



From the Reflect website

**Reflect**  
Methodist spirituality

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Methodist spirituality

**Newsletter**  
– *November*  
**2018**



## Letter from the Chair



Dear Friends,

What is spirituality?

At a recent gathering, we were each asked this question to start the meeting. As you might expect, we came up with a number of different answers....reflection, prayer, stillness, and relationship were some of them. I wonder what your answer would be?

John Wesley was a keen advocate of the need for Methodists to nurture their spiritual lives. He himself spent the beginning of every day in prayer, and enthusiastically encouraged others to incorporate spiritual practices into the rhythm of their everyday lives. For us, these practices might also include such things as daily Bible readings, attending retreats or quiet days, or speaking to a spiritual director.

Spirituality can be many things, but one thing it is not is unimportant. Many people struggle to make sense of life, and, sadly, may feel that spirituality as we would understand it is something strange, unattainable, and 'for others, not for me'.

In Reflect, we seek to support and promote spirituality amongst the Methodist people, in the hope that the events and opportunities we provide will enable others to find accessible ways into a spiritual routine which will be right for them.

On another note, we expect there to be one or two vacancies coming up on the Reflect executive committee in the next year. If you think you may be interested, do get in touch with me via e-mail: [chair@reflectretreats.co.uk](mailto:chair@reflectretreats.co.uk) .

With very best wishes

Gill Dascombe

## Reflect retreat 2019

19/21st July Wychcroft Retreat House

(5 miles from Redhill station)

Leader—Jane Hoskins who is a retreat leader and a part of the Southwark Diocese Spiritual Formation group.

Theme is "*Journey of the Soul*"

For further details please contact Brian Sherrell

01883 370945 or [brian-car@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brian-car@hotmail.co.uk) for further information



'As the illusion of control over their own lives falls away they open to the mystery of a God who is more present, more merciful, and more vulnerable than they ever imagined. "Blessed" takes on a new meaning that reflects more on suffering than success. Now space opens within their hearts and minds that allows for a much deeper relationship with God than they have ever experienced.'

From '*God Unbounded*'—Elaine Heath

## 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 2019.

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.

### LAUNDE ABBEY RETREAT 2019

15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019

#### Ephesians – The Riches of God's Glory

led by Rev David Butterfield

The retreat will follow the usual format of short inputs followed by lots of time to reflect and will be in silence from Friday night to Sunday lunch time.

A wonderfully peaceful and comfortable retreat house set in the rolling Leicestershire countryside, Launde Abbey offers space and peace for time with God.

Further information from David Middleton 01353 668210  
or email [davmid@btconnect.com](mailto:davmid@btconnect.com)



## Reflect Conference 20 October 2018—Sue Chastney

We met at the New Room Bristol on a beautiful sunny day. The entrance is in the middle of a shopping mall and the change from the busy, bustling crowd of shoppers to the lovely airy new extension with a café, a museum and meeting rooms was quite a contrast. All were welcomed with a tea or coffee and from there we moved into the chapel for the start of the conference. Wesley would have immediately recognised the place where he once preached although box pews have replaced the original benches.

We opened the day with devotions with a homage to Charles Wesley by singing *What shall I do my God to love* (StF 516) and then settled down to hear our keynote speaker, the President of Conference Revd Michaela Youngson, deliver a challenging and stimulating address entitled *God's Inconvenient Grace*.

She began by reading a Norse legend about a man who wanted to obtain wisdom but this could only be achieved at a terrible price of sacrifice and cost which then led to redemption. So how did this link in to the Christian message of God's grace?

Michaela referred to the parable of the prodigal son where grace and forgiveness was given to the son by the father. Radical grace was given to all because God loves all. Radical grace challenges us all because it applies to those whom we find difficult to love as well as those who we choose to love. *'We do not have to sacrifice. God's love is always available'*.

Inconvenient grace colours how we react to situations both within the Christian faith (e.g Anglican/Methodist conversations, church closures) as well as current affairs in the world around us (Brexit, actions of political leaders).

Inconvenient grace centres on not what we have to give up but on what we can share because God measures justice by generosity, not by holding on.

Inconvenient grace moves us from self-focussing to empathy and looking outwards.



How do we react when we have given everything but still cannot find resolution?

How do react when our faith is challenged?

Michaela challenged us to think deeply about our responses to God's grace on a personal, national and global basis.

With all these questions to ponder, we broke for lunch.

In the afternoon we had a choice of activities. There were workshops on *Dementia and Grace*; *Grace, Slavery and Abolition*; a visit to the New Room museum; a chance to have a guided walk around Bristol or time for personal reflection. We ended the day with time together. It was a great day.

Additional material *Radical Grace transforming Hope* a booklet by President and Vice President of Conference. If you would like to know more about the New Room at Bristol or the chapel, google:

[newroombristol.org.uk](http://newroombristol.org.uk)



## Resources

Following November '17 edition of this Newsletter, which included an article by Pete Philips on digital theology, 'Digital Culture is about connecting'. So it's worth sharing more widely some of the digital resources we have found on line.

- How about starting with our REFLECT resources on our web site: [www.reflectretreats.co.uk/resources.php](http://www.reflectretreats.co.uk/resources.php)

These include the articles which were prepared for Methodist Recorder last year on different ways of praying etc.

