



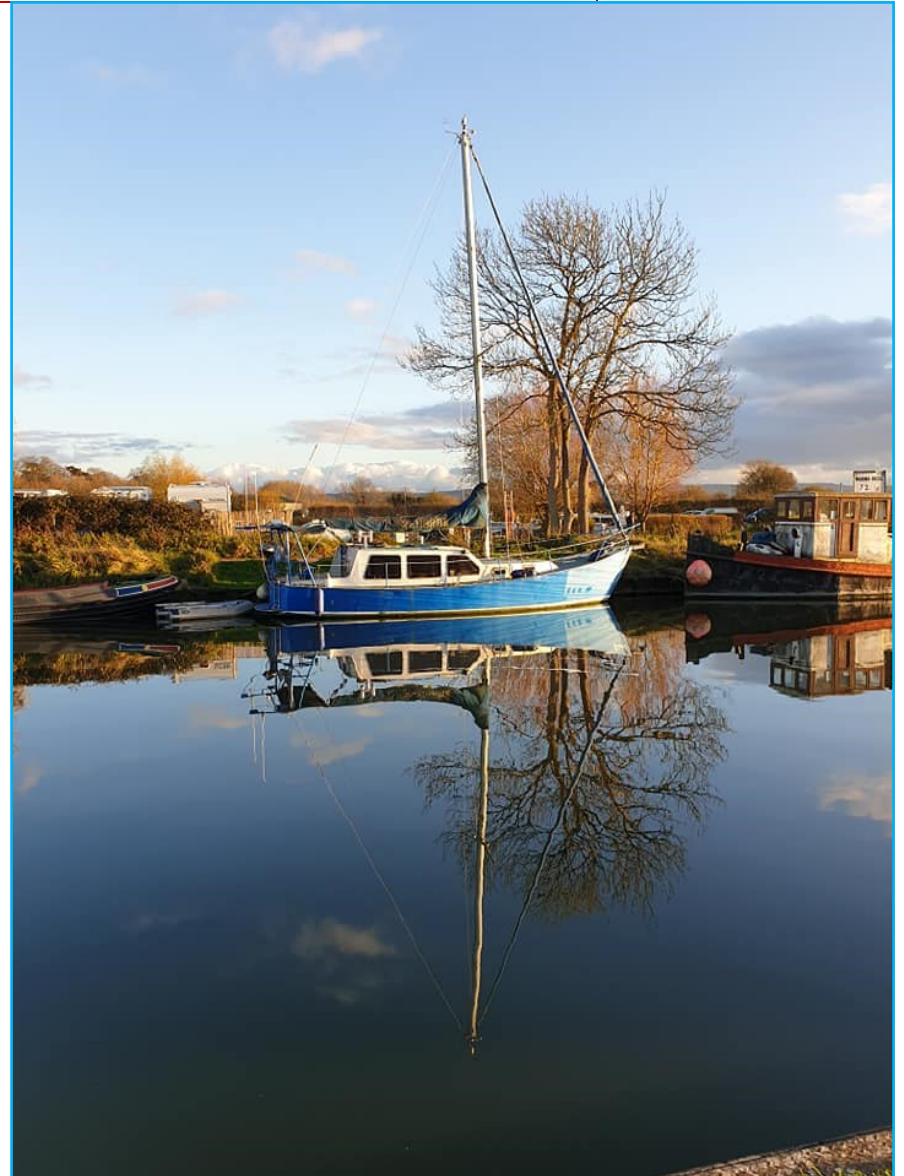
Cover picture—by Mandy Briggs at/ near Saul Junction, Gloucestershire
Above—as above

Reflect
Methodist spirituality

Reflect

Methodist spirituality

Newsletter
– November
2020



Letter from the Chair



Dear Reflect member,

This year of COVID-19 has changed us all in many unexpected ways!

At the start of lockdown in March, I had never heard of Zoom, and to be honest was both suspicious and slightly fearful about using it to replace gatherings of people. But since then we have seen worship, meetings, retreats and even choirs adapting creatively to this medium. I have learned a lot about technology in the past few months!

