



CROSS GATES METHODIST CHURCH Newsletter April 2024

MINISTER: Rev Becki Stennett

Live, Laugh, Love

It seems to me a thing synonymous with the décor of the last decade or so, the unending variety of signs which say 'Live, Laugh, Love', that you can purchase for your own home, or see in cafes and garden centres galore. For some of us, it's a lovely snappy summary of an encouragement to live life well, whereas I'm sure for others it hits a somewhat trite note.

Whether or not you're ready to pop up a 'Live, Laugh, Love' sign on your wall, I want to suggest it's a really good summary of what Easter celebrations are all about.

Firstly, 'Live'. Jesus is alive! He is risen! Death is dead, and we are assured that there is life beyond this earthly one. More than that, since we can know that Jesus died to wipe away our sins, we can also live more fully here on earth. We can live liberated from the pull of guilt and sinfulness, knowing we are accepted, forgiven, redeemed through Jesus' amazing sacrifice for us.

Secondly, 'Laugh'. So many seasons and traditions in the church seem like sombre affairs. But did you know there's an early Christian tradition called '*risus paschalis*' or 'Easter Laughter'? It's a wonderful tradition and one I'm very keen to re-engage with. It stems from the idea that perhaps God laughed at the face of the devil when Jesus was raised back to life-like the ultimate practical joke, the devil's grip on sin and death and fallible mortals was broken, shown to be folly, by God's amazing work of resurrection in Jesus. In order to carry on the laughter, priests who enjoyed this tradition would make sure their congregations were roaring with laughter on Easter Sunday, often perhaps being a little on the cheeky side of things, and some congregations held the tradition that the

preacher couldn't finish until the church were all rolling in the aisles with their sides splitting!

We laugh because the gift of Jesus being raised back to life is outrageous, incredible, and utter joy - we laugh because the folly of the old way of things, that sin and death are unconquerable, is done, and God is good!

Thirdly, 'Love'. From the beginning of time, and even before, the story of God's relationship with humanity and all creation is one of love. A deep, inconceivable love, that means that God would send his own child to be one of us, and to die for us, as one of us.

In this love, we all are held, made fully alive, and known better than we could ever know ourselves. This love is also what we are called to. So as we celebrate this Easter time, perhaps we will remember that Easter is not just for the Church. It's the climax of the greatest, truest love story there has ever been, and we are called to share and show this love in all the world, in all kinds of ways.

I pray you have a wonderful Easter, and that you can remember how precious you are to God who sent Jesus so you may fully live, raised him so we might laugh at the old order of things, and shows us love in greater abundance than we can ever understand, and asks us to show that love to others.

He is Risen! Happy Easter!

Revd Becki

Easter Services

28 March – 7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Holy Communion (<i>at Colton</i>)	Revd Becki Stennett
29 March – 11am	Good Friday (<i>in the Church building</i>)	Churches Together Reading of the Passion
31 March – 9am *	Easter Breakfast	All welcome *
31 March – 10.00am	Easter Day Holy Communion (<i>Coffee will be served after the service</i>)	Revd Becki Stennett

Communion Stewards for March are Carol Smith & Cynthia Best

***Please let a Steward or Denise Durkin know if you will be joining us for Easter Breakfast.**

Easter Prayer by Revd Michaela Youngson

When everything was dark
and it seemed that the sun would never shine again,
your love broke through.
Your love was too strong, too wide, too deep, for death to hold.
The sparks cast by your love dance and spread and burst forth
with resurrection light.
Gracious God,
We praise you for the light of new life made possible through Jesus.
We praise you for the light of new life
that shone on the first witnesses of resurrection.
We praise you for the light of new life
that continues to shine in our hearts today.
We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy,
will live in us each day;
and that we will be bearers of that light
into the lives of others.

Amen

April Services

7 April - 10.30am		Mr David Laycock
14 April - 10.30am		Mrs Susan Howdle
21 April - 10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Becki Stennett
28 April - 10.30am		Mr Steven Jones

Communion Stewards for April are John Best & Roy Cressey

Church Flowers

This month's flowers on 17th March were donated by **Jean, John and Philip** in memory of a much-loved husband and father, **Harry Drake**.

