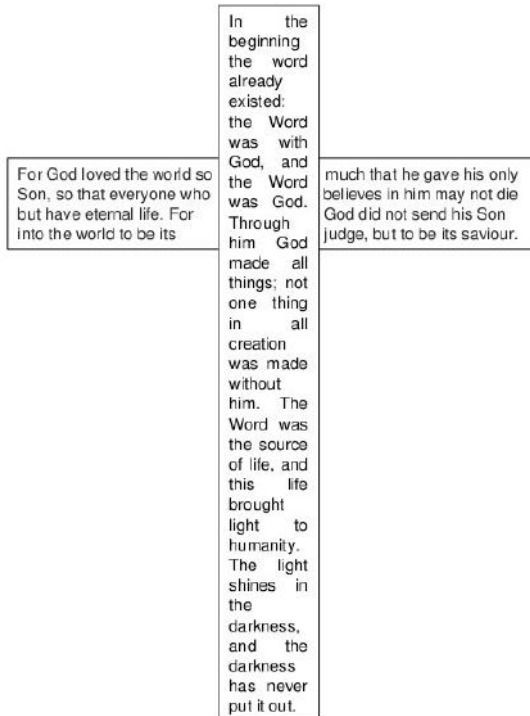


THE LINK

The Magazine of Portsmouth Methodist Church



March 2024

Minister : Rev. Ray Goddess

www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk

Reg. Charity No. 1178715

Minister's Desk

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in a meeting when a colleague shared the problem that they had on Christmas day last year. There is a very narrow road that passes in front of their church and ends at a T-Junction with limited turning space. The problem is that the Satnav often takes people down this narrow road to get to the next town.

On this day a large very long truck was directed down this narrow road. It had been raining and so the road was wet, and the truck moved very slowly past the church and came to the T-Junction but did not have enough space to turn. The truck driver put the vehicle in reverse and tried to back up, but the wheels just spun on the wet tarmac and the truck stood still.

The tow trucks in their area were not large enough to pull the truck out of trouble and so they contacted someone in the next town and arranged for a tank recovery vehicle to come and tow the truck back up the narrow road. The problem was that the recovery vehicle was limited to travel at 40 miles per hour – and so it took quite a while for the recovery vehicle to get to them. With many cheers of joy and laughter, the truck was finally moved back up the narrow road and sent on an alternative route to its destination.

On my way back from the meeting I was thinking of this story and realized that “there was a sermon hidden in the story”. This is not a sermon, but I think the brief message could be helpful to many of us.

Think of this. We have no clue who programs the Satnav, we have no clue who develops the maps for the Satnav, we have no clue who checks the accuracy of the Satnav – but we are willing to follow it blindly anyway – and sometimes it leads us down the wrong impassable roads.

We know who God is and that He created the entire universe. We know that it was designed without fault. We know that God is 100% accurate. Why is it then that so many struggle to follow God and keep trying to change and manipulate His instruction to us? **1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

The Satnav took the driver on a route that was not suited to what he was trying to do. In the same way, the world often takes us on paths that are not suited for us, and we often end up being lost, confused and possibly in panic. The Good News is that even when this happens God will guide us – even although we often do not realise that He is guiding us through our challenges. **Luke 1:79 to**

shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

And finally, the people had to call a special recovery vehicle to get the truck out of its predicament. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit who would guide us out of our places of struggle back into the safe arms of God. **John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**

May you seek God's light at all times, even when you find yourself in the toughest spot that you can ever imagine – Jesus will never desert you and the Holy Spirit will guide you as you open your thoughts to His guidance.

Blessings,

Ray

Baptism, Confirmation and Covenant

On 7th January our morning service featured an infant baptism, the confirmation of 4 of our folk and our Annual Covenant Service!

The baby, Ebunoluwasimi Theodora, the daughter of Abayomi Moses Sodiya and Oluwafunmilayo Busayo Sodiya is less than a month old!

