

LYNDON MAGAZINE



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Lyndon Methodist Church



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The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Ministerial team or the Editor

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

It seems a lot can happen in a few months. Since our last Newsletter, our building has been approved by the Registrar to offer Same Sex Marriage and I have been authorised to officiate at such an event if needed.



The Methodist church has been on a long journey of faith in the conversation around human sexuality, since 1993 to be exact. It's true to say that there is no one view or theological understanding when it comes to this topic. In June 2021, the Conference decided to allow same sex marriages on Methodist premises, subject to individual Church Council's decision to opt in.

Like the wider Methodist Church, we are not of one mind at Lyndon either. Some of us agree, some of us don't and some are undecided, and that's ok. The directive from our Connexion is that we embrace being a church which holds contradictory convictions and move forward in love. Or, as John Wesley put it, "Though we may not all think alike, we can all love alike."

As this Newsletter comes to you in March we are now already in Lent. The Methodist theme for Lent this year is *Unbounded Love*. The theme explores the many ways God's love refuses to stay in the lines and cannot be bound. It's a love that lives and breathes and moves among us, bringing freedom and healing hope to all, through our commitment to be a justice seeking church, experiencing and bringing the good news of God's uncontainable love.

It reminded me of a story theologian Mike Yaconelli recounted in his book *Dangerous Wonder*. He wrote how he once asked a friend if their two-year-old daughter would colour a page of her colouring book for him, which she did and brought it to him just before worship one Sunday morning.

The little girl was proud and excited, anxious for his response. He looked at the picture and did what I imagine anyone of us would have done, he lied. He thanked her for the colouring, saying how beautiful it was and wondered how long it must have taken her. Secretly however, in his head, he was saying, *this is terrible. Is red the only colour you could use? None of your strokes are even close to being in the lines.*

Sometimes we convince ourselves that Christianity is all about colouring in the lines. If we are good Christians, if we love Jesus, read our Bibles, pray and go to church, then we'll get much better at colouring. And if we live long and Godly lives, eventually, we will be able to colour perfectly within the lines.

The truth is however, God's love, which is rooted in God's grace is so outside the lines of our understanding, we cannot even begin to imagine. The older I get, I sense that Christianity is not so much about learning how to live within the lines, but more about the joy of colouring. God's grace exists to point people to a love like no other love they have ever known. A love outside the lines.

As we continue to journey though Lent we will carry on reflecting on how God's

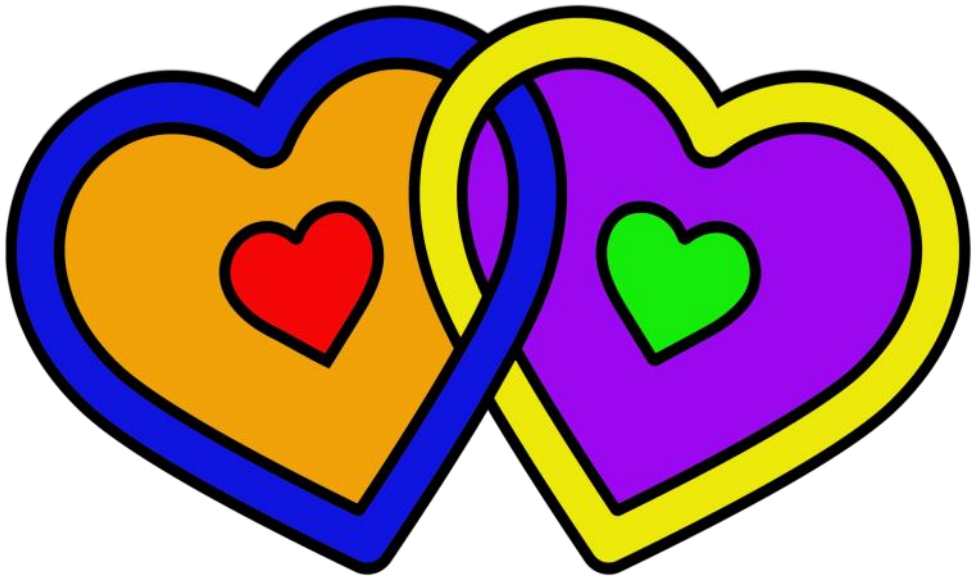
love is unbounded/outside the lines:

- Not bound by inappropriate places: nowhere is 'God-forsaken'.
- Not bound by our protective veneers.
- Not bound by societal injustice.
- Not bound by death.
- Not bound by status and power.

But in Holy Week, Jesus *is* bound. The powers lash out unjustly as they abuse their positions of authority, failing to recognise the divine in front of them. For the first time, Jesus experiences God-forsakenness and death. It seems that everything has been lost. What will happen next; will God's love remain bound?

We know it will not. God's love cannot be bound, even by death itself, because it's lavish, dangerous, excessive, outrageous and scandalous. God's love is ridiculously inclusive. God doesn't care who God loves and God isn't careful about the people God calls friends, or church. And that friends, is Good News for us all. Alleluia!

*Go Well,
Karen*



LOVE WINS

The History of Lent and the Methodist Church

Lent is one of the most ancient and enduring seasons in the Christian liturgical calendar, dating back to at least the fourth century, and perhaps even earlier. It is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter, when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But how did Lent originate, and what does it have to do with Methodism?

Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days of Lent (not counting Sundays) represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry. Lent was initially a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts, who were baptized at Easter as a sign of their new life in Christ. Later, Lent became a time of penance by all Christians, who sought to renew their commitment to God and grow in their discipleship.

The practice of fasting during Lent was very strict in the early church: one meal a day after 3 PM with no meat, fish, or dairy. It was Pope Gregory I (590 - 604) who regularized the period of the fast churchwide, to begin on a Wednesday 46 days before Easter with a ceremony of ash, and not to include Sundays, which were perennial days of celebration. The ceremony of ash involved sprinkling ashes on the heads of penitents as a sign of their mortality and repentance. The ashes were made from the palm branches blessed on the previous Palm Sunday. This is why the first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday.

But what about Methodists? How did they observe Lent? Well, the answer is not so simple. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was an Anglican priest who



followed the liturgical calendar and observed Lent himself. He encouraged his followers to do the same, especially to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays as he did. However, he also recognized that fasting was not a matter of legalism, but of personal devotion. He wrote in his journal "Some observe no fasts at all; no, not even that of Good Friday; others fast on all Fridays in the year; some only on those in Lent: others add Wednesdays also; others again (and those more than a few) fast every day in Lent."

