

Affinity

*All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above,
So thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love.*

[StF130]



October /November 2020

OADBY TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

August / September 2020

Oadby Trinity Methodist Church

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A Journey in God's service

Just over five years ago, God called me out of my comfort zone to start a new journey with him as I embarked on my training to become a local preacher in the Methodist Church.

It has been a journey of learning and discovery; discovering more about God from his Holy Word, and discovering also that he doesn't call the qualified, but he qualifies those whom he calls to do his work.

There have been times of optimism and confidence, but also times when I wondered whether I would be able to stay the course. There were plenty of friends both in Trinity congregation and in other churches around the circuit who gave me the encouragement I needed to continue my studies.

However, I have done it, and despite the setbacks and delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, I have passed my coursework, led my trial service and had my final interview at the Local Preachers meeting in September.

Now as I look forward to my service of Recognition and Accreditation as a local preacher, I give heartfelt thanks to God for calling me to this role, and I pray that he will continue to guide and sustain me as I continue my ministry within Leicester Trinity Circuit.

My service of Recognition will take place at Oadby on Sunday November 1st at 10.30 am. It will be partly “live” and partly via zoom. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Heather Corlett



Rev John Wesley who introduced the idea of lay preachers to Methodism in the 18th Century.

Editorial



Heather Corlett: Editor

Welcome to the October /November issue of Affinity. This will be an electronic copy only; hopefully we shall return to printed copies at some time.

Since our last issue, our Church has re-opened for services –albeit on a rather restricted scale, because of the social distancing rules and the need to keep people safe whilst giving them the opportunity to return to church to worship God.

The deadline for the October /November issue is **Sunday November 15th** . All contributions to Heather Corlett [Editor], Email: telroc@talktalk.net Articles need to be 250 words [1 page], 375 words [1 1/2 pages] and 500 words [2 pages]. **Please** try to keep articles as close as possible to these lengths.

Heather Corlett [Editor]



Letter from the Manse

“I will return to my house from which I came.”
When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and
put in order. (Matthew 12:44 NRSVA)

Rev Derek McLean

I included that quote in my letter to our Houghton friends a few weeks ago. Superficially, it is a comment about our churches. They were indeed empty, swept, and put in order. “In order” included the appointment of a COVID officer (thank you Barry, Liz and Mary) and writing Risk Assessments. Our return to church buildings could begin.

Fortunately the good folk at Houghton know that I have a sense of humour. The quote of course comes from a story of demon possession, and it is the demon which is returning with lots of its friends to repossess (yes, re-possess) the body it once occupied.

The joke makes an immediate and serious point: don't take Bible verses out of context.

As I write this, the quote seems particularly appropriate.

We have a difficult balance ahead of us. At one level, we rejoice that we are returning to our buildings for worship, for prayer and for the service of our God and our community...

... but we know that the evil is still out there. We know that there is a significant risk that infection rates continue to increase rapidly. We know that COVID presents a huge risk to many.

We also know that we are a people of faith and not of timidity. In previous plagues, Christians made decisions based on self-sacrifice for the greater good. They trusted – not that they would be spared from death by plague – but that following Jesus meant taking risks in faith.

We are not called to be foolish breakers of Government advice, but we may sometimes need to be fools for Christ. “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Rev Derek

Prayer and Worship

Subject to restrictions which may be in place from time to time, our churches in this section are open for Prayer and Worship at the following times:

Oadby Trinity

Saturday 10:15am. Half an hour of prayer in church led by one of our Members.

Sunday 8:30am (1st Sunday of the month) Holy Communion in church

Sunday 10:30am. Morning Worship. This is in mixed mode, with most participants joining online, but with the church open for those who wish to attend in person.

Church at the Cross (Great Glen Methodist Church)

Saturday 10am to 11am Church open for Private Prayer

Sunday 10:30am Morning Worship. 4th October, via zoom, joint service with Oadby. Any in-person attendees need to go to OTMC. On 11th October, the church will be open so some worshippers can join the service there. We hope to repeat that as often as possible after that.

Houghton on the Hill

Wednesday 2:30pm weekly act of worship. This will be Holy Communion most weeks.

