

BPW Methodist Circuit



Newsletter

Issue 68

November 2021

Message from Revd Alistair Sharp – Superintendent



Dear Friends, What makes you angry?

Charles De Gaulle once said: "When I am right, I get angry. Churchill gets angry when he is wrong. So we were very often angry at each other."

Anger is a divinely implanted emotion. Closely allied to our instinct for right, it is designed to be used for constructive spiritual purposes. The person who cannot feel anger at evil is a person who lacks enthusiasm for good. If you cannot hate wrong, it's very questionable whether you really love righteousness. However, anger needs to be under the control of our wisdom. When Abraham Lincoln had to write a letter to someone who had irritated him, he would often write two letters. The first letter was deliberately insulting. Then, having let those feelings out of his system, he would tear it up and write

a second letter, this one tactful and discreet.

Many people have said to me, in order to justify their angry behaviour, that 'Jesus got angry...he turned the tables over in the temple.' He certainly did, however after many readings of the gospels over the years I have concluded that turning over the tables is the only thing that Jesus did that he didn't encourage his disciples to follow him in doing. He encouraged and taught them to pray, to serve, wash people's feet and to heal. He commanded them to love, to give and he even taught them to take up a cross to follow him.

We may just need to ensure that our anger, useful though it can be, is under the control of Jesus Christ. He didn't lose his temper when the disciples fell asleep three times, nor when the disciples clearly weren't listening to him, nor even when he was arrested. Our cross to carry, may well be to not turn the tables over in our precious and delicate relationships.

God Bless,

Alistair

Rev Alistair Sharp

Methodist Superintendent

Bodmin, Padstow & Wadebridge Circuit

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Stationing: It was announced at Churches on Sunday that the District Stationing Team has matched us with a prospective Superintendent to take over from Alistair when he leaves us next year. You are invited to meet them on Saturday 13th November at Rock Methodist Church for coffee at 10.30am until 11.45am or at Bodmin Methodist Church for afternoon tea at 3pm until 4.15pm.

Hello again,

Welcome to your November newsletter. Days are now noticeably shorter and we will soon be starting to think about Christmas (if we are not already!) and the end of November takes us into Advent. Don't forget – if you have any special events or services (e.g. carols or Christingle) at your chapels or in your local area that you would like to bring to our readers' attention please let us have details before the deadline for the December/Christmas issue on 3rd Dec.

We start with some sad news as we received this message from David Bulford:

Dear Friends and family,

It is with a heavy heart that I am announcing that my Dad, Roy Bulford aged 105 went to meet his maker peacefully on Saturday 6th November 2021 at Castle Hill House. He will now be reunited again with my Mum, Evelyn who he lost three years ago after 78 years of marriage.

He will be buried at Indian Queens Cemetery with close family in attendance followed by a Service of Thanksgiving at Bodmin Methodist Church. Date and time to be announced.

We have received a eulogy prepared by David's brother Graham and we plan to share this with you in the next issue as space is rather limited and we could not do it justice in this issue. You may remember when, in the very early days of this newsletter we congratulated Roy on reaching 104 and pictured him surrounded by Cadbury's chocolate bars, and a few weeks later

reported that on hearing this news Cadbury's sent Roy a hamper. May there be all the chocolate you could ever wish for in heaven, Roy.

And, while we are thinking about members of our church and circuit community Ann Vine sent us the following message:

I would like to thank all those who have prayed for my grandson Samuel, who has been ill over the past year and had to move school. Samuel's health is much improved, and he is doing really well at his new school.

In this issue we feature COP26 and the climate, and Remembrance. We hear about the Methodist Church's response to the COP26 conference and are told about two forthcoming local talks about ocean science. Andrew Lewis from the North Cornwall Cluster of Churches tells us about the centenary of the British Legion. We have shared an article from *Singing the Faith plus* that discusses hymns appropriate for Remembrance services and we learn about different coloured poppies, concluding with a wonderful poem about a war horse.

Caroline Bailey, in a shorter article than usual due to her suffering from coronavirus tells us that November is a month for remembering. We hold Caroline in our prayers and wish her a speedy recovery from this awful virus. Coronavirus cases have been on the increase and John brings us up to date on the latest situation in the BPW circuit area. Surely there won't be another lockdown this Christmas to disrupt people's plans again will there? And finally, Dylan Smith tells us about his early journey to faith.

Take care and keep safe,

John & Tracey

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Environment and Climate Change

As COP26 draws to a close this week, this is a crucial time for churches to learn more about the impact of climate change, to call for climate justice and to commit to reduce our own carbon footprint.