Wesley eliminated Lent altogether for Methodists in 1784 when he published his own revision of The Book of Common Prayer for American Methodists. He did this because he wanted to simplify the liturgy and avoid any confusion with the Anglican Church. American Methodists had no ritual at all for Ash Wednesday until the 1965 Book of Worship, which many Methodist churches and pastors didn't have; that service made no provision for the use of ashes. It was not until 1979 that ashes were officially reintroduced in The United Methodist Book of Worship.

The reason behind this omission is not explicitly stated by Wesley, but it's conjectured that the core practices of early Methodists, such as regular fasting, confession of sins, and intense prayer, were already accomplishing what Lent, Ash Wednesday, and Maundy Thursday were thought to promote. These practices were not confined to a specific period but were woven into the fabric of their lives throughout the year.

John Wesley's View of Lent

The church of England did and still does observe Lent. John Wesley was quite familiar with the practices and messages of this season of mourning and preparation. Although he does not mention Lent directly, he preached quite a few sermons during this season without correlation to the lectionary or the content of the season. He also addresses the issue of fasting.

Whatever the cause, these strange alignments exhibit the plausibility of greater attention to the lectionary by Wesley than the surface information indicates.

Although he may have loosely followed the lectionary during Lent, there is some indication that Wesley saw Lent as potentially harmful. As mentioned, he removed it entirely from his edition of the Book of Common Prayer sent to the North American Methodists and at times appears to criticize the common observance of the Lenten fast.

Nevertheless, Wesley is generally quite supportive of fasting. He retains Friday as the day of fasting in his instructions to North American Methodists. He rather comfortably and with approval lists Lent among the fast days of the Church. He considered it "deplorable" that many Methodists were neglecting fasts, and his journals are full of his own commitment to fasting. Therefore, despite his reservations about set fasts, John Wesley smiled upon the practice of regular fasting.

Many contemporary Methodists now do observe Lent. Whilst it is not required in Methodism it is a time when Methodists, like other Christians, may choose to give up certain activities to enhance their focus and express their dependency on God.

So, while the observance of Lent was not originally included in Wesleyan Methodism, it has become a part of many Methodists' practices today with many Methodists observing Lent in various ways, such as giving up something they enjoy, taking on a new spiritual discipline, or volunteering for a good cause. Some also receive ashes on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday as a reminder of their need for God's grace. Whatever they do, they do it out of love for God and gratitude for his saving work in Christ.

UNBOUNDED LOVE



The Methodist theme for Lent in 2024 is “Unbounded Love” and it connects the Gospel readings from the Sunday lectionary throughout Lent to weekly themes.

God's love doesn't stay in the lines

Charles Wesley's famous hymn Love Divine, All Loves Excelling talks about Jesus as ‘unbounded love’ – a kind of love that cannot be contained, that works in our lives and in our world to free us and heal us. Unbounded Love is the theme of the Lent campaign of the Methodist Church in 2024 – holding together our commitments to be a justice-seeking church, and a people who experience and proclaim the good news of God's uncontainable love.

The weekly themes are:

Week 1 - “Pure, unbounded love thou art”: Jesus' baptism and wilderness experience

Week 2 - “Visit us with thy salvation”: Losing our life (psyche) to find it

Week 3 - “Pure and spotless let us be”: Turning the tables in the Temple

Week 4 - “Finish then thy new creation”: God's unbounded love for the cosmos

Week 5 - “Changed from glory into glory”: Like a seed that has to die before it bears fruit, death is no barrier to God's love

Week 6 - “Till we cast our crowns before thee”: As Jesus entered Jerusalem the people responded by taking off their cloaks. What's our equivalent?

Prayer For March and April

Please pray for all those currently caught up in conflict throughout the world, whether at home or abroad. Pray for the leaders of all nations that they may work together in order to bring these conflicts to an end.

Lay before God the heated arguments, the disputes and the one-sided vision and conflicts in your own life and ask him to help you become part of the solution to make this world a better place.

As the earth starts to wake up from its winter slumber, thank God for the beauty of his creation and its rich and varied fruits. Pray that people stop taking the earth's resources for granted and that we, too, respect all living things and help to preserve them for the good of all.



Also please pray for:

Pray for those we know who are unwell or with serious illness, and for those who are anxiously waiting for test results, operations or just an answer as to why and what can be done to help. Not all illness is visible. Pray that God will be with them all, embracing them with his healing arms.

Pray for those family members who are supporting their loved ones that they may feel God supporting them through very difficult times.

Pray for all those that have been recently bereaved, that they too may feel God's supporting arms. Pray for comfort for those that are left behind, for the realisation that those that have gone from our lives remain with Him, and no longer feel pain or sorrow but rest with God in eternal rest and peace.

Pray for the doctors, nurses, care workers and volunteers. Give them the skills and strength they need to support those in need.

We pray for those members of our congregation who, for whatever reason, are unable to join us in our acts of worship. May they know that they are still in our hearts and minds.

Help us to look around us – to be more aware of the needs of those whom we live amongst. Let us be ready to do all we can for those who call for help, as well as those who may need us without being willing to call on us openly.

Pray for our services in March and April and all those that lead them. We also pray for all those volunteers that help our services to run smoothly, so that we can bring your love and message to our community.

Amen

Lighten Our Darkness

On 11th April, we had an own arrangement service which was pulled together by Jo Hancock based on resources from the Methodist Church website. It was a very different but very interesting service, and I thought it would be appreciated by a wider audience. It certainly made me think. Therefore, please find below edited highlights of the service.

INTRODUCTION

'Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord...' are familiar words from the evening service in the Book of Common Prayer. The theme today is 'Lighten our darkness'.

Christmas is past, but the nights remain long, and the world still feels a dark place of suffering and evil. And so, we are going to reflect, in hope, on our belief that it is God alone who can bring light to our dark world. We will rejoice in the light of hope brought by Jesus, a light that can never be put out by our darkness, a light that opens our eyes to the joy-giving presence of God in our lives.

'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them.

You have given them great joy, Lord; you have made them happy.