Following the baptism, Susan Commons, Carissa De Graft-Eshun, Leslie De Graft-Eshun and Thandi Langeni were confirmed.

The service was followed by coffee and cake and it was an excellent morning.

Sheila Wells 1931 - 2024

As mentioned in the January/February Link, Sheila passed away on 3rd January after 92 years of being associated with Trinity. Here follows a tribute to her:

Sheila Young was born in Collingwood Road Southsea in December 1931 and she attended Trinity Methodist Church Sunday School. When the family moved to Gosport, they still attended Trinity – riding their bikes to the ferry and then to church.

On the outbreak of war, the Youngs attended Stoke Road Methodist Church in Gosport. They were bombed out of their home in Chantry Road in 1944 and spent six months in a vicarage. After the war they all returned to Portsmouth

and Trinity where Sheila was a member of the Choir, the Youth Club and the Tennis Club. She took part in many pantomimes and other performances.

It was at the Youth Club that Sheila met Brian Wells and they married at Trinity in October 1953, a marriage that was to last 59 years. The Wells family grew when a son, Adrian, and a daughter, Hilary, were born.

At Trinity, Sheila was for many years a Sunday School teacher, a member of the Church Council and a much-valued Pastoral Carer. She was involved with the Ladies Club from its inception until her death. Sheila and Brian enjoyed Guild nights, social evenings, games and old-time dancing. They loved socialising and would arrange soirees for friends and family. Sheila's baking was legendary and she supported the Saturday Coffee Mornings until the end. She also completed 25 years of playing the organ for Sunday Worship in 2022.

When Brian retired, the couple went on a world tour – even though Sheila was initially scared of flying. They loved to travel. Sheila drove a car for over 50 years and the pair would go all over the country. Driving enabled Sheila to maintain her fierce independence, allowing her to go wherever and whenever she wished.

Above all, Sheila loved her family, spending as much time as she could with her four granddaughters and subsequently her great grandchildren. She was very competitive and was frustrated when beaten at board games.

Sheila had an amazing life and in Hilary's words 'those who knew her will not forget'.

On one of the window sills inside the Trinity site, there is a Noah's Ark, made by Sheila's father, Thomas Young, in 1943, for the Beginners' Department of the Sunday School. Aged 13, Sheila could remember her father patiently making this by hand using a fret saw, painting the pieces and joining them together. This Noah's Ark is still in remarkable condition with only a few pieces missing.



And now a poem written by Hilary – a lesson for us all:

TOMORROW MAY NOT COME

Don't put off today as tomorrow may not come
Those things we want to talk about
the things that can be done
The faces in the photos of family that you know
We need to know their names and connections, before you go

The papers that you filed so neatly in that box
They might be needed sometime, where's that key to open the lock
The secrets, the stories, the tales that you told
Will resonate and comfort us like a blanket from the cold

So many things we talked about, so much we had to say
But I didn't always notice as the time just slipped away
Make sure you note these precious things
each and every one
So, don't put off today, as tomorrow may not come!

By Hilary Smith-Hamblin – For My Mum (Dec. 2023)

Looking Back

Christmas Collections

- The Southsea Community Choir Christmas Concert was held on Sunday 11th December at Portsmouth Methodist Church Albert Road. The Southsea Songbirds, Southsea Community Choir and the Southsea Community Orchestra all performed and the church was full to the rafters. As well as some fantastic renditions from both choirs there was great community singing of some favourite Christmas songs. The concert raised a massive £1375 for church funds
- Over Christmas £248.11 was raised for the Methodist Church Children's Charity Action for Children. In addition, those folk who have Action for Children Money Boxes at home raised £145.12. If you would like to support Action for Children by having a collection box please talk to Shirley Haynes or any of the Church Stewards.
- The PMC Calendar Sales raised £100 for Church Funds.

Thanks

Eileen Baxter writes:

'We would like to thank Shirley and her helpers for the lovely Christmas lunch that we had on December 20th. It was excellent and a good time was had by all. Tea and cakes were served later.

