

AGM report cont....

Date of next Executive Committee: TBC for May 2020. Meeting to include discussing how to expand access to retreats, to explore ways of encouraging participation for a wider range of people. .

It was agreed that the training of spiritual directors is important to provide sufficient availability across the country to support those running events. Good spiritual direction training courses are available – we should avoid repetition and make use of courses which already exist (sometimes under other names and among other denominations).

Date of next 2020 AGM: TBC. Next year's event may have a different format. Discussion took place about a **possible** 24 hour retreat for the Executive Committee to help **discern** the way forward for the future.

The meeting closed with The Grace.



Reflect

Methodist spirituality

Newsletter
- November 2019





Dear Reflect members,

At our recent Reflect Open Day Conference in London, we gathered to pray and reflect together against a backdrop of considerable political and social unrest, as thousands protesters rallied in support of their particular stance on Brexit whilst others had made the opinions and passions of Extinction Rebellion fully known. In the weeks that have followed the disagreements in Parliament have plunged the government into further turmoil.

As the seasons move familiarly onward from summer to autumn and to winter we are reminded that we are living in uncertain times the like of which this country has never known before.

Reflection and action are two sides of the same coin. Reflection must never be an escape from the realities of living, and action must never lack deep discernment of meaning and purpose. The one without the other can be empty and self-indulgent. Action without reflection is rootless. Reflection without action is fruitless.

On another note, as our three annual retreats continue to attract both faithful regular attendees and new members, thanks to the hard work of our retreat organisers, we in the Reflect Committee would be very happy to hear of any member who would be interested in joining the committee and help us as we consider our role, both present and future. In particular we could love to hear from anyone who could take on the role of website editor.

With all good wishes, Gill

Membership: Figures confirm that membership now stands at 169, with some subscriptions still outstanding. Membership records match those held by the Retreat Association. New software will be sought to aid the database management.

Newsletter: It was agreed to reduce the costs of the newsletter by starting to send newsletters via email where possible. Hard copies will continue to be available to those without internet access. A notice to go in the next newsletter about next summer’s newsletter being distributed in this way. A write-up from November’s Open Day event at Wesley’s Chapel, London will be submitted for the Methodist Recorder & other publications including The Buzz.

Website: Agreement was unanimous that the website was a valuable resource and a vacancy for website/social media coordinator will be publicised. This vacancy could also be advertised at forthcoming Retreats.

Retreat Association: The URC have approached the Chair of Reflect with a view to returning to Retreat Association membership. It was agreed that there is always mileage in URC/Methodist groups working together more closely.

Membership of the Executive Committee: All present are very happy to continue in role.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ROLE	NAME	START DATE
President	Yvonne Walker	Nov 2016
Chair	Gill Dascombe	Nov 2016
Deputy Chair	Chris Wood	Nov 2016
Secretary	Louise Wright	May 2019
Treasurer	Pam Reid	April 2012
Membership Secretary	Susan Chastney	May 2017
Newsletter	Pearl Luxon	Nov 2014
Website		
Learning Network	Tony Moodie	
Retreat Association	Alison MacTier	
Diaconal Order	Lynne Tonge	May 2017
Retreat Leaders	Sandie Exley-Watts: Northern, David Middleton: Launde, Brian Sherrell: Southern	Nov 2017
Invited to attend	Edel McClean Philip Turner	

AGM REPORT

The Reflect Executive Committee met for the AGM at Wesley's Chapel, London on 19 October 2019. After the welcome, opening prayer and apologies, Chair Gill Dascome led the meeting. Minutes from the 2018 AGM were agreed and, with no other business to add to the agenda, the usual reports were discussed.

Chair's Report:

President of Conference Rev Michaela Youngson spoke to Reflect members and local church clergy and members at the Reflect Open Day at John Wesley's Chapel, Bristol in November 2018.

Louise Wright was welcomed as secretary for the Reflect Executive Committee in May 2019.

Sue Chastney has kindly agreed to represent Reflect and the Methodist Church on the board of trustees for the Retreat Association

Retreats: The next Northern Retreat is set for 19-21 November 2019. The theme "The Cross, Pastoral and Prophetic Reflections" will be explored by retreat leader Rev Dr Inderjit Bhoghal. For more details, please contact - Sandie Exley-Watts via sandie@exleywatts.me.uk.

