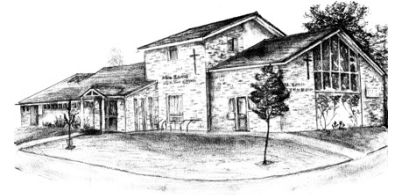




# Newsletter

February 2020

Number 2



## Welcome!

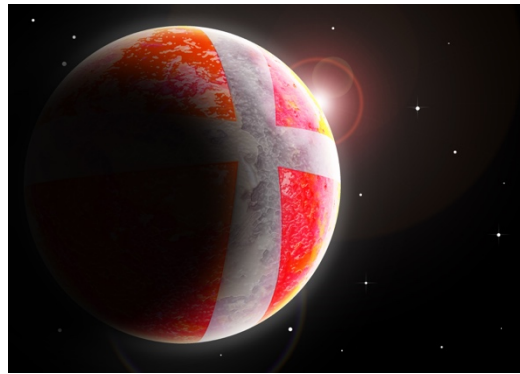
"For everything there is a season and a time for ever matter under heaven." So begins Ecclesiastes Chapter 3. How then do we mark the changing of the seasons? Traditionally in the church there have been four main seasons. Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time.

These seasons have often been marked by the use of different colours. Advent and Lent have both been Purple, as a sign of penitence and preparation. Christmas and Easter have been either White or Gold to symbolize celebration. Leaving Ordinary Time as Green. Ordinary Time may seem an odd title, but it is for those parts of the year not marked by festivals or preparation for the main festivals of the Christian year.

In our Diamond Year, you will be able to see the changing of the seasons as the Pulpit Falls change colour according to the season. We do have the addition of Red for Pentecost as well. Indeed as time went on different colours were added to mark particular occasions.

On each of our new Pulpit Falls you will see the diamond and the Methodist Orb and Cross, a reminder of the tradition to which we belong, and to Jesus who came for the whole world.

Of course, some things come for a season and are fit for a season. They begin and they end. In this issue we particularly mark the end of the season where Messy Church has been part of our life for ten years. As we celebrate all that God has done in and through Messy Church, so we ask, "What next Lord?" And we see our focus change to the next area of mission and ministry that God calls us to. Time for a new season to dawn.



**"I look upon the whole world as my parish"**

**Rev John Wesley**

It seems we all like a soundbite and very often this quote from John Wesley is often abbreviated even more to "the world is my parish". This offers us a wonderful image of how the gospel of Jesus Christ is for every person in every part of the world. However, when we read the quote in full we find Mr Wesley saying this:

**"I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation."**  
-Journal, June 11, 1739.

In the church I grew up in two fixed Sundays of the year were given over to mission. Home Missions and Overseas Missions. It always amused me as a child that "Home Mission" meant giving money to causes elsewhere in the country, and rarely where we were ... at home.

Yet where better to begin than where we are! There are plenty of biblical quotes that come to mind, some about going out to tell other people about the Kingdom of God, while others remind us that it is by how we live that we will be known as followers of Jesus.

The mission that God calls us to be part of is not one or the other. It is not just to support missions elsewhere, whether in the UK or abroad, but also where we are, here in Abingdon.

All Saints is a very busy church, there are so many people through our doors, some for church-based activity and many more for other groups. Yet recent observation tells me that people do look at, read and in some cases, study the various items that are on our notice boards and glance through some of the leaflets that are left out.

This is clearly an opportunity for us to communicate something of our faith in God as well as our activity. John the Baptist is one character among many that spent his whole life pointing away from himself and towards Jesus.

The reality of today's society is an interesting mix of people seeking after spirituality and at the same time, not associating spirituality with traditional church. It becomes vital therefore that we communicate something of our spirituality and faith in God in those things we chose to display and show the part of the world we are in.

The fuller quote of John Wesley is as applicable to us today as it was for him in 1739.



## FISHING FOR PEARLS

6 conversations reflecting upon, and celebrating the second half of life; rooted in Christian faith but suitable for all

GROWING TOGETHER THROUGH OUR EXPERIENCES OF LIFE

Memories - Feb 6<sup>th</sup>  
Identity & relationships - Feb 13<sup>th</sup>  
Wisdom - Feb 27<sup>th</sup>  
Forgiveness - March 5<sup>th</sup>  
Death & dying - March 12<sup>th</sup>  
Celebrating life - March 19<sup>th</sup>

**@ ALL SAINTS METHODIST CHURCH**

Facilitated by Deacon Selina Nisbett

Refreshments provided  
This Church supports the Combating Loneliness Initiative

JOIN US ON SOME OR ALL OF THESE DATES

FEB 6, 13, 27

MAR 5, 12, 19

7-9 PM

ALL SAINTS CHURCH IN THE PERRY ROOM

ALL SAINTS METHODIST CHURCH, APPLEFORD DRIVE ABINGDON OX14 2AQ

For more information phone Anne Matthews on: 01235- 522237

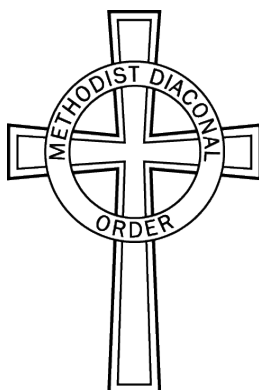
## Fishing for Pearls

Sometimes we read of other people's stories of their faith and life and think ours bears little relation to all that they have done. That may be true, but then they have not lived our lives, known our stories, or seen how God has weaved in and out and through all of our experiences.

