

LADYWELL RETREAT 2017.

*The 2018 retreat at Ladywell convent over the weekend
of the 22nd and the 23rd June.*

The theme for the weekend is

"Jesus remember when you come into your Kingdom"

Led by Gill Dascombe.

*Booking are now being taken with a deposit required next January.
for further information please contact Brian Sherrell 01883 370945
or at brian-car@hotmail.co.uk*

Patient Waiting

Our Scriptures have much to say about patience, but we assume all too often that it is a passive kind of waiting – a form of restraint in which we simply bide our time before we get the result we either wanted or didn't want. But patience is no such thing. It is being still before God and realizing that in the waiting, all desires are known, transformed and reshaped. In the activity of patience we discover that God does something with us in the space. Things gestate, germinate and grow; we find that we acquire a new wisdom. In waiting we discover new things that would not have been if we had just hurried by.

I think God can do some pretty good things with apparently unpromising material. Many seeds look like nothing in our hands, but what they need is time and space to grow and a bit of patient t.l.c. What is needed is the wisdom to wait attentively for signs of growth.

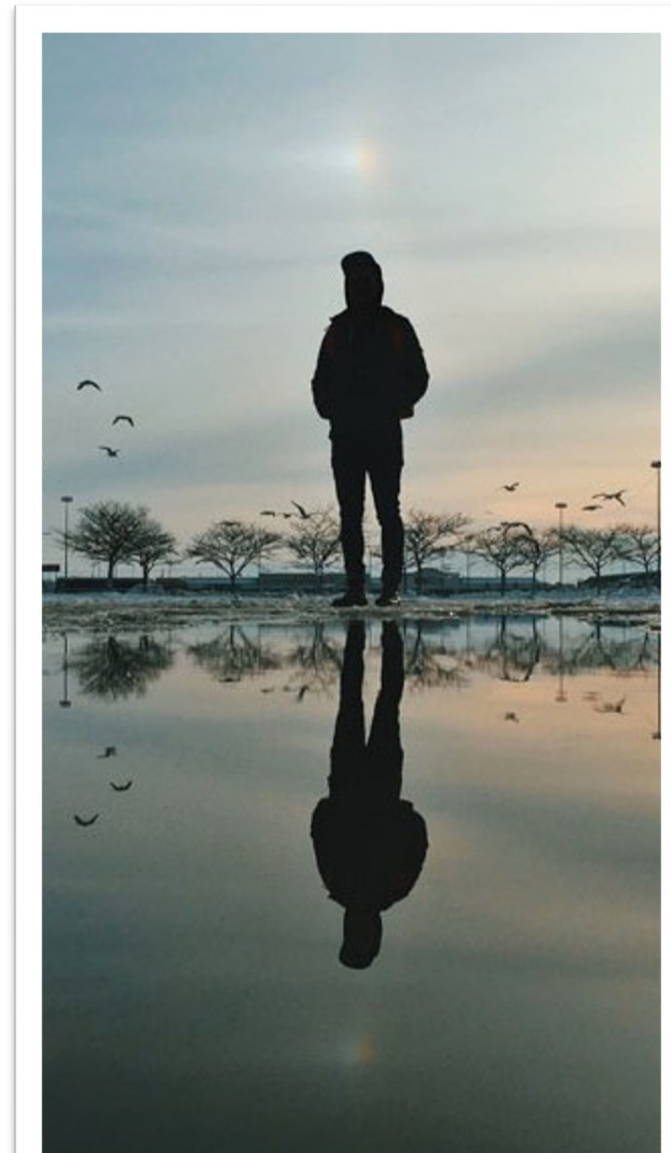
The practice of patience and the practice of hope are key to what it means to be a disciple of Jesus as we seek to live out his way. It is about hope, grace, understanding, counsel, strength, depth, lightness, prayer, wisdom and humanity in the midst of everything; it is about living authentically in the midst of the place where God has set us.

Rev. John Swarbrick

from August 2017 Newsletter North Harrow Methodist Church - with permission.



