



Bishopston, Easter Compton, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches and St Peter's Piling.
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We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit (www.bsgc.org.uk) a family of churches serving communities across the local area.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.

Sunday 22 January 2023



For many Methodists, the beginning of the year includes the opportunity to join an annual Covenant Service. It's been my privilege to lead two already, with two to follow between now and the end of January. I'm often asked whether leading several Covenant Services diminishes the impact for me personally: the short answer is 'no,' if anything it becomes more meaningful to repeat the words each time, and I am always conscious that I am leading in different places and for different people each time.

The Covenant Service is seen as being at the heart of Methodist spirituality, and when it follows close on the heels of Christmas, it can be one way in which we respond to the love of God made known in the Christ-child. Like the Magi, we open our treasures and lay everything at the feet of the one who has come among us in vulnerable love. We give ourselves totally, we hold nothing back, we submit everything to the God who has gently and lovingly come amongst us. It was suggested to me some years ago, that before you say the covenant prayer you should imagine the words on the lips of Jesus speaking to God for the sake of the world he enters. "I am no longer my own but yours, put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will, put me to doing, put me to suffering..." takes on a new depth of meaning, if you hear these words as the self-surrender of God's Son to the task before him. Then, when we say the covenant prayer, we are mirroring what God has done. (paragraph adapted from words of Rev Dr Roger Walton, a former President of Conference)

Echoing what God has done might leave us feeling vulnerable. But we join with others in saying the covenant prayer, making the same promises before God. As we open our treasures, we allow the possibility of accepting God's generosity in grace, allowing ourselves to be forgiven, affirmed and renewed.

Rev Patrick

WORSHIP DETAILS FOR 22 January and the week.

Horfield at 10.00 conducted by Rev. P. Stonehewer with Baptism, Holy Communion, Covenant Service and Church Anniversary. We will welcome Catherine Ravn Wigen and her family for a service of baptism. Members of Catherine's wider family will also be joining us from across the world using Zoom. This will be our All-Age Covenant Service this year, on the occasion of our Church Anniversary.

Horfield at 12.30, Christian Believers Fellowship led by William Carey.

Bishopston at 10.30 conducted by D. King.

Shirehampton at 11.00, Local Arrangement, Café Church.
St Peter's and Easter Compton at 10.00, Conducted by J. Creech.
Easter Compton on Wednesday 25 January at 3 p.m. Quiet, reflective Space.

OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 22 January and the week

Sunday Worship. Radio 4 at 8.10, WE FOLLOW ONE STAR. From the Chapel of Selwyn College, Cambridge for the week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Songs of Praise. BBC 1 at 1.15. Mark De Lisser hosts Songs of Praise, Gospel Singer of the Year.

Daily Service at 9.45. BBC Radio 4, Long Wave.

You will also find an online service of Morning Prayer to cover each day of the week, available from first thing each Monday at <https://westburyparkchurch.org.uk/worship-service>

St. Peter's Piling, Open Café Church, 23 January, 10.00-12.00 for coffee, tea, cake and chat

WORSHIP DETAILS for 29 January and the week

Horfield at 10.00, Local Arrangement

Horfield at 12.30, Christian Believers Fellowship led by William Carey.

Bishopston at 10.30, Conducted by J. Gardener

Shirehampton at 11.00, No service.

St Peter's and Easter Compton at 10.00 Conducted by Rev. P. Stonehewer with Covenant Service and Holy Communion

Easter Compton on Wednesday 01 February at 3 p.m. Quiet, reflective Space.

GENERAL NOTICES, Please send items to Eurfron by Tuesday, eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk or 0117 969 1908

Articles of Faith Exhibition. Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol.

Monday 20 February - Saturday 8 April. Victoria will be holding an exhibition of works from the widely acclaimed Methodist Modern Art Collection with artefacts from other faith traditions. Full details of the exhibition opening times plus details of talks, musical events and worship can be found in the programme. [Articles of Faith Programme](#)

Piling. We're delighted to celebrate that Connie Gregory reaches her 100th birthday this month! Congratulations Connie, along with our best wishes. There will be a centenary birthday tea on her birthday 31 January at 3pm in Mafeking Hall, Piling. Please contact Jonathan Edwardes if you're planning to attend (to help with numbers for catering)

Walking from Cape Wrath to Dover. Rev Patrick will be sharing some experiences from his sabbatical on Saturday 4 February, 10.30 onwards, during the coffee morning at Bishopston Methodist Church, 245 Gloucester Road BS7 8NY. All are welcome.

Safeguarding Training. All people who volunteer for jobs in the church, where they meet with others, must attend a Foundation Awareness Course. There are vacancies on the next course at St. Andrew's Filton on Saturday 28 January at 10.00. If you wish to attend, please contact Pauline or Eurfron to book a place.