They rejoice in what you have done' (Isaiah 9)

THE FIRST LIGHT

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 1: 1-6

Poem: "And God Said, Let There Be Light!" by Charles Mackay

Earth heard the loud, the solemn sound,
And started from her utmost bound,
And Darkness, on his ebony car,
Spread his black wings, and fled afar;
The dun clouds opened with affright,
And hailed the burst of life and light!
"'Tis light! 'tis light!" the mountains rung,
"'Tis light! 'tis light!" the valleys sung!
The stars beheld its dawning bright,
The spheres confessed the Godhead's might,
While Nature's universal voice
Proclaimed aloud, "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

THE PROMISE OF LIGHT

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 60: 1–3; 19, 20

The Old Testament reading offered hope to a people living in a time of loss and despair, lost and far from home. They were in what we would call these days 'a dark place'. But God promises to rescue them from their darkness. The well-known hymn of John Henry Newman, 'Lead, kindly Light, amidst the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on', reminds us of that promise from our God of Light and Life.



The prophet Isaiah, Old Testament. Painting of - High Altar by Sieger Koder in St. Joseph's Church in Bad Urach, Germany

Newman wrote of this hymn, written during illness: 'Before starting out from my inn, I sat down on my bed and began to sob bitterly. My servant asked what ailed me. I could only answer, "I have a work to do in England" I was aching to get home, yet for want of a vessel I was kept at Palermo for three weeks. At last I got off in an orange boat but we were becalmed for whole week, and it was then that I wrote the lines, Lead, Kindly Light, which have since become so well known.'

This hymn has helped many in dark and hopeless situations. The largest mining disaster in the Durham coalfield was at West Stanley Colliery, known locally as "The Burns Pit", when 168 men and boys lost their lives as the result of two underground explosions in February 1909. 141 men lay dead but incredibly, there were still men alive underground. A group of 34 men and boys had found a pocket of clean air. A few of them panicked and left the group, dying instantly after inhaling poison gas. The remainder sat in almost total darkness, when one of them began humming the hymn "Lead Kindly Light". In no time at all the rest of the miners

joined in with the words, "Lead kindly light amidst the encircling gloom, lead thou me on, the night is dark, and I am far away from home". These 30 men were later rescued.

"Lead, Kindly Light" was also sung by Betsie ten Boom, sister of Corrie ten Boom, and others as they were led by the S.S. Guards to the concentration camp Ravensbrück during the Holocaust.

It was also sung by a soloist on the Titanic during a hymn-singing gathering, shortly before the ocean liner struck an iceberg on April 14, 1912.



THE DAWNING OF LIGHT

New Testament Reading: John 1: 1-14

Poem: "And the Word was Made Flesh" by Laurence Housman.

"Light looked down and beheld Darkness.

'Thither will I go', said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld War.

'Thither will I go', said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred.

'Thither will I go', said Love.

So came Light and shone.

So came Peace and gave rest.

So came Love and brought Life."

THE OPENING OF EYES

New Testament Reading: John 9: 1-9; 35-41

From an article in the Daily Mail. (2nd Nov 2010)

A blind British pensioner who flew to China for pioneering stem cell treatment has got her eyesight back - and has arrived home to see her great grandson for the first time. Dorothy Leach, 76, can make out faces, shapes and colours for the first time in more than a year after receiving stem-cell treatment in China. 'When I got back to Heathrow Airport last Wednesday I could see such a lot. It was unbelievable,' said Dorothy. 'The other day I saw a crow on the fence in my garden and had to check with people that I could actually see it, but I did see it. It is amazing. The doctors said it could take another six months to a year before my sight gets as good as it will be, but it is much better already. It was definitely worth it.'

Dorothy's main aim is to see her two-year-old great grandson Chris at Christmas.

REFLECTION

I am the man whom Jesus healed. I was blind but now I see. I see everything...not only the things and people around me, but realities that my blindness hid from me. Seeing what others can see is a blessing but it has also made me question whether what I see is true. I see a beautiful world, but also the ugliness of human cruelty. I see the finery and religious demeanour of the Pharisee, hiding the lack of compassion he feels towards those guilty of physical or moral imperfection. I see the man called Jesus, so ordinary in appearance, and know that 'ordinary' he is not. His apparent poverty disguises his wealth of truth and wisdom and love. His vulnerability belies his spiritual power. My new ability to see the world as it is confuses and challenges me. But I trust that the insight Jesus has given me will enable me to see the truth that will set me free.

BLESSING

Lord grant us, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ,
that our lamps may feel the kindling touch of his love
and, knowing no quenching, may burn for us and give light for others.
May the blessing of God's light shine upon us all,
light without and light within. Amen



Chain Gate, Cuidad Rodrigo Cathedral, Depicting the Old Testament Prophets

St George

St George is the patron saint of England and we celebrate St George's day on 23rd April.

What do we know of St George?



This is the common image I suspect we all have – the things that come instantly to mind when we think of St George:-

- Brave knight, all dressed in armour
- Carrying his colours of red cross on white background
- Slaying the evil dragon
- Saving the villagers from certain death

But we all know this is more myth than truth – after all – there are no fire breathing dragons.

And what do we really know about the real St George. Here's a few interesting facts:-

- St George wasn't English. He was actually born in the 3rd Century AD in modern day Turkey and is thought to have died in a town in modern day Israel in AD 303
- St George wasn't a Knight. They hadn't been invented back then – it is likely

he was an officer in the Roman army

- St George was a martyr – canonised in AD494 by Pope Gelasius for his Christian faith, it is believed St George was executed for refusing to make a sacrifice in honour of the pagan gods of his superiors.
- St George never visited England – hardly surprising – there were no direct flights back then!
- His reputation for virtue and holiness spread across Europe and his feast day – 23rd April – was celebrated in England from the 9th century onwards.
- St George later became popular with English kings. Edward I (1272-1307) had banners bearing the emblem of St George (a red cross on a white background) and Edward III (1327-77) had a strong interest in the saint and is said to have owned a relic of his blood. The St George cross was not used to represent England until the reign of Henry VIII.
- People turned to St George for protection. During the Middle Ages, people believed that St George was one of the 'Fourteen Holy Helpers' – a group of saints who could help during epidemic diseases. St George's protection was invoked against several nasty diseases, including the Plague and leprosy.
- From around 1100, St George's help was also sought to protect the English army. In William Shakespeare's play, Henry V, the monarch famously calls on the saint during his famous battle cry "Pray God for Harry! England, and St. George!"

Coming more up to date, the memory and imagery of St George is still used today for those we honour.



This picture shows the annual procession of The Order of the Garter. This order

founded by Edward III in 1348 is the highest order of chivalry in the country and we see here the late Queen Elizabeth II who was at the helm as Sovereign of the Garter. To this day St George's cross still appears on the Garter badge and his image is the pendant of the Garter chain.