Newsletter – November 2017



Letter from the Chair



Dear Reflect member,

As I write this letter, we are coming up to a very exciting event – the Reflect Open Day Conference to be held at Coventry Central Hall. The title of the day is 'A Coventry Pilgrimage', and we look forward to welcoming our keynote speaker Jill Baker, the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, as well as Reflect members, and also guests and visitors from the Coventry area and beyond.

This is one of a number of ways in which, in the past year, the Reflect committee has sought to explore ways to raise the profile of Reflect within Methodism, and to broaden the scope of our work.

Pearl Luxon and Lynne Ling have both worked very hard to transform and update the newsletter and the website, with excellent results. Thank you!

The Methodist Recorder kindly granted Reflect the column space to contribute 12 monthly articles on many aspects of prayer and spirituality from September 2016 to September 2017. Thanks to all contributors.

Following a very well-received presentation and set of workshops at the Convocation of 2015, further links between Reflect and the Methodist Diaconal Order have resulted in Gill Dascombe and Chris Wood leading a Summer Retreat for Deacons in August 2017.

In addition, Reflect has continued to offer its established retreats at Launde Abbey, Ladywell, Douai and a Northern venue. Those who come, whether 'regulars' or new retreatants continue to be grateful for this faithful ministry.

Many thanks are due to those who organise and lead these on a regular annual basis. This year, Katharine Cheney has stood down as organiser of the Northern retreat; we are grateful for all the work she has put in. We welcome Sandie Exley-Watts as her successor.

With all good wishes,

Gill Dascombe

Reflect Retreats and similar events for next year!

This is not an exclusive list and other retreats are available, especially as this newsletter comes to members with the Retreat Association book of retreats and places to retreat for 2018.

If you have been somewhere different in 2017 we would like to hear about this too. Tell us about the venues you have been to and the content or reflections you have been helped to have on the retreat.

Photography & Spirituality

There is another Photography and Spirituality Study Tour in Rome, led by Philip Richter, in May 2018. For more details on

<http://www.methodist.org.uk> and type 'Study tour Rome' into search.

'To be a Pilgrim'

6 - 8 April 2018

Organized by Jill Baker,

Vice-President,

Methodist Conference 2017-18

This weekend conference at Cliff College offers an opportunity to explore different aspects of pilgrimage – through worship, through images and words, through various activities and, for those who want to, through getting outside into the grounds of the college and the beautiful surrounding countryside.

No experience of pilgrimage is needed, just a "Come and see" pilgrim spirit – you will be most welcome. Save the date! For more information click here.

Five-Day Community for Spiritual Formation 2018

You may also be interested in a five day retreat Jill is involved with in May 2018 at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, with Elaine Heath and Roger Walton.

More information is available here.

<https://5daycommunity.com/2017/09/15/five-day-community-2018>

PENLAR Quiet Days

Sue Wilson has offered Quiet Days in her home "Penlar" for more than ten years.

The Quiet days are well received by busy working people as well as those who have retired. In the past, she has given training days on 'How to run a Quiet Day' for the Retreats Association with Yvonne Walker.

Sue is also offering Quiet Days with or without spiritual accompaniment for individuals. MBTI for individuals, couples and groups and Penlar, with its spacious living room and dining room is an ideal venue for small group meetings - up to 10 people. Penlar will be listed in the 2018 RETREATS handbook in the Greater London section.

To find out more out more, please
email: contactsuewilson@gmail.com (** this email address is all one word.)

Have you ever thought of organising a Quiet Day in your home or church hall? The Retreat Association runs training days on how to run a quiet day and produces a useful Quiet Day pack of resource material to help you get started. These are advertised in the Retreats 2018 handbook or search the web site www.retreats.org.uk

Digital Spirituality

by Pete Phillips

Spirituality is all about **connecting** – with God, with ourselves, with the world around us. Digital Culture is about connecting. So much of our everyday life includes digital tech – from phones to tablets, laptops to smart TVs. We shop online, order prescriptions online, get a takeaway online. Can we use the internet for our spiritual nourishment as well?

