

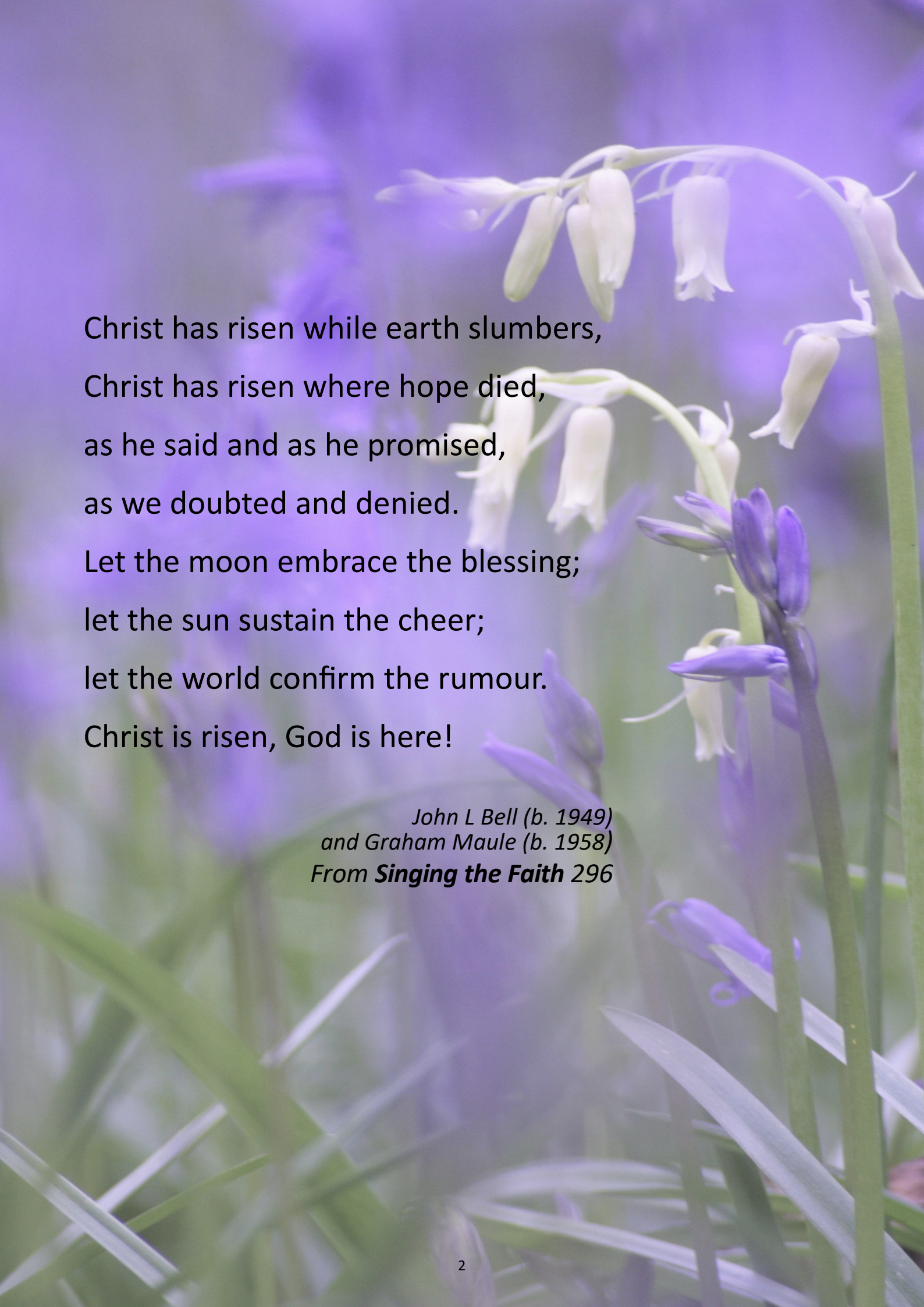
Grapevine

April 2017

Issue Number 30

METHODISTS AND THE MEDIA

East Anglia District of the Methodist Church



Christ has risen while earth slumbers,
Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised,
as we doubted and denied.
Let the moon embrace the blessing;
let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumour.
Christ is risen, God is here!

*John L Bell (b. 1949)
and Graham Maule (b. 1958)
From **Singing the Faith** 296*

Welcome to grapevine

This edition has the theme **Methodists and the Media**. Once again we are really grateful to those who have made contributions, which we are sure you will find inspiring.