Sunday 10:30am Houghton members will continue to join the online worship for the section week by week. We also hope to be in church on the 25th October and 22nd November.





Rev Derek McLean

Sabbatical

I was due to be on Sabbatical for the period from December to February. I had planned to spend it in Israel-Palestine working on an Ecumenical project. As most of you know, this work is something which I care passionately about. It inspires my reading of Scripture, and illuminates my understanding of the life, work and ministry of Jesus.

Like so many aspects of our lives, that project is on hold at present.

I have been given permission to defer my Sabbatical in order to be able to do this at a later date.

We don't yet know when this might happen. Partly, of course, this depends on how soon we return to a post-COVID 'normal'. In practical terms the EAPPI process works as a series of overlapping three month periods with the opportunity for one team to hand over to the next. EAPPI have indicated that they would like me to serve on a future trip, but until the programme restarts we will not know what the rolling dates are for future periods of service.

The Circuit has generously permitted me to defer the Sabbatical provided that I can then fit it in with other circuit needs. Saidu is due to take a Sabbatical in April, May, June and we have two ministers moving in August 2021, so the new date will not be before September 2021 at the absolute earliest.

Perhaps I will be in Bethlehem for Christmas 2021 instead of Christmas 2020!

Rev Derek

Aerial view of Bethlehem





The Methodist Church

Saturday Prayer: 10:15am

Please join us in prayer. We are led in prayer for approximately 30 minutes with various members of the church leading this time together.

Please attend only if you are free of coronavirus symptoms, arrive in good time, wear a mask, leave contact details for Test & Trace, and sit as directed. We are following Government guidance to ensure Social Distancing can be maintained.

If you have a particular concern you would like to be held in prayer, please contact the minister, Rev. Derek McLean on 0116 271 2404 or derek.mclean@methodist.org.uk



The Methodist Church

Sunday worship: 10:30am

Joining online - please contact the minister, Rev. Derek McLean on 0116 271 2404 or email derek.mclean@methodist.org.uk for joining instructions.

Joining in person:

Please arrive in good time, wear a mask, leave contact details for Test & Trace, and sit as directed. We will be following Government guidance to ensure Social Distancing can be maintained.

Please attend only if you are free of coronavirus symptoms.

Church Council Meetings via 'Zoom'

Thanks to the marvels of modern technology it has been possible to hold 'virtual' meetings of Church Council at a time when it was not possible for members to meet physically. As well as the regular planned meeting on 15th June, special meetings were held during July and August to enable the Managing Trustees to make decisions about the cautious and gradual re-opening of the premises. Following much careful planning and preparation, including completion of a detailed risk assessment, it was possible for *Zeph's* to resume trading in mid-August with appropriate social distancing measures in place. After an 'experiment' on 16th August, weekly worship at 10.30am on Sundays has resumed with limited numbers present. Those able to worship via *Zoom* are encouraged to continue to do so. At the meeting held on 12th August our Senior Steward, **Barry Wilford**, agreed to act as the **Covid-19 Officer** for Trinity. Some of our regular lettings have recently resumed. Council meetings have taken account of the financial impact of the 'lockdown'. The reduction of income from lettings has been particularly serious and at the June meeting it was agreed to write directly to members and friends to up-date them on the current situation. The most recent meeting, held on 12th August, was heartened to receive news about the generous response to the appeal for financial contributions to reduce the anticipated deficit. Members of the Council were pleased to receive reports of the continuing, much appreciated work of the Food Bank throughout the pandemic which has been recognised by, among others, our local Member of Parliament, Neil O'Brien.

Our next meeting will be held on 30th September.
Howard Smith (Sec.)

Sent by a friend this made me smile!

Sharing.....

The old man placed an order for one hamburger, French fries and a drink.

He unwrapped the hamburger and carefully cut it in half, placing one half in front of his wife.

He then carefully counted out the French fries, dividing them into two piles and neatly placed one pile in front of his wife.

He took a sip of the drink, his wife took a sip and then set the cup down between them. As he began to eat his few bites of hamburger, the people around them were looking over and whispering.

