



St. Andrew's Psalter Lane Church
An Anglican Methodist Partnership

NEXUS

Christ in Nether Edge & Us



June - July 2017

www.standrewpsalterlane.org.uk

Correspondence should be addressed to the Church Office, Shirley House, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL

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(A District Group which meets at Ringinglow)

Welcome & Cover Illustration

Welcome to all readers of NEXUS. There are links to further information contained within the text and readers may find it easier to access the links by accessing Nexus on the web page of St Andrew Psalter Lane <http://www.standrewspsalterlane.org.uk/>

Nexus is curated by Anne Hollows 07723407054, anne.hollows@gmail.com

The cover picture for this edition is a collage of images from European churches. A focus on Europe, far from being a year too late for the referendum, is a timely reminder that we continue to hold and develop, close links with our sister churches of all denominations throughout Europe. Since World War 2, churches have been at the forefront of forging cooperation between individual churches, Dioceses and Districts. For countries of the former Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc, this cooperation was crucial to sustaining a Christian presence during the years before 1989. The cooperation also helped to re-ignite interest in Christianity in the years following independence. I hope you will glean some insights into church life in other parts of Europe.

Letter from Gareth

Dear friends,

In this special edition of NEXUS on the theme of Europe, it's good to note that the ministerial staff team of the Sheffield Methodist Circuit has quite an international feel. As well as those from a UK background, we have German, Italian, American (and one of our American colleagues also has an Armenian heritage) and Nigeria. Denominationally, we include Lutheran and Waldensian.

The religious landscape of Europe has for many centuries been predominantly Judaeo-Christian, though even within this statement lie many complexities. For example, the Christian history of Europe has seen the theological controversies and often tragic conflicts associated with the Reformation, and the continent has witnessed the terrible history of anti-Semitism, including the dimension of Christian anti-Semitism.

Today, the religious map of Europe is far more complex. To begin with, the very word "religious" is much less appropriate than was once the case. In certain countries, the Roman Catholic Church and to a lesser extent Orthodox Churches and certain Protestant denominations remain influential, but broadly speaking, there is a strong secular ethos across much of the continent. This is partly a natural consequence of particular philosophical and cultural developments, going back in part, it could be argued, to Renaissance humanism, but it is also reflected in the existence of many consciously secular states. Secularism is certainly not in itself an enemy of religious faith, and the question of what kinds of religion flourish best in a secular environment is an interesting one.

As well as the influence of secularism, there is also the increasingly multi-faith dimension of religion in Europe. It is important to remember that this is not at all new, and that history provides us with very positive examples of religiously diverse societies. Medieval Andalusia in Spain under Muslim rule is often hailed as a golden age of mutual respect and cooperation between Muslims, Jews and Christians, and even if that is to see things through slightly rose-tinted glasses, it is certainly true that there was considerable shared flourishing during this period.

Today, there is great cultural and religious diversity across the nations of Europe, and although, sadly, we are often aware of tensions

associated with this, often related to historic political factors, there is potential for an extremely fruitful cross-fertilisation of insights and heritages. The first time I visited Germany, in 2006, was in order to attend an annual Jewish-Christian-Muslim conference then held in Wuppertal, near Düsseldorf. The atmosphere of the conference was open and creative, and there was a sense of how relations between members of these three faiths could develop and be strengthened in the future. Of course, this is only one dimension of the rich diversity of faiths across Europe. Some important studies have been published in recent years on the experience of faith communities of Indian origin in Europe, such as the Hindu and Sikh communities.

From this general overview, I shall make way now for other people's more specific reflections on the theme of this edition.

Peace and love,
Gareth



CONTEMPLATION

ON ENTERING CHURCH

Lord,
your house seems noisy,
people exchanging news, dates,
appointments;
such a hustle and bustle of busy-ness.
I want to be quiet, Lord,
why don't they stop?
Lord, why don't you stop them?
Drive them out

like the money-changers in the Temple?

Lord,
I've realised
it's not the noise around me
that distracts me and my prayers;
it's me, Lord,
my mind darting from one thing to another.
Did I turn down the oven?
Did I lock the door?
Is my hair tidy?
Does my dress really suit me?
How I wish I'd finished the ironing yesterday.
What shall I have for tea?
Am I ready for work next week?

Lord,
cast them out;
drive away the distractions to my worship;
all the thoughts that take my mind
from looking to you.
No, Lord,
it's not just the noise outside
that destroys,
but also the noise within.
Judith Stevens

Talking Point : a focus on Europe

What, more on Europe? Isn't that all done and dusted? Well of course it isn't and while whatever government tries to resolve the issues of our political and economic relationship with Europe, it seems even more relevant that we keep open our understanding of and communications with our many friends on the mainland of the continent to which we belong. So in this edition of Nexus we have a focus on Europe, not only, but particularly on some of our church contacts with Europe. It is interesting to note, as recognised by Mike Hornsby Smith, a sociologist of religion, that the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty is almost

entirely based on the Catholic social gospel. Jacques Delors, often loathed in the tabloid press, was a devout Catholic and inspired this aspect of EU policy, in particular the principles of subsidiarity and community participation. This committed the EU to ensuring that decisions were made as close to the citizen as possible – a long way from the popular myth of control being lost to Brussels!

