

GLAZEBURY METHODIST CHURCH

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REV ANDREW'S MESSAGE –

“Don't waste a crisis” 2

Today is the birthday of the Church, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gave new utterance to the people of God, inspired, encouraged, emboldened the new followers of Jesus rose up and shared the gospel – and three thousand were added to their number that day. Yet, I like so many other Presbyters and Pastors celebrate when one long attended worshipper decides to become a member!

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer..... and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Daily he added to their number – why, well I believe it was because of this devotion to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread to prayer, to this communal sharing, that the Lord added to their number. The adding to their number is an act of God not of people, it is God alone who works through the hearts of men and women, all we are required to do is to worship God and make disciples.

I was interested in an article that I read recently which discussed the merits or otherwise of physical meetings “...we spend years developing individual expertise, knowledge and insight, then take decisions in forums that make us collectively stupid. A leading academic in this field, has studied thousands of meetings. How do people interact? Do decisions reflect the breadth of knowledge in the room? The evidence is as clear as it is depressing, as the academic puts it “Meetings predict bad outcomes more powerfully than smoking predicts cancer”

Sobering reading and research when you consider the number of meetings that church members and church leaders attend, when you look at the agenda items of any church meeting, it's little wonder or maybe hardly surprising to find our churches struggling in so many ways. One of the blessings of this coronavirus has been the removal of physical meetings. Though it takes us a long time to get used to it, and then to find better ways of meeting – the online meetings do have the capacity to be places where real discussion and debate can be held, though they need to be managed incredibly well, and we're just not geared up for that at the moment. Look out for the “how to lead good virtual meetings” training from the learning network. (You heard it here first.)

Now of course, I can't imagine in a million years that we shall get very far with virtual meetings, but it does raise the real pressing question of the true value of our meetings and may be a time to take stock of what we really ought to be spending out time talking about.

So, what do we need to be talking about? (In my view)

Jesus said – “I will build my Church,” and we know that in many places within our locality and nationally and indeed internationally he is doing precisely that.

At the Methodist Conference in 2011 – yes 9 years ago! The Revd Dr Martyn Atkins - "As disciples of Jesus we are called to become the Church God wants us to be," said Dr Atkins. "This will involve making some tough decisions. We don't have all the resources we would like to have but God has not given up on us. We must work hard to become a Church that demonstrates our faith through a commitment to justice and serving our local, national and international communities."

On property, Dr Atkins said: "We unquestionably have too many church buildings: too many in the wrong places, too many unfit to sustain our life as a discipleship movement shaped for mission today. We too readily associate the sustaining of the life of our chapels with the work of God's kingdom - these often overlap but they're not the same thing. A more sacrificial, strategic approach is needed. Our churches must not exist simply to perpetuate the status quo, but to provide a place where people can come to faith and be nurtured in their journey with Christ."

What our enforced lockdown has taught us and has brought from us is a renewed strength to meet the needs of our community at this time, a renewed and focussed energy to be the people of God today – to listen and to study, to worship and to pray in new meaningful ways that have been lost with our propensity of seeing church as being first and foremost what **we** do in **our** building.

The first thing in my mind is for the Church is to take risks. To have that long hard and difficult conversation in the local church and determine whether it truly has a mission, and I don't mean a half-hearted 'save this church' mission, but a very serious conversation about individual church sustainability – and ask the difficult question. As you come out of this enforced lock down, ask yourself why do we want to open the church doors – what is your mission?

I want you to imagine that you are considering opening a new church on your current site, what would be the reason for doing so?

- What, in **prayer** has God placed on your heart, to what have you been led?
- What plans, ideas would you have in place, to whom are you seeking to demonstrate your **presence** what activities and events are you going to put on to draw people in?
- How are you going to **proclaim** the gospel to the people in your orbit as they too come out of the chains of lockdown, with their worries and fears, how does the gospel you're planning to proclaiming speak to them today?
- What is your means of **persuasion**, to encourage them to consider a life with Christ?

The first thing each and every church needs to do as it emerges is to re-evaluate its very reason for its existence, because it's a huge commitment of resources and energy, Jesus will indeed build his church, and by the power of the Holy Spirit many will be added to the number of believers, but will he do it where you are, is it his church to do with as he pleases, or is it your little oasis a peace of security and friendship?

If you want to read more of Martyn Atkins report then you can find it on the Methodist web site. Conference reports 2011 -General Secretary report.

Bible readings for 31May 2020 - Acts 2: 1-21, Numbers 11:24-30, Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b, 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13, Acts 2: 1-21, John 20:19-23 and John 7:37-39.