Key to the Methodist Church's response is:

- Continuing to take steps at all levels to reduce our carbon footprint in conjunction with organisations such as Eco Church.
- Improving our understanding of the challenges of climate change and developing a Christian response.
- A youth led campaign called, **Climate Justice for All**, that has been working on an international stage to highlight the global challenges facing communities ahead of COP26 in November.
- Encouraging every church to take part in a Climate Sunday service and commit to further action.
- Working ecumenically through the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) to promote resources and action for climate justice.
- Praying for the world.

Ocean Science Talks

Dr Mike Kent has told us that a series of talks on *Life on the Edge: Ocean Science from a Christian Perspective* is coming to a close this month - details below. All are welcome to attend.

Thursday November 11th Exploring Marine Frontiers Dr Mike Kent and Revd Alistair Sharp in conversation with guest marine scientist Dr Nick Higgs Director of the Eleuthera Institute, the Bahamas, and Honorary Research Associate at the Natural History Museum	Thursday November 18th The Ocean Makes the Earth Habitable with Prof Meric Srokosz Professor of physical oceanography and author of 'Blue Planet Blue God'
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The talks are in Wadebridge Town Hall, from 7-9pm and are live streamed via the website at: lifeontheedge.info.

Life on the Edge is an Equipping Church Leadership in an Age of Science project funded by the Templeton Religion Trust.

November is a month for remembering



November is a month for remembering, for bonfires and fireworks, for planting bulbs, for the approach of Advent.

We start with All Saints Day on the 1st of November, where we remember with love the 'great cloud of witnesses' we read of in Hebrews 12:1, and are exhorted to keep persevering in our faith, not growing weary or losing heart, but spurred on by those who have lived by faith before us. We huddle in the dark around crackling bonfires and watch fireworks lighting the darkening skies with glorious showers of colour. We wear red poppies to remember those who have given their lives in times of War. If we want beautiful tulips for

Spring, it's time to start planting these - each brown bulb a powerhouse of energy and colour for next year. We also look ahead to the start of Advent at the end of the month, and some of us will begin Christmas preparations. Sunday November 21st is 'Stir Up Sunday' – a traditional time to make Christmas puddings, and also named after a prayer from The Book of Common Prayer:

'Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As we deepen though Autumn towards Winter during November, we can choose to use this time to enter a season of reflection, not just getting caught up in busy preparations, but embracing the opportunity for a quieter pace of life. So whether you are warming your hands by a fire, wearing your poppy to remember, planting some bulbs or maybe even stirring up a Christmas Pudding, join me in this poem-prayer for November:

*Stir up the embers of our hearts, let the flames awaken
Warm and light our way again with flicker fire glow
May the thickened bed of ash, that peaceful resting place of
All that came before, now soft dove white as dusty snow
Remind us of what burst with life, lit up and burned with power
Become the bed for our next fire, as we love and remember
Scoop them up and scatter wide, to feed the ground once more
Plant deep the tulips of our souls to nurture life and grow
Hear the call that Advent brings, Christ will come again,
Enter in the holy space, be still, and breathe and know.*



Caroline Bailey

Remembrance

Andrew Lewis writes in the November issue of the newsletter for the North Cornwall Cluster of Churches:

November is a time of the year for Remembrance. November 11th and the nearest Sunday have, of course, for the past hundred years been kept as days on which we remember the sacrifice of those who fought in both World Wars and in subsequent conflicts. This year indeed is the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the British Legion in 1921, which now oversees the Armistice commemoration. What we remember is the service and the selflessness of those who died which has allowed us to enjoy freedom and security. In remembering them we also value the service of those who serve in the armed forces today and also those who in the various branches of civilian service keep us safe.

But November has been a time of remembrance for long before the twentieth century's wars. The church keeps November 2nd as the day of All Souls, remembering all those who have died. It is a time when families come together to remember the recently departed, taking the opportunity to visit graves and other memorials. Services are held in church to remember loved ones and to read out the names of those who have died. This can be a time of sadness and regret. But the church celebrates All Souls on the day after the Feast of All Saints. It is easy to think that Saints must be special people, not like us. And indeed, those who are remembered throughout the year on their individual saints' days are usually people who have, like those we remember on November 11th, made some special sacrifice or given service in their lives in a particular way.

But on All Souls Day we rejoice with all those who are special in God's eyes, particularly those of whom nothing particular is remembered or known. But as we are all special in God's eyes, we are all saints. We should not be afraid of recognising this and valuing ourselves just as God values us. Calling ourselves holy - for that is what saints are - may seem presumptuous. But to deny it and denigrate ourselves is to deny the goodness of God who in his compassion and all-encompassing love has created us for himself. We are loved by him whether we choose to recognise it or not. If we do recognise it, we should not be ashamed to acknowledge that it makes us saints. We need only to accept God's love.