In denominational terms, sociologists of religion position the UK in the north-western, largely protestant part of the continent, as compared with the south-western and north eastern parts which are predominantly catholic (the Republic of Ireland is included in the south western group). The south eastern part of Europe is predominantly orthodox, although there are strong, albeit minority, orthodox communities in the Baltic countries resulting from the movement of people when these countries were part of Russia. These distinctions, balanced with history, account for some of the major differences in different approaches to social policy, including marriage, adoption and sexuality. Spain, part of the 'Catholic' region, recognised same sex marriage some years before the UK and well ahead of France and Italy, has at present a very liberal law on abortion. The legacy of the civil war and Franco's links with the church hierarchy remain of huge significance, and trump the church's power in these matters. On the other hand, in some countries of the former USSR (Lithuania, Ukraine, and Georgia, for example) religious observance is high; I have queued to get into mass in Vilnius, and observed fellow passengers on buses in Georgia crossing themselves as the bus passed each and every church. Following the end of Soviet restrictions on religious freedom, both the Catholic Church in Orthodox Church have gained influence in social policy including attitudes to the LGBT communities. There are high levels of abandonment of children born to single mothers or who are disabled. At the same time, the position of the church is contested: in Georgia there were objections to government spending on restoration of churches (icons and murals were whitewashed in the Soviet era), sometimes with fantastic golden cupolas, while spending on much needed housing and social welfare was limited.

Regardless of our future political relationship with Europe we will continue to have strong links with churches in Europe at both individual and collective levels. The movement of people around the continent has led to English speaking congregations in major cities of Europe,

just as parts of the UK have mass said in Polish. As Gary Wilton reports below, the many UK citizens Europe have formed congregations. Partnerships have also been established. The church in Brno, Czech Republic, featured in Jana Krizova's article below, has an active partnership with a church in Oswaldtwistle in Lancashire. This arose through an individual student exchange arranged some 25 years ago and group visits between the two churches take place frequently. Perhaps a partnership with a European congregation might become an aspiration for our own church. What do you think?

Continental Anglicans

Over 1.5 million UK citizens currently live in continental Europe, so the 'Diocese in Europe' is one of the Church of England's best kept secrets. There have been English churches and congregations across the breadth of Europe since long before the reformation, often created to provide public worship for Anglicans living abroad and involved in international trade. In 1842 The Diocese of Gibraltar was founded. In 1980 the current Diocese in Europe was created, becoming the then 44th Diocese of the Church of England. It is currently overseen by Bishop Robert Innes. Today's Diocese in Europe is made up of churches and congregations spread across forty-two countries in three continents, and covering one sixth of the earth's land surface. Services are held more or less frequently at over 280 places (listed in the Diocesan Directory). The people of the Diocese are served by around 170 clergy and over 100 readers. Vocations are strong in the Diocese, but most clergy and many readers come into the Diocese from other parts of the Church of England or the Anglican Communion. The Diocese ministers in a myriad of situations, in most of which the Church of England has scarcely been heard of, questions of establishment scarcely arise, civic links may take a very different form, and denominational identity is often much less important than the language of worship. 'We too are facing questions of identity, organisation and maintenance; but we do so in a very different context from that of the other 41 Dioceses in the Church of England'. The Cathedral of the Diocese is located in Gibraltar with two Pro-Cathedrals – one in Brussels and one in Malta. It was my privilege to serve as a Residentiary Canon of the Pro-Cathedral of Holy Trinity

Brussels for just over 5 years from 2008 to 2013.

There have been Anglicans worshipping in Belgium since the 16th century. These were English-speaking merchant communities both in Antwerp and in Ghent. In the 19th century, King Leopold I recognized the Anglican Church as an officially-sanctioned religion and allowed Anglicans to worship in the Royal Chapel. Anglicans have been worshipping in Brussels since 1816, with civil services starting in 1818 with the appointment of the first civilian Anglican priest. Formerly, there were two Anglican communities in Brussels, the Church of the Resurrection and Christ's Church. These were combined in 1958 to become today's Holy Trinity.

Today Anglicanism is a state recognised religion in Belgium with the government paying clergy stipends, providing for the upkeep of church buildings, and supporting Anglican Religious Education in schools when there is sufficient demand. Today's Holy Trinity Brussels is a large thriving church family made up of people from over 40 different nations and from all kinds of backgrounds. Worship ranges from a mainstream Anglican service of Holy Communion in English to an informal praise service in English to an African Service of Holy Communion offered mostly in French. Quite often the African service lasts longer than 2 hours.

My family and I consider our time at Holy Trinity to have been a very special privilege and the congregation there are often in our prayers. Many of the current congregation serve in the EU Institutions – so they currently face a lot of uncertainty in the light of Brexit. Please do join us in praying for them.

Gary Wilton, Vicar of All Saints Ecclesall

Lithuania

Our family served in the newly-reorganised United Methodist Church in Lithuania from 1996-2002. The Soviet Union had fallen just five years earlier and some of the surviving Methodists in Lithuania had asked for help in reviving Methodist activity, training new leaders, and re-acquiring church property taken in Soviet times. What a privilege for us to hear the stories of those who had kept the faith for the 50 years of communist rule – stories of persecution, loss of jobs, even loss of life, of house-group Christians which had gathered in secret with a Bible or a

tattered hymn book to worship and prayer together.