The flowers at Easter are to be arranged by Barbara Leeming.

Georgina and Barbara thank everyone for their kind donations.
If you want to sponsor fresh flowers in Church please contact either Georgina Cressey or Barbara Leeming. Any donations towards the cost are much appreciated.

Table Top Sales – 5th April & 3rd May

9.30am to 12 noon

Why not come along for a drink and a chat and then browse round all the items for sale. You might just find the item you have been looking for at a good price.

If you would like more information or to book a table, at a cost of £5 for Church funds, please contact John Smith or phone 0779904472. *Come along and pick up a bargain!*

Monday Coffee Morning

Please come and join us between 10:00am and 11:30am if you would like someone to talk to while you enjoy a drink.

Ladies Friendship Group

Meetings are at 2.30pm in the Wesley Room on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. All welcome

26/03/2024 Revd Becki Stennett – Holy Week

09/04/2024 Jacki Lawrence – Leonora Cohen: the Tower Suffragette

23/04/2024 Christine Holdstock – To the beautiful lakes of Croatia

Men's Fellowship

Meetings are at 2pm fortnightly in the Wesley Room on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. All welcome.

East Leeds History & Archaeology Society

Friday 27th March, 2pm

Andy Wilson will deliver an illustrated talk: 'Berenblum and the Bari Bombs – How the research of Issa Berenblum in Leeds contributed to the discovery of chemotherapy'.

Friday 26th April, 2pm

Ann Lightman will deliver an illustrated talk: 'Royal Links in Lawnswood Cemetery'

Talks take place in the Methodist Church Hall, Cross Gates and all are welcome. ***Admission £2.00 including refreshments.***

Music Hour

Every second Wednesday of the month, 1.15pm to 2.30pm.

Bring an instrument, sing-a-long or just enjoy a cuppa and a biscuit. All ages welcome. Suggested donation £2. Upcoming dates: Wednesday 10th April, 8th May, 12th June.

Charitable Donation

Action for Children: Thank you for your donation of £480.18

To be able to be there for vulnerable children, we rely on amazing people like you. Our vision is that every child and young person has a safe and happy childhood, and the foundations they need to thrive. We protect and help children and young people by providing practical and emotional care and support. We make sure their voices are heard. And we campaign to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

None of this would be possible without you.

Your generosity means that in the past year we've been able to help over **765,905 vulnerable children and young people** in the UK. Thanks to your support, we can continue to be a vital lifeline for children all over the country. On behalf of the children and families we help, I'd like to say an **enormous thank you**.

United Methodist Social Principles

The Natural World: All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it.

The Nurturing Community: We believe we have a responsibility to innovate, sponsor, and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals.

The Social Community: We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God's sight. We reject discrimination and assert the rights of minority groups to equal opportunities.

The Economic Community: We claim all economic systems to be under the judgement of God no less than other facets of the created order.

The Political Community: We hold governments responsible for the protection of people's basic freedoms. We believe that neither church nor state should attempt to dominate the other.

The World Community: God's world is one world. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community.

Our Social Creed: Our Social Creed is a statement of faith reflecting our Social Principles.

Statement on Antisemitism and Islamophobia

A statement from the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton and Deacon Kerry Scarlett

We are deeply saddened and concerned about the increase in antisemitism and Islamophobia in the United Kingdom. Such incidents, attacks and attitudes are fundamentally opposed to Jesus' command to love our neighbour. The tangible fear and tension for British Jewish and Muslim communities as a result of these incidents have no place in our society and are a real threat to community cohesion.

The 2023 Methodist Conference reiterated our commitment to oppose antisemitism and to stand by all who are discriminated against or persecuted on the grounds of their religion or ethnicity. We recognise that as a Church we need to be vigilant about our own language, voice and actions, and continue to repent and learn from past wrongs. We are committed to being an inclusive Church that challenges antisemitism, Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination.

We call on our elected leaders to lead by example and not only call out any discrimination on ethnic or religious grounds but to ensure that in their language they do not incite antisemitism and Islamophobia.

We also believe that we are called as Christians to challenge all policies and practices which perpetuate injustice, oppression, violence and suffering. This includes instances where states, political parties, politicians or groups try to silence legitimate criticism of policies and actions by claiming they are antisemitic or Islamophobic.

