

# VISION



Pentecost Sunday is celebrated 50 days after Easter. In 2024, it falls on **Sunday, 19th May**. This event is celebrated to commemorate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

## *MINISTRY TEAM:*

**Rev. Dr. Bonni-Belle Pickard (07590 564477)**  
**and all members of Union Street Church**

*MAY 2024*



**Union Street**  
**Methodist Church**



			<b>Local arrangement Service Led by Dennis Makowski</b>
May	5th	10-30am	
May	12th		<b>Rev Dr Bonni-Belle Pickard</b>
		10-30am	<b>Holy Communion followed by Annual Church Meeting</b>
May	19th		
		10-30am	<b>O Siu</b>
May	26th		
		10-30am	<b>Geoff Harris</b>

**Online Services**

*Details will be available on the circuit website  
Laurel will also keep us informed in the newsletter  
Please check the circuit website for details of services  
[www.nkmethodists.org.uk](http://www.nkmethodists.org.uk)*

## Ministers Letter May 2024



Many of you will remember that my Easter sermon ended with a reflection on my own recent journey through feelings of despair with the long waiting and watching for our building project to finally get through the preparation stages. That Maundy Thursday had been particularly rough as there seemed to be so many strikes against us and little positive news coming our way. I had spent several hours that morning writing up yet another explanation of where we were in the process to someone whose doubts were even greater than my own. And then, suddenly, out of nowhere, we received a bid for the Brewer Street property that met our asking price, the one that many had dismissed as unattainable. There WOULD be a resurrection!

As I shared on Easter, my initial reaction, like that of the women at the tomb, was to run away in disbelief. Was it just a hoax? Another cruel joke setting us up for more disappointment? I remember re-reading the sermon I'd prepared days earlier for Easter (it's never easy to write an Easter sermon in the midst of Lent and Holy Week!) and realising that I, too, was doubting what God can do. Once I allowed myself to 'believe,' I found myself looking at Easter from an entirely new perspective!

In an interesting turn of events, on the following Thursday, Alfred and I had the news that his younger brother, Raleigh, had passed away. Raleigh had returned to his home just days before after nearly 18 months in hospital with an incurable lung condition. Alf's siblings and I were able to 'be with' him via a video call just moments before he died. We sang a family favourite hymn together, "Safely through another week, God has brought us on our way..." That hymn ends with the line, "Heaven above, eternal rest." Indeed, our passing from this life to the next is not the end, but only the beginning!

Also on that Thursday afternoon Easter, I had an email saying that the group bidding on the Brewer Street property had increased its bid and one or two others were planning to bid as well! As I write this, Alf and I am preparing to fly to the States for Raleigh's funeral not knowing which bid will finally be accepted. We watch and wait.

In my personal Bible reading this morning, I came across a verse in Exodus 13 about the Hebrew people leaving Egypt for the Promised Land. That 'wandering through the wilderness' metaphor has been recurrent for me over the past seven years of preparing for the Union Street building project and the past 18 months of preparing for my brother-in-law's death. The verse I saw today says; "When the king of Egypt let the people go, God did not take them by the road that goes up the coast to Philistia, although it was the shortest way. God thought, "I do not want the people to change their minds and return to Egypt when they see that they are going to have to fight." God knows we'd prefer the easy way out – but that's not the path that leads to growing in wisdom and understanding and perseverance!

Today I'm praising God for taking us on the long routes – so that we don't give up the fight but learn to love and trust better. Amen.

---

Since returning from my trip to the States for Alfred's brother's funeral, the sale of the Brewer Street property has been approved by the Church Council and the Circuit Meeting, so we are hoping the sale will be complete in the near future. The buyers are a group called Octavia House Schools which provides education for students who have special needs related to childhood trauma. The group has several schools across the country and has been specifically looking for a suitable venue for a Key Stage 1 and 2 school for children in N and W Kent. They found our site particularly suitable for their needs, and they were delighted to hear that the site started out as a school venue some 200 years ago! They envision making some internal alterations to provide classrooms on the ground floor, a dining room in the Gordon Higgins Room, a gym in the Upper Hall, and using the various other rooms as treatment rooms for their students and office space for their staff. All in all, their usage of the Brewer Street property seems to fit very well with our heritage, and the prospects for mutual benefit in the future are good.

Meanwhile, the need to begin some restorative work on the Church is urgent and will probably begin as early as June. We will be making plans in the coming weeks for the 'interim' period while we will not be able to use the Church premises. Please continue to be in prayer as we consider the next steps in our journey!

Bonni-Belle

**Union Street Methodist Church**

## Aldersgate Day

May 24th is known across the Methodist/Wesleyan family as "Wesley Day." It marks the day when John Wesley got the order of salvation right. Prior to May 24, 1738, he believed that one must be sanctified before one could be justified. In other words, he thought he had to make himself acceptable to God before God could forgive his sins.