On Boxing Day, we had a hot and cold Buffet Lunch followed by quizzes, a gentleman singing 60s songs and a singalong. We also had tea and cakes and a goody bag. All this was for the people who would otherwise have been alone. We had a great time.'

An Update from Girls' and Boys' Brigades

It's been a busy start to the year for 8th Portsmouth Girls' Brigade and 4th Portsmouth Boys' Brigade.



Activities at BB since the new term began have included pancake making, owl biscuit decorating, a paramedic teaching the older boys CPR, and lots of fun and games.

Activities at GB since the new term began have included learning about families, learning about wisdom, and looking at appearance/fashions. The older girls up-cycled skirts, purchased from charity shops, over the past couple of weeks and transformed them into aprons and bags! They were really creative - learning new skills and thinking about sustainable fashion.

8th Portsmouth GB members had a special guest in January - the new CEO of Girls' Brigade, Judith Davey-Cole, came to visit! It was great to have her with us and hear the girls sharing with her what being a GB member means to them!

Catherine from 8th Portsmouth GB and Alex from 4th Portsmouth BB joined forces with Donna from 1st Portsmouth GB to lead an assembly at Wimborne Primary School in late January. We talked to the children about the importance of being courageous and trying new things - such as Boys' and Girls' Brigade!



Preachers for March

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Preacher</i> |
|--------------------|--|
| 3rd March | Rev Ray Goddess Holy Communion |
| 10th March | Mrs Fran Jenkins and The Junior Church Mothering Sunday |
| 17th March | Rev Dr Beryl Wright |
| 24th March | Mrs Shirley Haynes Palm Sunday |
| 31st March | Rev Ray Goddess Easter Day |

Holy Week Services in Portsmouth Methodist Church (Trinity Building)

28th March: Maundy Thursday - Holy Communion led by Rev Ray Goddess at 7.30 p.m.

29th March: Good Friday Service (a Local Arrangement) at 10.30 a.m.

Money Matters

Benevolent Fund

The retiring collections at our Services of Holy Communion are for the Benevolent Fund. Donations from this Fund to charities and organisations are made during the year. At the Church Council on 21st January 2024, it was decided to distribute some of the Benevolent Fund to Charity. £100 each has been given to The Fund for Human Need, the Roberts Centre (supporting children and families in Portsmouth), Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches, The Rowans Hospice, The Children's Society and Naomi House Children's Hospice.

Can you think of any other organisations which you feel should receive monies to support their work? Please give your ideas to Alan Haynes for future inclusion.

New Financial Year

We are approaching a new financial year. It would be beneficial to the church finances if more folk would consider giving by standing Order direct to our Bank Account. This can be done online to

Bank:
CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Account Name: Portsmouth Methodist Church

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number:00034416

If you do not bank on line, the Treasurer, Alan Haynes will gladly provide you with a Standing Order Form.

If you would prefer to use the envelope scheme so that you can set aside your weekly offering please let the Treasurer or Shirley Haynes know. Thank you

Money Boxes

You can help the church financially by taking home one of our money boxes to collect your loose change. Boxes are available on the table at the main Albert Road entrance.

Table Top Sale

In the lower hall we have a table for the sale of small items and books. If you can donate to this we would be very grateful. The table sale allows all users of our building to be able to contribute to our funds.

Noticeboard

A Golden Invitation

On Sunday 14th April 2024, Mick and I will celebrate 50 years of wedded bliss (!) and we would like to share the occasion with our family and with you.

So on Saturday 13th April – from 3pm-6pm at Eastney –

please bless us with your **presence**, not the other kind, we do not need gifts – just your company.

For catering purposes, it would be helpful to have an idea of numbers so if you could let me know if you're able to pop in for simple refreshments, it would be much appreciated.

We will ensure that different dietary needs are catered for – but please let me know of any specifics.