Obviously they were thinking, 'That poor old couple – all they can afford is one meal for the two of them.'

As the man began to eat his fries, a young man came to the table and politely offered to buy another meal for the old couple. The old man said they were just fine – they were used to sharing everything.

People closer to the table noticed the old lady hadn't eaten a bite. She sat there watching her husband eat and occasionally taking turns sipping the drink.

Again the young man came over and begged them to let him buy another meal for them.

This time the old woman said ‘No thank you, we are used to sharing everything.’

Finally, as the old man finished and was wiping his face with the napkin, the young man again came over to the woman who had yet to eat a single bite of food and asked ‘What is it you are waiting for?’

She answered,

THE TEETH!

Submitted by Diane Price

The Silver lining in the clouds of lockdown

Going from worshipping together face to face in church to worshipping on line via zoom has been a big change for all of us, and some of our fellowship may have found it harder than others to adjust to the new way of doing church.

However, every cloud has a silver lining, and worshipping via zoom has allowed friends to join us who would normally be worshipping in their local churches. We have enjoyed the company of Sam and Veronica Robson with baby Ellie, as well as Colin and Caroline Smith and David and Kathleen Wood at our Sunday services.

The following is a message from Kathleen and David, expressing their appreciation of the fellowship of our zoom services over the

past few months. They are now able to worship in their own local church.

“COVID 19 has brought many challenges and opportunities. For us, the challenge of not being able to worship in Richmond (N. Yorkshire) was accompanied by the opportunity to worship elsewhere via Zoom, and other such systems. We have very much appreciated our time at Oadby Trinity over many weeks, where Rev Derek, and all of you, have made us feel very welcome. Thank you.

Our own church is now open for worship most weeks, and we will be gathering there whenever we can – as long, of course, as the regulations allow.

So for now, we wanted to say thank you, and maybe see you again sometime in the future!”

Every blessing

Kathleen and David Wood.



Rev Derek McLean

Waiting for work.

The Gospel Reading for 20th September was Matthew 20:1-16. Jesus is teaching about the Kingdom of God, and talks about the owner of a vineyard who hires people at different times of day, and pays them all the same amount.

This is the Sermon Derek offered in response:

My Sabbatical has been postponed. I will not now be going to Israel-Palestine in December.

As you know it is a place where I find great inspiration. I was to have been there with the EAPPI programme, which involves monitoring the way in which the Israeli security operation impacts the daily lives of Palestinians. One of the places which they monitor is the checkpoint where Palestinians can pass through to get into Israel.

The Checkpoint is horrible. It is all the more appalling that those trying to get through come from every level of Palestinian society. Some of those with passes never actually get through: they are turned back for random, political or bureaucratic reasons.

Some amongst the scrum have important jobs in hospitals in Israel. Others are casual daily labourers. It is these labourers who come to mind every time I re-read this passage. They sit on a low wall on the Israeli side of the checkpoint and they hope to be hired for the day.

Most tourists never see them – the tourist coaches sail past through a road gate which ordinary Palestinians cannot use. Those few tourists who do see them usually only see the stragglers – those still there at the eleventh hour, in the words of the parable. Late in the day, many have given up.

Today, as in Jesus' time, these day labourers are the excluded ones: the ones needing that days work just to survive and feed their families. Those at the eleventh hour the lowest of the low in the economic system which determines the value of people in his day and ours.

Jesus tells us that economics doesn't look like this in the Kingdom of God.

Sure – I spent long enough in a job which demanded an understanding of economics. An understanding that the parable is dependent upon the existence of “wealth creators” too, a system which creates jobs for these day labourers. But Jesus is clearly telling s something about the value of every individual.

The last few months has seen us recognise the value of some of those who earn little in monetary terms, but it has also highlighted the plight of those whose income is fragile:

- Those in Leicester garment factories not even earning Minimum wage, never mind Living Wage
- Those for whom “working from home” is a return to Victorian piece-work on dreadful pay
- Those who are left waiting at the city gate with no work for the day
- Those feeling humiliation at their first visit to our Food Bank.