In 1940 King George VI created a new award for acts of the greatest heroism or courage in circumstance of extreme danger. The George Cross, named after the king, bears the image of St George vanquishing the dragon. The image of St George also adorns many of the memorials built to honour those killed during World War One

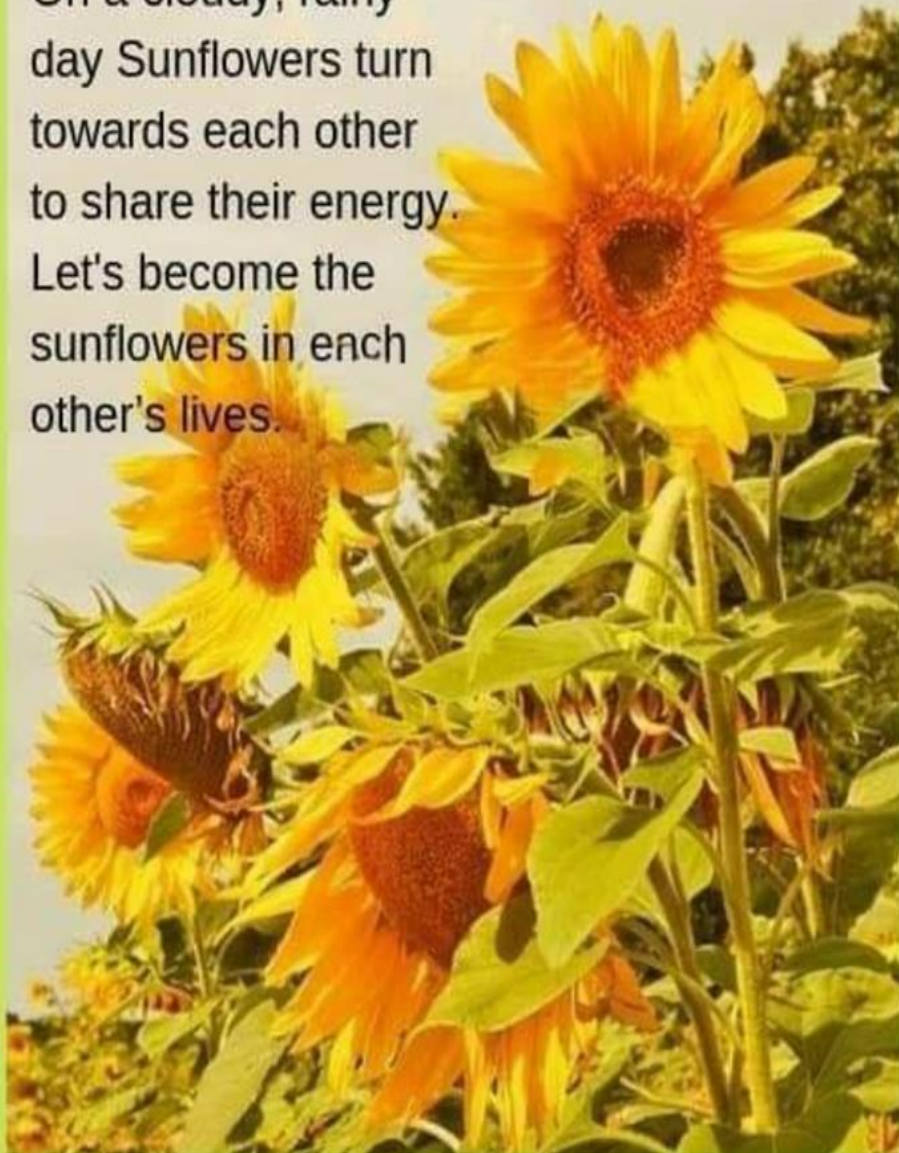


St George is truly an international saint and England is not the only country or region to claim him as its patron.

England shares St George with Venice, Genoa, Portugal, Ethiopia and Catalonia among others as their patron saint and many of these places have their own celebrations and ceremonies in his honour.

Ian Smith

On a cloudy, rainy
day Sunflowers turn
towards each other
to share their energy.
Let's become the
sunflowers in each
other's lives.



Life as a Parent of a Child with Down's Syndrome

Written by Heather Hughes and first published in the Knowle Magazine 28/01/24

I have been asked to write what I would say to a new parent of a child with Down's Syndrome (DS). We have two children Richard (now 41) and Bethany (now 37) who have DS. Looking back to the time of Richard's babyhood I would have been amazed to have been told that one day he would be reading as well as writing eg to the Prime Minister Boris Johnson to tell him it was time he finished the Covid Lockdown. He can play the piano and bagpipes, use computers, play table tennis, beat most people at draughts and enjoy lively outings eg Go Karting. He has a good sense of humour and loves to tease people, especially his mother!

Over the years we have had to fight many battles for our children, especially for getting mainstream education. Richard was, as far as we know, the first child in Solihull with DS to go to a mainstream school (St. Alphege) and Bethany went on to Alderbrook School where she got 5 GCSEs grades C - F and, in her final year, she won the award for student of the year.

Children with DS, like the rest of us have different talents and abilities. The vast majority are able to achieve a lot more than people imagine. We have had to do a lot of work battling for extra support etc in schools and give them help in learning to read and write. We also had to keep an eye on how the medical profession treated them. In hospital when Bethany was aged 10 months we were asked if we wanted her to have an intussusception operation. We asked what would happen if she didn't have one. They replied she would die!

Life with two children with DS has been exhausting but rewarded by giving and **receiving abundant love.**



Quotes by Richard Hughes:

It's not important whether you have Downs Syndrome or not, you still can be a very nice person.

Everybody is good at different things, we are not all the same, God made us. Downs Syndrome people can do well in things if they set their mind to it. They can act in films, play music etc.

What I like doing:

Go Karting

Playing table tennis

Playing the piano & keyboard

Playing the bagpipes (unfortunately I can't play it at present as it takes too much puff). I last played at Elmdon church when the Mayor etc. came for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Going to theme parks and going on the fierce rides

Going on holidays

Pestering parents and teasing my mother!

Tracking down Dixie Egerickx (an actress in The Secret Garden) I have written three letters to her but she has not replied.

Being taken out by friends and PAs

What I don't like doing:

Eating gluten-free food (I'm a coeliac). I want to eat what I want.

Washing up.



Called to be a Deacon

As many of you know I started to train at Queens in September to become a minister in the Methodist Church and have joined the family at Lyndon as a student minister. The following piece is a little about myself and how I feel called to ordained diaconal ministry.

