

The Ark

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CONFERENCE BY ZOOM

The Methodist Conference has been rather surprising this year. We knew it would be different as all were attending from home via our new mode of communication – Zoom.

The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Deputy Secretary of conference were all located at Cliff College on specially constructed, appropriately distanced, rostrums and received votes from on-line polls or by the raising of an electronic hand. Speakers wishing to say something were 'brought into the room' to appear as large as life on our screens in front of us. All the while our Yorkshire West representatives were using WhatsApp, to note the finer points for us to respond as a team.

Some speakers had obviously thought about the background to their zoom presence and been careful to select the right corner of a room to set up. On the first day of Presbyteral conference, one speaker sat in front of a Methodist banner strategically placed to show off their District to the full. Three days later many speakers were now sitting in front of District propaganda.

The twists and turns of Notices-of-Motion, Points-of-Order, clarifications, and defeated or supported resolutions became exhaustive, and the time went so very quickly. In essence though Conference did meet, but this year in a virtual format, and conferred as best it could. Those matters it could not give proper debate, were deferred to next year. Lots of hard work went into preparing the technology and surprisingly it has been a truly meaningful, as well as memorable, Conference.

Whilst at conference, our Superintendent Minister Revd Andrew Longshaw, has started compassionate leave and we pray for him and his wife Lizzy. I have been asked to assume the role of Acting Superintendent until further notice because our Deputy Superintendent, Neil Bishop and his wife, Helen, have their leaving service next Sunday 12th July at 4pm. Again this will take place through the mystery that is Zoom.

God still has much to teach us about being family, about what Church means, the new ways we can engage, and when we sit in front of others and profess the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be the background and foundation of our life.



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ADRIAN PLASS—SEE BACK PAGE

Q1 Fact from 2012—If every one in the world washed their hands properly, a million lives could be saved a year.



BIBLE READING—GENESIS 24:34-38, 42-49,58-67

34 So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. 35 The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. 36 And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. 37 My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; 38 but you shall go to my father’s house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.’

42 “I came today to the spring, and said, ‘O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! 43 I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,” 44 and who will say to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also”—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’

45 “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ 46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, ‘Drink, and I will also water your camels.’ So I drank, and she also watered the camels. 47 Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. 48 Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had

led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son. 49 Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left.”

58 And they called Rebekah, and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will.” 59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham’s servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes.”

61 Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb. 63 Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. 64 And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, 65 and said to the servant, “Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

[On-Line Bible](#)

BIBLE READING—ROMANS 7:15-25A

15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do

what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, .

[On-Line Bible](#)

THIS WEEK'S REFLECTION

Let's start with the Old Testament Reading and have a look at Isaac.

Isaac was the son of Abraham and the father of Jacob. These three men are referred to collectively as the Patriarchs, the founders of the Hebrew faith.

Abraham was a mighty leader. He was not only the father of Isaac but also the father of a great nation, his descendants being the modern-day Jewish people.

Jacob, the third Patriarch, was the son of Isaac. Like his Grandfather he was a strong character. His early life left much to be desired. He was a cheat, a liar and a thief. A dubious character indeed. But a person, for all his faults eventually became a founder of the great nation by producing the twelve sons who became the Children of Israel.

But what about the middle one, Isaac.

Well we don't hear much about him actually. His parents were very old when he was born and he brought them great joy. He was obedient and did what Abraham asked. He loved his mother and mourned her when she died, only being comforted when he married Rebekah. Even his marriage was arranged but that turned out alright. Then again Isaac and Rebekah found it difficult to have children and they had to wait many years for their twin boys, Esau and Jacob, to be born.

All in all Isaac just seems to be an all-round, pretty good bloke. Perhaps a bit laid back and I think, as I read about them in the Bible, that Rebekah was the driving force in that marriage.

*Isaac seems to be just
an ordinary man,*

Isaac seems to be just an ordinary man, maybe even a bit weak for God's great plan. But

through him God worked his extra-ordinary plan for His great nation.

Now then, you can see where I am going with this.

We are part of God's plan for our little corner of the world.

(Do you remember singing 'Jesus bids us shine --- You in your small corner and I in mine')

My small corner at the moment is very small, as is yours, and yet God still calls us to do our bit.

MEDITATION

Luke 23:46 tells the tale
of the faultless
fallen
victim
the perversion
of the Empires
relentless force—
of crowds which once
stood in Pilates Palace
calling, still.
For blood,
by the Poplar Trees.
Somewhere
between Jerusalem and
Minnesota Streets
Stands the cross,
Hand in hand
With the lynching
Tree—
And we who,
Washing our hands,
Refusing to see ourselves—
Are here,
Refusing to see—
That Jesus
Was George Floyd
Killed by the very
Same power—
Two thousand
Years ago, and—
Still...
Struggling...
To...
breathe.

*"Crying out in a loud voice,
he breathed his last"*

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WHO ME?

Waiting between Bishop Stortford and Harlow, to catch speeding drivers, a Police Officer sees a car pattering along the M11 motorway at 11MPH so he says to himself: "This driver is just as dangerous as a speeder!" So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over.

Approaching the car, he notices that there are five old ladies, two in the front seats and three in the back...wide eyed and white as ghosts. The driver, obviously confused, says to him "Officer, I don't understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit! What seems to be the problem?"

"Ma'am," the officer replies, "you weren't speeding, but you should know that driving slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers."

"Slower than the speed limit? No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly...eleven miles an hour!"the old woman says a bit proudly.

The Police officer, trying to contain a chuckle explains to her that M11 is the road number, not the speed limit. A bit embarrassed, the woman grins and thanks the officer for pointing out her error.

"But before I let you go, Ma'am, I have to ask...Is everyone in this car OK? These women seem awfully shaken, and they haven't made a sound this whole time," the officer asks.