The economist in me thinks this merely accelerates the need for a Universal Basic Income, but I don't think that is the meat of this parable.

How do we cry out for justice for all? Where are we in the story?

Are we Kingdom people, who rejoice that we share Jesus' love for the weakest?

Or do we confess that we quite like the privileges we have that make us the landowners, or those picked at the start of the

day?

Do we resent sharing?

... Or more commonly just fail to notice those who don't have our advantages?

Rev Derek

Situations Vacant

Circuit Steward

The Circuit Stewards play a key role in leading the coordination of work across the Circuit. Together with the ministers and some office holders, they form the Circuit Leadership Team who help in running the Circuit between Circuit Meetings. Their input is especially important in relation to the invitation and re-invitation of Ministers.

Circuit Stewards also attend the Church Councils of individual churches to share a bigger vision of Methodism in this area. As far as possible, we should have Circuit Stewards from every part of the Circuit.

We are looking to appoint an additional Circuit Steward from the Houghton-Glen-Oadby section.

Circuit Property Steward

The Circuit owns the manses in which our ministers live, it also owns a former manse which is let out as a student house. The Circuit currently has responsibility for the Claremont Street Church building, as there is no Church Council in place since that church closed, so the circuit takes responsibility until the

building is sold.

The Circuit Property Steward also acts as an advisor to each of the individual churches in relation to the way in which we look after them, and the way in which we report and coordinate our care of property under the Methodist system of Governance.

Our Circuit Property Steward has recently retired after many years faithful service. We are looking for someone with some knowledge of property and of Methodist governance to fill this important Circuit role.

Pastoral Secretary/ Pastoral Visitors

Methodism places great importance on the pastoral care of its members and adherents. It does so by the appointment of Pastoral Visitors.

The work of the Pastoral Visitors has been extraordinarily important during the COVID pandemic as they are the formal way in which the Church keeps us in touch with each others needs. We are aware that some people have been unable to do this as well as they would like as their lists are longer than they can manage. We would be able to do this more effectively if we had a few more Pastoral Visitors.

Most urgently, we are looking for a new Pastoral Secretary who acts as Coordinator for this work. In November last 2019, June Aldridge gave a year's notice that she would step down this year. It would be of great comfort to know that we have someone stepping in to take on this role.

Finance

Oadby, Glen and Houghton Churches

Thank you for your generosity.

Along with a huge number of organisations up and down the country, our three churches have faced considerable financial uncertainty during the COVID pandemic. We have lost income from lettings and we have lost a significant part of the income which would have appeared in the offertory week by week.

In normal circumstances, we would be concerned if the financial outturn for 2019/20 was much worse than we had originally budgeted. In these extraordinary times we are immensely grateful that people have responded generously and so the results are much better than we might have expected. Thank you.

Of course, if you are able to help and have not yet done so, please consider supporting us further, either through regular or one-off giving.

... BUT never forget, there are some of you who are much worse off in these circumstances. If that is you, please ignore this appeal, or better still, consider giving less money to the church for a season.

Leicester Trinity Methodist Circuit

The Circuit is seeking to help all of our local churches to continue their Mission and Service to local communities

and their worshipping presence, glorifying God in different parts of the city and surrounding area. Please pray for those who are facing difficult decisions and for the circuit team evaluating the choices being made. Following a generous donation, the circuit has set up a fund to enable it to offer support to help those churches in their Mission. If you want to support this in addition to the brilliant way you are supporting your own local church, please let me know.

Rev Derek McLean



Claim to Christianity – Study Sessions

Two one hour sessions via zoom: 7:30pm on Mondays 26th October and 2nd November

In the August edition of Affinity we featured a book review written by Tom Wilson of the St Philips Centre, where he wrote about Hannah Strommen and Ulrich Schmiedel’s book “The Claim to Christianity: Responding to the Far Right.”

The St Philips Centre are now offering a course based on this important issue facing Christians in the West. To what extent is the radical love of Jesus being hijacked by those who wish to use the message of the West’s “Christian Culture” as the new disguise for racism? How do we respond.

We’ve got the opportunity to be amongst the first to explore this material with them.