Before this, I am going to explain a little about the two paths of ministry in the Methodist Church. In the Methodist Church there are two types of minister – presbyter and deacon, both equal but different. A presbyter like Karen holds pastoral charge for churches, with a focus on the inside of the church and the ministry of preaching and sacrament (communion and baptism). A deacon does not have pastoral charge of churches but still has pastoral relationships in the area and churches they serve. Deacons are called and have a focus on the people of God outside of our church walls and have a call to a ministry of service. Both have the title Reverend and both receive the same training. This ministry of service often involves work with the vulnerable and those at the margins, but can also have work that focuses inside the church too. Similarly, a presbyter may also have work which focuses outside the church walls. The main difference is that as a Deacon I will also become a member of the Methodist Diaconal Order. This means that I will follow a rule of life and be part of a dispersed community.

At the age of 4 I was taken to the local Methodist Church by my Mom as this was the nearest church. Here we received a warm welcome and we soon felt at home in that place. It played a huge part in my life and as I got older my relationship with Jesus grew, developed, and became real. They were always great at encouraging me to get involved in things and let me have a go at leading various groups, leading the music and eventually doing my Local Preacher training.

I have had a varied working life including drawing maps of listed trees, electrical cables and gas pipes, before working for 7 years for Balfour Beatty in various roles on a project replacing gas mains. It was in 2018 when I began to get itchy feet and wondered if this was the time for me to pursue my sense of call to ministry seriously. But after praying through this I clearly felt God saying to me that there was something else I had to do before candidating. It was a colleague at work that suggested that I looked at the website of ‘that strange place that you go to.’ They meant Scargill House that I had been to on retreat a couple of times, which I did and found that they were looking for a musician. I spent time praying about this and felt fairly sure that this was what I was to do before candidating, so I went for the



Scargill House

interview and got in.

Scargill House is an intentional, international community living in the Yorkshire Dales, serving guests who come through their doors for holidays and retreats. My time at Scargill was both wonderful and challenging, but it was a huge privilege to live in community and to serve the guests. My role included leading worship and music, working in the Personnel office, cleaning toilets and making beds and serving thousands of cups of tea and coffee. I loved being able to lead people in worship every day, being able to pray with people but ultimately it was a joy getting alongside people, serving them and seeing God work in people's life was a real gift. Before going to Scargill I thought that I was called to a presbyteral ministry but through my experiences at Scargill knew that God was and is calling me to a diaconal ministry and the Methodist Diaconal Order.

So, after nearly 15 years of pondering, God has said that the time is now. I am grateful to God but also my home church, Scargill and now Lyndon who have journeyed with me this far.

Helen Cook



Taking inspiration from the Westley's Holy Club, Methodist Young Adult Fellowship (MYAF) has been formed by a group of Young Adults within the Methodist Church as a group to offer fellowship to one another.

Comprising of a WhatsApp group and monthly zoom gatherings, MYAF hopes to be a safe and inclusive space for young adults to meet, chat, pray and get to know one another in a church which can sometimes feel very grey.

The group is for 18-30yr olds who have connections with the Methodist church and would like to spend time connecting with other young adult Methodists.

To join the group or find out more, please email admin@yorkshirenemethodist.org

Why Do We Eat Easter Eggs (and What Has The Rabbit Got To Do With Easter)?

Easter is the most important date in the Christian calendar. Every year, Christians around the world remember Jesus' crucifixion and celebrate his resurrection on Easter Sunday. However, an important part of Easter celebrations today for many people is giving (and eating!) chocolate eggs, and in the UK we buy about 80 million Easter eggs each year!

But how did eggs become such an important part of Easter celebrations?

The Tradition of Easter Eggs

Pagan Roots

The modern symbols of Easter - such as eggs and bunnies - have their origins in paganism. Ancient cultures celebrated spring as a time of birth and renewal following the darkness of winter. The word "Easter" itself has roots in Scandinavian and Germanic words related to mythological goddesses of spring and fertility. These goddesses were celebrated during spring festivals.

Rabbits symbolized fertility, while eggs - the start of all life - were believed to have magical powers. Modern-day pagans continue to celebrate spring as part of a seasonal cycle known as the 'wheel of the year,' complete with rituals like planting seeds and holding egg races.

Ancient Origins of Easter Eggs

Throughout history, people have exchanged eggs during spring festivals to celebrate the new season. Eggs symbolize new life and rebirth.

In medieval times, eating eggs was forbidden during Lent (the 40 days leading up to Easter). As a result, indulging in an egg on Easter Sunday became a real treat, especially for those who couldn't afford meat.

Eggs were given to the church as Good Friday offerings, and villagers often gifted eggs to the lord of the manor at Easter.

Even royalty participated - Edward I purchased 450 eggs in 1290, decorating them with colours or gold leaf for distribution within his household.



Superstitions and Blessings

Superstitions abounded regarding eggs at Easter. For instance: Eggs laid on Good Friday were believed to turn into diamonds if kept for 100 years. An egg with two yolks was seen as a sign of future wealth. Eating eggs cooked on Good Friday and blessed before consumption was thought to improve fertility and prevent sudden death, therefore, it became the custom for people to have their eggs blessed before eating them.

Pace Eggs

In 18th-century Lancashire, "pace eggs" gained popularity. These were hard-boiled hen, duck, or goose eggs with decorated shells dyed in bright colours (similar to medieval practices). Pace eggs were given as presents during Easter or to actors in pace egg plays - medieval-style mystery plays featuring a fight between a hero and a villain. The hero character (often St. George) would be killed but then resurrected to triumph over the villain. Children rolled decorated pace eggs down hills in an egg roll race - a tradition that may have symbolized the rolling away of the stone from Jesus' tomb.

Egg rolling is a tradition that still continues in some parts of England, although today it is chocolate eggs being rolled down the hill! The most famous egg roll takes place in the United States of America, on the lawn of the White House, in Washington DC.

Chocolate Easter Eggs

These days, Easter eggs come in all shapes and sizes, but where did the first chocolate egg come from, and where did this tradition begin?

The first chocolate eggs appeared in France and Germany during the 19th century but were initially bitter and hard. As chocolate-making techniques improved, hollow chocolate eggs like the ones we have today were developed.

The first chocolate Easter egg in the UK was introduced in 1873 by the family-owned company, Fry's. Joseph Fry, the founder, had initially started selling drinking chocolate in the 1750s. His grandsons later created the first chocolate bars in the 1860s. Fry's particular achievement during this time was their chocolate Cream Bar, a product that is still sold today. However, it was in Easter 1873 that Fry's would create something truly groundbreaking: the first chocolate egg.