"Oh, they'll be all right in a minute officer. We've just come off the A120."

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Only, we are very ordinary people, with very ordinary weaknesses.

But we are not alone in this. Even great people have problems as we do.

I take great comfort in the great Apostle Paul's words that we have read today.

In his letter to the Church in Rome he tells us that because we are human and sinful that we don't always do what we should and very often do what we shouldn't.

Rings a bell?

Well Paul goes on to ask 'Who can rescue us from this predicament?'

And his reply is simply 'Thank God for Jesus'.

Thank God for Jesus. Through Him we are forgiven time and time again if we are truly sorry and then, not only are our sins forgiven but they are also forgotten and we can begin again in newness of life. A clean slate.

So God continues in his plan for each of us.

We are to be a light in the world.

So how can we shine – you in your small corner and I in mine?

Well we may be locked-up but we are never locked down. We are still free to show God's love to others.

A prayer, a letter, a telephone call, a financial gift to mention just a few and if we are able to go out there are many more opportunities.

We are called to be a part of God's great plan for His world and in these times it is as important as ever it was. So what can we do?

As you may remember I am very fond of helpful hints. Well here is one that I find helpful.

A few weeks ago I heard some words quoted in a sermon. I keep these words in front of me and now I give them to you.

'Be joyful,

Keep the Faith,

Do the little things'.

God bless us all and keep us in His love until we meet again.

Amen

Val Brook

PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord our God; in you is life and life eternal. You love us with an everlasting love.

You give us the freedom to turn to you or turn away from you. You do not compel us to love you but invite us to know you and your love.

Help us in our desire to know you and to be more faithful to you.

Blessed are you, God, for ever.

We give you thanks for all your faithful people.

We remember before you those who are new to the faith and all who are seeking to deepen their faith.

We pray for all who are tempted to turn their back on you, those who are troubled by doubt and all those who are finding their faith a challenge.

Silence

Holy Lord,
our trust is in you.

We give thanks for the gift of power you have given to peoples and nations.

May we use all our powers to your glory and the benefit of others.

We remember all who suffer from the misuse of power, all



who are oppressed, the wrongly imprisoned and those who suffer from violence.

Lord, grant us peace in our hearts and in the world.

Silence

Holy Lord,
our trust is in you.

We give you thanks for those who brought us to know you and love you. We pray for our friends and our families.

May our relationships all reflect a good relationship with you.

Silence

Holy Lord,
our trust is in you.

We give thanks for all who have committed themselves to work for your glory and the benefits of others. We remember all who feel let down, deserted or lonely. We pray for the persecuted and the marginalised in society.

We ask your blessing on all who are ill at home or in hospital, on all those isolating during the pandemic. On those who seek healing or deliverance.

Silence

Holy Lord,
our trust is in you.

You, Lord, are the giver of life eternal. We remember before you the faithful departed. May they rejoice in the fullness of life eternal.

We ask all this through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.



WATERING CAN

The watering can has been in existence since the 17th Century and these days it comes in all colours, shapes and sizes. The watering can has many uses including as an ornament; a plant holder; pouring bitumen for road-works; as a foot shower - to mention a few.

Throughout the summer we fill the watering can and go around the garden giving individual plants a refreshing, gentle shower and seeing the brilliant colours and textures of the flowers and foliage. We are also reminded of the wonderful Creator behind it all and how he 'waters' His world on a massive scale with the rain.

We have had a chance to enjoy the simpler things—to stop and ;smell the roses'.

'...see how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like on of these.'
Matthew 6:28&29

FLY IN 'V' FORMATION

The reason why migrating geese fly in a 'V' formation is because each goose flapping its wings creates an upward lift for the geese that follow. When the geese do their part, the whole flock has a 71% greater flying range than if each bird were to fly alone.

A lesson there for everyone.



"I can't go out because of the virus" sounds weak, whiny and boring.

Try this instead:

"I've sworn an oath of solitude until the pestilence is purged from the lands."

That sounds more principled, valiant and heroic - and people might even think you are carrying a sword.

Members belong to a static organisation;
disciples live with uncertainty.

Tom Stukey

It's Good to Talk

If you wish to talk to a Minister then please contact Rev Barry

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The **Methodist Church**



GROWBAG WORLD—ADRIAN PLASS

Upon this giant growbag world,
I planted seeds of light,
And dreamed a glowing harvest,
That would penetrate the night.

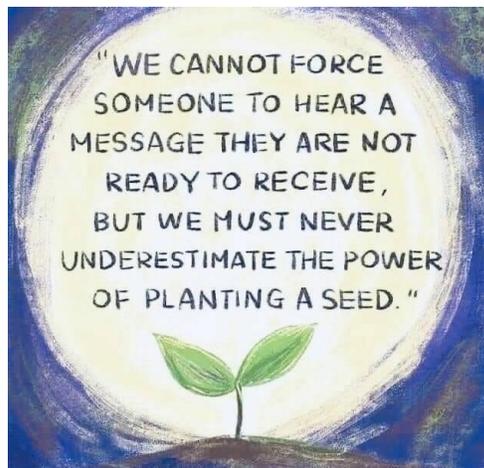
But as I toiled upon my knees,
They ringed me round with gloom,
Their pockets full of pallid hands,
Their voices full of doom.

'We tell the truth, the truth is dark,
There is no light to save,
Your seeds will never break the earth,
Your garden is a grave.'

And yet I work, I work, I work,
And now my seeds have grown,
I touch the cold and lightless leaves,
And love them as my own.

And will there come a morning soon,
When flowers from the shade,
Will bloom and break, and oat, and light
The world that you have made?

How hard, how hard, to paint a dream,
For eyes that cannot shine,
For eyes too dulled by twilight skies,
To see the dawn in mine.



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