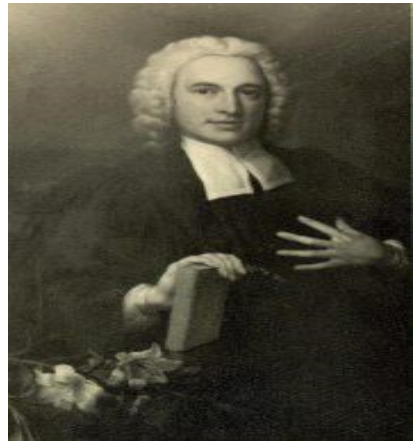


John Wesley

While reluctantly attending a Moravian society meeting, not long after his return from Georgia and the disappointing conclusion of his career as a missionary, Wesley listening to someone read the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans, he realized that justification, the forgiveness of his sins, is a free gift from God. It cannot be earned. We don't deserve it. It is God's pure gift to humankind by virtue of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Christ did all the work for us. He reconciled us to God. Our sins are forgiven and we are reconciled to God by grace through faith. Pure gift!

By this gift we are set free from sin and death. We are set free to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love those whom God loves, as God loves them.

In honor of the day, and to acknowledge that Charles Wesley had a similar "heart warming" experience three days earlier, on Pentecost, May 21, I encourage you to read and contemplate one of the hymns he composed to mark the occasion. This hymn is #342 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*,



## Where Shall My Wandering Soul Begin

*Where shall my wondering soul begin?  
How shall I all to heaven aspire?  
A slave redeemed from death and sin,  
A brand plucked from eternal fire,  
How shall I equal triumphs raise,  
Or sing my great Deliverer's praise?*

*O how shall I the goodness tell,  
Father, which Thou to me hast showed?  
That I, a child of wrath and hell,  
I should be called a child of God,  
Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,  
Blessed with this antepast of Heaven!*

*And shall I slight my Father's love?  
Or basely fear His gifts to own?  
Unmindful of His favors prove?  
Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,  
Refuse His righteousness to impart,  
By hiding it within my heart?*

*No! though the ancient dragon rage,  
And call forth all his host to war,  
Though earth's self-righteous sons engage  
Them and their god alike I dare;  
Jesus, the sinner's friend, proclaim;  
Jesus, to sinners still the same.*

*Outcasts of men, to you I call,  
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!  
He spreads His arms to embrace you all;  
Sinners alone His grace receives;  
No need of Him the righteous have;  
He came the lost to seek and save.*

*Come, O my guilty brethren, come,  
Groaning beneath your load of sin,  
His bleeding heart shall make you room,  
His open side shall take you in;  
He calls you now, invites you home;  
Come, O my guilty brethren, come!*

*For you the purple current flowed  
In pardons from His wounded side,  
Languished for you the eternal God,  
For you the Prince of glory died:  
Believe, and all your sin's forgiven;  
Only believe, and yours is Heaven!*

## Centrepoint March Meeting

In March we all brought along pieces of music which we liked and wanted to share. Some brought back past happy memories, others had a more recent special meaning.

Laverock Lea was a blast from the past; how many of you remember the church band back in the 70's – 80's, largely comprising church members from Larkfield and Union Street? They had been known to entertain us at Centrepoint Charity evenings. Then, there was a track from the band Genesis, In the Air tonight. We had Battle of Jericho, by the Maidstone Singers, we had Nigel Kennedy, we had Les Miserables. And no 'blast from the past' evening would be complete without Cliff Richard – 'From a Distance', this time. We had a very pleasant trip down memory Lane.



Our next meeting: 22 May, we shall be holding a Beetle Drive.





JUST A THOUGHT

”

”

**AS FULL OF SPIRIT AS  
THE MONTH OF MAY,  
AND AS GORGEOUS AS THE  
SUN IN MIDSUMMER.**

– WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**As full of spirit as the month of  
May, and as gorgeous as the sun in  
Midsummer.”**



Answers to the  
April  
Bible Trivia Quiz

1. The people perish.
2. Joseph
3. Rich
4. Good tidings
5. Above pearls
6. Jesus
7. Paul
8. God
9. Foolish
10. Isaiah



# Pentecost Quiz

Answers in June Vision.