Our District Chair speaks of his installation as an Ecumenical Canon, including the resulting interest shown by the media.

We are given an insight into Steve Oliver's radio show *Gospel Hour* on Radio Heacham and Jane Leach describes her preparation for Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*.

Yasmin Finch writes about digital media with top tips on getting a healthy church online presence. Debbie Caulk describes the good things happening through the media and ways in which the Methodist Connexional Media Office can support us.

The Norwich circuit are to repeat their 'Praying the Day' event with something similar in May and Nigel Fox invites other circuits to join in.

Alastair Oatey gives details of a week of celebratory events following the transformation of Wesley House.

If there is something you would like to have included in the September 2017 edition of *grapevine*, please see the guidance on the back cover of this issue. We would love to hear from you!

The Editorial Team:

Julian Pursehouse, Barbara Garwood and Alison Travis

grapevine

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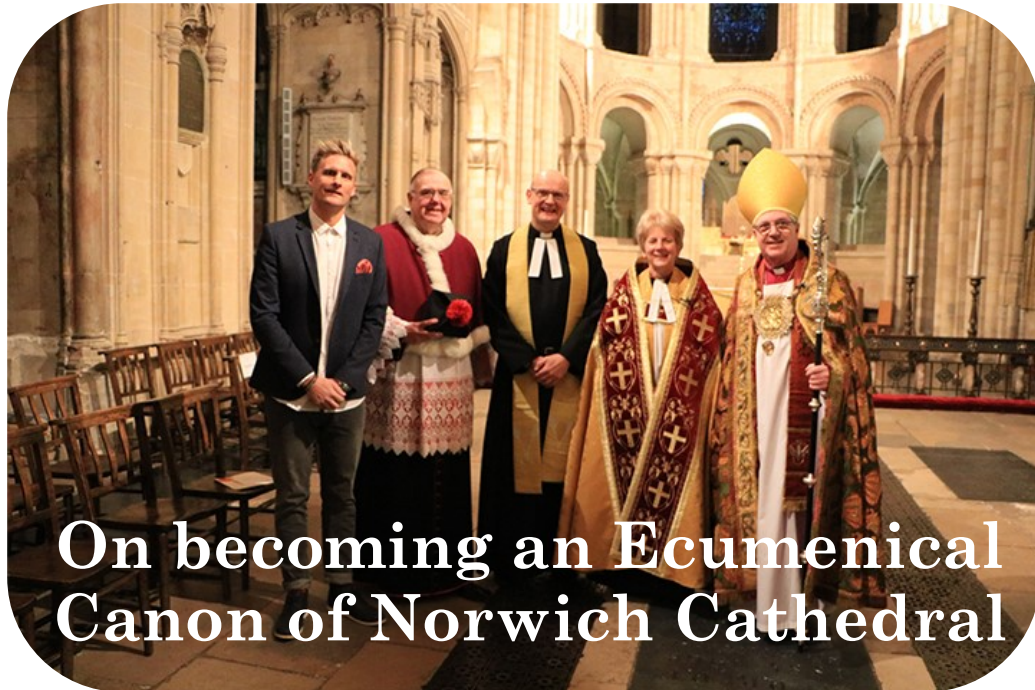
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Revd Jenny Pathmarajah

Page 2 and back cover images by:

Revd Steve Cullis



On becoming an Ecumenical Canon of Norwich Cathedral

by Revd Julian M Pursehouse

It was a great delight and privilege to be invited by the Bishop of Norwich to become an Ecumenical Canon of Norwich Cathedral and to be installed on Sunday 22 January during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This was a tangible expression of our friendship, cooperation and partnership in the Gospel of Christ and I am delighted that I was able to share this occasion with the Very Revd David Paul, Dean of St. John's Roman Catholic Cathedral and Pastor Jon Norman of Soul Church.

Over the last three years it has been a great blessing to share in the life of the Cathedral in a

variety of ways. Some of you will be aware that I have contributed to the teaching of the Norwich Centre for Christian Learning, which is situated in the Theological Library opposite the Refectory. I have valued the opportunity to shape the learning and development of Anglican lay readers, Methodist local preachers and other interested folk who gather on Saturday mornings to learn more about the Bible, theology and the spirituality of daily life. In addition to this, I have found opportunities during the week to share in the worship of the Cathedral, either at evensong or contemplative prayer.