Remembering Conflict – Singing for Peace

Singing the Faith includes a handful of hymns that are of particular relevance to a Remembrance Service on or near 11th November. From the Times and Seasons section of Singing the Faith, three texts spring to mind:

Marjorie Dobson's *By a monument of marble, or a simple wooden cross* (StF 131) is set to the widely familiar tune "Scarlet Ribbons". In simple and direct language, Marjorie asks the basic question: "Why must factions stir up conflict?", saying that "this eternal mystery / troubles hearts and stirs the conscience, / urges us to think again..." The hymn ends with a prayer:

*God, we need your help and guidance
in our constant search for peace.
Move us on to new solutions
as we pray that wars may cease.*

With its steady, stoic but ultimately uplifting tune, "St Anne", Isaac Watts' *O God, our help in ages past* (StF 132) needs no introduction. A paraphrase of Psalm 90, verses 1-5, it is full of evocative phrases, including the verse that might have been written to be sung over the dead of The Somme or Passchendaele:

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;*

*they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.*

First published in *The Psalms of David* (1719), Watts' paraphrase was entitled, "*Man frail, and God eternal*". Two verses from the original that especially reflect the idea of frail humanity are omitted from all modern hymn books. One begins, "*The word commands our flesh to dust – 'Return, ye sons of men'...*" and the other uses the image of withering flowers in the field.

John Bell and Graham Maule's *To be a soldier* (StF 133) was written in memory of George Macleod, the pacifist founder of the Iona Community, whose "*Rule of the Iona Community*" was nevertheless entitled "*Mile Christi*" - "because we are engaged in a battle". That paradoxical image of a fighter for peace runs through the hymn: "*To be a soldier, / to fight for peace till war shall end: / this is the conflict / Christ calls you to attend.*" Verse 3 describes what such a soldier's commission looks like, echoing, in one line, the prophet Isaiah, quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:18:

*It calls for courage
to bring the poor release,
to enter politics praying
and break rank obeying
the power and Prince of Peace*

Another hymn, a new one, available only on the StF+ website is this by the Revd D S Grant. The suggested tune is St Gertrude (H&P 718) which is that old favourite *Onward Christian Soldiers* inexplicably omitted from Singing the Faith:

A hymn for Remembrance Sunday

*Poppies to remember
lives laid down in war -
hopes and bodies broken,
wounds forever raw.
Red and white and purple
tell of what's been lost,
summon us to silence
as we count the cost.*

REFRAIN

*Help us to remember
now and every day
sacrifice and service,
Lord of life, we pray.*

*"Do this to remember,"
Jesus tells his friends;
by his death securing
life that never ends.
Broken like his body,
bread on which we dine;
blood that's shed for us
recalled again in wine.*

REFRAIN

Help us to remember...

*Jesus, we remember
this the debt we owe;
and we pledge our service,
that the world may know
all that leads to freedom,
all that makes for peace.
Let your Kingdom come, Lord!
Let all bloodshed cease!*

REFRAIN

Help us to remember...

We all know the familiar red poppies associated with the British Legion inspired by the sight of the poppies flowering on the battlefield wastelands left by the battles of World War One, but verse one of this hymn mentions white and purple poppies, less familiar to most of us. White poppies are available from the Peace Pledge Union and are worn, like red poppies, in the run-up to Remembrance Day every year. They represent three things: remembrance for all victims of war, a commitment to peace, and a challenge to attempts to glamorise or celebrate war. In wearing white poppies, we remember all those killed in war, all those wounded in body or mind, the millions who have been made sick or homeless by war and the families and communities torn apart. We also remember those killed or imprisoned for refusing to fight and for resisting war.

The Peace Pledge Union differs from the Royal British Legion, which has traditionally said that red poppies are to remember only British armed forces and those who fought alongside them. In 2019 they shifted their position to say that they "acknowledge" civilian victims of war but did not extend their remembrance to all nationalities. White poppies symbolise a commitment to peace and to finding non-violent solutions to conflicts. In this way they reassert the original message of remembrance, 'never again'.

Purple poppies were originally produced by Animal Aid to encourage remembrance of animals caught up in human inspired conflicts. In June this year the Animal Purple Poppy Fund was launched by the War Horse Memorial which pays tribute to the nobility, courage, unyielding loyalty and immeasurable contribution these animals played in giving us the freedom of democracy we all enjoy today and signifies the last time the horse would be used on a mass scale in modern warfare. The Animal Purple Poppy Fund uses the Poppy trademark under licence from the Royal British Legion, but is not endorsed by, or affiliated with or otherwise connected with the Royal British Legion.

