

GLAZEBURY METHODIST CHURCH

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REV KATHARINE BLAND

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My colleagues and friends, my sisters and brothers in Christ,

As you are all aware, at its recent Conference, the Methodist Church of Great Britain decided, with an overwhelming majority vote, to accept the proposals for same-sex marriage as outlined in the God in Love Unites Us (GILUU) report. This means that the Methodist Church now accepts marriage can take place between two people of the same sex, whilst also holding the traditional view of marriage of it being between a man and a woman.

As a Methodist Church we have found love and joy in these discussions as well as much pain and distress experienced by many. In our Circuit, we have found brothers and sisters who agree, others who disagree with the proposals, and many who remain uncertain.

As it stands, at present, all the churches in the Circuit can only preside over marriages between one man and one woman. The accepted proposals from Conference do not change that fact, and although each Church Council is required to decide upon any future change to the registration status of their church building, there are safeguards in the resolutions and government legislation to prevent churches or ministers being forced to do otherwise. This does however give the opportunity, to any Church Council that chooses, to explore the possibility of same sex marriage being affirmed in that local church. If a local church does believe that this is the right way forward for them then their Marriage Registration can be changed.

I am aware that, since the announcement of this in our church, there have been unsurprisingly a number of conversations between members of our congregation. I am also aware that these conversations differ between those who agree and are happy with the church's decision, others who do not agree and feel very unhappy, and others still who do not know how they feel. **We should take the opportunity at the General Church Meeting to introduce more information to the church congregation with a possible view of facilitating small group conversations.**

Whatever the outcome of the Church Council meeting, no-one lay or ordained would ever be expected to be present at a same sex wedding if it went against their conscience. Scholars and theologians would stress that there are different ways of interpreting scripture, and many recognise that they were written in and for a very different culture from ours. That is not to say that we should totally succumb to everything that appears to be the 'cultural norms' around us (the Bible tells us to be 'in this world, but not of this world'), but it does mean taking into account the way in which our understanding of scripture can change according to different cultural understanding and knowledge garnered over the centuries from science etc. One example would be the position of women and how that differs in 21st century Britain from the cultural norms of Biblical times, not to mention views on divorce, slavery and genocide. It was the early church that made the decision not to insist on circumcision, an example where a clear Biblical mandate was over-turned because it was felt that changed circumstances warranted it.

The GILUU report does not seek to de-value family life, but rather to celebrate it and to recognise and affirm that deeply loving relationships can exist outside the hitherto accepted definition of marriage and family. In the end it will come down to what members of the church can live with, hence much reflection and study has been given to the particular part of the report that discusses living with contradictory convictions.

We have a real opportunity here to make a powerful witness to wider society on how to live together in peace, unity and mutual understanding, in spite of deeply held differing opinions.

As John Wesley said: 'Though we may not **think** alike, may we not **love** alike' and it is to be hoped that our shared love for Jesus would enable us to live together. The title of the Report - God in love unites us - contains a double meaning here: firstly, a recognition that the love which binds people together is a God-given gift, but also it expresses the hope that our love for Christ will continue to unite us, even when we hold different beliefs.

I think perhaps individual or family conversations may be the best way forward, but I am open to other suggestions. The time for consultation has passed, the report has been adopted by the Methodist Church, and we do need to move on in faith. We are a church of the future, our mission and witness in the church and this community must not be held back because of this.

"And let us run the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." Hebrews 12:2 In Christian Love, Katharine

Gracious God, let the light of your face shine upon us; your peace rule in our hearts and your strength be our song. By the gift of your grace let us take up the cross and follow in the steps of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

BIBLE READINGS for Sunday, 22 August 2021– 1 Kings 8: (1, 6, 10-11) 22-30, 41-43; Psalm 84; Ephesians 6: 10-20 and John 6: 56-69

AN EXTRACT FROM – John 6: 56-69 – Jesus the Bread of Life – Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.....

PLEASE NOTE THAT NEXT WEEK'S NEWS SHEET WILL COVER 4 – 19 SEPTEMBER INCLUSIVE DUE TO HOLIDAYS. IF YOU HAVE ANY ITEMS FOR NEXT WEEK'S EDITION PLEASE LET ME HAVE THEM ASAP.