Traditionally, people would give each other chicken's eggs at Easter, which had been hard-boiled and painted bright colours (hence the tradition of decorating eggs). Fry's took this tradition and put their own spin on it by creating hollow



chocolate eggs. They were pioneers in figuring out how to use moulds to make these delightful treats. While countries like France and Germany had been making solid chocolate eggs for years, Fry's innovation allowed them to create hollow eggs using a smooth paste made from cocoa fat, cocoa powder, and sugar.

The earliest chocolate eggs were designed with a well-known 'crocodile' pattern to hide any imperfections. As chocolate-making continued to progress, other shaped treats appeared. Cadbury, another prominent chocolatier, produced modern chocolate Easter eggs starting in 1875, using pure cocoa butter that could be moulded into smooth shapes.



So next time you unwrap a chocolate Easter egg, remember that you're partaking in a delightful tradition that has lasted for over 150 years, whilst also participating in a tradition that goes back to pagan times.

The Easter Bunny



The story of the Easter Bunny is also connected to Pagan tradition. Rabbits give birth to large litters of babies (kittens), symbolizing new life.

In Germany during the 1700s, children built nests and left carrots out for the "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws" - the Easter bunny.

Legend has it that the Easter Bunny lays, decorates, and hides eggs for good children as another symbol of new life.

Let's explore more the fascinating history of the Easter Bunny, a beloved figure associated with Easter celebrations.

The Easter Bunny: A Symbol of Spring and New Life

The Easter Bunny, also known as the Easter Rabbit or Easter Hare, is a folkloric character closely tied to the celebration of Easter. Depicted as a rabbit (sometimes even dressed in clothes), the Easter Bunny is famous for bringing colourful Easter eggs to children. The origins of the Easter Bunny can be traced back to German Lutherans. Initially, it played a different role - acting as a judge who evaluated children's behaviour at the start of Eastertide. Similar to Santa Claus's "naughty or nice" list, the Easter Hare determined whether children were good or disobedient.

Historical Associations

Hares in Medieval Art: The hare was a popular motif in medieval church art. Ancient beliefs held that hares were hermaphrodites, capable of reproducing without losing their virginity. This association led to depictions of hares alongside the Virgin Mary and Christ Child.



In the Neolithic Age hares were ritually buried alongside humans in Europe, symbolizing rebirth. This tradition continued during the Iron Age.

In Classical Greek Tradition hares were sacred to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Eros, Aphrodite's son, often carried a hare as a symbol of unquenchable desire.

Hares appeared as symbols of sexuality in literature and art in Renaissance Symbolism.

In England and Germany traditions specifically connected hares to Easter. Children hunted for Easter eggs hidden by the Easter hare (similar to today's U.S. egg hunts). Traditional Easter hare hunts and even eating hare meat at Easter were documented. The "Hare Pie Scramble" tradition involved eating a pie made with hare meat while people scrambled for a slice.

The Easter Bunny's journey from European prehistory to today reflects its enduring appeal as a symbol of spring, fertility, and new life.



March & April Quiz

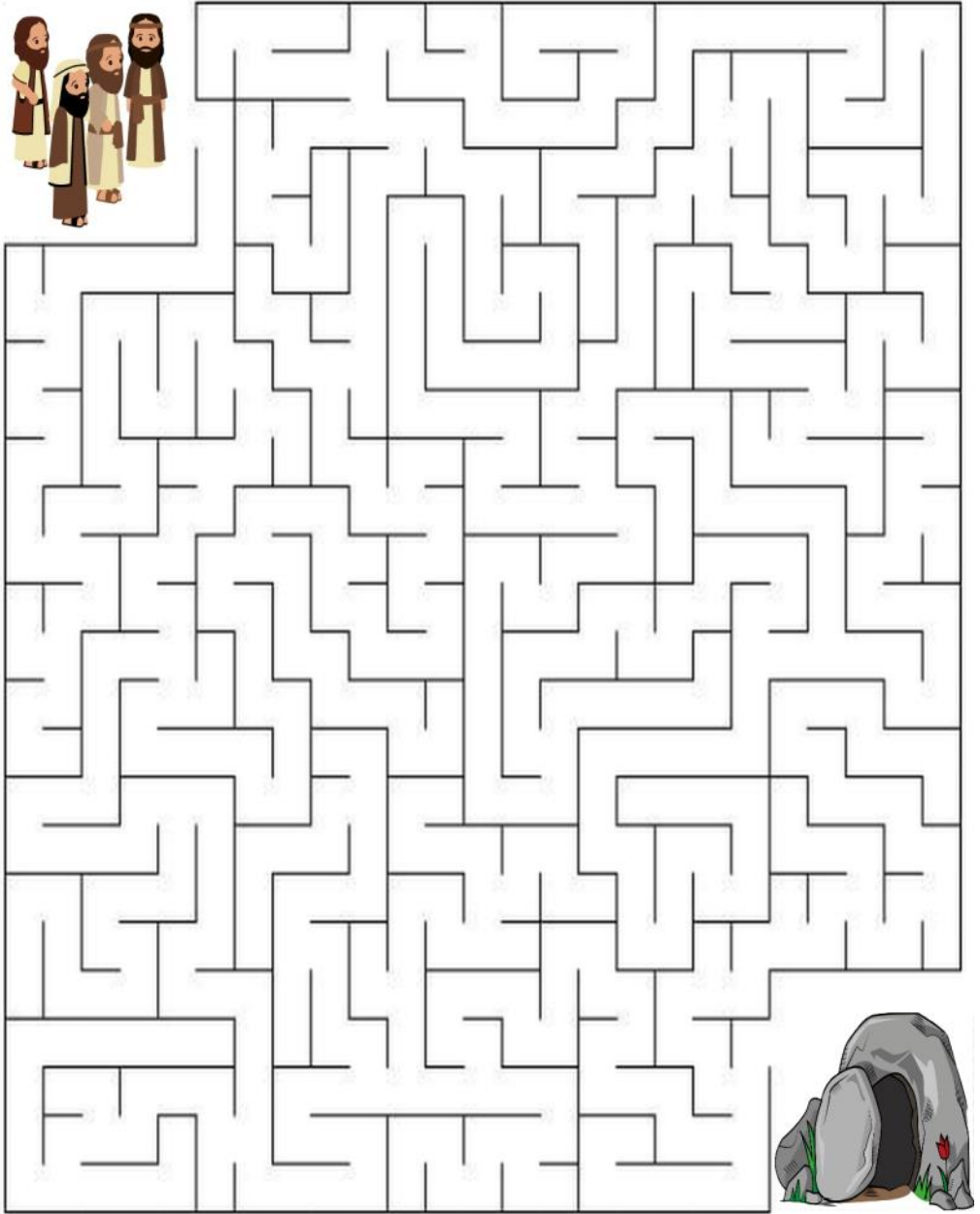
Each of your answers (or part of your answers) should contain a job title, a profession or an occupation – Good Luck