From StF+ website



In thinking about the war horse John found a wonderful poem about a soldier and his horse, which is particularly poignant as we remember animals of war and animals in need through the Animal Purple Poppy Fund. It certainly brought a tear to John's eye as he read it.

It was written by Neil Andrew for a recent competition to reflect on the horse in war. Neil, who runs a livery yard business in Warwickshire but is originally from Wales says that although the poem wasn't shortlisted, he put it on Facebook, and it's already been seen by over two million people and has been read out at memorial services in the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The poem *I Spoke to You in Whispers* is also included in a recently published collection of poetry entitled *Tales from a Dark Meadow* which is based around country life and includes thought provoking poems about the way the countryside is changing, including the sad loss of family farms, the rigours of horse racing, the beauty that nature provides and the emotions of the people who manage and work in the rural environment. It comes with a gentle warning: very few of the horses sent across the Channel made it, like Joey in the War Horse book and associated film, back home.

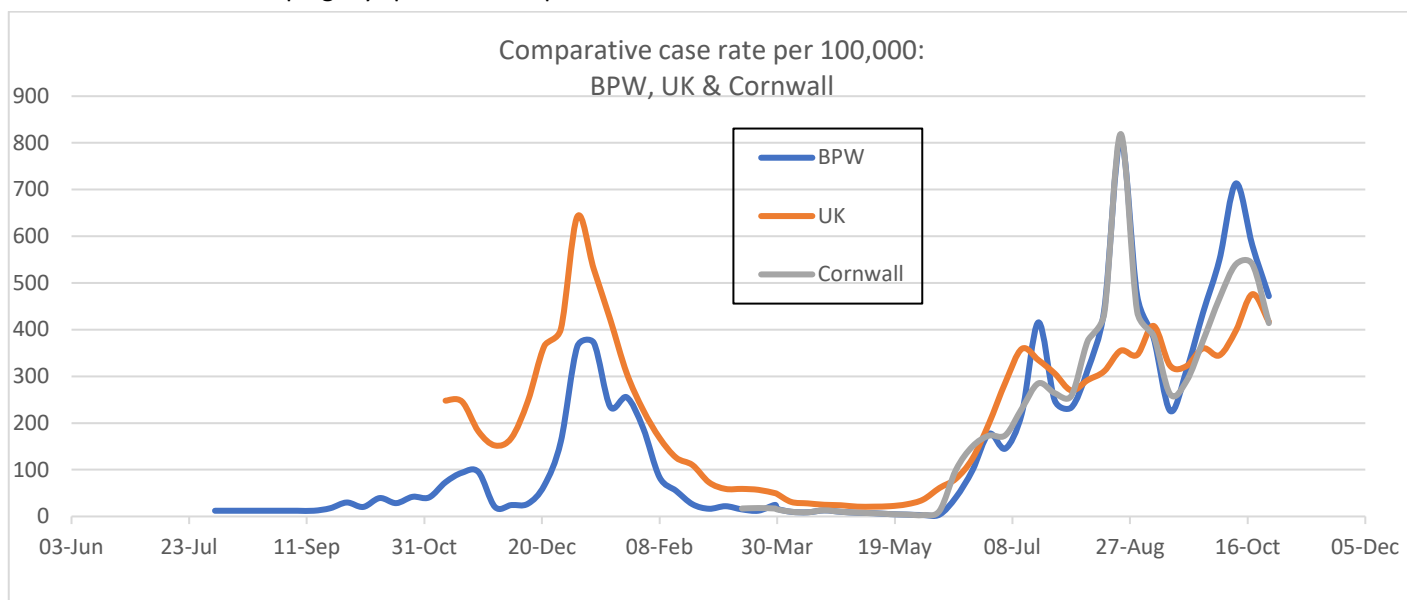
I SPOKE TO YOU IN WHISPERS

I spoke to you in whispers
 As shells made the ground beneath us quake.
 We both trembled in that crater
 A toxic muddy bloody lake.
 I spoke to you and pulled your ears
 To try and quell your fearful eye,
 As bullets whizzed through the raindrops
 And we watched the men around us die.
 I spoke to you in stable tones,
 A quiet tranquil voice.
 At least I volunteered to fight
 You didn't get to make the choice.
 I spoke to you of old times;
 Perhaps you went before the plough
 And pulled the haycart from the meadow
 Far from where we're dying now.
 I spoke to you of grooming ,
 Of when the ploughman made you shine.
 Not the shrapnel wounds and bleeding flanks,
 Mane filled with mud and wire and grime.