Our efforts to learn Lithuanian – with its seven declensions(!) – were encouraged by several older church members who said, “after so many years of surveillance, we want to speak with our ministers one-to-one; no intermediaries or interpreters, no third parties.” Not only did their pleas spur our learning, but their patience with our mistakes were gestures of grace: (like my once announcing in church on All Saints Sunday that we were all going to go to the nearby cemetery after worship and ‘climb down into the graves’).

As our language developed, we could understand why one woman broke down while reading Psalm 42 in worship one Sunday, recalling the pain of her past as she read: “...*my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, “Where is your God?”*”; we began to comprehend the Gospel significance of the persecuted and the learning to live in Christian community with one another; we heard the testimonies of those who were discovering a Jesus who forgave past wrongs and offered new life; we stood with members who had seen the church of their childhood turned into a military warehouse or a cinema or table tennis club, weep when they sang their first hymn in a re-consecrated church...; we came to admire their insistence that the re-emerging church not just be a sacred space but a place where people could get practical help in settings of great need.

This April my wife Kristin and I returned to Lithuania in time for their Methodist Annual Conference. Imagine our joy to receive communion from an ordained minister we knew as a teenager, to meet a congregation that had begun in someone’s living room, to talk with members of a youth group who were not even born when we served there. The Methodists in Lithuania continue their commitment to blend personal and social holiness in the manner of *Jonas Veslis* (John Wesley). In that spirit Lithuanian Methodists enter men’s and women’s prisons, run centres for persons with drug and alcohol addictions, provide after-school tutoring and support for neighbourhood children, offer activities for pensioners, cooperate ecumenically, and do the daily work of discipleship. Please pray for the current church leaders and congregations in their life together and ministries of Christian service.

Rev. David Markay, Sheffield Methodist Circuit

The Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is known as an atheistic country. According to some statistics, only 20% of the population claims any church connection. I was raised in a Communist family in 60' and 70', and it was clear to me that religion would disappear with my grandmother, and churches would turn to museums or concert halls. When my school friends invited me to a Methodist Sunday service, I was rather puzzled with both the vocabulary (I had never heard words like sin or mercy) and way of thinking (grace better than righteousness). Fortunately, the pastor was very pleasant, intelligent and full of humour, and I felt attracted to the nice people around him. I became a Christian, and much later also a Methodist minister.

The Methodist church in my country is very small, only one thousand members in 25 local churches. We are part of the United Methodist Church. About one hundred years ago, a small group of US missionaries (of Czech origin) came to the newly born Czechoslovakia and started to preach the Gospel in tents and public places, rather like John Wesley. Many people were converted, and soon the Methodist Church was established (in 1921). But before it could grow more, the Great Crisis came, then World War II, and the connection to US Methodists was cut. They came again for a year or two after the war ended, but were expelled by Communists in 1948. Forty years of oppression by the regime meant that the church never developed. Yes, we could worship on Sundays, but only inside churches. I remember a service in the summer, shortly after I began attending the church regularly. It was hot, and I asked if the window could be opened. The answer was: No. Our singing would be heard in the street, it would be considered a religious propaganda, and the pastor would be imprisoned.

We now enjoy freedom, granted after political changes in 1989. Rapidly, connections among Czech churches as well as Methodist churches abroad renewed or were created. Our bishop resides in Switzerland. He supervises Methodist churches in 14 European countries from Poland to Macedonia to France plus two countries in North Africa. There are contacts with churches in the area. Official partnerships of Czech and US churches have emerged, and a number of personal friendships arose. Czech Methodists have friends in the Great Britain; one of our pastors worked there for one year, there is official cooperation in Europe.

Methodists are ecumenically minded, also in Czechia. As a member of the Ecumenical Council of Churches we cooperate with other churches. The largest is the Roman Catholic Church (about two million members), and the largest Protestant church is the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (about one hundred thousand). There are almost all denominations in Czechia, mostly in small numbers. I am happy the cooperation takes place also locally, wherever Christians meet for prayers, worship, or to develop charitable projects.

Methodists are active in helping people in need. We run several shelters for families with children, for men and for addicts. We prepare various programs for all age groups (education, Bible study, prayer meetings, youth activities...). We are grateful for the chance to be “a normal church” and ask your prayers that we may continue to grow.

Jana Krizova, presently Minister in Brno but shortly to become the Minister in Prague

The Waldensian Church

Our connection with the Waldensians began when we spent a year working for the Waldensian church in Sicily in 2002-3. This was followed some time later with three years worshipping with the Waldensian church in Turin in 2007-9.

Mediaeval historians know of the Waldensians as a heretical movement of the Middle Ages, akin to the Cathars. Not many people in this country are aware, however, that the Waldensian church is still going strong, despite centuries of persecution. It is a Protestant church, which is formally united to the Methodist church in Italy. It has around 30,000 members in Italy (plus an additional 15,000 in Uruguay and Argentina) and has a strong emphasis on social action.

It started with a man called Waldo or Valdes who lived in Lyon, France from about 1140 to 1205. He was apparently a rich merchant who underwent some sort of religious experience and as a result changed his life. He gave away all his money, lived in poverty, and started preaching to ordinary people. Around him grew up a band of followers who lived in poverty and aimed to return to the fundamental teachings of the early church. Waldo was keen to have the Bible available for people to read and had himself translated the gospels and parts of the New Testament into the local language.