1	Who was known as the Iron Lady?	
2	The most famous opera by Rossini?	
3	Suffolk born artist who painted the Haywain?	
4	What have author Jilly, comedian Tommy and Mrs Ed Balls in common?	
5	Who led the Mutiny on the Bounty?	
6	Who played Captain Von Trapp in the Sound of Music?	
7	Which author gave us Jeremy Fisher and Jemima Puddleduck?	
8	Who lives in Greendale with Jess?	
9	What is missing from this list – Blitzen, Comet, Cupid, Dasher, Donner and Vixen?	
10	Our first sewing machine	
11	Actress Pam Clement played who in Eastenders?	
12	U S astronaut Alan, David Platt in Corrie and host of Tipping Point are all what?	
13	Who first hosted show 'The Price is Right'	
14	Surname of Stan, the bus driver in On the Buses	
15	Comedian Danny, Singer and TV presenter Cheryl and 2 Dr Who's were all what?	
16	A 1962 James Bond film starring Sean Connery	

**Answers please to Lynne Tyler or Church Email
by Friday 15th April 2024**

Easter Maze

Help the disciples find their way to the empty tomb



St George Wordsearch

E	Z	D	H	A	T	U	R	K	I	S	H
M	G	E	E	L	N	T	C	U	V	S	E
M	B	R	K	N	I	G	H	T	M	O	T
C	J	N	O	G	A	R	D	F	I	R	E
E	V	C	I	E	S	I	P	R	N	C	V
S	U	G	K	N	G	M	E	A	W	P	F
A	F	S	V	G	R	T	M	H	N	A	V
L	F	F	D	L	R	O	I	S	O	C	U
G	W	D	M	A	R	T	Y	R	W	S	Z
D	W	T	G	N	E	M	E	C	R	Y	N
W	M	F	B	D	I	H	T	J	A	A	J
F	C	Q	M	R	C	I	U	J	N	R	S

APRIL

CROSS

DRAGON

ENGLAND

FIRE

GARTER

GEORGE

HERO

KNIGHT

MARTYR

RED

ROMAN

SAINT

TURKISH

WHITE

January - February Quiz Answers

1) Three Blind Mice 2) Little Tommy Tucker 3) The Cat And The Fiddle 4) Old King Cole 5) Solomon Grundy 6) Wee Willy Winkie 7) Little Miss Muffet 8) King Of Hearts 9) Ten Green Bottles 10) Five Little Pigs 11) Old Mother Hubbard 12) Four And Twenty Blackbirds 13) Tweedledum 14) Little Bo Peep 15) Grand Old Duke Of York 16) Old Macdonald

Unfortunately there were no entries this month with 100% correct answers. Commiserations to Tom and Kate Collen, The Hunt family and Joan & Ray Lowery who all got one wrong. Question 8 foxed everyone!

The hidden message was "Happy New Year".

Lyndon Community Page

We really would like to make this page and the whole magazine relevant, therefore, please get in touch. Let us know what you like and don't like and send or give any important events, ideas, offers, stories, feedback or tips personally to Lynne Tyler or by e-mail to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com.

As previously mentioned, to keep this section going, improve this magazine and to try and create a closer community we really need your interaction.

RECYCLING MADE EASIER

Did you know that you can now put glass recycling in your brown bin, rather than putting it in a separate box? Solihull Council has recently updated its methods of recycling and now has a new Mixed Recycling Facility which uses smart technology which enables this change to be made at zero cost as well as getting better value from recycled materials.

In addition, Solihull Council has also started to offer an additional, bookable, small items collection scheme which allows you book a kerbside collection for batteries, paint, small electrical items, and textiles and paired shoes. All the relevant information can be found on their website <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Rubbish-and-recycling/Small-items>.

This is a great way of saving the planet's valuable raw materials, ensuring that items can be recycled and turned into something new, and helping Solihull reach its net zero carbon target.

HOW TO SAVE MONEY WHEN YOU'RE ILL

It's that time of year when we all seem to be picking up a winter bug and reaching for something to make us feel better. However, the latest advice is to ditch the expensive cold and flu remedies in favour of a hot drink and some paracetamol.

Recent research by a committee which is part of the US medicines watchdog, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), found that phenylephrine, the decongestant ingredient in these sachets, doesn't work when taken orally!

So, save yourself some money, and in future instead of spending loads of money on Lemsip or Beechams, get the same results for pennies. Take generic paracetamol, which costs as little as 40p for a packet of 16 and make your own choice of hot drink.

LYNDON CHURCH CENTRE IS NOT JUST FOR SUNDAYS

Do you know how many different organisations use our premises during the week? As well as all the church groups that take place such as Girl's Brigade, Boys Brigade, Stay and Play, Bible Study, Ladies Club and Lunch Club there are numerous activities that take place during the week.

The church centre is used by a variety of groups during the week and would welcome new members. I have recently joined the Vibe Life class on a Friday morning and can thoroughly recommend it. Below, please find a list of all the activities that take place at our centre and contact details to find out more information. I'm sure if you decide to go along to any of the groups you will be given a warm welcome.

