***THE AVENUE***

**STANFORD AVENUE**

**METHODIST CHURCH,**

**BRIGHTON**

February – March 2022

**Minimum Donation 50p**

**THE AVENUE**

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A Letter from our Minister

Preaching a challenging/controversial sermon

Happy New Year everyone,

I thought I would use the newsletter this week to write a little about preaching. The subject has come up a few times over the last week or two for a few different reasons. So I thought I’d share my thoughts on the subject. Particularly how they should not be a one way means of communication and certainly not the final word on anything.

Preaching can be a hugely rewarding thing for the preacher, as well as scary and stressful. When it is the norm for it to never be any of these anymore then it’s perhaps time for the preacher to consider having a sabbatical from preaching or standing down. Though, of course, sometimes it’s ok for it to be none of these things as we all have our off weeks!

I don’t wish to go into the process of preparing a sermon, but I would first like to share how I come to the decision on what the subject of the sermon will be. I think this well be helpful in thinking about how a sermon should be received.

So, finding a subject to preach on. First, I look at the scriptures from the lectionary or consider the time of the Christian year for an appropriate non lectionary reading or theme. I read these with many things on my mind. Some things are conscious, and others may be less so. These things can include what is happening in the world or local community, what challenges the church and/or circuit is currently facing, what I have been reading or listening to, what I am personally being challenged by or things that I might personally be struggling with.

(The latter is not always appropriate but can sometimes be powerful. Whilst training for the ministry I talked openly from the pulpit about my experience of depression, the experience of going to the GP and my experience of medication and counselling. This was scary, but you might not be surprised to know that almost everyone come forward with a similar experience or having had been though the same process or of a loved one suffering in a similar way. Suddenly people were open and engaged with the subject.)

All of which leads me to preaching on a wide variety of subjects. Sometimes I know these messages will be received well, perhaps because they are uplifting or bring forward solidarity and togetherness. Other times they might be controversial or challenging. The latter is usually when I feel most scared or stressed.

All preachers will lean toward certain stances. I think people would lay politics at my door, and very fairly so. However, I think all preachers would try to have a good balance. It’s not appropriate to be challenging or preach things that will be controversial every week. However, it’s just as inappropriate to preach ‘a big hug in a mug’ sermons every week, as we, as church, need to grapple with issues.

Moving on, it is the challenging sermons that leads me to share how I feel about the use of the sermon slot. Whenever I preach, I preach from a place of honesty and integrity. I never preach with a hidden agenda, and when there might be an agenda, I will name it. For example, I preached at a circuit service about risk and faith when we were in early discussions about how we might restructure the circuit. The subject was on my mind, the lectionary reading fitted the subject perfectly, and I knew the circuit was in the place of beginning to wrestle with the subject.

Significantly, preaching with honesty and integrity does not mean that I preach the final word or preach assuming I have it right. If I’m wrestling with an issue, I give my best knowing it will be flawed. This is what makes preaching so scary, saying things that may not be fully formed knowing people will disagree. The wonderful thing about preaching scary things is that when people disagree and enter into conversation, we both come away having advanced our thinking further on the subject.

In the circuit consultation one of the comments that came out a few times was that we as a circuit want to avoid fundamentalism. I felt like this was a curve ball as I reckon, we already do a good job of that. If you were wondering, the word could mean a few things. One of those things might be that the preacher is assumed to be right; what they said is black and white, and if you don’t agree then you should leave or change your view. This way of being can be even more dangerous when it comes with the assumed authority of a minister or counterpart in other denominations. So, to continue avoiding fundamentalism is certainly a good aim!

I am the opposite of a fundamentalist in this sense. I am a person wrestling with the issues and am always wanting to be in discussion about them. I am always ready to listen, and I am always ready for people do disagree with me. For many good reasons, I’m sure, but the main two are, 1. Because I know I’m not always right 2. Because if I get to hear other opinions then my understanding is enriched, even if I disagree!