As a justice-seeking Church we believe in building communities of inclusion and challenging discriminatory speech and behaviour, recognising that we are all created in God's image and have value and worth. We continue this work of seeking justice, peace and flourishing through our interfaith relationships and with all who share a vision of a society where no-one is discriminated against and all are free to fulfil their God-given potential.

A Place for All

Come, sinners to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesu's guest;
You need not one be left behind,
For God has called all humankind.
Sent by my Lord, on you I call,
The invitation is to all;
Come, all the world and witness how
All things in Christ are ready now.

(Singing the Faith 401 verses 1 and 2)

The History of Cross Gates Libraries - Part Two

By East Leeds History & Archaeology Society

The Percival Leigh Library, designed by local architect Charles Castelow and built by RM Thompson Ltd of Leeds, was opened on the 14th December 1939. The opening ceremony was performed by Lord Harewood. The post of City Librarian was then held by R.J. Gordon. The library occupies a site of some 1330 square yards and is situated opposite the main shopping centre, at the top of Farm Road. It was built on the site of an old farm owned by John Wilson of Seacroft. The total building costs came to £18,600 and the internal fittings added another £2,500. The initial stock of books cost £3,500.

Being the largest branch library in the city, and possibly the UK, it was outstanding in design and structure, and as such attracted many visitors. It had a main lending room, a reading room, a study room and a children's library. It also contained a staff rest room and dining room, a work room and store room. The children's library was designed to be both a lending area and reading room. It had a central seating area arranged around an electric fire and was a bright and airy space to encourage the local children to make full use of all the facilities the library had to offer. Horsforth artist Edward da Lister painted a mural around the walls which showed children's heroes, and inhabitants of different countries. The cost of the mural was £75.00.

The library was named after Percival Leigh, a former Lord Mayor of Leeds and Chairman of the Libraries and Arts Committee. He and his wife were active in the cultural life of the city and his wife is remembered for donating her collection of cookery books to the library at Leeds University. Since the library was built at the beginning of World War Two, things were fairly quiet until the late 40's early 50's. However, when the country started to get back on its feet and rebuild, it became known as one of the finest examples of its kind and librarians and local authority staff came from all over the world to view it. A look at just one page of the Visitors Book from the 1950's shows entries from Switzerland, the USA, Greece, Egypt, India and many other countries, as well as many places in the British Isles. It was well used during the post war years and library records show that between 1940 and 1951 almost five million books were lent out.

To be continued in the next edition.

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers: All those people in our prayer book and those we know who are unwell, in hospital, in Nursing Homes, going for tests at Hospital, recently bereaved and who find this time of year particularly difficult.

Leeds South & East Foodbank, helping local people in crisis: In February our Church donated 10 baskets (125kg) to the foodbank last month. You can bring items to Church or John Best can collect them from you. **If you would like to contribute food/toiletries please contact John Best email jvbest39@hotmail.com who will gladly collect.**

Free phone service to hear prayers and news from the Methodist Church:

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514. Listen to news: 0808 281 2478.

Pastoral message from the President & Vice-President: 0808 281 2695

Content is updated weekly on a Thursday evening.

Service Options: Please do contact Barbara Lloyd if you would like to receive details of worship via email or would like to have printed worship sheets delivered.

Websites: Circuit: www.leedsnandemethodist.org.uk

District: www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk

Your Financial Contributions: Thank you to all those who continue to contribute to the Church's running costs. If you are unable to attend Church in person, please continue sending them to Linda Booth or to the Church's address.

Spotlight on.....: Please consider writing a few words about your life for inclusion in a future Newsletter, as have many of our Church family already. Please send your contribution to Tracy Dick (see below for contact details)

Newsletter: Please email contributions for the Newsletter to Tracy Dick tracylouisedick@gmail.com, Deadlines coming up:

Sunday 21st April, Sunday 19th May.

CROSS GATES METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of people who are seeking to celebrate and share God's love for all.

Through Worship, Witness and Service in the Community we aim to follow Christ's example of open arms, hearts, minds and doors

Cross Gates Methodist Church, Austhorpe Road, Cross Gates, Leeds, LS15 8QR