

# A home for eternity?



Beaton House in Biscot, Hampshire

Kathryn Fleming *reflects on*

1 Peter 2:2-10 and John 14:1-14

It's a very architectural sort of day. The epistle reminds us we're living stones, constituent members of a spiritual house with Jesus the cornerstone. The Gospel offers different buildings. I've always loved the King James Bible translation of John 14:2, that has Jesus promising: "In my Father's house are many mansions". As a child I imagined a series of stately homes, their doors wide open, so you could choose exactly where you wanted to spend eternity, and I cherished the thought of as much variety in heaven as there are

people to enjoy it. That vision of inclusive welcome is still important to me.

"No one comes to the Father except through me," says Jesus – and that's pretty clear, even non-negotiable. The only way that we will reach home safely is the route that Jesus forged for us on the cross, the route of self-giving love that is even stronger than death. I don't think that means, though, that only card-carrying Christians can expect a welcome home. The Jesus event is indeed once for all – but it is for all. To see Jesus is to see God. To live the Jesus way, denying self and serving others, is to join the royal priesthood, that new body of people who, having received mercy, are become a people of dignity and hope. 😊

Lord Jesus, our Way, help us to follow you, dying to self and living to God. Jesus, our Truth, help us to recognise you wherever we meet you. Jesus, our Life, welcome us to live your way, today and for ever. Amen.

## Science and faith

### Part 1 – God the creator

by Caroline Hodgson

Early theologians were preoccupied with the material aspect of creation. Had God created everything out of nothing, or had matter already existed in some form? In the second century the debate was fuelled by the drive to establish "orthodox" doctrine. Gnosticism held that matter was evil, and therefore intrinsically opposed to God. By contrast, most of the Church Fathers, such as Tertullian, held that God had created everything from scratch. During the Reformation, Luther and Calvin advocated a literal

interpretation of Genesis, and numerous attempts were made to reconcile new scientific knowledge with Noah's flood.

It wasn't until Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, that a contender entered the arena to challenge traditional notions. Darwin's observations were shocking, because he was – like Copernicus and Galileo – challenging humankind's privileged position at the centre of creation.

The debate rages on, although many Christians accept creation as one of God's mysteries – something that we cannot understand in our lifetime. 😊

“Our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.'”

Psalms 126:2

## World Laughter Day

by Lisa Tulfer

In fourth-century Egypt, a monk called Evagrius Ponticus developed the idea of Christian vices (which would later evolve into the Seven Deadly Sins) and virtues. One of the vices was sadness, the failure to respond joyfully to God's love, and the corresponding virtue was *hilaritas*, or Christian joy.

Humans express joy through smiling and laughter, so you may want to take part in World Laughter Day today. Started in

Mumbai in 1998 by Dr Madan Kataria, the annual event raises awareness about laughter and its benefits – it is believed to increase people's well-being, including through the release of endorphins. The logo of Dr Kataria's international movement has the tagline "World Peace through Laughter", and the day seeks to unite humanity through the shared language of laughter. In Copenhagen in 2000, almost ten thousand people gathered for a "Happydemic".

Laughter is contagious. Can you do something today to spread a bit of it? 😊

## **Blandford Methodist Church: Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May**

Good morning and a warm welcome to our Morning Worship which is being led by Mrs Christine Thompson. The stewards today are Tina Wild and Margaret Cornish. Thank you to Angela Walden for playing for us and thanks also to Angela for the flowers. After the service, please join us in the hall for refreshments.