**Also on this web page** are other online resources such as: -

- **Pray as you go**—a daily devotional with music and contemplation on a passage of scripture and other useful items such as a the Examen and other Ignatian style reflection exercises, including retreats. This is out of the Jesuit stable, of course and the editor has used it for a number of years.

[www.pray-as-you-go.org/home/#](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/home/#)

- **A Word in Time**—the Methodist Church daily Bible study, with reflection.

[www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/the-bible/a-word-in-time/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/the-bible/a-word-in-time/)

## 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 2019 RETREATS handbook in the Greater London section.

To find out more out more, please

email: [contactsuewilson@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.retreats.org.uk)



**Come heavenly, holy one,**  
Come all embracing Christ,  
send your Spirit upon me  
as a shaft of light  
breaking through the  
clouds on a winters day,  
catch my eye afresh,  
demand my attention!

Send your Spirit upon me  
as a storm wind  
stirring leaves  
that have lain too  
long, break through  
the blanket of comfort,  
and call me to life again.

Come, send your Spirit upon me  
as refreshing rain  
in the desert places  
of my soul, and  
cause the seeds of hope  
long dormant now  
to flourish and flower  
In vibrant response.

Send your Spirit upon me,  
dazzle me,  
stir me,  
revive me,  
shake me,  
overwhelm me,  
awaken me....

...discomfort me

do not leave me  
as I am...

Come,  
send your Spirit,  
touch my heart,  
revive my soul,  
remind me of your  
ever present love.

*Poem and photo by  
Sally Coleman*



*I greet the storm  
I stand in its rain  
And somehow you're as clear  
As the day, again.*

**Lemn Sissay**



## Launde 2018 - Walking with God through the Landscape of our lives led by Rev Vincent Price

Vincent introduced the retreat by bringing to mind some of the joys of walking; it's a most natural pastime - optional leisurely pace - stop and pause - follow anything that takes your attention - take in the landscapes - walking alongside people - walking with God.

In our first session we were guided to consider the experience of walking on pavements, like the cramped pavements of Cambridge, and escaping into a church to breathe in the peace! The busy pavements can make us feel alive, or symptomatic of impending burn-out. We were encouraged to consider when we have felt truly alive.

Next we considered the contrast of the hill called Cronckley Fell in Teesdale: Park by THE road, the beautiful path round and up the fell, the broad green sward manicured by sheep, the small waterfalls along the way - breadth, beauty openness, invitation - moments in life clear and open - what are our times of blessing? Who has helped us, who do we help? Who has been blessings to us and who are we blessings to?

We left the open spaces of Cronckley a fell for Sacred Enclosures in our next session! Walled gardens can be images of prayer according to Margaret Self. A broken teapot became a ladies walled garden, in brokenness we can be more sacred, more treasured, than when whole. When have we been particularly cherished and cared for?

As if transported by the Spirit, we found ourselves in woodland for our next session. Pine woods/plantations, surrounded by tall trees, blocking out the light, deadness all around on the ground, little bird song. By contrast deciduous forests, a great green canopy overhead and lush green ground cover, the air alive with bird song. There is limited vision in woodland but many confusing tracks, more tracks on the ground than on the maps! Vincent encouraged us to look at changes in direction that have made major differences in your life - how has God guided and worked through those decisions?

In Session 5 we thought about waterside walks, swirling rivers - where is the gift in ... tears? And still pools - what calming and quiet places are we able

to return to, physically or imaginatively?

Finally we are by the seaside! Imagine a seaside. The mystery of the seashore - a boundary. Behind us is the known land that we have explored. Ahead the open sea, the journey yet to be.....

Grateful thanks to Vincent for the varied walks this retreat took us on and his gentle sensitive leadership.

*David Middleton*

### **A personal word from the Editor—Pearl Luxon**

Quite a year! I am sorry we didn't get a Newsletter to you in the summer, I was in the midst of a chemotherapy journey, which I won't bore you with save to say that I've now had the final chemo, for a long while we hope, and Stem Cell treatment in August. So I'm still recovering from the harsh chemo that accompanies that. While the doctors are very pleased with the physiology of my recovery, including blood count, I am still off, lacking reliable energy. Cancer is part of life and some cancers are a life-long journey. We are told that 1 in 2 of us will get cancer. So we would be negligent as spiritual people if we didn't look for lessons from this, for our faith. I didn't experience any of the 'why me', only 'why not me?'

In particular I was struck by a writer who is not someone of Christian faith who decided that her cancer could teach her about *Life*, even though she was told that she was terminal. She is still living 8 years on. This reminded me of the way that St Francis befriended the Sun and the Moon and even death, in his appreciation of all that God has made and all that *Life* gives.

I recommend 'The Cancer Whisper' - Sophie Sabbage—to those for whom it is relevant. I'm not sure how it would read to someone not affected by cancer.

Learning how God works through the Creation is a challenge to me and my discovery thus far is that it is *Life*-affirming. I am still reflecting on this and learning. So I may write more in future.

I'd very much appreciate more articles sent, including book reviews for June.

Please send items for publication, photos and pictures, either with a written piece or separately.

**Please send on email: [pearlluxon@gmail.com](mailto:pearlluxon@gmail.com)**