The Pope excommunicated Waldo and his followers (by contrast to his near contemporary Francis of Assisi, who shared similar experiences and teaching to Waldo – also son of a rich merchant who had a religious experience, gave up worldly goods, preached poverty and aimed to make the gospel come alive for ordinary people. Some suggest the Catholic church may have realised from the example of excommunicating Waldo and resulting flourishing of his movement that it would be safer to keep such dangerous leaders and ideas ‘within the fold’)

So the Waldensians found themselves at loggerheads with the established church. They were persecuted and practised in secret. They were subjected to torture and burning at the stake. Persecutions reduced the church to the Alpine valleys north west of Turin, on the border of France and Italy.

In 1532 the Waldensians decided to join the new movement initiated by Luther – the Reformation. They also decided to preach and proclaim the gospel, to stop doing things in secret and so making them higher profile and leading to further persecution. The most famous of these persecutions was the ‘Piedmontese Easter’ of 1655, a massacre in which an estimated 1,700 Waldensians were killed.

Cutting a long story short, the Waldensians gained religious freedom and civil liberties in 1848 – this momentous occasion is still celebrated with torch-lit processions and hymn singing round bonfires throughout the Valleys, a celebration we have been privileged to take part in.

The modern day Waldensian church is proud of its long history, but also seeks not to live in the past but to look to the future, and in particular to address current needs in society through social work. Our year working in Sicily was spent in a children’s centre in a deprived part of Palermo – Rachel working in a nursery school, Alastair in a family setting where children were looked after who had been abandoned or taken out of the care of their parents. The worshipping community was quite diverse, with two pastors – one Italian speaking, the other an English speaking Nigerian, to cater for the large numbers of immigrants from West Africa in Sicily (this had many advantages but one main disadvantage – two sermons and very long services!). It was an interesting experience being part of a minority faith community, which was widely misunderstood or suspected by the wider population.

We are now members of the 'English Committee in aid of the Waldensian church missions' – see www.waldensian.org.uk. This charity seeks to raise interest in, and financial support for, the Waldensian church in Italy. One of its main activities is to sponsor Italian ministerial students to study in the UK. If anyone would like to find out more, please speak to either of us, or sign up for the mailing list by contacting website@waldensian.org.uk.

Rachel Morris

By the Book:

Lost in Translation part I (European)

I am aware that most of the books I read, and as a result most of the books I recommend, are written in English. A lot of good books written in languages other than English don't get translated, so it can sometimes be easier to read a mediocre book in English than it is to find a good book translated from another language.

In the past it was mainly ancient and modern classics which were translated into English - however, this has changed. In the age of the Internet it is easier and cheaper for publishers to find translators, and as a result the number of books being translated has soared.

More popular works are also being translated, for example the recent deluge of Scandinavian crime novels. These books, with their shorter sentences and more straightforward language, are often easier, quicker, and cheaper to translate than some European fiction, for example the complex, Proustian prose of Karl Ove Knausgaard's *My Struggle* series of novelistic memoirs.

A very few authors have written in more than one language: Vladimir Nabokov wrote his early works in Russian and his later works in English (and translated his earlier works into English with his son), while Samuel Beckett wrote in both English and French throughout his life, and translated his own works into the other language.

As more books are being translated, English readers have much more to choose from - translation is so much more than changing words from one language to another.

Jean Allen

Some suggestions:

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoyevsky; translated by Richard

Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky

In Search of Lost Time by Marcel Proust (6 volumes); translated by Christopher Prendergast

The Luzhin Defense by Vladimir Nabokov; translated by Michael Scammell

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett; translated by the author

My Struggle by Karl Ove Knausgaard (6 volumes: 5 translated so far); translated by Don Bartlett

The Neapolitan Quartet by Elena Ferrante; translated by Ann Goldstein

Church music in Europe – brief excursions

Here are some personal reminiscences and, for those readers who enjoy European travel, a few possibilities.

First stop Paris and the regular afternoon organ recital at Notre Dame; a weekly event provided by some of Europe's finest organists and an opportunity to hear the staggering sounds of the great organ. American travel writer Rick Steve recommends the morning recitals at St Sulpice where the 6600 pipes contribute to what may be the greatest organ in Europe. There is a free recital after Sunday morning mass.

A fascinating organ can be heard at the minster in Freiburg in Breisgau in the Black Forest. It is in fact 4 organs, played from a single console and the sounds of the organs can be heard drifting through the mediaeval streets, as well as at numerous recitals. The minster also has 19 bells, some cast as early as the 14th century. Freiburg also has a reputation as one of the greenest cities in Europe, being internationally recognised as a centre of ecology and sustainability. (The other Freiburg, in Saxony, also has a fine organ).

Travelling south to Salzburg it is unsurprising to find a cornucopia of church music. The choir of the Franziskan kirche, sings mass every Sunday, featuring the work of all the major classical composers.

On a lighter note, I have fond memories of an Easter Sunday service in the Methodist Church in Barcelona. At the end of the English language service, the choir sang the Hallelujah Chorus with the energy of a fiery flamenco.