- 1. What Christian holiday does the holiday of Pentecost follow?**
- 2. According to the Book of Acts, how many days after Jesus ascended into Heaven did the disciples celebrate Pentecost?**
- 3. While everyone was gathered together in a room celebrating the feast, what sound was heard all around them, as described in Acts?**
- 4. How does the Bible describe what happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit entered them?**
- 5. Acts describes which one of Jesus' disciples taking the opportunity to stand up and speak to the crowd of people?**
- 6. When Peter was speaking to the crowd, what does the Book of Acts state he said would happen to the old men in the city?**
- 7. In Acts 2:21, what did Peter say would happen to those that call upon the Lord?**
- 8. Who did Peter describe in Acts 2:25 as sitting at the right hand of God?**
- 9. According to Peter in Acts 2, what did God tell David would happen to his enemies?**
- 10. In what city did this first Pentecostal celebration described in Acts take place?**



# Circuit Walks

Members of the Maidstone Methodist churches meet once a month for a morning country walk of around 5 miles. This happens on the third Thursday of each month. If you would like to be involved, please contact the organiser for further information. **Please not that the May walk will be on the second Thursday of the month (May 9<sup>th</sup>);** both our volunteer leaders will be on holiday the following week.

**Organiser: Lesley Hitch (Mobile:07733 046915)**

## March Walk report

### **Patience is a virtue.... And other sundry sayings**

How often did my mother say in my childhood days, “Patience is a virtue”? As if to hammer home her point and encourage patience, she often followed up with “Everything comes to those who wait.”

Like most children, I was impatient and wanted things to happen NOW! But at some stage in my life, I think I did become more patient. (Others may beg to differ about this!). I have often looked back and wondered what brought about that change.

In the Scottish education system of my youth, all pupils had to continue studying both arts and science subjects until they left school. My university also encouraged some mixing between scientific and arts subjects in the first year. I took this a stage further by taking a second arts option to explore a social science, psychology, rather than my pet hate Chemistry. At the time I was pleased to get my pass and move on. But I have often looked back and wondered whether that year had a subliminal effect on me. If so, it may have benefitted my people skills during my many years of leading large engineering teams engaged in developing new state of the art aircraft control systems.

When you are developing innovative technologies, there is a substantial risk that things may go wrong at some stage. When that technology is safety critical, the problem is not only solving the technical problem, but also finding methods to demonstrate the system will operate safely. When something in a single seater aircraft goes horribly wrong, as a last resort a pilot could eject. This is not really an option for a large passenger aircraft with a few hundred passengers! Very often my role was one of trying to shield the team, take the customer and management kicks, whilst providing the time and a conducive environment for solutions to emerge. Patience was indeed a virtue, something our customers all too often lacked. But the second saying is also true, we did solve the problems and the systems were successful. Patience, and a lot of hard work by the team, was rewarded.

Why all this in a walking report? First, and foremost, our dear editor, Dennis, needs help filling the pages of this month's Vision. Finding something new to say every month becomes more difficult when we are repeating some walks more frequently. Also, Lesley is often 'soft soaping' me - "Could you do the write up, you're much better at it than me." Is this a case of 'flattering to deceive' to get her own way? But then I have seen the patience she has shown as she has failed to find people to help with her various roles. So, perhaps I am trying to prove to her patience is sometimes rewarded! However, this sometimes taxes my own patience with myself as I struggle for ideas. (Sorry Dennis if we're late with the copy!).



Lesley always takes it upon herself to report problems we encountered, on the public paths, to the authorities. But now she may have the potential of casting off that job. Having encouraged another couple of walkers to join us, one of the walkers just happens to be involved in the work of “public rights of way and access”! And whilst he thought he had just come out for a nice morning walk on his day off, he found plenty relevant to his ‘day job’. Dedicated as he is, he was soon committing observations to memory, with the aid of photos. Another case of Lesley being rewarded for her patience?

We started our walk from Penenden Heath. As our photo shows, we had enough walkers to form a mixed football team, plus a substitute if we include our photographer .



We set off on a tour of the vineyards to the west of Boxley. The leader was so busy talking to our newcomer that he managed to lead the party too far down the road to Boxley, missing a concealed gate into the fields towards Cuckoo Woods. So now the group had to show some patience with him as, like the Grand Old Duke of York, he walked them down the hill, then he walked them back up the hill until ‘they were neither up nor down’. The gate was found.

The sheep field we entered provides an extensive view of the North Downs and across the Medway Basin. Such was the buzz of conversation in the group, how many looked up to take in the view as we walked downhill towards Cuckoo Woods? By then the leader had learned that there was a huge increase in the number of walkers on these paths during lockdown. And today there are still far more walkers on them than pre-pandemic. This has put immense pressure on the wear and tear aspects of the paths and stiles. The maintenance teams are struggling to keep up with demand.