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### **Dates for your diary:**

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> May	6.00 pm	“Going Deeper”, monthly meeting of prayer, worship and ministry at the Parish Church (first Sunday in each month) – see below
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	10.45 am	Church Anniversary led by Reverend Gwyneth Owen, followed by lunch in the hall
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	4.00 pm	Easter Offering Service at Verwood Methodist Church
Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	8.30 am	Monthly prayer meeting, Holtwood Methodist
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> July:	10.45 am	Pauline’s final service at Blandford Methodist, followed by lunch in the hall
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July:	4.30 pm	Leaving Service for Reverend Pauline Crispin at Trinity Church, Ringwood
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	10.45 am	Harvest festival service led by Reverend Nick Wood from Verwood Methodist, followed by lunch in the hall

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**Bible in a year:** 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> May: 2 Kings 1 – 18 and Luke 24 – John 3

**It’s not too late to give a leaving gift for Pauline!** Even though it is a few months yet until our Minister and Superintendent, Reverend Pauline Crispin, leaves us for pastures new, it would be good whilst she is on Sabbatical to begin thinking about a gift from our church which will form part of her leaving present. If you would like to make a monetary gift towards a leaving present, please pass this to Joyce before the end of May, and if you have any suggestions for a gift, please let Joyce know.

**Church Anniversary lunch:** Don’t forget it’s our Church Anniversary next Sunday when the Reverend Gwyneth Owen will be leading our service. This will be followed by lunch in the hall when we shall enjoy a time of chat, fellowship and good food. If you haven’t signed up for lunch and would like to come, please let one of the stewards know.

**Going Deeper - A monthly "Filling Station"-type event:** I wanted to invite you to come along to a new monthly evening service we’re starting this term. It’s called “Going Deeper” and it’s a filling-station type event - aimed at people wanting a more charismatic/contemporary expression of worship but equally wanting to serve in their local context where they might not get that on a regular basis. Equally, there’s something about the wider church gathering to seek God’s presence. This is not about BFPC trying to steal your church’s congregation

members, but us trying to serve the wider church. We kick off on 7th May at 6.00 pm in the Parish Church - and we want to welcome all to come along and partake.

*Reverend Chris Beaumont, Lead Minister, Parish Church*

**Easter Offering Service:** A warm welcome is extended to everyone to join us at Verwood Methodist Church for the Dedication of the Easter Offering Service on Sunday 14th May 2023; 4.00pm for tea and 5.00 pm for the service.

*Glenda Sidding*

**Aldersgate Sunday:** The Sunday nearest to 24<sup>th</sup> May or preceding Sunday is traditionally known as 'Wesley Day', or Aldersgate Sunday. It commemorates a life-changing moment in the Christian journey of John Wesley, the most prominent of the founders of Methodism. In May 1738, John attended worship at a Moravian 'Religious Society' meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. It was during this service that he felt his "heart strangely warmed", as he experienced God's love in a most personal and life-giving way. Until then he had known God in his mind, but not in his heart. Now he understood the value of a personal experience of God that would bring assurance of salvation to the believer.

**Thank you from Phil Dixon:** The following was received by Joyce from Phil Dixon: "Please pass on my sincere thanks to the people of the Christchurch and Wimborne Circuit. My time amongst you has been both challenging and rewarding. I believe God has been at work and his purposes are being revealed as we lean on him. Yours in Christ, Phil."

*Phil then quotes Ephesians Chapter 1 verses 18-19: I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his people, and how very great is his power at work in us who believe.*

**Blandford Foodbank** is urgently in need of -

Tinned fruit	Tinned vegetables	Coffee	Squash/Fruit juice
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The following items are also running low and need restocking -

Tinned meat	Tinned soup	Jam/marmalade	
Rice pudding	Shampoo	Tea Bags	Toilet roll

For those able to support the Foodbank with items, a box has been placed in the Narthex as a collection point.

*John Cornish*

**Prayer:** Please can we continue to uphold in prayer those members of our congregation who we know are ill or suffering in some way.

If you know of anyone who would like prayer and be mentioned by name in The Link, please let me know (having obtained their permission first to mention them by name).

***As Reverend Pauline Crispin is currently on sabbatical, for any immediate problems and concerns, please contact Joyce Wild in the first instance.***

**Minister:**

Reverend Pauline Crispin

**Pastoral Support:**

Joyce Wild: (Tel: 01258 454091)