And finally to fireworks. Most towns in mainland Europe's holiday areas have firework displays at one or more points in the summer and on one memorable occasion these were accompanied by Verdi's Requiem. Just

imagine huge rocket bursts punctuating the Dies Irae!



Shirley House Interfaith Centre

Interfaith and Europe- some reflections

Our interfaith activities are very much based around Shirley House, or Sheffield, though Sheffield Interfaith is a member of the national interfaith network and occasionally people have attended events further afield- and often found these inspirational. But what is the position regarding interfaith relations across Europe? Many of the 'headlines' that spring to mind, from the crusades, to the Bosnian civil war, to recent 'Islamist lorry bombs', to the ridiculous banning of 'burkinis' in France point to intolerance of Islamic neighbours by the cultural 'Christian' majority. Europe's colonial past has also shaped some of the current tensions. On the other hand, many of the volunteers helping Syrian and other refugees in Greece, Italy, Calais, or nearer home raising funds and collecting clothes and food, are doing so as a response founded on their faith- whether Christian, Muslim or many other traditions.

During his recent visit to Egypt (not far from Europe), the Pope made a point of emphasising the need for peace between the two religions, which have both existed there since they were founded.

Paul Chaffee of the (North American based) 'Interfaith Observer' commented in 2014 that in western Europe there was a lot of institutional interfaith networking but not as much grass-roots (ie local) activity as in the US or Canada. He also noted that there was almost no interfaith communication at all in Eastern Europe, though some young people are picking up the challenge.

Conclusion: keep trying, keep praying; everybody is our neighbour.

Forthcoming Events:

Wednesday 28th June (7.30) **What is Zen Buddhism?** Talk by Gensho (Richard Jones)

Sunday 2nd July (12.00) **Interfaith Barbecue lunch-** In SAPL church

garden. As last year, a bring and share lunch with separate grills for Kosher, Halal, vegetarian and unrestricted food. Please also bring salads, puddings and drinks.

Monday 18th September **Sounds of the Spirit (2)**- In church. Part of Nether Edge Festival.

All our events include refreshments and new people of any, all or no faith are always welcome, we do not have 'membership'.

Caroline Cripps

Theology Everywhere: Sharing our Cape

In the 4th century, a Roman soldier called Martin is supposed to have come across a man who was begging for food and had no protection against the cold. Taking pity on him, Martin (later known as St Martin of Tours) took his own cape, or *cappella*, tore it in half, and gave half to the man. In time, the half he retained became a holy relic; the priests who cared for it, and subsequently all priests working with the army, became known as *cappellani*, or chaplains. Martin, the man who lived his Christian faith in practical ways, within the secular sphere, became, in a sense, the founding figure of chaplaincy.

Today, of course, there are chaplains in many places – prisons, armed forces, hospitals, schools, universities, shopping centres, factories, town centres... They represent many of the major world faiths, and sometimes explicitly those of no faith, but my concern here is with the Christian successors to St Martin.

As a chaplain, my ministry is not lived out in holy spaces or sanctuaries, but in the midst of the explicitly secular – in my case, a very proudly secular university. I am not there as of right, but as an invited guest, I seek to earn the trust of students and staff, by slow, patient steps, through acts of compassion and love, through participating in the celebrations and the boring administration of university life, through welcoming, congratulating, comforting, encouraging. I don't always get it right, but even in my weaknesses and mistakes I show (I hope) the humanity which is a part of what I offer.

This, of course, is no more or less than the calling which belongs to the whole people of God. The Greek word for 'people' is *laos*, from which we get 'laity', and it goes without saying that the business of being God's

people is not a calling of the few, ordained to a special status. It is the task of all of us. When the Bible refers to 'saints' (literally, 'holy ones'), it is not referring to those who have proved themselves unusually worthy, but to those who have accepted the call to follow Christ, and are his by grace. We are challenged to live out that calling, not in closed sanctuaries, but in the secular arena, recognising those secular spaces as holy, because they are equally loved by the God who is equally present in them. In that sense, the call to be 'saints' or 'God's people' is precisely the call to be chaplains.

When I was training for ministry, I did a placement in a rural part of East Anglia, where I found that people classified themselves as 'church' or 'chapel'. I don't think, by this, they saw a clear distinction between the two; it was more a residual, slightly tribal loyalty, based on where their parents (or more often grandparents) had worshipped. It defined the place to which they would naturally turn for weddings, baptisms and funerals.

We tend to want to think of ourselves as a Church, and are probably seen as such. But that may mean different things to different people. Being a church may mean that we have come of age, and can be taken seriously as ecumenical partners. Or it may imply that we have achieved a certain rigidity in our structures and traditions. Perhaps it means that we have reached a state of peak irrelevance in the lives of many – available when specific rites of passage are needed, and perhaps at Christmas, but of little or no value at other times?

We have, in recent years, tried to explore what it might mean for Methodism to return to the identity of a 'movement'. But I wonder whether the time is ripe for a return to the concept of 'chapel'? Not as a marker of tribal, denominational identity – a rival for 'church' – but as a statement of how we understand our place in the community. And not to confuse mission, evangelism and daily living as 'chaplaincy', nor to devalue the work and training of our qualified and expert chaplains (heaven forbid!). Rather, to recognise that there may be value in a 'chaplaincy mindset'.