I have talked on a few occasions about missing one of my churches in Leeds because they regularly heckled, tried to put me off for fun, or just openly disagreed during my sermon. It was fantastic, it kept me on my toes. Sometimes it was heated, but there was also a lot of love there.

Furthermore, if we look at the history of the church, the sermon slot was the time for people to ask questions or have discussion. I’m not sure how often this actually happened, but it shows that it was never meant to be a one-way street.

My worry is that people will not feel comfortable to challenge myself or any other preacher. In fact, if we ever get to that point then we have strayed into fundamentalism.

So, I guess what I’m saying is, I will continue to bring up difficult topics. Not because I enjoy it, as I often really don’t, but because one of the jobs of a preacher is to challenge. So, as this is the case, I also what to underline just how happy I am for people to disagree with me. When I’ve talked about my church in Leeds with people they have tended to be horrified. So maybe during the sermon isn’t the time for you. However, I am very open to having discussions after. This might be over tea, over the phone a few days later, in a small group, or even for a visit, which I’m always happy to do. I’m sure every other preacher would be happy to do the same, and if they’re not you can totally call them out on it!

So please do take my sermons as a chunk of something to be wrestled with and knocked about, not as something that is the final word as even, I treat them as very far from the final word. They are much more part of a grey difficult and exciting journey of faith.

Grace and Peace,

Dan

BONHOEFFER’S POEM FOR NEW YEAR’S DAY

**With every power for good to stay and guide me,**
**comforted and inspired beyond all fear,**
**I’ll live these days with you in thought beside me,**
**and pass, with you, into the coming year.**

**While all the powers of good aid and attend us,**
**boldly we’ll face the future, be it what may.**
**At even, and at morn, God will befriend us,**
**and oh, most surely on each New Year’s Day**

**The old year still torments our hearts, unchastening:**
**the long days of our sorrow still endure.**
**Father, grant to the soul thou hast been chastening**
**that Thou hast promised—the healing and the cure.**

**Should it be ours to drain the cup of grieving**
**even to the dregs of pain, at thy command,**
**we will not falter, thankfully receiving**
**all that is given by thy loving hand.**

**But should it be thy will once more to release us**
**to life’s enjoyment and its good sunshine,**
**that we’ve learned from sorrow shall increase us**
**and all our life be dedicating as thine.**

**To-day, let candles shed their radiant greeting:**
**lo, on our darkness are they not thy light,**
**leading us haply to our longed-for meeting?**
**Thou canst illumine e’en our darkest night.**

**When now the silence deepens for our harkening,**
**grant we may hear thy children’s voices raise**
**from all the unseen world around us darkening**
**their universal paean, in thy praise.**

**While all the powers of good aid and attend us,**
**boldly we’ll face the future, be it what way.**
**At even, and at morn, God will befriend us,**
**And oh, most surely on each new year’s day!**

***Martyn – Thanks for this Dan.***

POEM BY JOHN PAUL MOORE

As I go along my journey
I am reaping better than I have sowed
I am drinking from the saucer
Because my cup has overflowed

I don’t have a lot of riches,
And sometimes the going’s tough
But with kin and friends to love me
I think I am rich enough

I thank God for the blessings
That His mercy has bestowed
I am drinking from the saucer
Because my cup has overflowed

He gives me strength and courage
When the way grows steep and rough
I will not ask for other blessings for
I am already blessed enough

May we never be too busy
To help bear another’s load
Then we will all be drinking from the saucer
When our cups have overflowed

CHEESY CARROT SQUARES

Ingredients:

Drizzle of Olive Oil

1 Onion, Finely Chopped

175g/6 oz Grated Carrots (Approx. 2 Medium Carrots)

150g/5 oz Oats

150g/5 oz Grated Cheese (Of Choice)

1 Egg

1 Teaspoon Marmite or Soy Sauce

1 Tablespoon Tomato Puree

Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 170° C/325°°F/gas 3
2. Line an oven tray with baking parchment, or brush it with Olive Oil
3. Fry onion in oil over low heat till soft
4. Mix cheese, carrots + oats and add onions
5. Beat egg with marmite/soy sauce and tomato puree/and mix well with oats mixture
6. Press into a greased baking tin
7. Bake for 20 – 30 minutes, until browned
8. Cut into squares. Good Hold or Cold

*Martyn – Thanks Lis, I can personally recommend them*

ACTION FOR CHILDREN NEWS and EVENTS



Action for children collection boxes, Gaynor will collect any boxes on Sunday 13th February after the service in the fellowship room.