Whilst there is no substitute for face to face meeting, there have been unexpected benefits to the Zoom revolution. At this year's AGM on 7th March we were delighted to welcome more Reflect members than I have ever known before at this event! It was good to 'meet' one another and share something of our spiritual journeys. Since Zoom enabled so many to attend without the need to travel large distances, I am inclined to hold the AGM this way in the future.

Sadly, though, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that two of our three annual retreats have had to be cancelled this year. Hopefully 2021, and the advent of the vaccine will enable us to resume them.

In the meantime, however, we are going to be holding the first ever Reflect online Quiet Morning on 16th January. The leader will be Rev Judith Jessop, a Reflect member and pioneer minister from Sheffield, and the theme of the morning will be 'Covenant'. For further details, see elsewhere in the newsletter and on the website www.reflectretreats.co.uk.

Thank you all for your continued support and membership of Reflect.

With all good wishes

Gill Dascombe



Discussion was then opened up with the theme of Reflect's current work and related things to do with spirituality. Judith Jessop has offered her time to work with Reflect – she is concerned that, within the Methodist Church, we have suffered from lack of awareness of traditional spirituality. In lockdown, Zoom opened up an obvious method of online spiritual retreat events which could include those who can't travel and also as a means of including those who would not usually get involved.

Judith Jessop is currently undergoing stationing but is generously offering some of her time to work with Reflect on this. Gill said that it would be good to gather names of different groups/individuals to share ways of furthering this work. There is also Finding Sanctuary in the Everyday which Lynne has been working on to add to our website as a means for people to be introduced to various aspects of spirituality and as a way to "dipping a toe in the water" from home. Douai Abbey Retreat closed some time ago but was a retreat organised by Brenda Woods, Phil Hoar and Yvonne Walker. Anglicans have helped out on this team but it became impossible to find Methodists to take on this role. Yvonne suggested that this would work very well online and it may be worth approaching Brenda and Phil to see if they would do this on an annual basis.

Pearl Luxon explained that it can be difficult to join in contemplative/reflective retreats from home so online events can be challenging. Judith Jessop mentioned a Whirlow spirituality centre which may be a useful contact. Gill has been approached by the Methodist Diaconal Centre for Reflect to facilitate retreats for them – this would be fine but we wouldn't want "ordinary" Methodists to be left out of provision if we focus too much on providing for specific groups.

Sandie said that comments today highlight that Methodism is missing the ability of knowing what is happening and where on a very local basis. Quiet Days, Spiritual Direction, etc are not well publicised in Methodism and folk looking for something would not know where to look.

Christine Walters asked whether there are any connections with 3Generate and Young People – we need to share contemplation and spirituality opportunities with them. Tony Moodie said that the Children, Youth & Family team who run 3Generate have been having conversations with Roger Walton about incorporating the Methodist Way of Life with resources for young people.

9. Date of next Executive Committee - April 23rd 2021

10. Date of next AGM tba

11. Thanks and close: Gill thanked everyone for attending. T meeting ended with The Grace



Retreats and Quiet Days—



Southern—Wychcroft Retreat

For 2021 I have a retreat arranged for the w/e 9/11th July at Wychcroft Retreat Centre near Bletchingley, Surrey.

The leader is yet to be confirmed due to changes in circumstances for the previously announced leader. The price will be approx. £180.

The numbers will be limited to 20 to allow for everyone to have the right amount of space. The house is carefully following Covid secure guidelines.

To receive more details or simply to register interest please contact Brian Sherrell at brian-car@hotmail.co.uk

Launde Abbey Retreat

Friday 19th – Sunday 21st February 2021

Sing a New Song – an exploration of Psalms old and new

Leader Revd Dr Carla A. Grosch-Miller

Carla is an ordained minister, practical theologian and poet. She served churches in the US and the UK for over 20 years and most recently has focussed on research, teaching and writing. She is the author of *Psalms redux: Poems and Prayers* (Canterbury Press, 2014), *Lifelines: Wrestling the Word*, *Gathering Up Grace* (Canterbury Press, 2020), and a co-editor and contributor to *Tragedies and Christian Congregations: The Practical Theology of Trauma* (Routledge, 2019). Carla and her husband David live in Northumberland, where she regularly swims in the North Sea and he does not!