This would entail being experts at speaking of the love of God in everyday life. It would entail valuing the 'secular' as in fact 'holy', working for its good, praying for it, and 'seeking its peace and prosperity' [1]. None of this is new, but it is perhaps something of which

we need to remind ourselves frequently. And it is, or has the potential to be, radical.

[\[1\]](#) Jeremiah 29:7

Catrin Harland: Methodist Chaplin at Sheffield University and Sheffield Hallam University

Beyond Food Banks

[Sheffield Church Action on Poverty](#), [Sheffield University Chaplaincy](#) and the [Urban Theology Union](#) came together on 4th May 2017 with food bank volunteers from across the city with a big question: how do we go beyond food banks?

The event was initiated and led by the chaplaincy Liberating Theology Group and Jeremy Clines from the chaplaincy invited [Chris Allen](#), a sociologist from Liverpool John Moore, to come and address the event. Nick Waterfield, Claire Dawson, and [Julie Upton](#) were asked to respond as local church leaders in urban communities where people struggle to keep their heads above water in a very unjust system. Nick and Julie are also members of UTU. We then had a wider discussion with the thirty people present all giving their own insights and suggesting steps forward. It seems to me that Chris's big challenge to us was to see what more can be done to go from works of mercy to seeking justice and from giving to others to sharing with others. He also spoke enthusiastically of the need to find ways to go food together because, "food grown belongs to everyone so no one gets to be the host – we all share." Nick Waterfield challenged us to see food banks as being "not about food" at all because people who go hungry in Britain are experiencing debt, isolation, and so many other indignities that to focus it all on food was to miss the point and that food banks are not all the same with different theologies, values, and approaches to tackling the symptoms of poverty.

Claire Dawson, who is researching a PhD in Urban theology, reminded us of some of the theological resources available to us from people such as Anna Rowlands and Sam Wells and introduced the ideas of [Asset Based Community Development](#). Julie Upton, a UTU trustee and chair of a food bank in Sheffield, picked up on some of Chris Allen's challenge to go beyond food banks and told stories of some of the people she comes across who access food bank services and bring their wider

experience of poverty.

The wider conversation told us that there is a huge amount of reflective practice in Sheffield and a great deal of energy for taking us from doing to a radical 'being with'. Jim Wallis, US evangelical campaigner, often uses the illustration that the church is good at pulling drowning people out of the river but less good at going upstream to see who's pushing them in. While this image perfectly illustrates the difference between mercy and justice it is a bit defeating.

How can we be in two places at once? How can we go upstream when we are really very busy saving lives with practical action?

I prefer to say that we are 'steam valves for an unjust system' because our works of mercy stop the whole "filthy rotten system" – to quote Dorothy Day – from exploding. But we can also be whistle blowers by finding creative ways to put whistles on the steam valves: our debt advice agencies and food banks.

Our meeting was just 90 minutes but we got a huge amount done and in the end had three teams ready to re-connect and go deeper on three of the issues that we discussed the most: [community organizing](#), growing food locally, exploring the theology of what we need to do. Liberation theology is begun when we listen carefully to what is going on among those on the edge of society, ask what God is doing and find ways to act in order to bring about God's preferred and promised future. I think that diverse group of people did this yesterday and I was proud to be alongside them. We looked deeply, honestly, and without romance, at the reality of food bank Britain and began to ask ourselves what theologies drove our activity. Then we started to move from activity to action as we considered a better-shared future.

(If you are reading this on-line, you can click on the underlined items to link to relevant web pages)

Keith Hebden of the Urban Theology Union

Global Church

Across the world the forced displacement and migration of people is challenging governments and people of all faiths and none. In this edition of Nexus, with a focus on Europe, our prayers are for the challenges

faced across Europe by the movement of people and for all those who work to save lives and contribute to building safe places for refugees. We remember in our prayers countries, and individuals, who struggle to meet the challenges of re-settling different faiths and different cultures. We remember in our prayers all who work at sea to save the lives of the thousands of migrants crossing of the Mediterranean. We remember in our prayers all who greet and welcome the survivors of boat crossings, remembering too those responsible for providing burials for those who die before they can be rescued. We pray for those who organise and support the settlement of refugees in temporary homes in arrival countries and for those who register and administer the systems for refugees. We think particularly of those working with overwhelming difficulties in Greece and Italy. We pray for the communities and individuals who are welcoming refugees in longer term settings, whether in communities or in individual homes; for those teaching languages and helping children to adjust to schooling and for those providing therapeutic support. We ask for blessing on all the faiths in Europe that they may continue to support and develop this work. All this remembering that Christ was himself a refugee in a foreign land.

Food and feasting:

On the assumption that we may have some long hot summer days, here are two summer recipes from Europe

Salmorejo/Gazpacho soup

- 1 kg. ripe & soft tomatoes, top of core removed but seeds left in
- 1 deseeded green pepper (preferably the long, thin Spanish pepper, not the capsicum/bell pepper type, although this will do fine too)
- half a medium onion
- a third of a long (UK) cucumber, peeled and seeds removed
- 1 clove of garlic
- 200 ml good virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp red wine vinegar or sherry (Xerez) vinegar
- half tsp of ground cumin
- 2 level tsp of salt

- **FOR THE ACCOMPANIMENTS**

- 3 hard-boiled and cooled eggs, yolk and white separated and chopped small
- large handful of sultanas, soaked in olive oil
- Spanish Serrano ham or good ham, chopped small
- croutons

Method

Place all the ingredients in a large bowl and blend with a hand blender until smooth and completely homogenised.