If you need your box collecting, please contact Gaynor on 07733488959.

Saturday 19th February 2022 Stanford Avenue 2pm: Brighton Male Voice Choir; A Concert in Aid of Action for Children.

Light refreshments will be available!  Come along, enjoy the singing and support Action for Children.

Many thanks Gaynor Paul for action for children.

MEDITATION & MUSIC.

Meditation & Music meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Fellowship Room after Luncheon Club @ 14-30 pm until 16-30 pm. There is a different subject each time with poems and music. Everyone is welcome.

If you need more information, please call Sylvia Lord.

Best wishes Sylvia Lord.

COP 26

If you read a newspaper, watch the news, listen to the radio or follow events online, you will know that this was an opportunity for the leaders of all nations to revisit their pledges made in 2015 in Paris and set new goals to reduce the effects of fossil fuels on climate change. The results were mixed with different countries aiming to lower their emissions, some much slower than others.

But what can we do? Everyone knows to recycle but unfortunately what can be collected differs from council to council. Most supermarkets collect soft plastic but send it to other countries to dispose of. The Co-op collects recyclable soft plastic that is sorted and recycled in this country with none going to landfill.

The Green Centre, which operates from the Open Market on Thursdays, collect so many items that would otherwise end up in the bin. From bread bags to crisp and biscuit wrappers the volunteers collect and sort all donations, Check them out either at Planet Brighton, Open Market or online.

Have you thought of refilling your shampoo, washing up liquid etc instead of buying new? Store and Store Next Door at Fiveways have an amazing selection.

Do nothing and nothing will change. But if everyone does something we can make a difference. So, let’s refill, recycle, re-use, re purpose, buy British & Fairtrade, plant trees, use the car less, use charity shops and more.

I do it for my children, grandchildren.

WHO DO YOU DO IT FOR?

Lis Coblenz

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We continue to pray for June Lawson,

Nadine & Gary Pugh, Ann Collins,

John Pollard (Vic & Margaret’s Son), Sylvia & Ray Smith, Debbie Johnson, Jean Griffin, Doug Butler.

Liz Wakeling & Amy Codling (Leaders of Scouts & Girls’ Brigade), Phil Codling, Maureen Knell, Sheila Whyte, Syd Beck, Jean & Geoff Starks and Gill & Shirley Challen,

It was really pleasing to see the Baptism of Harvey the son of Lewis Ellingford & Charlotte on Sunday 23rd January. Lewis was involved with the Stanford Avenue Youth Players for many years & now works in Theatre in Chichester. Congratulations to you & your families.

Some of you may remember Clive Musket who was a member of the Church many years ago. He had 2 Children, Nigel & Keith who were members of the Scouts in Church. Sadly, Clive passed away living in Seaford on 12th December 2021. Dave Hunt who was also very involved with the Scouts is sending me the Order of Service from his funeral.

Our thoughts & prayers go to all the family of Clive.

As always, please let me know if you want me to remove any names, add to them or update us with news of any of the above.

We of course continue to pray for our Circuit staff as they minister to us – namely – Revd’s Andy Lowe, Deborah Cornish, Dan Woodhouse, Heather Leake Date, Major Connie Croly, Sue Harrington, and all our Lay Workers and Local Preachers.

LIFE AS A REDCOAT.

Part 5 – THE CHILDREN ARRIVE

The week before the guests arrived, I had time to sort out a two-week programme for the children and prepare the KINGSLEY CLUB where we would spend many hours.