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

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

EMAIL

It was agreed to reduce the costs of the newsletter by starting to send the June newsletters via email where possible. Hard copies will continue to be available to those without email. Your feedback is welcome.

Covid-19—now

I have seen a flourishing of creativity both online and in pictures of offline activity. If you would like to publish any of your reflections or pictures or provide links to them in future here, please let me know. As on occasions in recent years I have permission to include a painting and poem reflection from Revd Sally Coleman.

I have also reflected a lot on the blessings of where I now live, as has Revd Mandy Briggs who gave permission for use of her Gloucestershire photos. Perhaps you have found wonderful localities or reflected in poetry or other art on this? **Pearl Luxon**

The following prayer was well received in the last edition. It is still the case that many people, including those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, are shielding.

A blessing for those who have shielded

For those of us who have shielded, may you remain our protection.

For those of us set free and yet still unable to walk to the end of the driveway - may you be our strength

For those now able to catch up with family we have missed for so long, may you be our restoration and help the glue of our relationships hold together.

May you hold us together.

For those of us released but still lonely, may you be present

For those with a letter of liberation, and yet still living with the diagnosis which inspired it, may you bring healing and wholeness and perhaps a glimmer of holiness.

Whether we are excited or terrified or somewhere in between

- be the I Am that flings stars and paints sunrises and moves mountains with us, around us and within us we pray.

Amen

Revd Jo Cox-Darling

Reflect online Quiet Morning

COVENANT

16TH January 2021 9.30am – 12.15pm *

At the Annual Covenant Service, the Methodist people are invited to renew their Covenant relationship with God.

'The emphasis of the whole service is on God's readiness to enfold us in generous love, not dependent on our deserving. Our response, also in love, springs with penitent joy from thankful recognition of God's grace.' (Methodist Worship Book)

We shall spend the morning in guided reflection and quiet exploring the spirituality of covenant and our relationship with God.

The Methodist Covenant Service is regarded as a significant contribution to the wider church in the UK.

Programme and further details can be found at <http://www.reflectretreats.co.uk/index.php>

If you would like to attend* please e-mail Gill Dascombe
chair@reflectretreats.co.uk

*Numbers are limited to 24, but in the event of oversubscription, another Quiet Day can be held on 20th Jan. Please indicate if you would be available for the second date, if required.

There is no charge for this event, but donations of £5 may be made by bank transfer to Reflect:

Lloyds Bank, Sort code 30 96 18, Account no 0283311302, ref Quiet Day

Relationship between newsletter and website – there may be room to improve this so that our online resources work well. There have been a few hitches with the Retreat Association – coordinating dates, for example. Pearl would like to stand down from this role after the next edition (Nov 2020). Gill asked whether Pearl would continue until 2021 and Pearl confirmed that she would like a smooth handover.

vi. Website—currently no-one to cover this and Gill works to do this as and when she can at the moment. We have a company to do the technical bits but it needs someone to keep it up to date.

vii. Retreat Association – Sue Chastney went to the meeting in May but there is not much to report.

viii. Learning Network – Tony Moodie reported that the Evangelism & Growth strategy was accepted at Conference in the summer – without prayer and deep contemplation, evangelism is merely recruitment and the current leadership and members of the Learning Network strongly endorse this. Roger Walton (following his term as president) developed a Methodist Way of Life which has grown during his time as District Chair. It is based on the four aspects of Methodist calling and the card includes questions to challenge and stimulate. There is Methodist Way of Life information on the main Methodist website and resources are being added all the time. Information will continue to be shared with churches. Sally asked about the intersection of the Methodist Way of Life and the Reflect organisation – is it possible to add link to Reflect on the Methodist website? Tony confirmed that there is an alternative page which our link can be added to. Gill hoped that we could do the link in reverse from our website too.

7. Membership of the Executive Committee: vacancies include, Website, Newsletter (once Pearl steps down), Southern Retreat (Brian happy to work with the new volunteer).

8. Any other business: Gill opened up a discussion on the work of Reflect and the future but first Derek Gallagher was invited to introduce himself as others were able to do earlier in the meeting. Derek is a local preacher who has been involved in running a day retreat centre in Kent for the past 20 years and is grateful for the support of Reflect.