Check for any unblended ingredients. Soup should be a pale red with flecks of red and green in it.

Chill in fridge for at least 1 hour

Place all accompaniments on a large plate, keeping them divided into separate sections. Or use a sectioned snack server.

Divide the Salmorejo between four bowls and serve with the accompaniments and crusty bread

French fruit soup

- 1/2 cup dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc
- 1/2 cup crème de cassis (black currant liqueur)
- 1/4 cup pomegranate juice
- 2 tablespoons strawberry extra jam
- 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
- 1/2 pound small red plums—halved, pitted and cut into 1/2-inch wedges
- 1/2 pound cherries, pitted
- 2 basil sprigs
- 1/2 pound seedless red grapes
- 1/2 pound strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 6 ounces blueberries
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Mint leaves, for garnish
- Toasted brioche slices, for serving (optional)

METHOD

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the white wine with the crème de cassis, pomegranate juice, strawberry preserves and orange zest and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the preserves.
2. Add the plums, cherries and basil to the saucepan and return to a boil, then simmer over moderately high heat for 1 minute. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fruit to a large glass or ceramic bowl. Add the grapes to the saucepan and simmer for 30 seconds; transfer the grapes to the bowl. Add the strawberries and blueberries to the saucepan and simmer for 2 minutes. Transfer the berries and cooking juices to the bowl and let cool completely; discard the basil sprigs. Cover and refrigerate the fruit soup until chilled, about 45 minutes.
3. In a small bowl, whisk the sour cream with the sugar. Spoon the fruit soup into shallow bowls and dollop the sweetened sour cream on top. Garnish the fruit soup with mint leaves and serve with toasted brioche, if you like. The fruit soup can be refrigerated overnight.

Gardening Notes



What can we do to adapt to the unpredictable weather that seems to pass for normal these days? April was bright and dry. The bright clear weather had us 3 weeks early according to a speaker at the Spring Flower Show in Harrogate. But then it was **COLD**, with the winds coming from the Arctic via the Norwegian Sea. Then all

sorts of things were bitten by the frost. Down to -6 C in some places and this after plants had committed themselves to flowering. Fortunately we are not dependant on vines for our cash flow like the vineyards in Surrey.

Air frost, like this is difficult for the plants to cope with. But on a domestic scale we can wrap plants in fleece and not plant them in frost pockets. That needs thought and planning. Cold air behaves like water. It will flow downhill and collect in hollows and on the uphill side of obstructions such as fences, greenhouses and walls. Where possible leave a space for the cold air to flow downhill. If you have a hedge at the

bottom of a hill have a slatted rather than solid gate in it to allow the cold air through.

April and May were also dry this year. This too needs planning to cope with sustainably. Are lawns really a good idea in an area like Nether Edge that is blessed with so many trees? They don't make the attempt in Paris. Petanque is played on gravel unlike crown green bowls that needs a manicured surface. But growing things other than grass, the land needs long-term management, adding organic material and protection of the soil surface. In summer it will be cropping but it needs care over winter as well. A green manure crop works well and these can be planted between crops in the summer. I have just put spent hops on as a mulch between the rows of garlic and onions. I had put on a 2 gallon can of water per square yard. As if it goes over dry soil it will keep the water out! But hopefully the danger of frost will be past by the time you read this. So the tender subjects like dahlias, courgettes and French beans can be planted out. Giving them some protection will help them grow fast enough to outrun the slug damage. I hope you have gardens full of flowers, tomatoes struggling under the weight of fruit and so many courgettes that your children are fed up with them.

Bill

Eco Church: Carbon Conversations

Would you like to tread more gently on the planet? Are you concerned about climate change, but can't work out how to improve the situation? Carbon Conversations is a short, informal series of meetings aiming to help us reduce our "carbon footprints". It was created because most of us accept what scientists say – human activities are seriously damaging our climate – but most of us feel uncertain what we personally can do about it.

Carbon Conversations takes place over 6 two-hour meetings, usually 2-3 weeks apart. We plan to host a group at SAPLC, the first session being 12th July. In the meetings, participants learn the basic facts about climate change in a non-threatening way (e.g. through board games) and share questions and feelings. The approach is completely non-judgmental: each of us must make our own decisions about what we can reasonably do to reduce carbon emissions at home, at work, when travelling, through what we buy. There are no easy answers in our

complicated lives.

Nick Nuttgens – who has run Carbon Conversations several times – has agreed to run this group. So it will be good – and good fun!

Practicalities:

Wednesday, 12th July, in Shirley House at 6.30pm. The group will then arrange dates and times for the other 5 sessions.

Cost: £20 per person, to cover cost of materials (incl. a handbook entitled “In time for tomorrow?”) and tea and coffee.

Please register in advance, by emailing or phoning the Church Office.

Church in the Community

Knit and Knatter

Mondays 10-12 noon Knit and Knatter. In Shirley House. Contact: Alison Gregg, 266 5638.

