas in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Allow to cool before adding the beaten egg and flour. Turn out into a loaf tin and bake in a slow oven (180°C/160°C Fan/Gas4) for 45 - 50 minutes (maybe longer for non-fan ovens).

# Our Calling as Methodists

George Ginn

**T**his in all its fullness presents the people called Methodists a life changing challenge. This is not something we are called to cherry pick, choosing what suits us best, it's a calling to respond to every part. The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the Gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. Our discipleship then is to be incarnational of God's love in the world around us in our worship, but also in our mission in the world.

**WORSHIP** – in this we are called to increase awareness of God's presence, but are we always presenting God as an ever present help in trouble now, or simply a champion of the past? Should we not be looking at what God is doing now and joining in? And when we come into the sanctuary do we come to escape from the world, or come to lay the world before God.

**LEARNING AND CARING** - the church is there to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care. Is there a keen desire to know more of our faith and how that faith lead us into action? I find the leadership within the church prepared to go to great lengths to

encourage members to learn and to grow, but a reluctance of our people to come forward and respond.

**SERVICE** - the church is called to be a good neighbour to people in need, and to challenge injustice. The church has done well in responding to need, but is lacking in challenging Injustice. The Rev. David Shepherd said "It is not enough to put ointment on the wounds, but to find out why the wounds were caused in the first place". We are called to speak the truth in love and challenge the sea of injustice all around us.

**EVANGELISM** - the church is called to make more followers of Jesus Christ. The great commission said make disciples of all nations. Reaching out to the whole world, but some evangelism appears insular, just getting people into the churches and no more. I attended the Methodist School of Fellowship in 2003 and one evening session was called "the future of Methodism". Dr. Colin Morris for his part spoke on the women's movement and we all know how strong and outward looking that is. They reach out to the world trying to transform things for the better, challenging injustice for the rights of women around the world.

I find we are in danger of losing the Methodist circuit system of supporting and working together, for we are joined for a purpose. We need our worship to lead us all to discover what God is calling us to do. We need to be eager to learn and to care. We need to serve in helping the vast need around us, but also to stand up in a real way about the

injustice that prevails. And evangelism is not just getting people to fill our church buildings but to send them out to change our world. We are called to change the world, not just to suit ourselves. Salvation belongs to a God who calls us.

George Ginn  
Ely & Newmarket Circuit

### **'Calling' all ladies: An invitation from MWiB**

Part of 'Our Calling' as Methodist Women in Britain is to engage with God's Good News in creative ways.

On Saturday 18th May, at Belsey Bridge conference centre, we will be welcoming Sally-Anne Lomas to lead our Away Day.

Sally-Anne is a documentary film maker with a special interest in the life, work and spirituality of Mother Julian of Norwich. Julian has also been a source of inspiration for Sally-Anne's artistic creativity leading her into the 'Cloth of Kindness' project. She has entitled her day 'Enfolded in Love' and with speaker sessions in the morning and opportunities for creativity and reflection during the afternoon, it promises to be a not-to-be-missed day!

There is a charge of £30 which covers the cost of morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea and the hire of some of the conference centre's very comfortable meeting rooms.

The day runs from 10 am to 4 pm and further details and booking forms are available from Elizabeth Wright, tel. 01953 882149.



# My Calling

Martin Callam

I have experienced God's call on a number of occasions and felt that I was being called on others.

Between 2001 and 2007, along with my wife Paula, I spent most of my Summer holidays in Bosnia-Herzegovina working with Novi-Most, a charity set up to work with young people, many of whom had been traumatised during the civil war. We saw God at work in many ways during these visits. We both individually felt that we were being called by God to offer ourselves as full-time workers for the charity and we were prepared to leave our work, our homes and family. We were fully convinced that God was calling us, so we applied and offered ourselves to this work of outreach, evangelism, and caring.

Much to our surprise and disappointment, after much thought, prayer and heart searching, Novi-Most turned us down. The remarkable thing about this was the fact that their Director really could not explain why, they just felt that it was not right for us to go.

"What is God doing?" summarises politely what we were thinking.



At about this time (2007) Street Pastors had just started in Norwich and we joined the second cohort of trainees. We completed our training and were commissioned in September before going out on the streets for the first of our monthly night time patrols in the October. We were surprised, to say the least, when we received a phone call at 8am on the Saturday before Christmas from Val Dodsworth, the local organiser.

She had read an email from the Street Pastors' Head Office in London before going to bed. In it they had described problems that were being experienced by the initiative in Antigua & Barbuda and asking local reps if they knew of a couple who might be suitable to be sent to go and lead and develop the work there.