Some would say, what better medium than the internet is there to help us grow closer to God and one another? Martha Lane Fox talks of the internet as a hive mind of creativity – a place where we can come together to be creative together. It's a vast collection of **resources** to resource us, including to resource our spirituality.

We can pray on line – either using one of the denominational prayer sites (for example: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-in-daily-prayer>) or through the Jesuit Pray as You Go app (<https://www.pray-as-you-go.org/>) or by joining a community praying online such as the Northumbria Community (<https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices/how-to-use-daily-office/>). In fact, the list is almost endless and not just for prayer but for bible reading, meditation, reflection, icons, reflection practices. There are many sites such as Praying Each Day (<http://www.prayingeachday.org/prayersites.html>) or Tearfund's *Rhythms* app to help us connect. The Methodist Church has a whole collection of resources available: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship>.

Of course, spirituality is also about withdrawing from the busyness of the world so that we can focus on those things that really matter – spirituality is never a negation of the world but rather an attempt to get the world in the right perspective. As such, it is important to work against the internet's attempts to distract us from our spiritual journey. The internet is a great place of creativity – so good you can go looking for an image of Mary Magdalene and suddenly realise that three hours have passed chasing an interesting trail of clicks and links. So, as with all spirituality, **discipline** is needed in the digital realm.

Discipline might mean turning off the phone's notifications during our reflection times or printing off resources so that we put the devices to one side. It's like seeing a couple in a restaurant immersed in their own phones, ignoring one another. Devotion is about a special time, not a place to be disturbed by the latest funny picture or political shenanigans. *Cont.*



It's getting the discipline right between connecting with what's happening in the world but also what's allowing us to deepen our own spirituality. A bit like a digital version of Karl Barth's proposal to have the bible in one hand and a paper in the other. We use the devices, we use digitality only so far as it doesn't get in the way of our spiritual reflection itself.

Spirituality is also about finding space to reflect. That space might be a blog where we can write out own reflections and invite others to share in them. Or it might be a collection of pictures cycled on a PowerPoint which remind us of beauty or glory or weakness or failure – a visual place of reflection. Or a collection of sounds or audio clips which take us away from where we are and allow us to reflect more deeply on our spiritual journey. I think it is likely that soon we will find virtual reality packages available mixing the kind of cinematography of the BBC's Blue Planet with sounds of the sea as a way to help us to focus. You can already don your VR goggles and walk around an refugee camp while you reflect or watch a drum ritual in Polynesia.

The digital provides rich resources for our spiritual reflection. So rich are they that we need to be careful in our selection and in our use of those resources. We need to be careful that the resource selection process does not become the journey itself. We need to be careful that the technology does not get in the way of our reflection, doesn't distract us from our core activity of reflecting on spiritual things. We need to be in control so that we can find that which enables us to find God and find ourselves.

What an opportunity.



Revd Pete Philips is Director of CODEC at St John's College Durham and a Methodist Presbyter

Who/ What is CODEC?

CODEC is place of research, inquiry, translation, re-coding and re-engineering between faiths millennia old and the contemporary digital world. Our aim is to research and to transform the theological conversation concerning digital culture. CODEC includes a large network of people exploring together the impact digital culture is making on contemporary pedagogy, the world of faith and discipleship, and on our engagement with the Bible and other sacred texts. More info—www.dur.ac.uk/codec/

A NON-MAGNIFICAT

Mary has second thoughts

My heart questions you, Lord. I feel worried and frightened at what you are asking me to do.

Yes, you have focussed on me - and, goodness knows, I have tried to live in your ways and to do your will – but why did you have to choose *me* ?

I wonder what people will think. They'll hardly believe me fortunate, having a baby out of wedlock. How can they call me happy – or blessed? This call, to be the mother of the Messiah – I shan't be able to tell anyone – they'll think I'm mad. God, you are holy and mighty – but why have you chosen *me*, such an ordinary person, for this special task?

Lord, I've seen how you have saved your people in the past. But what about today? Sometimes you seem to be showing no mercy to those who honour you. Innocent people – Christians, Jews and Muslims alike – are being persecuted and randomly killed. Where is the salvation in that?