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7th November 2020

Via ZOOM

PRESENT: Louise Wright, Tony Moodie, Sandie Exley-Watts, Lynne Tonge, Sue Chastney, Michael May, Jean Smith, Sally Rush, Yvonne Walker, Judith Jessop, Gill Dascombe, Christine Crabtree, Pearl Luxon, Pamela Reid, Judith Lampard, Diane Hughes, Christine Walters, Lily Twist.

1. Welcome: Gill welcomed everyone, especially the Reflect members, and then led our opening prayers including the poem "This is the time to be slow". A silence was also kept in memory of Chris Wood who passed away earlier this year after contracting Motor Neurone Disease. He had previously held the post of chair of Reflect and, at the time of his passing was Deputy Chair of Reflect.

2. Introductions: Each of the people present were invited to introduce themselves and give a short "news where I am" statement.

3. Apologies for absence: Colin & Mary Rowe, Derek Gallagher (possibly joining later), David Middleton, Brian Sherrell, Andrew Hollins, Alison MacTier.

4. Minutes of previous AGM: Sally Rush's job title was changed from Pastoral Worker to Community Worker before the minutes were signed.

5. Notification of Any Other Business: a time for discussion will be facilitated towards the end of the meeting for AOB.

6. Reports: *all circulated in advance and Gill pointed out the highlights of each report.*

i. Chair's report - see previous page

ii. Retreats - A booking for next year's Southern Retreat is booked at Wychcroft near Croydon but Brian has indicated that numbers have fallen in recent years and is concerned about whether people will continue to join weekend retreats post-Covid 19. Gill spoke to Brian yesterday and encouraged him not to cancel 2021's retreat just yet. Brian is standing down from his role in organising the Southern retreat.

iii. Financial - membership direct debits have fallen but the income is fairly stable. We still have funds remaining from the grant and a bequest.

iv. Membership - reminders have gone out for those who have not yet paid there are quite a number of subscriptions not yet renewed. Pam confirmed that these often come in as late as January or even March. Declining membership of Reflect is a concern.

v. Newsletter - Newsletters are published in July & Nov/Dec in conjunction with Retreat Association newsletters and are now sent out electronically. Only 15 or so receive it by post now. Contributions are both welcome and necessary and Pearl works creatively to produce each edition. She would like feedback on the electronic version. It is usually 10-12 pages long, even given the desire for more content!

CHAIR'S AGM REPORT 2020

Last year, our AGM was held at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, in what seems like a different world! This came after a successful Day Conference, which was addressed by Rev Dr Barbara Glasson, then President of the Methodist Conference. This was followed by a series of varied and much-appreciated workshops led by members of our Executive committee.

Life has changed for all of us in the past year in all sorts of ways. Many functions and events of the church have been severely limited by the imposition of the lockdown, not least Reflect's core activity of facilitating retreats.

At that last meeting, we felt that it would be necessary to consider the way forward, both with our core work, and exploring new possibilities. Since then, a member of Reflect has come forward and offered to develop online spirituality resources; the Exec have taken part in an online Quiet Day, and we shall be discussing that at the Exec meeting following this AGM. Further options for future development are also under consideration.

The Launde retreat took place in February, but sadly the other two retreats have had to be cancelled. As we meet in November 2020, we are uncertain of what the future holds, but aware of our calling to respond to the spiritual needs of the Methodist people.

I continue to be very grateful to the hard work and commitment of our committee: retreat organisers, secretaries, treasurer, newsletter editor, Retreat Association, Learning Network and Diaconal liaison.

I was very sad to report the death of Chris Wood in March 2020. Chris was a former chair of Reflect and latterly the deputy chair. He was an enthusiastic and talented musician and a respected spiritual director.

GILL DASCOMBE
October 2020





Sally Coleman

There is a place in God's heart
where tears can't stop.

Tears for the broken,
the weary,
the downtrodden.

Tears for those who have
no voices,
no one to care.

Tears for
the hungry,
the empty,
the destitute,
the abused,
the forgotten.

Tears of passion,
compassion
flow
to us
if we
will
receive them
as streams of living water,
flowing in
to care,
to open our dry eyes that
we might see
a new way.

Sally Coleman