

## WEY VALLEY – WEEKLY CIRCUIT LETTER – 12 June 2024

Barrie Tabraham

### *‘God as Spirit’\**

*\* Taken from the title of Geoffrey Lampe’s intriguing study.*



The picture opposite was painted by **John Brokenshire** (b. 1958) and was commissioned specially for the **Methodist Collection of Modern Art**. I was moved to write about it, because, in the weeks following Pentecost, the Collection has been on display at Emmanuel Church in Eastbourne, where my son Paul is the minister.

Sarah Middleton, who has worked full-time for the Methodist Church all her life and who was married to Rev. Brian Duckworth (my predecessor as the Super of the Wimbledon Circuit), helped set up this remarkable art collection. She acquired this picture from John Brokenshire (which he had painted in 2003) for the Methodist Collection of Modern Art and suggested the

title “Pentecost” – to which the painter readily agreed, since it was previously untitled.

The painting is perhaps best described by the artist himself: John Brokenshire said of this abstract painting that:

‘I was keen to get a very loosely represented image of a bird in space into my painting. But I wanted a sense of a bird hovering, not on a trajectory. At the same time, I hoped to refer in some way to angels: even if very obliquely by colour alone or by suggestion. Darkness had to be the counterpoint to this. . . . The title Pentecost was not suggested by me, but was the highest interpretation I could hope for from any viewer.’

‘The work was a long time in the making. . . . First it came from a period of interest in shadow and light as pictorial elements and the desire to create paintings from their interaction. Meanwhile the white floating image was thanks to drawings I had been making in the museum from stuffed birds. Over time I began to visit snowy owls in my imagination and they became emblems of purity and grace. . . . I wanted a sense of a bird hovering, not on a trajectory. At the same time I hoped to refer in some way to angels. . . .

‘A longstanding hope has been to convey a sense of the mystery within nature. But recently, I have felt a shift and a longing to refer more openly to the inner world. . . . I have longed believed in God: I was first drawn to the spiritual in nature . . . and have strongly felt a sense of a wonderful benign force. I would search to re-encounter this presence, and would even hope to find it in the process of painting. Gently and gradually I made my way back to the Church. I was concerned about the spiritual needs of my young children. Now I wish it had been much sooner!’

When we look at this painting, we may think about the Spirit of God, sweeping over the face of the waters in Genesis Chapter 1, or perhaps the Spirit descending from heaven upon Jesus at his baptism ‘like a dove’ (John 1:32) – which we find in all four Gospels. Or maybe an image that is in our own minds that is unique to us and us alone.

For me, the contrast between the white of the Spirit and the darkness of the background, conveys a sense of the light of the wisdom and love of God, that penetrates even the darkest places on earth and also the darkest parts of *our lives* – with love and joy and peace.

---

**A Prayer:** Loving God, forgive us, if at times we are too concerned with analysing your nature and purpose. Help us always simply to have open hearts and minds – so that we may constantly search for truth, that we may never lose a sense of awe and wonder when we discover something new, and we may always be open to your wisdom, power and love. Amen.

Every blessing to you all,

*Barrie Tabraham*

Image © Methodist Modern Art Collection, © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.  
All material reproduced by permission under CCL 1226356.

---

## Resources/Good News

### **This Garden Isn't Finished Without You**

The Methodist Church is to show its first garden at the RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park.

Read the story behind the garden that illustrates the Methodist Church's commitment to diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

[Showing up at the RHS Flower Show - Methodist Church](#)

---



Stay for **FREE** tea,  
coffee & a chat

## **Clothes4U**

Pre loved clothes with TLC

from

**Knaphill Methodist Church**

Broadway, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2DR



**Saturday 15 June 2024 2 - 4pm**

To claim your **FREE** clothes, collect a voucher from **30+** places in Surrey.

Email us to find out where they are: [clothes@knaphillmethodist.co.uk](mailto:clothes@knaphillmethodist.co.uk)



[www.knaphill-methodist-church.com/clothes4U](http://www.knaphill-methodist-church.com/clothes4U)

[clothes@knaphill-methodist-church.com](mailto:clothes@knaphill-methodist-church.com)

## **Pudding & Praise**

**Sunday 16 June at Walton-on-Thames**

**4.00pm**

All are welcome.



Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 2SR

## **Practical Aspects of Spirituality**

Join us for

**Wesleyan Spirituality**

- 'real Christians'  
not 'almost Christians'

led by

**Allan Taylor**

**Saturday 22 June**

**09.30 – 12.00**

**St. Mary's Church  
Guildford GU1 3UP**

Refreshments from 09.15

If you would like to attend please email [gmc.info@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gmc.info@hotmail.co.uk)



# The Life of Christ

*The greatest story of all time*

18 - 22 JUNE 2024

10.00AM - 3.30PM

  
WINTERSHALL  
*Experience the story*

BOOK  
NOW!



**Our powerful biblical outdoor drama takes you back in time to when Jesus lived on earth.**

Follow over 100 actors in full costume moving through the beautiful grounds of the Wintershall estate with its lakes and ancient woodland re-enacting the remarkable events of Jesus' life.

This is a performance in three acts with a lunchtime interval.

Wintershall, Bramley, Surrey GU5 0LR  
Registered Charity Number 1167111



Book tickets **now** on our website:  
[www.wintershall.org.uk](http://www.wintershall.org.uk)  
or call 01483 892167