Monday

10:00 – 10:45am Zumba – a dance based exercise class
Katherine 077515 222908

5:30 – 8:00pm Born 2 Sing – inclusive singing, drama and dance classes for children and a well being choir for adults
Born2sing.co.uk or info@born2sing.co.uk

7:00 – 9:00pm Hobs Moat Womens' Institute – hosts a variety of different
Every 3rd Monday speakers as well as activity evenings
Of the month *Linda Dance - 07837 272374*

Tuesday

7:15 – 9:15pm PHAB club - for people with and without disabilities designed to allow them to feel independent, meet new friends and gain confidence together. PHAB is currently looking for new adult volunteers
Maria – 07966 375522 or kpmsmith@blueyonder.co.uk

8:00 – 9:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous
Anthony – 07975 726036



Wednesday

- 9:30 – 11:00 am Slimming World
Claire – 07917 867577
- 10:30 – 11:15am Yozu Fitness - an exercise class for mothers and babies
Viktoria – 07534 027537
- 7:00 – 9:00 pm Astral Karate – sports karate group for all ages from 5 years upwards; beginners from 7:00pm and advanced from 8:00pm
Steve Eustace – 07580 675107

Thursday

- 9:30 – 11:00am Slimming World
Julie 07807 020692

Friday

- 10:30 – 11:15 Vibe Life – a dance based aerobic workout.
Book on Gymcatch website or app or contact Jenn on 07739 873931
- 8:00 – 9:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous
Anthony – 07975 726036

Saturday

- 8:30 Slimming World
- 10:00 Slimming World
Both groups with Diane – 07852 901078

Notices & Events

Ladies Club - 1.30pm to 3.30pm (March) and 2.00pm to 4.00pm (April)

Wednesday 6th and 20th March (1.30pm to 3.30pm)

Wednesday 3rd and 17th April (2.00pm to 4.00pm)

Lunch Club - Fridays 12pm to 1pm

MARCH

1st Chicken Pie

8th Hot Pot

15th Sausage Casserole

22nd Steak Pie

29th CLOSED - GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL

5th CLOSED - HALF TERM

12th Spaghetti Bolognese

19th Salmon

26th Sausage and Mash

Price: starter £1, main £4 (£5 from 12th April), pudding £1

No need to book - Just come along

Monthly Prayer and Bible Study - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Wednesday 6th March

Wednesday 3rd April

Hobs Moat WI - 7pm to 9pm

Monday 18th March

Monday 15th April

Notices & Events

EASTER FLOWERS

Hopefully the Flower Ladies will be decorating the church on Thursday 28th March 2024 during the morning ready for Easter Sunday on 31st March 2024 to celebrate our risen Lord. Any donations towards the cost of the flowers would be gratefully received and may be given to Brenda or one of the Stewards.

Thank you, Brenda

CHARITY - MESSAGE FROM SOUTH YARDLEY PANTRY

Dear Lyndon

I have been asked to write to thank you all so much for your continuing support of our Food Pantry; it's very much appreciated. We continue to welcome new shoppers at the Pantry week-by-week so all support whether cash or donations of food, toiletries etc is so helpful.

It was also good to welcome folk from Lyndon to our Christmas Day service. The collection for 'All We Can' amounted to £102.

Kind regards, Sue Gaughan

Secretary to Church Council, South Yardley Methodist Church

HBCT GOOD FRIDAY WALK OF WITNESS

As 'Hatchford Brook Churches Together', we plan to hold our traditional 'Walk of Witness and Outdoor Service' on Good Friday morning.

The venue for the Service will, as before, be outside 'Savers' on the Coventry Road near the shopping precinct.

The suggested plan is that folk from Lyndon leave their church at about 11:00 and make their way to the corner of Horseshoes Lane and Coventry Road at about 11:20. Folk from the Sheldon churches meet at St Thomas More's at 11:15 and walk along Horseshoes Lane to Coventry Road. All can then proceed along the Coventry Road, past the Precinct to the venue for the service at 11:30am.

Elmdon and St Mary's either join the other groups or make their own ways to the venue for the Service at 11:30am. (or perhaps, by arrangement, meet at St Mary's and walk along Hobs Moat Road ?)

If you plan to arrive at the venue by car, free parking at the precinct car park is limited to 30 minutes. The charge for two hours used to be £1. (Parking in the space behind the shops can land you with a fine!)

Roger Hancock

THANK YOU LETTER RECEIVED FROM SONIA AND FAMILY

I would like to thank everyone who sent cards after Roy died on Dec 27th and for the church flowers, prayers and kind thoughts. Also for support and thanks to those who were able to attend the funeral service. Sonia Lewis

Services in March

Sunday 3rd March

10:30am Communion Service

5.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 10th March

10:30am Service

Sunday 17th March

10:30am Service

Sunday 24th March

10:30am Palm Sunday Service and Parade

Sunday 31st March

10.30am Easter Sunday Service with Communion

Note : The Circuit has asked that we do not include details of the preachers on our service listing.

Services in April

Sunday 7th April

10:30am Communion Service

6.00pm Lyndon People - note later time

Sunday 14th April

10:30am Service

Sunday 21st April

10:30am Service

Sunday 28th April

10.30am Church Anniversary Service

Note : The Circuit has asked that we do not include details of the preachers on our service listing.

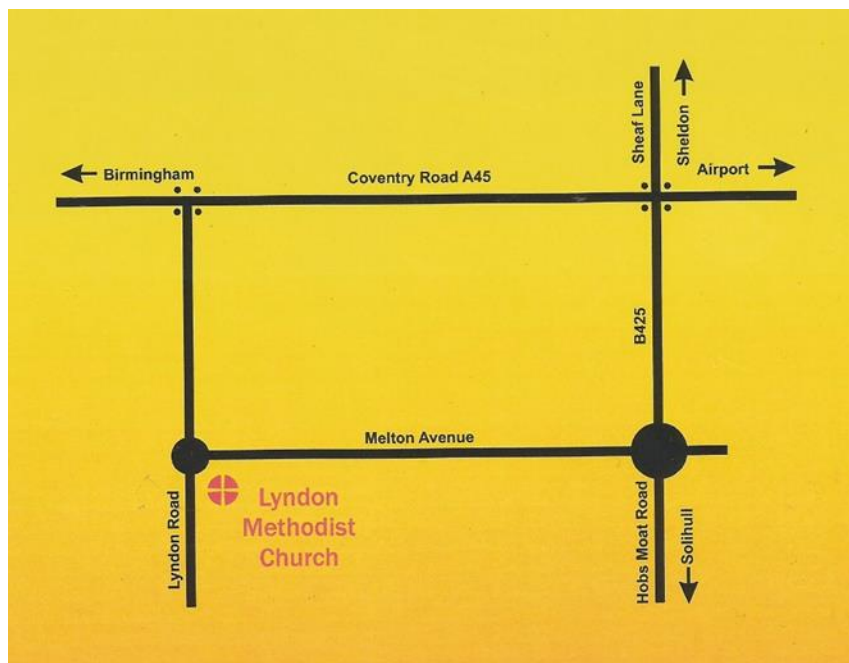
Our next issue will be May 2024

I am looking forward to receiving your contributions by

15th April 2024

by email to Lynne Tyler or to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

or by post to Church – address below



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