The invitation to be an Ecumenical Canon is a natural extension of this involvement and I do hope that through my presence in Cathedral life I can remind our sisters and brothers of the rich gifts that the Methodist tradition can offer to our ecumenical relationships and our partnership in the Gospel. I also believe that the Cathedral, as a significant place of worship, teaching and ministry, can resource the wider Christian constituency let alone the Anglican Diocese of Norwich.

As a result of this invitation there has been considerable interest in the media, including a newspaper report in the EDP and Norwich Evening News and also an opportunity to appear on the Radio Norfolk Sunday show with Anthony Isaacs. The radio show in particular gave me the opportunity to explain the significance of this appointment to a wider constituency of people.

I am reminded of the words of a former President of the

Methodist Conference and a great advocate of the Methodist/Anglican Covenant, Revd Dr Neil Richardson:

'The Church began with the experience of grace. (Peter and Paul are prime examples.) So this same grace will be the hallmark of its life and mission. The Church of Christ will be recognisable by the way it extends friendship (reconciliation) to the radically other, and by crossing boundaries in its commitment to the cosmic unity which is God's grand design.'

I do hope and pray that my appointment as an Ecumenical Canon will be an inspiration to the people called Methodists to live out this same gracious friendship and so embody the unity of Christ.



*Revd Julian M Pursehouse
(Chair of District)*

Gospel Hour

by Revd Steve Oliver

I became a DJ on the radio just by chance. I saw a leaflet in a shop window asking for people to be involved and, as I was looking for a way to spread the gospel, I took the chance and so began 'The Gospel Hour'.

The programme is run from my study and has become a big part of my being able to share the Christian music I love and stories which may be of interest. During the hour, there is an opportunity to request a particular song or to share a story or personal reflection

which can be shared with the listeners.

The music I play is a mixture of traditional hymns and very modern Christian individuals and groups. I am learning just how exciting and inspirational those, who I would never have chosen to listen to, really are.

For many, the gospels in the Bible mean very little because they can seem unfathomable, but I believe the words in music become the entry to an understanding that just words cannot bring.

Radio Heacham is a local internet radio station run by a young man, Joseph Rumens, who has a vision to bring community radio to a wider audience.

The music is diverse from rap to rock with various DJs bringing their own particular brand and style.

Radio Heacham uses all social media and has its own app and Facebook page.



Gospel Hour from 9.00-10.00 pm
every Sunday with DJ Revd Steve Oliver
Listen on www.radioheacham.org.uk

Listening to groups like Third Day, Bethel Music and Casting Crowns, together with traditional hymns enables us to see that, yes, being a Christian in this current age can have its difficulties, but it also says having Jesus in our lives brings a new meaning to all aspects of life. A trust in Him gives hope to a world that is struggling to find a peace within itself.

The Gospel Hour has an intention to bring Jesus and hope to those of faith and those of none, to the young and the not so young.

So, if you know people who are searching for a new beginning in their life, then please suggest they tune in on Sunday evenings between 9pm – 10pm. The music will tell its own story!

Over the coming year I am hoping to bring a one morning a week programme called the Christian Rock Show. I am not sure how well it will work but, perhaps through using the internet and social media, I may bring the Gospel to those I never thought possible.

Revd Steve Oliver



**Writing at the end of November 2016,
Revd Dr Jane Leach describes her
preparation for Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* ...**

Its 6.00 am on a Sunday morning and I have set the alarm so I can listen to the 6.30 am news. Tomorrow morning I'm doing Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* (TFTD) and I need an idea to share with the editor. The brief is to offer a comment on the news from a Christian perspective in 2'45 seconds. The aim is to produce a 'thought' – something for people to take away whether they're religious or not. The lead story today is that Fidel Castro has died (what could I say about him?), but also I need to consider what

will be at the top of the news tomorrow?

The aim is to produce a 'thought' – something for people to take away whether they're religious or not.

I listen on my laptop to the TFTD's from the last week. No-one, it seems, has reflected on the growing story of sexual abuse in youth football so I set to work reading all the coverage and hoping that inspiration will strike.

As I read the words of survivors who've come forward, I am struck by the sense of liberation experienced by former player, Steve Walters. When he'd first read the testimony of fellow player Andy Woodward, he described feeling a burden lifted and felt that for the first time he too could speak up.

Understanding Christianity as wisdom, however, is, I think, an important approach to communicating faith in today's public square.