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Please note that all services in the Circuit will start at 10.30am for the foreseeable future.

| Date | Preacher | Virtual (V) or Physical (P) | If can't attend church – join online by this link |
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| | | | From 6th June: Online: click this link to join the meeting via Zoom . Sunday Service Zoom Link On the Phone: Dial 0330 088 5830 on your telephone, When it asks for the access code, enter 935 8460 6158# . When it asks for your ID, press # . |
| 22/8/21 | Steward – Delia Caswell | P | Rev Katharine Bland (HC) AND General Church Meeting to be incorporated in the service. |
| 29/8/21 | Steward – Christine Taylor | V | Circuit Dial in Service |
| 05/09/21 | Steward – Delia | P | Own Arrangement |

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| | Caswell | | |
| 12/09/21 | Rev Katharine Bland – (HC) | p | Rev Katharine Bland (HC) |
| 19/09/21 | Own Arrangement – Christine Taylor | p | Breakfast Church |
| 26/09/21 | Steward - Delia Caswell | p | David Bushby |

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Latte Challenge

Do you remember the Latte Challenge from the start of last year....?

Well we asked you to take a cup and put in the cost of a cup of coffee, instead of perhaps of having a take-out coffee.

Some of you have carried this on and we heard last week that one person had handed over £130 recently and is carrying it on.

Why don't you? Excellent and thank you.

Auction



We are now able to look ahead at some fundraising activities. Normally we would have an auction around March / April time. But I'm sure (well I know) that people have items that they are dying to donate to the church for sale to make much needed funds. A provisional date of Saturday 25th September can be arranged but only if we have enough help available. How about it? Please phone or text Robert on 07806 600508 or email robert-graham5@sky.com

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Room / Event Bookings new procedure

With immediate effect please direct all room / event booking enquiries to Robert Graham via one of the following methods: DM via the Glazebury Methodist Church Facebook page

By email: Robert.graham5@sky.com

By Phone or text: 07806 600508

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MEN'S BREAKFAST

The next Men's Breakfast will be Saturday, 21 August from 09.30am and then will return to the last Saturday of each month from September – ie 25 September.

The speaker for the August meeting will be Allan Ramsay of Road Peace, speaking about interaction between motorists and cyclists.

We look forward to seeing you all again to share in coffee and bacon butties.

[Alan Crozier]

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For the most up to date news see our Facebook page.
Search 'Glazebury Methodist Church' on Facebook.

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A PRAYER FOR AFGHANISTAN The Church of Scotland - Rev Dr Marjory MacLean, Convener of the Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces, has written us a prayer for Afghanistan as we remember the sufferings of the people of that land and the sacrifices of our military personnel.

Let us pray All-loving God, Your hands have fashioned every lovely corner of this treasured planet, and the beautiful land of Afghanistan is as precious as every other place Your children call 'home'. By its rivers and mountains, its fields and gardens, its busy towns and ancient villages, it is the heart's desire of its people and the place where their lives and loves are nurtured.

We grieve today with those who grieve over Afghanistan, the people who call it home indeed, the people exiled or suddenly having to leave, and the men and women from other countries who have made sacrifices in recent years in the cause of that country's future.

We remember with renewed sadness the loss of lives of military personnel during the years of this country's involvement in Afghanistan, conscious of the questions that must today be troubling the minds of those in our community who were bereaved, those who were wounded on operations, and those who were forever changed by experiences suffered there.

We pray for peace, dignity, freedom and confidence for the men, women and children of Afghanistan; for courage, vision and generosity within the international community responding to such need; and for tranquillity of mind amongst our own Service community and its wider family.

In the name of Jesus Christ, the peace-giver, we pray, AMEN.

Please CONTINUE TO REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING in your prayers:-

For all the Afghan people who are in such a dangerous position at the moment. Pray that World Leaders will make the correct decisions for the safety of these people.

Those, for one reason or another, feel that they are not ready to return to church. May your blessings be always with them.

Those who are lonely.

Those who are depressed.

Those who are waiting for an operation or important medical results.

For any of our friends and relatives who are finding these times difficult. May your presence be with them.

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LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETS ON A REGULAR BASIS. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES/QUESTIONS PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHAT THEY ARE AND I WILL TAKE THEM TO THE MEETING – IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE QUESTION/CONCERN MIGHT BE. WE CANNOT WORK FOR YOU IF YOU DON'T TELL US WHAT YOU MAY BE CONCERNED ABOUT!!!

[Christine Taylor]

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Topic: Quiz Night

Time: 27 August 2021 at 8:00 PM

Also – 10 and 24 September

Join Zoom Meeting

Topic: Quiz Night

Time: This is a recurring meeting - meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89804710886?pwd=dE9IVm53WWNoZlUxQkYyQzU3am91Zz09>

Meeting ID: 898 0471 0886

Passcode: 465850

NB – QUIZ NIGHTS WILL BE HELD EVERY OTHER FRIDAY AT 8PM

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**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWS SHEET PLEASE CONTACT ME -
CHRISTINE TAYOR –ON 07801252625 OR christine4872@sky.com**