The 2019 **Southern Retreat** was held at the Anglican Retreat House near Bletchingley. Jane Hoskins' theme of "Journey of the Soul" was very well received. Bookings for the next retreat are already going well. Rev Pam Clews will lead on the subject of "Listening to God" at **Worth Abbey** in Sussex 15-17 May 2020. For bookings, please contact - Brian Sherrell via brian-car@hotmail.co.uk.

The 2019 **Launde Retreat** led by Rev David Butterfield took the theme "Echoes from Ephesians". Next year's event is booked for 21-23 February 2020 when David Middleton will use the theme "Quiet Moments" inspired by Tom Wright's book of the same name. For more details, please contact - David Middleton via davmid@btconnect.com.

Finance:

The committee reviewed the financial statement prepared by Treasurer, Pam Reid. A discussion took place about where costs might be reduced, including Reflect was fortunate to receive a bequest and further discussion will take place regarding the appropriate use for this money.

Reflect Open Day, 19 October 2019

Saturday 19 October was a notable day in London. There was the recalling of parliament for an extraordinary session; marches and demonstrations for both Remainers and Brexiteers; a People's March and Extinction Rebellion highlighting the need for urgent action on climate change. Yet, in another quieter corner of the capital, there was another group meeting: the annual Reflect Open Day Conference. This year we met at Wesley's Chapel, a fitting venue for where radical Methodist views from the past and the present have been debated.

The subject of this year's meeting was entitled *So What's the Story...?*

We were privileged to have Barbara Glasson, President of Conference, as our guest speaker.

We began with devotions, led by our Chair, Gill Dascombe, which led into the keynote address by the President. Barbara based her talk on the book co-written by herself and Clive Marsh, the Vice President of Conference, which is a resource book for Christian reflection and practice.

Barbara explained that she was not going to take us through the contents of the book but to tell the story of the cover and how it depicted both a physical journey and an inner exploration and reflection. The cover shows threads and yarns of different textures, colours and thicknesses lying together in an arc. Some are clear and prominent, others discernible but gently merging into the background.

The story begins with a journey to a friend's funeral and the realisation that parts of the deceased's life were unknown to many present. The service provided a much fuller and more rounded picture of this person's life – an experience that many of us could recognise.