The 'thought' forming in my mind centres on the words of Jesus, 'and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free'; I am thinking of contrasting this with the common sense phrase, 'least said soonest mended.' I check my sources and my facts and then I ring the editor and explain my thinking to her; by 9.55 am I have the green light to start drafting.

In 2'45 I can read 500 words

100 words fewer than this article but they need to be punchy and empathetic, topical and accurate, interesting and not at all 'preachy' as the 'thought' needs to communicate itself on its merits. Otherwise, in our post-Christian culture, its wisdom will be dismissed.

Understanding Christianity as wisdom, however, is, I think, an important approach to communicating faith in today's public square. I look for God's wisdom as it's expressed in art or science or in people's experience and then I make an explicit link with the words of Jesus or the traditions of the Church, saying, in effect: 'If you know this... you are not far from the kingdom of God.' I hope that to people of faith the 'thoughts' I offer demonstrate God at work in everyday life, and for those more sceptical, I hope that I can at least provoke thought about the wisdom that Christians believe is of God.

*Revd Dr Jane Leach
Principal, Wesley House, Cambridge*



Googling God

by Dr Yasmin Finch, District Mission Enabler

What if there were people coming to your church, day-in, day-out, to stand outside and have a look? To check you out? To see what's on the noticeboard? To catch a glimpse of you, when you go in the building and when you leave? Do you look friendly? Welcoming? Kind? What if there were lots of these people – 3, 30, 300, reaching out to you for help, for love, for God?

Online there will be a steady flow of people coming across your church. Some will be new people to the area, just moved in, googling 'church' in your location. Some will be searching for the answers to life and faith, googling God.

Our new front door

Our online presence is our new front door. It is as important and as vital as the physical presence of our church building, perhaps even more so.

It is a place that does not just publicise what we do, but shows who we are, and connects us to our communities.

Your church's website, Facebook group, Twitter or even Instagram account is like a new lobby, or hall, or even a balcony, where people can sit and quietly take a look at your church and your community.

I didn't know if you could just walk in...

At St Ives Methodist Church, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, people regularly appear at services or events having encountered the church's presence online. They may have watched the Facebook group for months, even years, before coming along. This is an example of one contact email:

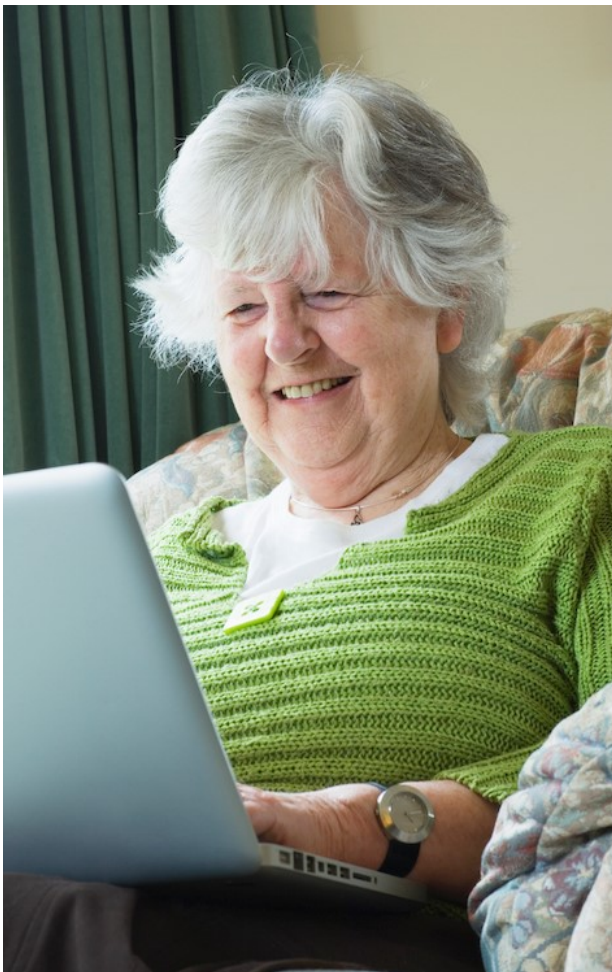
Hello there, I am not a member of any church, and was wondering if it was acceptable for me to come to one of your Sunday morning services? I didn't know if you could just walk in or whether you needed to be invited.

But a church's online presence doesn't simply reach out to complete strangers. It can offer a space for the busy, the doubtful, the housebound, and our community contacts, to go a little deeper and draw a little closer.

Top Tips

So how do you go about building a healthy church online presence? Here are my top tips...