Just now you don't seem to be scattering those who are arrogant. Day after day we hear more of the apparently unthoughtout whims of world leaders. And, if you do bring mighty kings down from their thrones, you seem to take your time about it.

If I am the lowly that you have lifted up, I'm not sure that I'm that thrilled about it.

What about the poor and hungry? Christian Aid and Water Aid can tell us that the four richest men in the world have between them the wealth that could feed the poor. But they don't. The rich become richer and the poor become poorer. I cannot see any empty-handed rich!

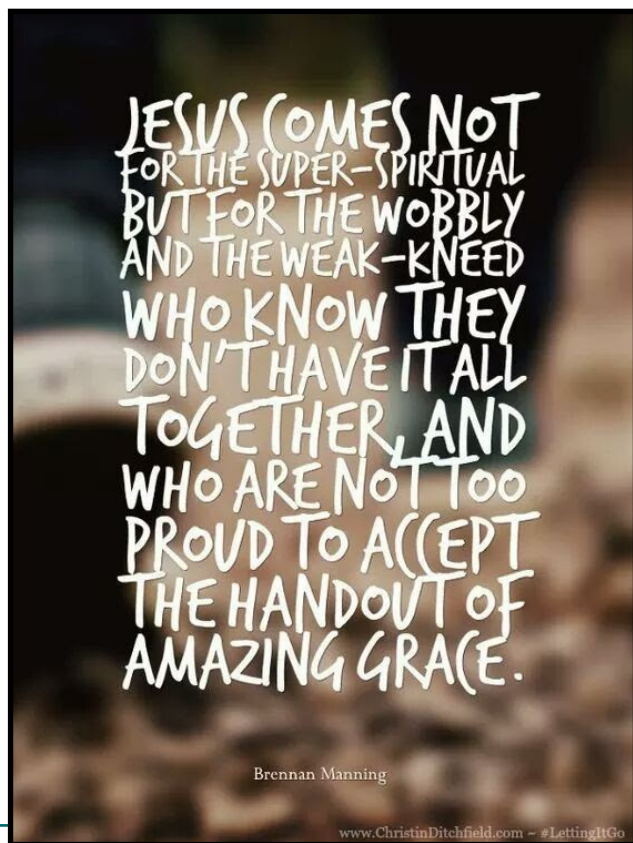
Lord, if I am to be the instrument of bringing in the Kingdom, the Kingdom that stretches back to your promise to Abraham, and a Kingdom that will never end, then I suppose I should be glad.

But I'm not. Not at the moment.
Contd...

And yet... and yet... Lord, it's not wrong to have these negative thoughts, is it? Surely I'm only being natural. I guess it's what I do about them ultimately that matters. Help me where my faith is falling short. I do know that, as you were for my forefathers, you have always been there for *me* in the past and that you will be again. Please, Lord, restore to me the joy of your presence. I am your servant. May your will be done, in me and through me, in the name of Jesus your Son whom you are entrusting to me.

AMEN

Katharine Cheney, April 2017 MWiB—writing competition *Highly Commended*



A word from the Editor—Pearl Luxon

Again I've received some good feedback from the last edition and some interesting articles. Please keep material coming in!

In particular we welcome Revd Pete Philips contribution on Digital Spirituality. Pete is Director of Research, CODEC at St John's College, Durham and a Methodist Presbyterian. Hopefully this may be the first of a number of articles and reviews of web based resources.

The picture above is from a Facebook page which came up.

Please note- I cannot accept items sent in hard copy, I am afraid, unless they are really short, since I do not have the time to type them out. I would scan them, but it takes ages to layout.

Photos and pictures are useful too, either with a written piece or separately.

Please email: pearlluxon@gmail.com

REFLECT Northern Retreat, Parcevall Hall Yorkshire, 17th – 19th October 2017

At a time when carbon dioxide levels are at their highest; when countries cannot talk to each other except by threats; when parts of the Church maintain division and mistrust – where do you turn for means of healing?