We look forward to seeing you there

Fran and Mick Jenkins

07739111945 fran.jenkins@btinternet.com

Junior Church – can you help?

It is so good to see our Junior Church family growing. We could really do with some extra help. Please pray about whether you could help some Sundays.



If you are interested kindly speak to Ray, Shirley, James or Diane.

Wednesday Social Club

This club, formerly known as the Ladies Club, has been meeting for many years and is open to all our church folk and the wider community. It meets from 2.30 - 3.30 pm each week and only takes a break at Easter and Christmas. We

desperately need someone to offer to open up at 2.00 and close the building at 4.00 when Shirley is away for any reason. You will not be required to organise any activities. If you feel this is something you can do, please let Shirley Haynes know. Thank you.

New Places for New People Prayer Group

A small group from PMC and beyond meet on Zoom every couple of months to pray for the New Places for New People project.

This Methodist project will eventually develop a new Christian community based around families with children on Portsea Island.

If you'd like to find out more or to join the praying team, surrounding this project in prayer, please speak to Catherine Burt. We'd love to have you join us.

From the Circuit

Silent Retreat

People often feel called to silence in response to God. When we find it hard to fully articulate what we want to express, silence can often liberate us from feeling bound by words, especially for those who feel over busy, or have recently experienced change.

A silent retreat is a good opportunity to press the pause button in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and to reflect on changing circumstances in our lives. Above all else a silent retreat can give us the opportunity to encounter God's unfailing Presence more deeply.

The day will start with some meditation and will explain the resources available throughout the day. These will include the labyrinth and creative prayer spaces. The rest of the day will continue in silence, including the sharing of lunch.

Saturday 27th April. 10.00am to 4pm

Tea and coffee available from 9.30am

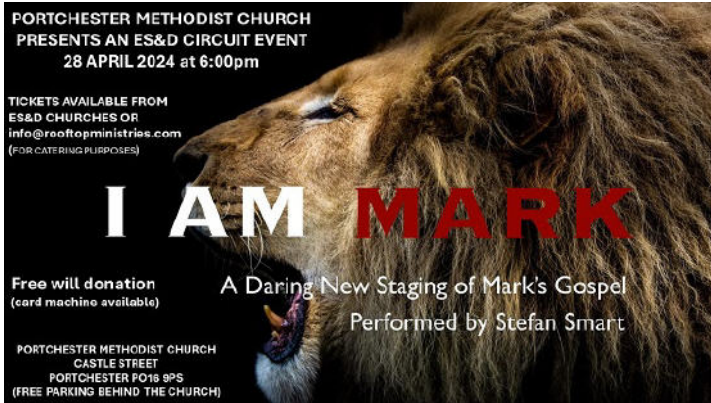
Suggested offering £35 to include refreshments, lunch and afternoon tea.

Venue: Wisdom House, Romsey, Hants. SO51 8EL

For more information: Tel. 01794 830206 or email:
reception@wisdomhouseromsey.co.uk

www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk

I AM MARK



At Portchester Methodist Church on 28th April at 6 p.m.

Community

Portsmouth Choral Union

PCU are performing St John Passion by Bob Chilcott on Saturday 16th March at St Mary's Church Portsea, beginning at 5.30 p.m.

Bob Chilcott has written a new setting to this work by J.S. Bach, introducing five well-known Passiontide hymn texts as the story unfolds– newly designed melodies that are designed to be sung by choir and audience together.

Tickets are £17.50 (£2.50 for students and children) and are available on the door – card payments only, or from www.pcuchoir.org

This is the Portsmouth premiere and is not to be missed.

And finally ...

Locusts

A plague of locusts, it sounds so biblical yet they still occur today and are still devastating. There are one of the ten plagues in Egypt in Exodus 10, they destroy the land in Joel and are a feature of the abyss in Revelations 9. They feature in two Psalms, 78 and 105. Plagues of them are also in ancient texts from India (Mahabharata), Arabia (Quran) and Greece (Iliad). They are a global phenomenon and are known in every continent except Antarctica. But have you

ever thought about what a locust is? Indeed, have you ever eaten one – they are very high in protein.