Horfield and Bishopston. The church has been awarded a Fairtrade certificate which has been placed on the Eco notice board. This means we will serve Fairtrade produce whenever possible.

Horfield and Bishopston. An important part of our discipleship is to pray for our community and one another. This week you are asked to pray for the following and their families: Richard and Margaret Angell, David & Audrey Bainbridge, David & Ann Baverstock, Beavers, Sandy Bowcock, Daphne Brennan/Wright.

Dates for your diary: January 19 at 7.30 on Zoom, Horfield and Bishopston, Leadership Meeting.

Wednesday Feb. 8 Horfield and Bishopston Church Council.

'The Noise 2023' event will be taking place from the 29 April - 1 May.

Circuit dates. Tuesday 24 January, 7.30 p.m., Circuit Meeting via Zoom.

Tuesday 21 February, 10.00 - 1.00, 'Preaching the gospel in the season of Lent' led by Rev. Dr. John Emmett at Victoria.

Thursday 9 March, 9.30 - 5.30. Accredited First Aid Course at Horfield.

Saturday 18th March, Circuit Quiet Day for Lent at the Elsie Briggs Prayer House, Westbury - on - Trym.

Reflection on the Lectionary Sunday 22nd January (Ordinary 3)

Psalm 27 : 1, 4 - 9; Isaiah 9 : 1 - 4; 1 Corinthians 1 : 10 - 18; Matthew 4 : 12 - 23

The reflection for this week is by Local Preacher, Adam Biddlestone (Zion).

In the section of Psalm 27 we read this week the Psalmist makes one request, 'to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.' (v 4) The reason for this request is to be kept safe in times of trouble and to be provided with a place of shelter. The request maybe, in part, is down to the Psalmist's perception of where God dwells and where one can come into his presence. The Psalmist hopes to triumph over enemies and in acknowledgement of the Lord's protection they 'will sing and make music to the Lord.' (v 6)

There are different views concerning where we can come into God's presence, many people have special places where they feel close to God and that God is close to them. There is a whole section in Singing the Faith headed, 'gathering in God's presence.' For me this doesn't suggest something magical about our church buildings or that he can be encountered within them, more than on a hillside or in our living rooms... but is more about the gathering with other people, of gathering our thoughts together for prayer and worship.

The gospel reading, set at the point Jesus begins to preach, finds him, as the Prophet Isaiah foretold in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, the despised and looked down on 'Galilee of the Gentiles.' So, Jesus begins his public ministry in the unlikelyst of places. This sets a pattern, of Jesus going to be among the unlikelyst of people in the unlikelyst of places. And when searching for the risen Jesus, at the end of the gospel, the women who are looking for him are told, 'he has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.' (28 v 7). So, for Matthew, his gospel account of Jesus' life and ministry ends where it began.

In the opening line of his hymn, Alan Dickinson poses the question, 'where can we find you, Lord Jesus our master?' (Singing the Faith 672) and following verses prompt us to go to the hungry, the homeless, the outcast, to follow Jesus into all the places he has gone before us, into all the 'Galilees of the Gentiles.'

So, to truly encounter God we need to 'leave the house of the Lord,' go out to be amongst those who have nothing, nowhere and no-one. In these places we together with those we meet will gain a deeper sense of being in the presence of the Lord.

Remember the encounter former President of Conference, Inderjit Bhogal, had when he went and sat in a place where Sheffield's homeless sat? He met 'Graham' and explained how he was preparing to write a sermon (his Presidential Address to Conference) about tables and bread and the wilderness. Graham used to frequent a certain bakers, just before closing time, and from his bag produced different types of bread, broke off a piece of each one in turn and put it into Inderjit's hands. In his company felt like an honoured guest, truly in the presence of the Lord. So, the unlikelyst of encounters with the unlikelyst of people shaped made way for a Presidential Address to Conference!

Lord, we thank you for the privilege of the Christian life and journey, for the unexpected encounters where we give and receive. Help us to follow in your footsteps, taking our cross in the service of all. Amen.

Our thanks to Adam for this reflection.

CHAS
BRISTOL
Housing Advice Service

HOUSING ADVICE DROP-INS

NEED SOME HOUSING ADVICE?
OR GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH THE COST-OF-LIVING
CRISIS?

CHAS (Bristol) Housing Advice Service is providing free housing & cost-of-living advice sessions to anyone who needs it. Come to our drop-in sessions for support:

The Hub Community Centre, Lockleaze
Wednesday 11th January, 11am-1pm
Wednesday 25th January, 11am-1pm

The Hub address:
Unit 1, Fadden Buildings,
Gainsborough Square,
Lockleaze,
Bristol BS7 9FB