

WEY VALLEY – WEEKLY CIRCUIT LETTER – 23 October 2024

Barrie Tabraham

‘Six of one . . . ‘

In case you feel that I tend to write in an overly serious vein, I want to share some thoughts with you on what might be called ‘theological and liturgical trivia’. Or to quote a phrase from Gershwin’s song *Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off*, which dates from 1937 and was spoken by Fred Astaire in the film *Shall We Dance?* – “You say ‘either’ and I say ‘eyether’; you say ‘neither’ and I say ‘nyther’” – basically, I am encouraging you to smile at what follows, and perhaps whisper under your breath, “Vive la différence!”

Blessing or Grace?

How should a service of worship end? Blessings can take many forms – one of the oldest being that to be found in the book of Numbers 6 vs 24-26: *The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you . . .*”.

In recent years it has become more common for the congregation to be invited to share the Grace. Now I happen to think that the Grace should be used to conclude a meeting, such as a Bible study or a Church Council (because it is the members who are sharing), and that *all* acts of worship should conclude with the blessing (which comes from God). What do *you* think?

Stand or sit?

It’s always amused me how, during Sunday worship, our Anglican friends stand for the reading of the Gospel whilst Methodists tend to sit (though not all!), and when Communion is celebrated, Anglicans sit, whereas Methodists tend to stand! Does it matter?

These days we are becoming more flexible, especially when a church is a Local Ecumenical Partnership (as was my last pastorate in Worcester Park) and one can do *both* without offending anybody! However, with the increasing average age of congregations, we



should bear in mind that standing for long periods is difficult for some folk – as is kneeling at the Communion rail. Also, the growing number of ‘alternative services’ that we have – particularly those which include Holy Communion – allows for a much greater variety of movement, as well as liturgy!

‘Broken’ or ‘Given’?



It’s a small point, but have you noticed how, when presiding at Holy Communion and distributing the bread, some ministers say, “The body of Christ given for you”, whereas others say, “The body of Christ *broken* for you”? Which is correct and which would you prefer?

Strictly speaking, it is the former, as according to Scripture, no bones of Christ were ever broken. However, some prefer the latter, as ‘broken’

emphasises the physical suffering endured by our Lord. I prefer 'given' myself, as it reminds us that Jesus Christ gave himself for the life of the world – and of course, even for me.

It matters not one iota . . .

Now you may think that small details are important. After all, Christendom was split over a single letter, when those who insisted that the creed's definition of Christ should include the word '**homo-ousios**' – 'of the *same* substance' [as the Father] – were opposed by those wanting the word '**homoi-ousios**' – 'of *similar* substance' [to the Father]. Without going into the details of what became known as Apollinarism or the Aryan Controversy of the 4th century, the debate over the single Greek letter 'iota' ('i') represented a very real struggle to understand the mystery of the incarnation.

But do these apparently trivial differences *really* matter in the larger scheme of things? When as Christians we are faced with the huge challenges of secularism, fanatical fundamentalism, the threat of ecological catastrophe, the suffering caused by unjust laws, the horror of modern warfare and so on, such debates perhaps pale into insignificance. Now that I've reached what some people have called the 'age of acquiescence' (when one has passed the grumpy stage!) I have found that I can echo the words of a famous Methodist of a couple of generations ago:

“The older I get, the more I believe about less and less” (!)

A Prayer: Loving God, help us to hold on to those truths which are essential to our faith, but also give us wisdom to discern those issues which are perhaps a matter of personal choice. And, dear Lord, allow us to smile at our own foolishness and learn from those who hold different opinions from ourselves. Amen.

Every blessing to you all,

Barrie Tabraham

Resources / Good News

Advent and Christmas Resources

The Methodist Church's Advent and Christmas campaign for 2024 is called

Hush the Noise: Join the love song this Christmas.



You can read more on the upcoming campaign, find worship resources and posters by following the link below. The sign-up link for weekly Advent discipleship gifts and daily Christmas reflections will be published soon.

[Advent and Christmas Resources - The Methodist Church](#)



CIRCUIT VISION AND STRATEGY

'Talking of God Together' A 4-week discussion group

For the four Fridays of October come and join us for a faith sharing discussion group on zoom. For 45 minutes from 5.15pm each Friday we welcome anyone from across the Circuit to end their week with a four-week course based on the book 'Talking of God Together'. The course aims to build confidence in easily speaking of our faith with others. You will not need your own copy of the book, and all are welcome to join. Don't worry if you can't make all the sessions - each will be self-contained.

4th October

11th October

18th October

25th October

Rev Dr Paul Glass

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/98448089846?pwd=enZ8ldXGe4uu2SPOCosDgYOgdYVsOB.1>

Meeting ID: 984 4808 9846 Passcode: 655618

STOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

(On the corner of Stoughton Road and Grange Road)



“COFFEE CORNER”



Fortnightly on Tuesdays from 10.00 a.m – 12 noon

3rd and 17th September

1st, 15th and 29th October

12th and 26th November

10th and 17th** December

** 17th December will be in aid of Cherry Trees, Clandon

Enjoy Coffee & a Chat, Coffee & a Game, or Coffee & a Book

The choice is yours!



Everyone welcome – bring a friend!



Pudding & Praise

Sunday 27 October at Walton-on-Thames

4.00pm



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

All are welcome.

**COFFEE
AND CAKE
AT ST. MARY'S
QUARRY ST. GUILDFORD GU1 3UP**

**SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER
2024**

10.30 – 12.00



Everyone welcome

Thursday 26 September

Thursday 31 October

- each month features a different charity



EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

Celebrating Faith, Courage and Wisdom

7 extraordinary women of the Bible inspiring

- 7 paintings
- 7 poems
- 7 anthems

29 October to 17 November
 St Mary's Church Quarry St Guildford GU1 3UP

Extraordinary Women of the Bible



Events open to all:

Tuesday 29 October	10.30 – 12.00	Trinity Club: a first view of the exhibition
Thursday 31 October	10.30 – 12.00	Coffee and Cake: time to enjoy the exhibition - along with friends and refreshments
	14.30 – 16.00	The Artist's view: Sylvia Dimitrova introduces the art of icons and her paintings
Sunday 3 November	10.30	Morning Worship: Bishop Graham Kings, with Holy Communion and the St. Mary's Choir
Friday 15 November	19.30	Festival Concert: Paintings, poetry and anthems together Tickets £10 available on Eventbrite
Saturday 16 November	09.30 – 12.00	Practical Aspects of Spirituality Time for reflection, personal growth and refreshments, led by Bishop Graham



Sincere thanks to Rt. Rev. Dr. Graham Kings for his participation and loan of the paintings which were commissioned for him.

with the exhibition also open for viewing

Tuesday 29 October	12.00 - 15.00	Thursday 7 November	12.30 - 15.00
Wednesday 30 October	12.00 - 15.00	Saturday 9 November	11.00 - 15.00
Thursday 31 October	10.30 - 14.30	Sunday 10 November	12.00 - 14.00
Friday 1 November	11.00 - 15.00	Thursday 14 November	12.30 - 15.00
Tuesday 5 November	11.00 - 15.00		

www.commongroundguildford.org
Enquiries: Email EWOB.GU@outlook.com
 Tel. 07793 696569

Saturday 26 October, Knaphill Coffee Morning:



MONTHLY COFFEE MORNING

AND SALE






**BOOKS, DVDs,
JIGSAWS, CAKES,
BRIC-A-BRAC & MORE**

KNAPHILL METHODIST CHURCH HALL

4th Saturday every month (except December)

10am to Noon