- Have a website with an email address or contact page for people to get in touch.
- A well run Facebook site for your church is better than a poor website.
- Keep information up to date.
- Think about what you can give to your community in your online presence rather than what you can get out of them.
- Don't use your online presence primarily to fundraise.
- Do make friends with your community.
- Don't be daunted—take small steps and see what happens.



Need help?

If you'd like help or advice in this area feel free to drop Yasmin a line: yrfinch@gmail.com You can look at St Ives Methodist Church's website here: www.simc.co.uk

DISTRICT NEWS



reImagine forum

a day for all those
interested in revitalising +
starting churches

Exploring
different ways
of being church
for the 21st
century?

Need some
practical
support to move
from ideas into
action?

Passionate
about
innovation,
inclusion and
risk-taking?

Reimagine Conference – 7 October 2017

Come and join us to be inspired and reimagine new ways of Church for the 21st century.

Nothing in organised religion works the way it used to. Real change requires more than doing conventional things better. It's time to reimagine...

Join us for a panel of diverse practitioners and facilitated breakout groups. A day to consider your church's next steps with keynote address by Trey Hall, pioneer, writer, and coach.

Venue – tbc

For more information please contact:
Yasmin Finch, District Mission Enabler
Email: yrfinch@gmail.com Tel: 07543 592019

Praying the Day

by Revd Nigel Fox

In January, the Norwich circuit held a roving circuit-wide Prayer Meeting which we called *Praying the Day*. We gathered at seven different locations, at seven different times from 7.00 am to 8.30 pm and followed something like the Benedictine prayer pattern with a mixture of traditional and home-grown liturgies.

We're planning to do something similar on Wednesday 24 May, in a way that will incorporate more of our places of worship.

The whole District was involved with the pre-Olympic 'Prayer Baton' in 2012, which travelled countless miles across East Anglia. We held 'the Big Pray' at Red Lodge School on 10 May 2014; an inspiring day of fellowship and exploration of aspects of praying in various ways. But there's not been any major prayer initiative since then. Perhaps we can pick up the threads in each of our circuits...

We chose 24 May for our next venture as it just precedes (and doesn't interfere with) another major prayer initiative which is being taken up in response to the Archbishops' call for 24/10 of united prayer, under the title: *Thy Kingdom Come*. 24/10 is shorthand for 24 hours for 10 days.

This prayer project is gathering momentum, and there will be major contributions at Norwich Cathedral, as well as at other centres, running from Ascension Day to Pentecost.

Is this something that your circuit might be part of, whatever your location? It should be possible to join in with something near you or to plan something locally with other Christians. Why not explore some ecumenical possibilities for sharing in prayer where you are?

An electronic copy of *Praying the Day* can be requested from norwichcircuit@gmail.com

Further information about *Thy Kingdom Come* is available via www.thykingdom.co.uk



Growing through conflict

Raise your awareness, understand your own approach and gain skills/resources to respond more confidently to conflict.

The one day introduction to conflict resolution brings three key areas for us to consider together:

- Understanding conflict: we will look at what we mean by conflict, and how it 'looks' in our churches; we will begin to explore our different approaches and response to conflict.
- Conflict Resolution skills: working with real life scenarios, we will explore skills: how to work constructively with disagreements in groups and meetings; how to 'lower' the level of conflict; decision making in groups.
- Further resources: we will offer ideas and pointers for further training.

This day is for those in leadership in churches, lay and ordained. For Presbyters, Deacons and Lay Employees in the first instance.

This day will:

- help you understand conflict and how it escalates.
- help you develop simple tools to transform conflict.
- focus on story-sharing and taking time to hear one another.

There are six dates to choose from (10.00 am - 4.00 pm with registration from 9.30am)

- 27 April: Ely Methodist Church
- 9 May: High Street Methodist Church, Harpenden
- 23 May: Hethersett Methodist Church
- 8 June: Priory Methodist Church, Bedford
- 20 June: Museum Steet Methodist Church, Ipswich
- 14 July: Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford

You will be asked to bring a completed questionnaire to identify your own style of responding to conflict, and to bring a 'live' experience of conflict.

Book your place: www.growing_through_conflict.eventbrite.co.uk

***Richard Armingier,
Learning and Development Coordinator, East of England Region***

grapevine

is available in large print
and on CD (audio) on request

Please ring the office:

01603 625765

or tell your church distributor if you
require either of these.



