

# Fareham Methodist Church

## Newsletter May/June 2017

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Dear friends, Each of the gospels have their own account of Jesus' resurrection. If I was pushed to express a preference then I think I might go for John's account in Ch.20 of his gospel. In his story Mary Magdalene has a large role. She is a complex character and has often been portrayed as such. We know that her encounter with Jesus during his ministry transformed her life so that she became a determined follower of his. Not only this, but she is the first person in John's gospel who sees the risen Christ and she is the first evangelist for she goes and says 'I have seen the Lord' to the rest of the disciples (even though they don't appear to believe her). Her witness alone proves that resurrection is **for everyone**. The heart of the gospels is about the good news of new life **for all**. For rich and poor; for the respectable and unrespectable; for the have and the have nots; the popular and the unpopular alike.

We might also note that Mary only discovers the resurrection has happened because she openly lingers at the empty tomb longer than anyone else. She is willing to stay peering into the darkness and emptiness for a second time for she is not as fearful of it as the others. It is in her lingering that she is willing to talk to the stranger in her midst – the gardener – and he turns out to be the risen Christ!

During this Easter season we continue to ponder on the resurrection stories and their meaning for us today. As a Circuit we are beginning to engage in conversations about evangelism – the sharing of the good news and talking of God (see elsewhere in this edition for a summary of our discussions at our Annual Church meeting). Sometimes we are called to share and talk with folk who are experiencing an emptiness and fear themselves and we take the opportunity to walk alongside them and linger with them in their difficulties, assuring them of God's presence. The good news is that resurrection is there even in the darkness, often in unexpected places and unexpected people. May God continue to open our eyes to see it as we continue our journey through the Easter season and we continue to talk together and with others about the good news of God.      With love, Claire

**Stewardship** I would like to record my thanks to everyone who has completed a stewardship survey in the last few months. For some this was the first time they had been asked to identify areas of discipleship and service in the life of the church. For others it was a chance to update their commitment since last completing the survey over 10 years ago. I know that the stewards and others have picked up on the results but if you are still waiting for feedback then please do speak to a steward in the first instance. My thanks to Malcolm Race in particular for updating the survey ready for publication and for then collating the information when the surveys were completed.      Claire

**Vestry Jottings** We wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped to make our celebrations of the Easter Festival so joyous. In a few weeks' time Jeffery Padley will step down from being our senior organist. We owe Jeff a huge debt of gratitude for a life time's devotion to providing music for so many services and events. We would also like to thank Maggie for her superb leadership and tremendous enthusiasm in her role of Senior Steward. It is now time to welcome Penny Garrett on to the team. We are also pleased to be able to welcome Frank and Brenda Palmer into our Church Family. They come to us from Copnor Methodist Church.      Andrew

**Thursday Prayer Circle** From May, we shall be meeting once a month, on the first Thursday of the month, from 10.15am to 11.15am There will be no meeting in August. The next meeting will be on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> May and will be led by Bob Temple.      Bobby Watson

**Circuit News** There will be a Southampton District Conference for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders (or anyone else interested) on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June from 10.30am to 3pm at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church. The topic is Celtic Christianity. For more information, see poster on Notice Board, or speak to Linda Press.

**Defusing the 'E' Word** Our Calling is to share the Good News with others and we do that already in many different ways. To help us do this, the circuit Evangelism Team is organising Roadshows across the Circuit. Each meeting will follow the same format and will give everyone the chance to explore evangelism in a variety of ways. The meetings will be held on:

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 13.00 – 15.00 at Emsworth. Please bring your lunch, hot drinks will be provided.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 14.00 – 16.00 at Liphook and Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 19.30 – 21.30 at Fareham. See Notice Board for Poster

### **Annual Church Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

At this year's ACM we spent a few minutes in small groups reflecting on the nature of our church life together and the aspects of mission that we are involved in. 'Mission' involves both *outreach* and *evangelism* recognising that our priority is to make disciples of Jesus through sharing our faith with others. We looked at the following questions and invited feedback:

- What place and form does evangelism take in the life of our church?
- What (if anything) holds us back?
- What resources or help does our church need to increase the evangelism (faith sharing / talking about Jesus) that is done by people in our church?

Thoughts shared included:

- \* Sharing activities with other churches in our area eg an ecumenical youth club
- \* many of our activities bring people across the threshold and into the church building so our outreach is good but how do we encourage faith?
- \* We can look at the church's activities as involving head, heart and hands
- \* we need to be listening ears      \* every welcome we extend to others is important
- \* the image of the evangelist standing on the street corner and shouting about faith is unhelpful!
- \* do we have a lack of confidence in chatting about our faith with others?
- \* how much we share of our faith is a balance
- \* social media is increasingly the way that people communicate and a tool for 'marketing/ publicising' what we have to offer
- \* how do we keep hold of young people who grow up and leave their 'home' church?
- \* Messy church attracts families (though maybe not both parents in a working family)
- \* the church is **us**, not the building, and we all have a duty to share God's love
- \* outreach leads to friendship that can then lead to faith sharing
- \* we have an opportunity to reach out to people in times of need.
- \* Prayer is really important in all of this!

Time constraints meant that many of these thoughts are still to be developed and will continue to be discussed at Church Council and other relevant groups in the life of the church. My thanks to everyone who engaged in the discussion at the meeting. Claire

**Action for Children** Once again it is time to empty the home collection boxes. Would all those with a box please hand them to me as soon as possible, but no later than the end of May. Thank you. Pat Croker

**Methodist Makers** Every Thursday during Coffee Centre. Come for company, chat and cake. We knit, sew, draw, design. Just arrive, you will be most welcome.

**Thanks** for flowers have been received from Alan Long and Lynda Thomas. These and the visits are much appreciated.

**Church & Community:** The next meeting of this group will be held in Church at 7.30pm on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May. Apologies to Lynda Young on 01329 505466 or 07771 964314. Thank you.

**Prayers:** Please remember Doreen Phillips, who is unwell and Tracy Cooper, who has her final interview as a local preacher at Petersfield on 8<sup>th</sup> June.

*Items for the July/August Newsletter should be sent to [jenkchalmers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jenkchalmers@hotmail.co.uk) or put in the J-R Pigeonhole clearly marked Newsletter, by 12 noon on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June.*