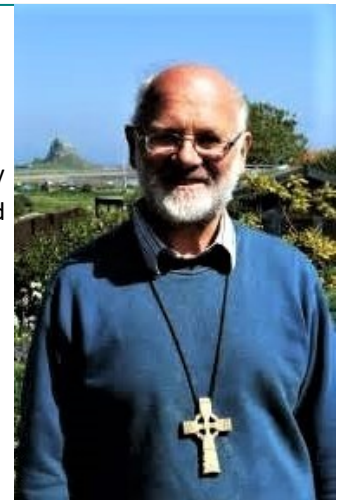
Seventeen of us met in the beautiful surroundings of Parcevall Hall, deep in the Yorkshire Dales, to encounter that part of Christian understanding that came out of the early Irish Church: the so-called Celtic way. Led by Ray Simpson, a founder and Guardian of the now worldwide Community of Aidan and Hilda, centred on Lindisfarne, we re-entered the deep understanding of some of the great people of the early church in that part of the country to explore how a world divided can become a world whole and united.

Over six sessions we explored important areas of thought, linked together with men and women. One was how all of life is a pilgrimage, linked to the great seafarer Brendan, recognising that pilgrimage – banned at the Reformation – is once more finding willing feet, not least to places such as Lindisfarne and Iona. Another was the inter-wovenness of the Church at grass roots level as children grew in faith through a holistic life where the Church was rooted deep in the local community. Then in the life of Brigid we saw the experience of hospitality – not just welcoming people but offering hospitality of the heart that takes time to befriend, listen, and make ourselves vulnerable as Jesus himself made himself vulnerable in loving others, even to the cross. We considered Patrick, whose creed is unlike the conceptual models of the church but glorified God in the whole of creation. And over it all was the Celtic cross: the cross imposed on the circle of the world with its regular rhythms as a way of approaching God.

In many ways the Church in these islands outshone its separate parts after the Synod of Whitby in AD 664, yet it is also true that much was lost, especially of the Celtic understanding of a world made whole. From time to time through history these truths reappear in Christian thinking: this is one such time – and an opportunity to learn and teach how God's good creating love can be expressed in a way that unites us all.

The time and the input by Ray were a great blessing.

Philip Hyne



Photos from
the Northern
Retreat



Ladywell Retreat

7/9th July 2017

The wonderful thing about Ladywell Convent is that as soon as you enter the grounds you are a place of peace and a tranquility.

The weekend was lead by the Rev Malcolm Rothwell, the theme for the weekend being "Lose you head and come to your senses".

23 people booked to come on the weekend

Malcolm took us through 5 sessions the first one on the Friday evening was about (Seeing) having a vision with various quotes seeing God in creation, but also within our own personal experience.

After morning prayers and a very good breakfast The first session on the Saturday morning was about the sense of smell (Presence)

and we were challenged to think about when we had been aware of the presence of God and other helpful biblical quotes.

After morning coffee it was time to think about hearing (Attentiveness) to be still and know that I am God, and from Mark 9.7 This is my son listen to him.

After a good lunch we had the afternoon free to sit in the grounds or use one of the quiet rooms, when we met again we thought touch (Connections) together with bible quotes we were challenged to think about when we felt most connected to God or whether there are people that we would want to reach out to.

Supper was followed by the theme that (Silence is Golden) about being still and knowing that I am God and a number of quotes from mystics over the centuries about the importance of silence.

The last session on the Sunday morning the taste of smell (Embodying) Psalm 34 talks about "Taste and see that the lord is good" and if we had any personal bitter or sweet experiences recently.

Our worship on the Sunday morning was a silent communion which a lot of people found the symbolism of the silence very helpful and moving.

In the short feedback session before lunch grateful expressions where offered to Malcolm for the very meaningful way that he had led the sessions which helped a lot of those present and for all the work that been put into the retreat.

We took home with us plenty of material to think about what we had heard to consider in the days/months to come.

The one thought that I came away with as to live in the present moment and for Carolyn it was a deeper insight into our senses.