As we’ve had to manage without so many of our Bible study groups for so long, this is a great opportunity to think seriously about our faith.

Places will be limited, so book early by contacting Derek.

Joyful News!

We offer our congratulations to Dired, Dusu, Seleda and Siseng on the safe arrival of their new baby Zenda, born on the 14th September.



CHRISTMAS POST.

This may be able to take place but only in a reduced way. Details will be published later when hopefully the situation may become clearer! So, watch this space.

Philip Sutcliffe



[We may have more idea about what is possible by time the deadline for the December/January issue comes around. –Ed]

OUR CHURCH

I think that I shall never see.
A church that's all it ought to be
A church where members never stray
Whose pastor has the time to pray.
Where all are meek and none is proud
Whose choir sings well but not too loud.
Such perfect churches there may be
But none of them are known to me.
But still we'll pray and work and plan,
To make our church the best we can !

Submitted by Barry Wilford.





ZEPH'S CAFÉ

THE NEW NORMALITY

Dave Smith

Last time we were preparing to reopen the café after the closure during lockdown. Well, the café did indeed reopen on Monday 10 August and, though we are all still learning as we go along, we continue to offer our services, albeit during restricted hours, in an environment that we hope our customers find both safe and welcoming.

In order to get to the current stage, I must first hand out a number of huge “thank yous”. Firstly to Michael and the staff, who have all worked so hard to make a success of reopening under the most trying of circumstances; secondly to those working behind the scenes to make this all work – and I must single out Penny for her efforts in particular to drive the business forward; and thirdly to yourselves, the public, for supporting the café in sufficient numbers to put us back on the road to viability.

There have, of course, been changes. We are proud to be able to claim that we can still offer the full two-metre social distancing on the premises, together with a one-way flow for maximum safety. The use of the garden area has proved popular during the summer weather: so much so, in fact, that the directors are looking to find imaginative ways in which that area might be utilised even during the winter months. The expansion into the church hall has also been an important factor in striving for viability and will continue to be so during the colder months. We have found a way to co-exist with the food bank and, hopefully, will be able to accommodate other demands once the room booking system gets back to normal.

Your support for the two Fish Fryday events to date has been nothing short of magnificent. This has encouraged us to plan a number of further special events for the rest of the year. Pre-booking, with advance payment, is essential as this helps us to lay the café out properly in preparation. Throughout the rest of the year please consider the following:

Fish Frydays - 2nd Oct, 6th Nov and 4th December, as expected. £8.50 pre-book and includes tea/coffee, bread/butter.

Events Nights -

Friday 2 October – Fish Fryday, £8.50 including tea/coffee, bread and butter

Friday 16 October - Italian Night, £9.95

Friday 6 November - Fish Fryday, £8.50 including tea/coffee, bread and butter

Wednesday 11 November - Get Together for tea and cake, £3.95

Friday 20 November - Pie Night, £7.50 including tea/coffee

Friday 4 December - Fish Fryday, £8.50 including tea/coffee, bread and butter.

Friday 18 December - Christmas Dinner Night, £9.95

21 – 23 December – Christmas Family Breakfast, £8.50

We are currently negotiating with Santa Claus and are hopeful that he will be able to make an appearance at breakfast time, while we are also investigating whether we can find some imaginative ways of being able to offer

some limited activities for the children – more on this nearer the time.

As I write this, the government is about to introduce the “rule of six”. Bookings will need to take account of this restriction and table layouts will be adjusted to accommodate this.

Supporting these special events really does make a huge difference to our business so please take a look and see if there is anything on offer to, literally, whet your appetite. We are all trying to adapt to the new normal but we promise that some things will never change: superb home-made cakes and scones in a safe and friendly atmosphere are still the trade mark at Zeph's.

Please come and give us a try.

Keep safe everyone!

Dave Smith –Zeph’s Director



Something to smile about amid the current restrictions upon our daily lives. Thanks to Penny Lee for this.