Val told us that she had thought nothing of it and had gone to bed. She woke at 2am with 'Martin and Paula' in her mind, she went back to sleep and woke at 3am with our names in her mind again. When this happened for a third time, she said, "All right God, I get the message but I am not going to call them just now, it is 4am!"

When we were told this, my first thought was, "This all sounds a bit dodgy." Paula wondered where Antigua was. We decided to investigate and met with the Director, Rev Les Isaac. After spending an hour with him we knew that we could not say no to this fantastic opportunity. So it was that we ended up living in the Caribbean for six and a half years. During which time we saw God work in many different, powerful ways.

While in Antigua, I came to reflect on two passages from the Bible: 'When they had come opposite Mysia, they

attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them' Acts 16:7 NRSV; and 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter 3 where Samuel heard the voice calling three times before Eli realised that it was God calling. Even in the 21st century God speaks.

Our time in Antigua came to an end and we returned home in March 2015. At that precise moment Rev Nigel Fox was running training sessions for worship leaders at Wroxham Road and we joined in with these and started taking part in services. After our return, having shared some thoughts at a Local Arrangement service, Florence Callaby asked me if I had ever thought about becoming a Local Preacher. The suggestion had first been made to me when I was 17 and really not ready. The thought was never very far away but there were always reasons (or possibly excuses) for not taking any action. After the prompt I agreed to have my name put forward at the Local Preachers' meeting. I am now struggling with the Worship Leading and Preaching Course but I am sure that, with God's help, I will complete it and eventually become an accredited Local Preacher, even if it is half a century after I was first called.

**Martin Callam**  
**Norwich Circuit Administrator**

# Smart Learning at The Vine Inter-Church Primary School in Cambourne: The Methodist Quadrilateral

Steve Acklam

**T**he approach of Christmas is always a joyous and exciting time, especially in a Primary school! Here, at The Vine Inter-Church Primary School in Cambourne, we have recently enjoyed a Smart Learning Day. The children are vertically grouped: so that within each classroom, years 4,5, and 6 sit together on each table (or years 1,2 and 3). This is an interesting way of teaching the children as all age groups join in the discussions and help each other in the art activity.

Our Christmas Smart Learning this year was to investigate the Methodist Quadrilateral in the light of the Nativity. Three classes thought deeply about the place of angels in religious stories: looking at artistic representations of Sikh and Muslim angels, then moving onto messenger angels and the way angels were among the first to **Worship** the Christ child. The class made some beautiful angels and wrote a scroll to a person they value to tell them why. The discussion was deep and full of meaning and the scrolls heartfelt and moving.

For **Learning and Caring** - we listened to a Russian fable about an elderly couple who cared for the birds outside

their cabin even though they personally had nothing. The birds taught them to love and cared for them in return by singing for them. We wrote a prayer to thank God for the care that our families, friends and teachers give to us. We made beautiful doves to set in our tree to remind us of the story.

When thinking about **Service**, we discussed the shepherds and their part in the Nativity story. They were the lowest of the low, mistrusted and often reviled but they were chosen to be the first to meet the baby. We collected words that mean 'service' to us and made paper chains of famous and family people to show that everyone is the same in the eyes of God.



The ***Evangelism*** classes discussed the concept of light and how important it is in this wonderful story: the star guiding the magi, settling over the stable for the shepherds, and the light in the sky when the angels sang. We read Isaiah 60: 2-3 and made candles before rewriting the prayer 'The Seven Candles of Christmas' and thinking about how we tell others about God's love.

In the afternoon, we all gathered in our

school hall to share our learning, helped by our Foundation Stage children who dressed up and retold the story of the Nativity for us.

Smart Learning days are always a joy to deliver and take part in and this was no exception. Our children had a thoughtful and enriching morning discussing the real meanings of Christmas.

Steve Acklam  
Methodist Schools Visitor

## Contributions

We hope you have been inspired by the articles in this edition of *grapevine*. If you would like to make a contribution to the next edition, we would love to hear from you. Please send any news items, letters and photographs, which you would like to share with others in the district to

[eagrapevine@gmail.com](mailto:eagrapevine@gmail.com)

*or post to*  
**'grapevine', District Office**  
**Chapel Field Road Methodist Church**  
**Norwich, NR2 1SD**

**For further information, please contact the District Office on**  
**01603 625765**

***Items should be sent in plain or rich text format. Photos should be sent electronically in jpg separately from the text.***

***Unfortunately we cannot guarantee inclusion of all contributions.***

# Have you heard?

**We're starting something new.....**



**Café Church at TMC Blakeney**  
**Sundays 10am**

Blakeney Methodist Church | 111 High Street | Blakeney | NR25 7PS