Sad news – Delia's brother John sadly passed away a couple of days ago. I am sure you will keep Delia, Peter and all the family in your thoughts and prayers.

SHARING SUNDAY WORSHIP

We are sharing our Sunday Service over the telephone. Most weeks we have over 180 callers from across the Leigh & Hindley and Liverpool North Circuits.

If you would like to listen in, at 10.30am on Sunday:

Dial **020 3478 5289** on your telephone,

When it asks for the access code, enter **145 404 825#**.

(this number will be the same each week)

When it asks for your ID, press **#**

We can then join together in worship

The call will be charged at the standard UK phone rate.

FOR THOSE THAT LISTEN TO THE SUNDAY SERVICE AND EVEN TO THE PODCASTS. IF YOU HAVE NOT GOT A SINGING THE FAITH HYMN BOOK AT HOME - SO THAT YOU CAN SING ALONG - PLEASE LET ME KNOW AND I WILL ARRANGE FOR YOU TO RECEIVE ONE - Christine Taylor Mobile: 07801 252625 or email - christine.arran4872@aol.com

PODCASTS

Regular podcasts from Rev Viv can be found on: <https://soundcloud.com/user-476066366>

I send these out daily to those who receive notice sheets by email each week. If you know of anyone who would like to receive them please let me have their email address and I will include them in the distribution. Christine Taylor

FEELING THE EFFECTS OF 'LOCKDOWN'? If you are on your own, or not, and are feeling the effects of the 'lockdown' then phone your Pastoral Visitor for a chat.

IF YOU ARE not a member of church and need to talk please ring Rev Andrew Bradley or Delia Caswell on the phone numbers at the top of the first page of this news sheet.

Let me have some thoughts/reflections on the lockdown situation. You could also send stories, poems, prayers or your celebrations of VE Day (Christine)

MONIES:-

Culcheth & Glazebury Community Day should have taken place on 8th May and the Auction on 25th April but were understandably cancelled. Usually the combined income from just these 2 events would have been at least £2,000!

As Social Distancing is likely to with us for some considerable time it's not likely that events like this will be able to take place in the near future, never mind being able to physically attend worship together. Unfortunately, we are somewhat reliant on these types of events, not forgetting the weekly 'collection' to help pay for the running costs of the church and the quarterly assessment to the Circuit which allows us to have a Minister. Currently we have a large shortfall of income.

How can you help?

Are you a member of the 'Envelope Giving Scheme' or a cash in the collection bag giver have you considered changing to Standing Order?

Many church members and friends have Standing Orders set up which means regular giving continues throughout the year.

Anyone is welcome to set up a Standing Order directly into Glazebury Methodist Church's bank account:

Sort Code: 60-13-04 Account No: 01841629 Please use your name in the comments field.

You can at any time make a donation (which can remain anonymous if you wish)

But don't forget that if you are a UK Tax Payer you can still Gift Aid if your gift is recorded. To remind you for every £1 you give the Government will add an additional 25p to the church. Thank you to everyone for your giving and continued support.

NOTE – Delia will be contacting those that pay by the envelope scheme at the beginning of each month so that arrangements can be made to drop them off at Delia's home.

The Methodist Conference will meet virtually this year

The Conference Business Committee met last week and agreed that the Conference should meet June 25 – July 2 2020 in order to conduct its essential business. The committee recognised that the restrictions that are likely still to be in place at the end of June mean that a virtual meeting is necessary. The committee was encouraged by the experience of the Council when it met virtually at the end of March.

Final details about the timetable are being discussed and there will be further communication with all those attending after the Council has met on 16 May.

We are particularly mindful of those for whom this is a significant Conference personally (eg ordinands and those designated for office) and hope that the Methodist people will keep them and all the representatives in their prayers.

A PRAYER FOR THESE DIFFICULT TIMES

On all those who are sick, in body, mind and spirit, O Living God have mercy.

On those who are lonely or afraid, those who suffer from anxiety or whose souls are discomfited, O Living God have mercy.

On all those whose lives are dedicated to service; our NHS staff, the hospitality industry, our farmers and many others, O Living God have mercy.

On those who are never able to attend their place of worship, who suffer persecution and oppression and live in deprivation, O Living God have mercy.

On those who fear they are unworthy and unwelcome in church. Who do not feel included in your Kingdom, O Living God have mercy.

On those who do not know your peace, for whatever reason, O Living God have mercy.

In this time of prayer we think of anyone who is grieving, particularly thinking and praying for Delia, Peter and all their family. Amen

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING TO THE NEWS SHEET PLEASE CONTACT ME ON EMAIL BY WEDNESDAY OF EACH WEEK: christine.arran4872@aol.com or phone me on Mobile: 07801252625.