Having exited Cuckoo Woods, we walked along a recently diverted path around the Scout Activity Centre. We then passed underneath the M20 and reached our own planned diversion from the public right of way. A stile, broken when we previously used this path, has been mended but the ground before it was like a quagmire as shown in Lesley's photo. Our short walk up the lane, to avoid the stile, brought us to the start of our journey through some of the Chapel Down vines. As we entered the vines another observation was recorded – a wind damaged tree blocked the actual footpath. By now the leader was noting slow progress – what was so interesting about a bland bridge over the high speed rail line to warrant a static conversation of several minutes amongst the tail enders? Or were they just waiting for a Eurostar or Javelin train to appear from the tunnel so they could wave to the driver? When our young grandson did that on that same bridge, the driver tooted back. Was that their ambition?



The further we progressed through the vines, two gentlemen, often at the rear, moved through the field. The reason eventually became apparent. “How far have we got to go? What time will we finish?” They had a table booked for lunch. Their panic of no lunch was soon resolved, a phone call established the table would be held for half an hour after their booked time. That certainly speeded up progress!

We passed through Boxley and forgot to photograph the ‘decorated for Easter’ post box. So, you’ll just have to put up with a scenic shot plus a photo of another observation for the footpath authorities; the stile, as we crossed the high speed line again, required long legs to climb over it! Woe betide the husband who took this photo of his wife in such a position. We hope he had persuaded her it was her public duty, evidence supporting the move to banish stiles on public rights of way and replace them with ‘kissing gates’.







The walk over, the hungry trio rush off to their delayed lunch. The rest of us tried to follow; but there was no room at the inn. So, we moved along the road and reorganised the tables in an alternative nearby café so we could all sit together for our post walk refreshments and chat.

**Murray Gibson**

## Ascension Day 2024

We commemorate Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven (as per Christian belief) by celebrating Ascension Day, which occurs on the Thursday, which is 40 (or 39) days after Easter. This year, it will take place on May 9.



# Trinity Sunday

Sunday 26 May 2024



Trinity Sunday is the first Sunday after Pentecost in the Western Christian liturgical calendar, and the Sunday of Pentecost in Eastern Christianity. Trinity Sunday celebrates the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## What Do People Do?

Many Christian churches in the United Kingdom observe Trinity Sunday through various activities, including special church services that focus on the theme of the trinity. Such services give the congregation a chance to learn about or revisit the concept of the trinity, which refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit being one God. The Athanasian Creed, named after St Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, is often included in church services on Trinity Sunday because of its strong affirmation of the Triune nature of God.

Many churches or Christian organizations that run Sunday schools may also have special lessons that teach children about the trinity. Sunday school activities may include songs, poems, group discussions, and coloring tasks.

## Background

Pope Gregory IX instituted Trinity Sunday in 828 CE. This day is known for being the only major Christian festival that celebrates a church doctrine rather than an event in its sacred history. It is dedicated to the Christian belief in the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and falls on the Sunday following Pentecost each year. The belief of one God in three elements is a distinctive of the Christian faith but the early church was plagued by contrary views. Trinity Sunday spread throughout the western church around the 14th century CE.

# ROTAS for APRIL

		<b>Vestry Steward</b>	<b>Pastoral Steward</b>
,May	5th	Jim Bryant	Michael Packer
May	12th	Christine Cox	Laurel Townend
May	19th	Dennis Makowski	Michael Packer
May	26th	Ian Jenkins	Pete Smith

		<b>Door Steward</b>
,May	5th	Laurel Townend
May	12th	Val Liddle
May	19th	Pete Smith
May	26th	Michael Packer

		<b>Projection</b>	<b>Sound</b>
,May	5th	Paul Smith	Ernie Munn
May	12th	Alan Townend	Ernie Munn
May	19th	Paul Smith	Ernie Munn
May	26th	Alan Townend	Ernie Munn

		<b>Reader 1</b>	<b>Reader 2</b>
,May	5th	Peter Herrin	Ernie Munn
May	12th	Lesley Hitch	Laurel Townend
May	19th	Alan Townend	Barbara Herrin
May	26th	Dannie Grey	Cheryl Grey

		<b>Intercessions</b>	<b>Organist</b>
,May	5th	TBA	Ransford or C.Ds
May	12th	Margaret Smith	Ransford or C.Ds
May	19th	TBA	Ransford or C.Ds
May	26th	TBA	Ransford or C.Ds

		<b>Communion Stewards</b>	
May	12th	Peter Herrin	Margaret Smith

# FOOD BANK

The box for your gifts is in the front entrance of the church.

Your continued support would, I am sure be much appreciated.

If you have any questions Jan Hinchliffe can be contacted on 07976 444015 or 01622 735198



## ***Material Needed for the June 2024 Edition of Vision!***

Please send copy for the June edition of *Vision* to the Editor By Wednesday 15th May or by email to [\*\*vision@usmc.org.uk\*\*](mailto:vision@usmc.org.uk)

***Dennis Makowski***