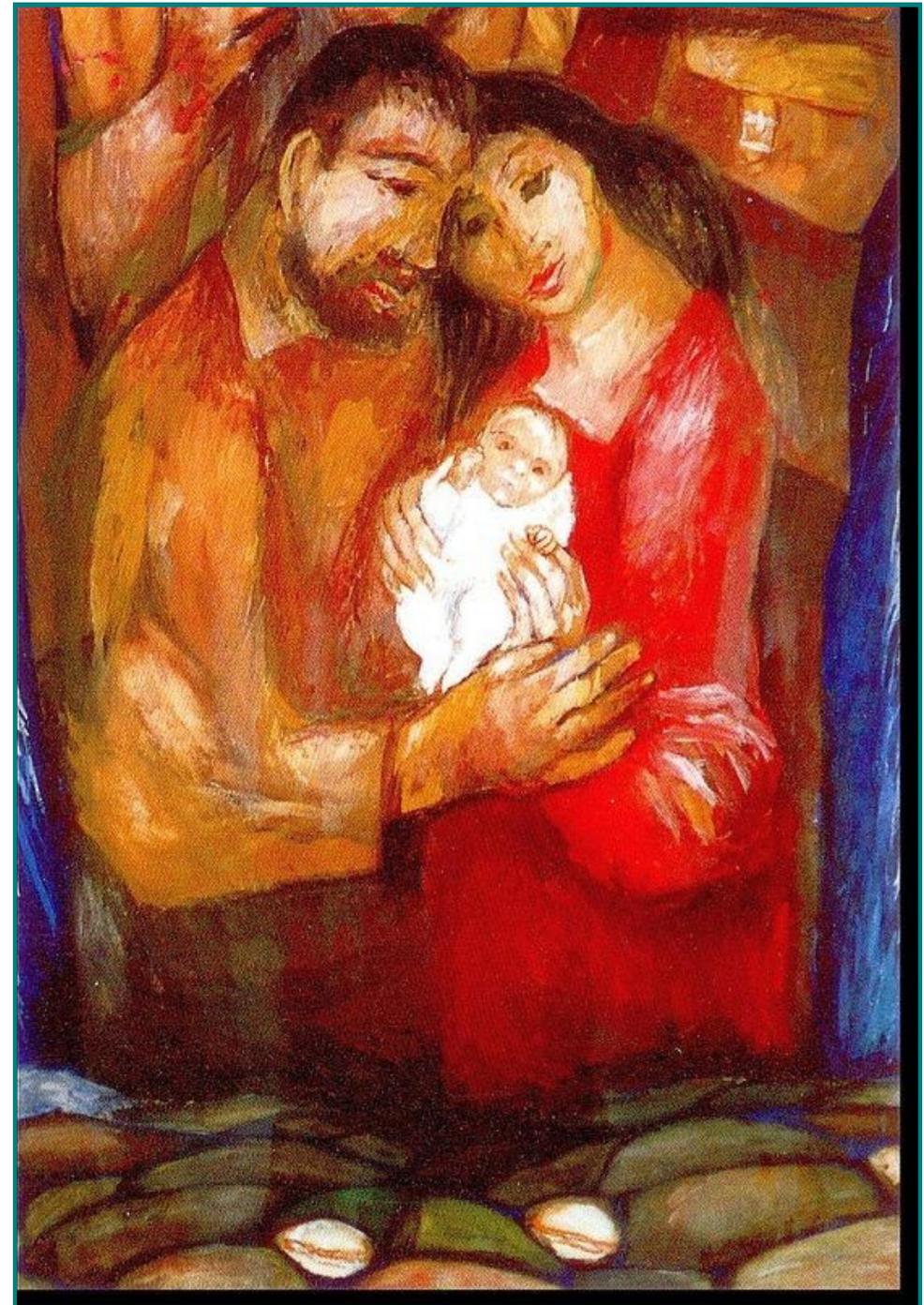
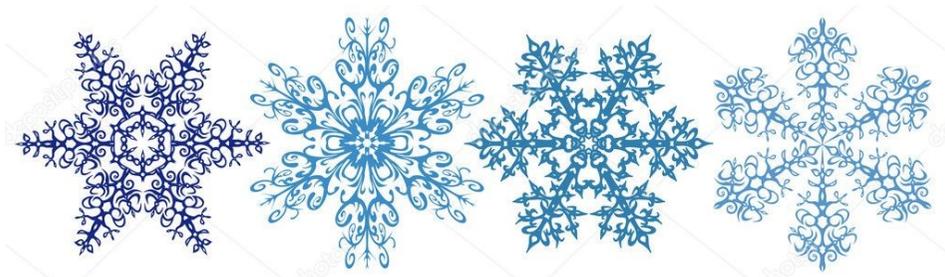
An offer of help to the bereaved family led Barbara on a journey to accompany the widow to visit her daughter in Alice Springs, Australia. Here, the impact of the landscape made a deep impression on her. The surrounding red rocks and landscape, the eternal nature of the surrounding land and the silence spoke to her of the eternal. This was intertwined with the relationship the indigenous Aborigines have with their surroundings. They are intimately connected with their landscape by stories of dreaming, song lines, people and places. They have a deep understanding of their eternal connection with the land and a verbal tradition of passing this knowledge down through the generations with stories and art.

On the way back home Barbara stopped off in Melbourne to catch up with an old friend. A nearby wool shop drew her in where she shared stories with the owner about the connection they both had with farming, sheep and the process of weaving and spinning. Barbara returned home with merino sheep's wool which she and her husband dyed and spun into yarn. This yarn now decorates the cover of *So What's the Story...?*

So what is the connection with story telling?