WORDS WORTH IN LOCKDOWN

I wandered lonely as a cloud
Two metres from the maddening crowd
When all at once my name was called
To enter Waitrose hallowed hall
This was the pensioners' special hour
I'd gone to get a bag of flour
But I forgot – when through the door
What had I gone to Waitrose for.
The Waitrose staff are extra kind,
I told them it had slipped my mind.
They asked what else I had forgot –
They clear thought I'd lost the plot!
I phoned my wife to ask.
She reminded me of this special task:
"I need some flour to bake a cake,
With all that cream you made me take,"
"Ah yes, I recall", I had to lie.
I dare not ask what flower to buy,
But then I saw them at the tills
A bunch of golden daffodils!



8

USA Newsletter August

News from Houghton on the Hill Methodist Chapel

I was glad when they said unto me we will go into the house of the Lord

Psalm 122 vs 1

After careful preparation, and just one week short of six months since we were last there, we were able to meet again in the Chapel for a communion service on the 9th September. The words of Psalm 122 have never resounded more truly. With the early autumn sunshine streaming through the windows it was a time of peace, reflection, hope and something of a sense of homecoming. It was almost possible to put some of the horrors of the past six months out of our minds.

Our re-opening was the result of careful planning, because the Chapel was still closed the Church Council couldn't meet there to plan the reopening! A meeting in the garden in front of the Chapel was one solution but the weather forecast was not promising....so we met in the little barn at the back of my home with all the doors open, 'appropriate' said the assembled company 'but it isn't yet Christmas'. It provided the perfect venue and we even managed a cup of tea when all the details had been finalised.



Of course we know that the Covid-19 pandemic is not going away anytime soon (underlined by the fact that further restrictions about meeting in private homes and gardens were introduced in mid-September owing, once again, to the rising number of infections) but this was a very special new beginning. For the time being we will have a service at 2.30pm each Wednesday afternoon in the Chapel, and for those who are vulnerable or cautious we will also continue to meet Online each Sunday morning at 10.30am.

Mary Moore

TRINITY WEEKLY DIARY

Tuesday

"The Tuesday afternoon group" is a well-established group that has met regularly on alternate weeks for over 2 years now. We meet in the church at around 2 pm and conclude our meeting with refreshments in Zeph's.

The Tuesday evening House group meet at each other's homes on alternate Tuesday evenings from 7.30 pm throughout most of the year. Numbers attending vary from 7 to 12; some 5 of whom act in turn as leaders of our discussions.

Wednesday

The Wives Group started in 1959 (approx.) has evolved as circumstances have changed. There are currently around 60 members and we meet fortnightly on Wednesday's at 2pm. The group is now entitled "***Welcome on Wednesday***"

Ladies Badminton in the church hall 2-4 pm

The Guides meet in the church hall on Wednesday evening.

Thursday

Thursday Fellowship meets at 2.30 pm every fortnight in the Meeting Room. Approximately 25 ladies and gentlemen attend and enjoy a selection of interesting meetings. Rev Derek McLean is our President and we have a committee of six who meet and plan forthcoming events and speakers.

The Julian Meeting is every 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. This is a time for contemplative prayer and fellowship.

Friday

The Friday Evening House Group meets for much of the year on alternate Friday evenings at 7.30pm, usually at 3 Tynedale Close (off Hunters Way on the Grange Estate). Over the course of each year the group makes use of a variety of study material including the well established *York Courses*. When the formal part of the meeting is over fellowship continues over light refreshments. New members are always welcome.

Saturday

On Saturday morning we have an open prayer group. We meet from 10.15am until approx. 10.45am in the Worship area, where we are 'led' in our prayers which cover personal, family, church, community, and world-wide issues. The power of prayer cannot be underestimated, the more there are the more topics we can cover, and thus not miss any important issues or people.

Sunday

On the first Sunday of the month we have a Holy Communion Service at 8.30am. Our Young Families group meet at 9.00 am on the second Sunday of the month

Our Junior Church is available on 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month

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If you wish to advertise your business in our magazine our rates are £42 for a quarter page advert, £72 for a half page and £144 for a whole page. We have 6 issues a year and our distribution covers houses in Oadby, Wigston, Knighton, Great Glen and Houghton on the Hill.

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