

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 57 **May 2nd 2021**
Leadership on a Journey

'As shoes for your feet, put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the Gospel of peace.' Ephesians 6.15

The Museum of Methodism at Wesley's Chapel in London is curating an exhibition in conjunction with the national Church that will showcase, through objects and stories, the influence of Black British, Asian and British global diaspora leaders on Methodism.

Explaining the aims of the exhibition, the Revd Dr Jennifer Smith, Superintendent Minister of Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission, said: "Our responsibility as a Museum is to give all of us a fuller sense of history to help us navigate the future. This is heritage as mission, and deeply about forming and re-forming Methodist identity to resource our mission today."

In preparation for the 'Leadership on a Journey' exhibition, the Museum is asking people to send a photo of themselves or a person they want to nominate for the exhibition, and the shoes they wear to do their work in whatever walk of life. Dr Smith says: "Sometimes our leaders can feel superhuman or so far away that it is hard to think about emulating them or leading ourselves. Exhibiting the shoes of Methodist leaders, we are reminding ourselves that the longest journey begins with one step."

The Museum of Methodism is currently displaying a pair of boots belonging to the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal which he wore during his Presidency of the Methodist Conference and which carried him from Sheffield to London during his Presidential year to protest the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. These boots are displayed alongside the equally worn 18th century leather shoes belonging to John Wesley.



Speaking about the resonance of shoes on a life's journey, Dr Bhogal, said: "I will never forget the first shoes I ever had in Nairobi. A shoemaker came to our house to measure me up. I wore them for my first big journey, from Nairobi to London. I am a walker, now I mainly use boots like those on display in the Museum.

"So what do shoes say and show? What journeys and messages and visions do shoes inspire in you? Who are people you would nominate for this Museum display with this in mind?"

The exhibition will run between 5th September and through Black History month until 26th November 2021. To nominate someone for the exhibition please email administration@wesleyschapel.org.uk

What's On

Sunday 2nd 9:30am in the church spoken service with Linda Little

10:30am online worship with Linda Little

Sunday 9th 9:30am in the church spoken service with Jill Brooks

10:30am online worship with Jill Brooks

Find all online services on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

For Kids and young people

Sundays 12noon Zoom sessions for King's Kids and King's Teens. If you haven't had your invitation please contact Carol or email ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Fridays 7pm Young Peoples' Singing Group

In your prayers

Continue to pray for the Covid situation in India, for Jim Tomsett, for Lyn and Richard and others you know who need prayers at this time.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list

Global access to vaccines



The President and Vice-President, the Revd Richard Teal and Carolyn Lawrence, have added their names to the call by faith leaders for all steps necessary to be taken to produce and distribute enough Covid vaccine for the entire global population. Read more in this article from *The Guardian*

<https://www.theguardian.com/.../global-faith-leaders-call...#PeoplesVaccine>

Have you been to a funeral recently?

This might seem like a strange question, but if you have, then you will have experienced possibly one of the most disconcerting aspects of the past year.

Sheila and I have been to three funerals since the start of 2020. The first in late January 2020 when the idea of a pandemic and lockdown were merely part of the general foreign news from somewhere far away in China.

This was the unexpected funeral of an old friend from my primary and secondary school days who had no known life threatening conditions but was found dead in his chair. He had been a member of "Colfe's codgers" a loose group of about twenty of us from my secondary school who met up about twice a year since we had all retired. His funeral was attended by about one hundred people who filled the crematorium chapel and later we enjoyed a wake at a local golf club, where memories of Ray were shared and friendships renewed with people one hadn't seen for some time, all drawn together in celebration of Ray's life.

The second funeral was in the middle of the relaxation of lockdown in June when our neighbour died after a short illness. We felt honoured to be invited to the funeral at the crematorium given the restriction in numbers to thirty, since Fred was well known around Crawley having lived and worked here for many years. Following the service everyone filed out of the chapel, and instead of gathering to express condolences to the family by the wreaths we all just walked off into the car park, got in our cars and drove to our own homes.

The last funeral, in January 2021, was of my oldest friend Martin who I had known since my first day at primary school, aged four and a half, and with whom

I had remained in touch ever since, meeting up once or twice a year. Sadly, again there was little warning, he was diagnosed in October and was given three months to live, which proved to be the case. Again, attendees were limited to thirty and both Sheila and I were invited. I cannot imagine how difficult it must be to cull a person's friends and family down to just thirty. If you have ever organised a wedding, you will understand the problem only too well, deciding who to invite and who to offend. After all, you don't normally have to invite people to a funeral, you just announce the date and time and see who turns up.

This funeral was at the Church near Minehead which Martin and his wife Sheelagh regularly attended and where Martin was a Steward. As Sheelagh said, at least it meant she could squeeze a few extra in, as the Vicar, organist and lady who arranged the Zoom feed, were all family friends not counted in the thirty.

On arrival at the Church, we were ushered to our named chairs, all socially distanced, where once the pews had been, just like at St Pauls. I had been asked to give part of the eulogy and the Vicar requested that on approaching the lectern I should look directly at the Ipad, mounted on a tripod, via which the service was being streamed, and smile before turning to the congregation. I have to say smiling to order has a horrible tendency to look extremely forced, and I'm not sure I got it right! Again at the end of the service we all filed out into the car park, said brief farewells to those we knew, and drove off, in our case arriving home after a round trip of ten hours and four hundred miles. Still our journey was less than that of Martin's sisters' families who live in Sheffield and Edinburgh .

As an aside, Martin had the time to plan his funeral and, as he had been a member of a local Sea Shanty singing group, suggested that he should leave to a rumbustious sea shanty with lines about rogues vagabonds and scoundrels. Unfortunately, the Vicar didn't approve! In the car park before the undertakers left with the coffin for the cremation, to be attended only by the undertaker and crematorium staff, the undertaker asked Sheelagh if there was any particular piece of music Martin liked. She mentioned the sea shanty and the Vicar's reaction and he rapidly found it on his Iphone and said he would ensure it was played as loudly as possible as the coffin was committed for cremation.

The gist of my message is to highlight the importance of the gathering, or wake, after a funeral. Currently with funeral services limited to thirty people and with no singing, they are already a very different experience, but the absence of any real form of gathering after the service is an aspect I have really missed. After Martin's funeral I received a lovely comment from his remaining sister Judy, who has lived in America for many years and so was unable to attend, saying that she remembered well an incident I had alluded to in my eulogy. Whilst this was both kind and reassuring, since the event occurred in the early nineteen sixties, it would have been so much more enjoyable had it been able to be face to face.

Wakes provide an opportunity to reminisce and celebrate the life of the deceased, to meet and renew friendships with family and friends whom we have may or may not have seen for some time and perhaps heal old disagreements and misunderstandings.

Stay safe and well.

God Bless, *Barry*

Christian Aid Week 2021

With our Government drastically cutting Foreign Aid, this is more important than ever. Many thanks to those who have already donated. Our total now stands at £315 (£381 including Gift Aid) If you'd like to donate, please click this link <https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/stpaulschurchcrawley>



And finally – some thoughts about coffee

"I don't drink coffee, but I do try to find a way to get some chocolate in every day." *Danielle Brooks*

If this is coffee, please bring me some tea; but if this is tea, please bring me some coffee." *Abraham Lincoln*

"Television is not real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs." *Bill Gates*

"Without my morning coffee, I'm just like a dried-up piece of goat." *J.S. Bach*

"A bad day with coffee is better than a good day without it." *Anonymous*

Contacts

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Prayer requests & newsletter items ask.stpauls@gmail.com

St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

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