In story telling we spin and weave a tale. In the preparation of the wool some of the material is discarded. The yarn is teased out and in doing so there can be surprises

Sue Chastney



Seiger Koder

21 Feb - 23 Feb 2020

Launde Abbey Retreat - Quiet Moments—

inspired by Tom Wright's book of the same title

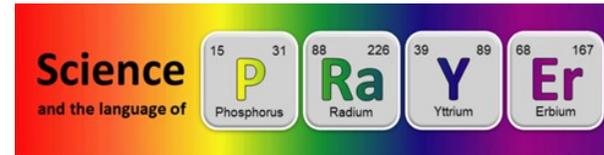
Launde Abbey, East Norton, Leicestershire, LE7 9XB

David Middleton

The retreat will look at the themes of Silence & Quietness, Stillness in Busy Lives, Quiet Moments and the Silence of God, A Quiet Conscience and The Peace of God.

David is a semi-retired Quantity Surveyor living in Ely, Cambridgeshire. He is married to Susan and has two married children, Paul and Catherine and four grandchildren. David is a member of the Reflect Executive, organiser of the Launde Retreat (with assistance in 2020), and a Local Preacher in the Ely and Newmarket Circuit. David wrote weekly Meditations for the Local Preachers' website, the Meditations are now available on The Worship Cloud website. He is currently involved in the development of The River of Life evangelism initiative in the Ely and Newmarket Circuit. The retreat will look at the themes of Silence & Quietness, Stillness in Busy Lives, Quiet Moments and the Silence of God, A Quiet Conscience and The Peace of God. The retreat will be in silence from Friday evening through to Sunday lunch enabling us to gain full benefit from the peace of this beautiful retreat house set in the rolling Leicestershire countryside.

Email davmid@btconnect.com T. [01353 668210](tel:01353668210)



Science and the Language of Prayer is the title of a series of five seminars held throughout the autumn at Bramhall Methodist Church. The key questions addressed were: how does a modern understanding of science affect our understanding of God, and, given this, how is it most appropriate to express our prayers?

Prayer, both public and private, has always been an integral part of Christianity. Some of the prayers we still offer today date back over 3,000 years and many of our prayer practices are deeply rooted in Christian traditions dating back for centuries.

The way we understand the world, however, has changed. Science tells us that the Universe is much bigger and older than previous generations could ever have imagined and that physical and biological processes are governed by scientific laws. We know that many diseases are caused by pathogens and that earthquakes are caused by seismic disturbances. Neurophysiology and brain imaging are giving us insights into how our thought processes are embedded in our physical brains.

This new understanding has the potential to affect how we express our prayers. Within the UK there is a healthy debate about how science and Christianity interact but little of this has addressed the issue of how we express our prayers. In his classic book on prayer, "God of Surprises" Gerard Hughes writes, "True Christianity will always be critical, questioning and continually developing in its understanding of God and human life" and warns that if this critical element is not fostered that "religious belief and practice ... will have little relation to everyday life and behaviour".

Science and the Language of Prayer cont...

The five seminars have each focussed on a particular scientific discipline: Criminology, Genetics, Neuropsychology, Medicine, and Geology, and have each featured a keynote speaker expert in their field. Following this there have been workshops designed enable wider participation in the issues raised. These have provided ideas for small group discussion, prayer and worship resources, further questions for the speakers, and the opportunity to compose prayers or create art work.

Video recordings of all the keynote talks and results from the workshops are available on the website <https://www.bramhallmethodists.org.uk/scienceandprayer/>

Gill Dascombe

Reflect Retreats and similar events for next year!

This is not an exclusive list and other retreats are available, which you can often find through the Retreat Association and places to retreat for 2020/ 21.

If you have been somewhere different in 2019/20 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.

2020 retreat at **Worth Abbey Rev Pam Clews will lead on the subject of "Listening to God" at Worth Abbey in Sussex 15-17 May 2020.**

For bookings, please contact Brian Sherrell via brian-car@hotmail.co.uk.



From the Editor

I'd very much appreciate more articles sent, including book reviews for November. Please send items for publication, photos and pictures, either with a written piece or separately.

Please send on email: pearlluxon@gmail.com

IMPORTANT NEWS for those who value this newsletter

It was agreed to reduce the costs of the newsletter by starting to send newsletters via email where possible. Hard copies will continue to be available to those without internet access. **Next summer's newsletter will therefore be distributed in this way.**