Psalm 78 gives a significant insight; it describes two types of locusts and the second is usually translated as grasshopper. A locust is simply a swarming short horned grasshopper.

Normally grasshoppers are innocuous, the short-horned is usually solitary, and overall, their numbers are low and they are not a threat. However, under a particular set of environmental conditions something triggers in the brains and their behaviour completely changes. Those conditions are drought followed by rapid vegetarian growth. The grasshoppers then rapidly reproduce, and start to swarm travelling large distances consuming fields of crops as they go. The swarms can be over a billion locusts and plagues will usually last for a few years. Indeed, a swarm named Albert's Swarm in the Rocky Mountains in America was estimated to have 12.5 trillion insects, covering 198,000 square miles and weighing 27.5 million tonnes. That particular type has now gone extinct, although no one is certain why; the main hypothesis is that it is linked to agriculture and gold mining destroying the eggs in the ground.

Now Joel in his passage (Chapter 1 verse 4) talks about their being four types of locusts *"What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten."* So, there is the locust swarm, great locusts, young locusts and other locusts. It is possible some of this relates to the stages of growth of the swarm, the grasshoppers will multiply and then swarm off, leaving their young who cannot yet fly (they are called nymphs) but otherwise look like locusts and who still devour the fields, they then develop their wings and so would then leave and perhaps another swarm then arrives.

Proverbs 30 verse 27 when talking about locusts says "locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks". Do we ever get driven by something in our brains that makes us act like those around us? Think about everyone rushing out to buy toilet roll as covid approached (a flat behind us had their windows piled high with it), psychologists have noticed a phenomenon where a crowd will behave in a way no individual in it would. Well Joel gives us the answer in his book – turn to God in repentance.

Mark Barton

Deadline for April Link:

Material for the April issue of The Link must be with the Editor by 24th March 2024

Where in the World?

I thought I'd get a big response to last month's 'Where in the World' but in the end only two correct entries were received. The answer was Hatchett Pond near Beaulieu in the New Forest, the largest body of fresh water in the forest and a beautiful place for a picnic (do mind the donkeys though, they'll try and join in!). The correct answer came (eventually) from Lesley Flower and Pete and Denise Foster, so well done to you.

This month's picture may cause a bit of head scratching as it doesn't show the place only some very new life showing that Spring is just around the corner. These are Egyptian Goose goslings in a photo taken on 19th February 2024 at a fairly near location that has featured several times before in this quiz. But where is it? Answers as usual to ralph.snelling@googlemail.com



When , What and Where

For more information about these activities and other community organised activities, please see the Portsmouth Methodist Church web site
www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk

| <i>When</i> | <i>What</i> | <i>Where</i> |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Monday | | |
| 6:30 p.m. | Girls Brigade | St Joseph's |
| 7:00 p.m. | Bible Study Class 1st and 3rd Monday of each month | Contact markbartonrn@gmail.com or 07766252554 |
| Tuesday | | |
| 10:00 a.m. | PMC Under 5s (during term time) | Trinity Building |
| Wednesday | | |
| 12:00 noon | Fellowship Lunch (1st Wednesday of month) | Trinity Building |
| 12:00 noon | Soup and Pud (3rd Wednesday of month) | Trinity Building |
| 2:30 p.m. | Wednesday Social Club | Trinity Building |
| 6:00 p.m. | Zoom Bible Study - ask for details | Online via Zoom |
| Thursday | | |
| 6:00 p.m. | Boys Brigade | St Joseph's |
| Friday | | |
| 9.30 a.m. | Stay and Play Group for Toddlers and Parents | Eastney Halls |
| Saturday | | |
| 10:00 a.m. | Coffee Morning | Trinity Building |

We advise that you check with organisers that meetings are taking place before travelling.