Nosh & Natter

The Nosh & Natter group is held on the third Tuesday each month. Much of the time is spent reminiscing about “old Nether Edge” events and buildings and I try to make a note of any special memories in one of the History Group’s Memories Books. Between 6 – 12 people attend each month, some on a regular basis and others occasionally. Most people enjoy one of Gareth’s tasty pub lunches or snacks.

Hope to see you there! Join us in the Union Hotel, 1 Union Rd, S11 9EF. Bring a friend. Everyone welcome. Contact: Chris Venables tel. 255 0805 email chrisvenables@blueyonder.co.uk or Sue Pass tel 255 6551

Parent and Baby Group

New baby in the family? Join our friendly group of parents - Mums and/or Dads with babies up to 12 months. Friday mornings during term time 10.00 – 11.30 at St Andrew's Psalter Lane Church. It's a chance to meet other new parents in friendly relaxed surroundings. Refreshments teas, coffees, other beverages and home made cakes. Cost: £1.50 per family per week Contact Muriel on 2551473 or Jean 2550198

17th Sheffield Monday Brownies

Mondays at St Andrew's Hall from 5.45pm – 7.15pm. If you are at all

interested, please contact me for further information.
Chris Venables. 07950 432487.

Church Family

Congratulations to Anna and Anthony Ashwell who celebrate their Golden Wedding on 20th May.

Our thoughts and prayers are with

Q Ackom-Mensah in hospital

Jack Timmins following his move to Swallownest Nursing Home

Caroline Cripps following her accident

John Naylor

Mike Procter at Mickley Hall (Leonard Cheshire Home)

All who have been experiencing health difficulties and the families who support them.

Young SAPLC

Sandcastles: Our monthly service for younger children and their parents/carers is on the second Sunday of the month at 9.15. All church members are welcome to attend these services and share in the worship with this part of the church family.

Junior Church: (Pebbles 3-5, Stones 6-10,) is during the main service at 10.30 – apart from Worship All Together Sundays. Children between 2 and 3 can join in the youngest group (Pebbles) with a parent/carer)



Rocks A monthly discussion group for 11-14 on the second Sunday of the month, during the morning service (10.30)

Boulders is a discussion group for teenagers with breakfast at 9.00 am, normally on the 3rd

Sunday in the month.

About our services

Sunday Services

Normal pattern: 10.30 am Service: 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays Holy Communion service; 2nd and 4th Sunday, Morning Worship

Monthly services: 2nd Sunday – Sandcastles at 9.15 am

4th Sunday – Holy Communion at 9.15 am (using the Book of Common Prayer)

2nd Sunday – Holy Communion at Southcroft, 6.30 pm

Please note that the bread used in our communion services is gluten free. Both fermented and unfermented communion wines are used.

Wednesday Services

At the 10.00 Communion service on Wednesdays, we reflect together on a piece of spiritual writing. This may be from one of the Christian traditions, or sometimes from another tradition of faith. The person leading the service will make copies of the piece of writing to give out to everyone. Come and enjoy an oasis of reflective calm in the middle of a busy week, and join us for coffee or tea afterwards.

Church Diary & Services

CHURCH DIARY

JUNE

Thursday 1 st	9.30 am	Eco Group Meeting	At Emmanuel Waterthorpe
Saturday 3 rd	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Wednesday 7 th	7.30 pm	Property and Finance Meeting	Interfaith Room
Thursday 8 th	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Sunday 18 th	12 noon onwards	NENG Farmers' Market	
Saturday 24 th	11.00 am – 2.00 pm	Summer Fair	At SAPLC this year
Wednesday 28 th	7.30 pm	What is Zen Buddhism?	Interfaith Room

JULY

Saturday 1 st	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Sunday 2 nd	12 noon onwards	Interfaith BBQ	
Tuesday 4 th	7.30 pm	Eco Group Meeting	Narthex
Thursday 6 th	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Thursday 6 th	7.30 pm	Leadership team	Narthex
Tuesday 11 th	7.30 pm	ECC meeting	Narthex
Wednesday 12 th	6.30 pm	Carbon Conversations , I	Room 3, Shirley House
Thursday 13 th	7.30 pm	Property and Finance Meeting	Interfaith Room
Saturday 20 th	10.00 am-2.00 pm	Eco- event - Going Greener at Crystal Peaks	Crystal Peaks

JUNE – JULY SERVICES

Please note that the congregation will join the Sandcastles worship on June 11th, and Morning Worship will follow the Sandcastles service at 10.15

June 4th	Pentecost	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
June 11th	Trinity Sunday	
9.15 am	Sandcastles	
10.15 am	Morning Worship	<i>Judith Roberts</i>
6.30 pm	Holy Communion at Southcroft	<i>Revd Anthony Ashwell</i>
June 18th	Second Sunday after Pentecost	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
June 25th	Third Sunday after Pentecost	
9.15 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>Imogen Clout</i>
July 2nd	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
July 9th	Fifth Sunday after Pentecost	
9.15 am	Sandcastles	
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>Imogen Clout</i>
6.30 pm	Holy Communion at Southcroft	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
July 16th	Sixth Sunday after Pentecost	
9.00 am	Boulders Breakfast Group	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Anthony Ashwell</i>
July 23rd	Seventh Sunday after Pentecost	
9.15 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>John Harding</i>
July 30th	Eighth Sunday after Pentecost	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>