I introduced myself in the Dining Room at breakfast on Sunday and invited parents to come to the KINGSLEY CLUB with their children after lunch.

The children were divided into age groups for their races, 4 years up to 12 years. I kept a note of the results to help me sort out teams for the week.

At 2pm children arrived with their parents for our first meeting in the Kingsley Club. The first thing I got them to do was to say after me, “I promise, never, ever, to tell the secrets of the Budgie Club to anyone”.

The children took it very seriously but some of the expressions on the parent’s faces was a picture, especially the dads!

I make it clear that this was the only time the parents would be allowed in the Kingsley Club. We went over a few camp rules to make sure the children would be safe at all times, especially at the swimming pool. Then the parents had to leave.

I told the children that Monday evening we would meet for a SECRET MEETING, and I would tell them what teams they would be in for the rest of the week.

After a busy Monday full of lots of activities we had our SECRET MEETING. Great fun.

More next time.

Wynn

*Martyn – Obviously a very full-on time for you Wynn. I can see where you got your enthusiasm from.*

FUNDRAISING UPDATE.

The Christmas fair was a great success raising over £1,500 for the Church. Thank you to everyone who supported this either by donating goods, coming and spending money or helping with a stall.

We met recently to plan future events.

We are still working on the details for the Flower Pot sculpture exhibition/trail and settle on a date for the Fashion Show which was originally planned for 2020. So, watch out for the dates.

Dates for your Diary.

5th March - 16.00 - Quiz by Robert in the Church £10.00 including ploughman’s. Please let us know if you want to attend for catering purposes.

26th March – 11.00 – 15.00 Spring & Craft Fair. Donations needed of gifts and cakes on the day please.

We are always looking for new ideas, so if you hear of a successful event that would be suitable, let us know.

Your fundraising team, Karen, Amy, Jeni, Mags Liz, Pete and Lis.

*Martyn – You are doing a brilliant job which brings in much needed funds.*

LUNCHEON CLUB

We held our usual Christmas Dinner for our members and Church friends on December 15th after cancelling last year due to Covid. A big thank you to nearly 60 people who came and made it a very special occasion. Thank you to everyone who took part, it truly was a lovely start to Christmas. We renewed friendships over a meal and followed with readings and Christmas carols. We reopened lunch club on Wednesday 5th January.

Thank you, Fred,

One of our dear members, Fred Allen, very kindly paid for everyone’s lunch on that day, as a New Year gift to everyone and a thank you for their friendship. Thank you, Fred it was a lovely gesture, appreciated by all of us. We welcome anyone to join us for lunch. We have, unfortunately had to increase our prices to £4.00 for a main course, dessert and tea or coffee. We would also welcome anyone who would like to join our friendly band of volunteers. You would not have to help every week but only when you can.

Please phone us if you would like to come.

Ann Tel 01273 887843

Josie Tel 01273 276123

Christine Tel 01273 500871

7th BRIGHTON SCOUTS

Hi Everyone.

We’re back to nearly normal hopefully, although some children are still testing positive at school each week, but that’s how it is!

The Cub Scientist Badge is being held in our Church next weekend 5th February; 48 Cubs will be attending including 7 from our Pack.

Eight Cubs will be going to Brighton Town Hall to meet the Mayor as they have gained their Chief Scout Silver Award, the highest badge for Cub Scouts.

The Scout Troop is growing in numbers now at 15! Several due to 29th Brighton Scout Group closing during the pandemic.

At the end of February, Cubs and Scouts are staying at Parkwood for one night. (As several haven’t been away with the Group before!)

The Group is increasing, but we could do with some new Leaders as we are all getting older! Any volunteers?

7th Brighton Leaders.

*Martyn – It’s great news that you are growing in number. Please pass on the thanks from everyone associated in the Church to all your leaders & helpers.*

9th BRIGHTON GIRLS BRIGADE

Hi everyone,

My name is Isabelle and I’m 12 years old. I love going to Girls Brigade. We play lots of games, make stuff, do badges and have fun. When we had to stay home, we had zoom every week. Some of my friends left and now there’s not many of us left. I need new Girls Brigade friends because I don’t want it to stop. Please tell everyone we need more girls.