The number of times I have wished that people would write a book, telling their story is countless. Yet for the majority, they would say something like, 'don't be silly – it was just as it was then.' This may also be true, but patterns of life and living have changed so much over the years that they are barely recognizable to the current world.

Yet God weaves his story with our story in every generation and does not stop!

These conversations are rooted in the Christian faith, and will help us to explore our experience and our faith enabling us to be more conversant in our own stories.



# Au revoir



In February 2010 All Saints and Peachcroft Christian Centre held the first joint North Abingdon Messy Church. It was the culmination of about 18 months' praying and planning, and before it the four of us (Marion Haynes, Beryl Tillin, Kate Jones, Jan Greenough) were in a fever of anticipation and anxiety. We had about 20 helpers poised for action: a kitchen team serving coffee and making lunch, a set-up team putting out tables and clearing mess, a welcomer, a worship leader and a pianist, and helpers at each activity table. What if nobody came?

We met in the church before we opened the doors to the public, and spent a few minutes in prayer, as we have done before every Messy Church since. And as we passed through the lobby on our way back to the hall, we glanced through the glass doors. There was a queue outside.

We never again had quite as many in our congregation as those who came on that first day. Numbers were always variable, especially when there was some activity on in the Market Place. But there were several occasions when the hall was full to capacity, and the wonderful kitchen team performed the miracle of the five jacket potatoes and two tins of beans. God did some amazing work.

So why have we stopped? Last October All Saints held a mission event, and I was asked to give my testimony. I spoke about my vision for Messy Church, and how exciting it had been to find an opportunity to break down the barriers that young families find around the unfamiliar territory that is church. And I spoke about the need to listen to God and our hearts, and try to discern his will.

Several things came out of that mission event. Led by Trey Hall, we looked at the different ways in which we see mission: some of us wanted to 'do' church in the best way possible, striving for excellence in all we do and attracting people to the beauty of our worship. Others wanted to embrace new ways of worship, meeting people through a more modern idiom. And some of us wanted to take mission out from traditional church, and find new expressions of faith and new ways to meet and tell people about God.

The Messy Church planning team had been asking for some time for people to shadow us, to share the job of planning and organisation we'd been doing for ten years, but no one had come forward. There was no one to hand over to. But I and others felt that we had to listen to what God was saying to us, and that it was time to move in new directions. 'To everything there is a season.' (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Fortunately, the Abingdon Baptist Church has taken up the baton. There is still a Messy Church in Abingdon, this time in Ock Street. And the energies that were being used in the service of Messy Church will be available to support whatever course All Saints and PCC are guided to, as we start a new decade. None of the last ten years would have been possible without people from different churches – often with different views on many topics – coming together to use different gifts in the service of God. We are so thankful for everyone who gave their time and skill to be part of this ministry. And we look forward to whatever God has in mind for us next.

Jan

# What's in an image?



Lent has traditionally been a time of learning and reflecting as we prepare for Easter. For this reason there are many extra things that happen in Lent, like the Lent Lectures.

At All Saints this year we have recognized that lifelong Christians and people on the edges of the church share some of the questions and so we are preparing a series of services. Each service addressing a particular question. This year we will also be having a "Lenten Cross" which will remind us of some of the key parts of the story of Lent.

Both these things come out of our Future Focus thinking about trying to use the Preaching Plan more creatively for our own church.

**1st March: Who is Jesus?**

**8th March: What Matters Most?**

**15th March: Am I Accepted?**

**22nd March: Where is God?**

**29th March: What Brings Fulfillment?**

**5th April: What About Suffering?**

**12th April, Easter Day: Is there Hope?**

I am delighted that each of these services will be led by All Saints preachers and ministers. We are richly blessed by God to have so many preachers among us willing to work together to make this series possible and take us through the season of Lent.



## Save the Dates!

We are delighted to welcome the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, Professor Clive Marsh to our Circuit on:

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 7:30pm  
@ Didcot Methodist Church**

Clive is an engaging speaker and it promises to be an inspiring evening as he explores with us the Presidential Theme of the Year, "The Importance of Story"



## Breaking the Taboo – A Circuit initiative looking at Mental Health

At our last Circuit Meeting there was full support for a Circuit Initiative looking at the issues surrounding mental health.

On **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March at Wantage Methodist Church, 3pm** we will begin this by holding an open meeting to get people together to talk and share.

We are very pleased that this meeting will be led by the Revd Stephen Normaton, a Methodist Presbyterian and founder of "Peer Talk" a growing charity that has received Connexional Funding. <http://www.peertalk.org.uk>

We will conclude this meeting with an act of worship and there will be no other evening services across the Circuit on this day.

We look forward to seeing you.

