

Have a heart

Heather Smith *reflects on* Ezekiel 36:24-28

The first heart transplant was carried out by Dr Christiaan Barnard in 1967 in Cape Town, a huge step in medical history. While they're not exactly routine, as many as two hundred heart transplants take place in the UK every year. You may be a candidate if you have severe heart failure – that is, your heart is unable to keep up with the demands on it because it cannot pump blood with normal efficiency.

It can certainly be difficult to keep up with the demands that life places on our hearts. Perhaps you have too much to cope with in family life, or suffer from loneliness. Maybe you find it hard to know where to channel your compassionate energies – so many people need our help. Perhaps you struggle with issues from your past.

The solution to all our heart problems, according to Ezekiel, is that God will take out our hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh. "Ah," you might say, "If only my heart were harder I wouldn't suffer so much." If you receive a surgical heart transplant things are never quite the same. It might save your life, but you need to take some precautions, including taking immunosuppressants for the rest of your life. If you receive a heart transplant from God, says Ezekiel, it comes with a new spirit. The combination, far from making us less able to cope, may be the key to Christ-like compassion. 🌸



Lord God, put a new heart within me, and direct my energy and my compassion in your ways. Amen.

Books of the Old Testament Zephaniah

by Georgina Byrne

There's a glimmer of joy in Zephaniah, but to get there the reader must wade through a torrent of disaster. This fits with the great message of the book – that the unremitting horror of divine judgement will, ultimately, purify and refine those who are left.

The prophet is named in the first verse as a descendent of Hezekiah, the righteous and respected king of Judah (2 Kings 18). His words

point to the coming devastation of the fall of Judah to the Babylonian Empire. "I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. The prophet uses vivid language to describe the destruction. The reason for it becomes clear in chapter three. The city has not listened to the Lord and officials are corrupt. Those who remain will be those who are faithful and lowly. Only over these will God cast protection, restoring their fortunes. When the time of purification is over, the remnant will remain. 🌸

LGBTQ+ Church

Part 4 – safeguarding

by Jayne Ozanne

Why do LGBTQ+ people need safeguarding in religious settings? Sadly, because many have been subjected to a range of conversion practices that try to change or suppress their innate sexuality or gender identity, causing significant harm. Research has shown that this is practised by many religious groups, where mainly young LGBTQ+ people are told that who they are is unacceptable to God and to their communities. This can cause untold mental health problems, as well as

deep feelings of shame and self-loathing that can cause life-long trauma.

That is why the Global Interfaith Commission on LGBTQ+ Lives chose to focus its second global conference, held at the Foreign Office in March 2022, on agreeing a set of Principles to Safeguard LGBTQ+ lives. These were based on the six principles enshrined in the UK Care Act (2014) – empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability. The full text is available at www.globalinterfaith.lgbt 🌸

“Prayer strikes the winning blow; service is simply picking up the pieces.”

S. D. Gordon (1859-1936), author and evangelical lay minister

Blandford Methodist Church: Sunday 1st June

Good morning and welcome to our Morning Worship which is being led by Reverend Carl Stokes, a Padre at Blandford Army Camp. The stewards today are John Cornish and Elizabeth Boyd. Thank you to Angela for playing for us and also for the flowers. After the service, please join us in the hall for refreshments.

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 8 th June	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Diana Middleditch
Sunday 15 th June	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant
Sunday 22 nd June	10.45 am	Local Arrangement service led by members of the congregation
Sunday 29 th June	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Dr Mark Kimber followed by General Church Meeting in the hall
Sunday 6 th July	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Reverend Andrew Pottage
Sunday 13 th July	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Barrie Knight
Sunday 20 th July	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Keith Beckingham
Sunday 27 th July	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Mark Priestley

Colehill Methodist: Every Monday, 11.00 am to 12.00 noon(ish), Bible Study, coffee, prayers and plenty of chat. All welcome.

Bible in a year: 1st – 7th June: 2 Chronicles 15 – 29 and John 12:27 - 17

Meet Reverend Dr Mark Kimber: Most Fridays Mark will be available in the Okeford Room from 10.00 am to 11.00 am for anyone who wishes to have a chat with him. However, on the third Friday of each month there will be a session entitled '**Meeting with Mark**' to which you are cordially invited.

Lunch Club: Joyce has advised that Lunch Club will be taking a break and resuming at 12.30 pm on Friday 26th September.

Today is **Mission in Britain Sunday** and Padre Carl Stokes has come to lead our worship. Our armed forces are just one of the groups Mission in Britain donates funds to. You will have been given a Mission in Britain envelope when you came in and if you feel like donating to this charity that would be most appreciated. Already many of you have collecting boxes for this charity but if anyone else would like a box please just speak to Joyce after today's service or contact her on 07817505543.

Joyce Wild

BMC Church Council Membership – Expression of Interest: If you are a member of Blandford Methodist Church and feel called and able to serve on the Church Council from September 2025, please speak to John Cornish or Reverend Mark to confirm your interest by 22nd June 2025. Your willingness to serve is greatly valued as we discern the future direction of our church together, and make things happen.

Becoming a Member of BMC: If you are interested in becoming a member of Blandford Methodist Church, please speak with Reverend Mark. He would be delighted to talk with you about what church membership means and how to take this next step in your journey of faith.

Light and life, Mark

Sunday 29th June 2025, BMC General Church Meeting following the morning service: All members and friends are warmly invited!

We will gather in worship, taking time to reflect on the past year and prayerfully consider where God may be leading us in the year ahead.

Please come prepared to share or reflect on:

- A significant moment in your faith journey this past year
- Highlights from our church life and community
- Where God might be calling us to serve together in the year ahead

After worship: Please bring a picnic lunch to enjoy together. We will:

- Hear a brief financial summary
- Confirm our stewards and Church Council members (from September)
- Share in an open conversation about the future ministry and witness of our Church

Let us come together with thankful hearts and hopeful vision.

Charities for 2025/2026: At our General Church Meeting on the 29th June, we will need to consider new charities to support from September 2025 through to August 2026. Please can you give this some prayerful thought and if possible let me have some ideas before the meeting so that I can pass these ideas on to Mark. However, ideas at the meeting will also be very welcome. (For info: our current two charities are Zane *[helping forgotten people in Zimbabwe and seeking to relieve invisible and visible suffering]*, and the Louis Ross Foundation *[helping young people facing difficulties]*).

Margaret Cornish

Harvest: It might seem as though it's some way off yet, but our Harvest Festival service has been planned for 5th October. Unfortunately, Mark is unable to take that service for us, so has asked that we think about this and if anyone has any suggestions for whom we might consider taking that service, please can you let either John or Mark know by Sunday 8th June.

Woodlands Methodist: You are cordially invited to hear “Gospel Voices” when they lead a musical worship service at Woodlands on Sunday 8th June at 6.30 pm.

Colehill Methodist will be holding a Coffee Morning on 14th June. Everyone very welcome.

Blandford Foodbank is urgently in need of (updated 11.4.25) – Coffee, Squash, Cereal, Tinned Sweetcorn, Toothpaste. Any other donations of food or household goods are also welcomed. 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 remember to uphold in prayer those members of our congregation 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).

Minister: Reverend Dr Mark Kimber

Enquiries via Lead Steward, John Cornish, on 07799 516 735

Pastoral Support: Joyce Wild: Tel: 01258 454091