I spoke to you of courage,
 As gas filled the Flanders air.
 Watched you struggle in the mud,
 Harness acting like a snare.
 I spoke to you of peaceful fields,
 Grazing beneath a setting sun.
 Time to rest your torn and tired body
 Your working day is done.
 I spoke to you of promises
 If from this maelstrom I survive,
 By pen and prose and poetry
 I'll keep your sacrifice alive.
 I spoke to you of legacy,
 For when this hellish time is through
 All those who hauled or charged or carried
 Will be regarded heroes too.
 I spoke to you in dulcet tones,
 Your eye told me you understood
 As I squeezed my trigger to bring you peace
 The only way I could.
 And I spoke to you in whispers.....

Coronavirus Update

It has been a while since I wrote about coronavirus but cases have been steadily increasing through the summer and there is the fear that the cold damp days of late autumn and winter will once again provide appropriate conditions for a resurgence of the virus. I have been keeping my spreadsheet up to date and the latest chart of cases looks like this:



The early part of the chart you will recognize from previous newsletters but what has been happening since July when I last wrote about it as we were moving to Step 4 of the government's plan? I wrote in the 25th of July issue that: *'The number of new infections in the BPW Circuit area has increased in the two weeks since the last newsletter and now stands at 228 per 100,000 people (an increase of 51, so a 'decreasing increase' if that makes sense!)* This compares to numbers of new infections in the last seven days in the UK of 359 and for Cornwall of 231.' You can see that things have gone a bit 'haywire' since then! The rate of infections for the UK has increased through the summer – but more slowly after an initial steep rise from June (the impact of the double vaccinations slowing things down perhaps?) but both Cornwall and the BPW Circuit area show a distinct spike during August (peak holiday season) when the case rate down here was well above that for the UK as a whole. On 23rd August BPW had a case rate of 808 per 100,000 people just below that for Cornwall of 819 – higher than anything we had ever seen before, and BPW is just coming down from another peak of 713 on 11th October. It looks as if case rates are easing down a little now summer holidays are behind us but case rates are not now the prime indicator, hospitalizations and deaths are lower at the

moment because of the vaccines but we must not become complacent and must continue to follow guidelines and advice and get our boosters when offered.

John Tilling

A Journey of Faith



My faith journey started when I was 16 years old. I remember being in my late teens, wanting to take on the world; join various ministries, work against injustice in South Africa while passionately serving in my local church.

I started running for Christ, and not long into the journey I 'fell' pretty hard. During this time of burnout, I remember reading through the gospels, trying to see if I had missed something on how Jesus went about ministry.

We read of the start of Jesus' public ministry in Luke 3:21-23; *When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."* Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

I remember reading this and realising that I hadn't missed what Jesus was recorded doing, but I had missed an important point. Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his public ministry. I was going on 21 and felt extremely burnt out from all the ministry I was trying to do. Who did I think I was? I had to pause and consider not what was written but rather the unwritten story of Jesus. What took place in those years leading up to this point in Luke 3? Jesus was on a slow journey of discipleship and calls us to follow his example. I had to slow down, I had to journey with my spiritual family at the pace Jesus set for us; a walk not a run. I had to allow myself to grow in my faith, and when entering into ministry, I had to resist running and rather walk with Jesus.

When we are going at this pace, we will then be able to call one or two others to follow us in a journey of discipleship. Today, may you consider your journey of discipleship and if there is anyone that you can invite to follow you.

Dylan Smith

Banner drop for COP26

Did you know, on the 10th January 1946, in a world convalescing from the horrors of a World War, the inaugural meeting of the United Nations General Assembly took place at Methodist Central Hall Westminster? You can find out more [here](#). The United Nations is currently hosting COP26 in Glasgow. Methodist churches in London, Manchester and Glasgow unfurled banners recently as part of global action from faith communities calling for climate justice and care for the vulnerable.



And finally

COP26

A MESSAGE TO DELEGATES



Links

Volunteer Cornwall is there to help:

- 01872 266988

Mental Health

- call the Samaritans on 116 123;
- [mind.org.uk/coronavirus/](https://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus/);
- [mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/).

Singing the Faith Plus website link:

- www.methodist.org.uk/

Tubestation:

- www.tubestation.org

For all NHS advice regarding the Corona Virus:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus>

NHS Test & Trace

- If you have tested positive for the virus: phone 119