On seeing the news media as our partner in ministry

by Revd Debbie Caulk

While it might be tempting to think that there's not much good news these days in the papers, on television and radio – or in the huge variety of other news media possibilities available in the 21st century such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter – there really are many good things happening through the news media to raise awareness of needs connected with our missional programmes.

At this moment, the news media is helping the Methodist Connexion, as well as all other churches and NGO relief agencies, in ways we couldn't possibly do on our own to get the word out to everyone and to focus everyone's attention on the critical famine situations in

East Africa. Every news channel is currently devoting time to showing pictures and telling that story.

In case you've missed it, here's the Methodist Church link about famine relief –

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/east-africa-food-crisis-a-catastrophe-of-this-magnitude-means-that-every-response-matters>

Since we can't be everywhere at once, it's very helpful to hear on the local evening news or read in the local newspaper or parish magazine what the current concerns are.

Our own Methodist Media Office at Church House, London, also

offers many possibilities to help us in our local areas with ministry efforts.

The media team produces a great weekly newsletter, “The Week Ahead”, connecting us every week with the latest things going on through the media, in relation to the current missional efforts of the Methodist Church in Britain.

You can sign up to receive “The Week Ahead” via email at this link – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/sign-up-for-e-newsletters>

And thanks to our media office, we don't have to go it alone, struggling to figure out what to do and how to do it, when it comes to anything media related. The team of highly skilled people in the media Office are very happy to help us with all of the following:

- *Help us write effective press releases*
- *Provide tips on how best to use social media, considering our situation*
- *Offer us personal support in relation to potential media enquiries (eg safeguarding, criminal, or property issues)*
- *Help us prepare for television or*

radio interviews

- *Assist with video making and editing, which can be posted on our ministry's website or our church's Twitter or Facebook page*
- *Help us source a list of local media contacts*

The media office also writes and edits 12 different electronic newsletters so that we can share our good news stories and information about our upcoming missional events with as many people as possible, as well as receive information about news we need to be aware of. To have your church or ministry site's good news story published, and to get out word concerning your events via the media office use this link – <http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/methodism-in-the-media>

Or if you need help in a hurry, you can always call the Methodist Media Office: 020 7467 5208 or 07969 985376

[Debbie Caulk is a probationer minister in the Norwich Circuit. She previously had a 20 year career in journalism, public relations, and marketing in the United States.]



Wesley House - Celebrating a transformation

by Alastair Oatey

Wesley House has a week of celebratory events in Cambridge this April to mark the rededication of the College following a multi-million pound redevelopment. The redevelopment enables us to start a new life with a focus on postgraduate students and a broader, international outlook giving us 24 residential rooms, all with ensuite facilities, and a brand new library, teaching and meeting rooms and a dining room / common room.

The spirit of the new college has been emerging already. In addition to our part-time students from the UK, several of whom are from the East Anglia District, we have welcomed international students including ordinands from Wesley Theological Seminary and Candler School of Theology in the United States and from Seth Mokitimi Seminary in South Africa. In addition we have hosted a student from Singapore, a visiting researcher and a DMin student from Sweden, a Turkish Muslim from Rome, a visiting fellow from Canada, scholars on sabbatical from Australia and the US and DMin students from



the United States, UK, Africa, Russia and beyond. All in all, we are experiencing a truly global reach even before our buildings have been completed! Everyone is warmly welcomed to join us for one or more of the events in the week of 24 April 2017. These include a **Methodist Studies Seminar** (Mon 24 April), a **lecture** by Professor Eamon Duffy (Mon

24 April at Wesley Church), the annual **Methodist Research Conference** (Tue 25 April) and an **alumni day** (Fri 28 April). The week finishes with a **Circuit service** on Sunday 30 April at Wesley Church, preceded by **afternoon tea** at Wesley House with tours of the buildings. We hope to be able to welcome everyone in the District to join us for this event.

*Further details are available on our website:
www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/rededication*

If you are unable to visit us in April, but would like to come and have a look round at another time, please contact us on office@wesley.cam.ac.uk or 01223 765 832.



Contributions

**Please send your letters, good news
and beautiful photographs for the
September 2017 issue of *grapevine*
by Wednesday 5 July 2017 to:**

eagrapevine@gmail.com

or

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

District Office: 01603 625765

***Please send short items in
plain or rich text format.***

***Photos should be sent electronically in
jpg separately from the text.***

***We cannot guarantee inclusion
of contributions.***