Thank you for reading this.

Isabelle.

There has been a Girls Brigade group at Stanford Avenue Methodist Church since 1914 and so far, we have adapted to all the changes, but the coronavirus has been the biggest since the 1960’s. Isabelle is a very loyal member of our Company and has lots of ideas to get new members. Maybe you recall the fun you had at a youth organisation or club? If your daughter, granddaughter, neighbour, friend is 5 or over please tell them about us. We meet on Wednesdays in term time from 6.15. We would welcome any girls whatever their needs and ensure they had a fun time.

Please email 9thbrightongb@gmail.com or call Amy Codling 01273 308445 for more details.



CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED.

Please, please, please send me your items for the Church Magazine. If I do not receive items, it may not be worth producing. I’m sure that some of you have some very interesting stories or items that other would be interested in.

Please send them to the stanfordmethodist@btconnect.com or drop them through the Church letterbox.

BI-WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

We now have someone who has kindly agreed to producing a Newsletter. Mel Gilham is producing it Bi-Weekly and I’m sure she would welcome any items to be included. Please send them to her email address. If you would like to receive a copy, please let Mel know by emailing her at melbe10@me.com.

LAST DAY for APRIL – MAY 2022 magazine contributions will be FRIDAY 25th MARCH.

You will be able to send contributions via E-Mail: stanfordmethodist@btconnect.com, or, by post to Stanford Avenue Church with ‘For Magazine’ on the front of the envelope.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Happy New Year.

As I write this, I cannot believe January is coming to an end! As the saying goes – “Time Flies” I enjoy hearing from many friends at Christmas, it really does lift my spirits. Many friends wished me a Happy and Healthy 2022. For many it was a very different Christmas due to the loss of a loved one – Others recovering from illness – A couple of my friends had to isolate having been in contact with Covid.

How different life has been these past months. On my perpetual calendar the thought for January 19th was ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TO CARE about others, SMILE at them, and BE A FRIEND to the FRIENDLESS.

NOT always easy. I find many hymns a tremendous help. The one that comes to mind is “What a friend we have in Jesus”. It asks questions and gives us advice,

HAVE WE TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS?

IS THERE TROUBLE ANYWHERE?

WE SHOULD NEVER BE DISCOURAGED

TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER

CAN WE FIND A FRIEND SO FAITHFUL?

WHO WILL ALL OUR SORROWS SHARE?

JESUS KNOW OUR EVERY WEAKNESS

TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER.

DO THY FRIENDS DESPISE, FORSAKE THEE?

TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER

IN HIS ARMS HE’LL TAKE AND SHIELD THEE

THOU WILT FIND A SOLACE THERE.

O WHAT PEACE WE OFTEN FORFEIT

O WHAT NEEDLESS PAIN WE BEAR

ALL BECAUSE WE DO NOT CARRY

EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER.

Back to the thought for the day that calls us to CARE for others, SMILE at them, and to BE A FRIEND to the friendless. O how we need to pray so we can become aware of other’s needs. How we need to listen sometimes instead of talking.

So once again I wish you a Happy New Year, also a blessed 2022.

Love

Wynn

*Martyn – Thanks Wynn again for a very thought-provoking piece.*

Services at Stanford Avenue & Dates for your Diary

6th February – Circuit Together Service @ Patcham

19th February – Concert in aid of Action for children – Brighton Male Voice Choir 14-00 Light refreshments will be available.

13th February – Rev Dan Woodhouse

13th February – Action for Children Collection Boxes required after the Service

19th February – Action for Children Concert, Brighton Male Voice Choir @ 14-00.

20th February – Major Connie Croly

27th February – Rev John Jennings

5th March – Quiz

26th March – Spring & Craft Fair

15th May – Church Anniversary

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