



Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Colossians 1:1-14

There's a well-known verse nestling in the middle of this reading: "we have heard of your faith... and... love... because of the hope laid up for you in heaven". Those are my italics. The reason this verse stops me in my tracks is because I wonder what I – what we – think of heaven. (By "we" I don't just mean "we Christians" – this is a question for everyone.)

Cartoon heaven has a large ornate gate rising out of a cloud, with St Peter acting as a kind of bouncer, and cherubs, complete with halos and harps, lounging around on cushiony clouds. We may not take that literally, but do we have an alternative in our mind's eye? Do we need some idea of heaven for the health of our faith? Or is the very notion damaging and distracting? Was John Lennon right? Is it healthy to think that "above us [is] only sky"?

This is one for personal reflection and prayer, so I can only provide my own insight, with the help of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He preached about this in 1878: "It is clear that no man has a hope laid up in heaven

unless he has hope within himself." I agree. It's not about keeping our fingers crossed, hoping that something might or might not be reality, for surely that's a distraction. It's about looking deeper within, drawing on our inner, God-given resources, to find the flame of hope within. Hope, like charity, begins within – heaven in the here and now. ☺

Lord, thank you for hope, for heaven, and for the here and now. Keep me focused on this, and help me to keep the flame flickering, even on days of dark doubt. Amen.

St Swithun

by Julian Smith

St Swithun is commemorated in the Common Worship lectionary on Tuesday.

Immortality is assured when a rose is named after you. St Swithun has "large, strongly-scented, soft-pink blooms of more than a hundred petals".

But Swithun's fame does not depend upon a rose. Nor does it depend upon knowledge of his holy and humble life, his ten years as Bishop of Winchester in the mid-tenth century, or his time as an adviser to King

Egbert. Swithun is remembered for the legend that attends the moving of his body.

According to his wishes, Swithun was buried in a simple grave outside his cathedral. When a new cathedral was being built it was planned to move his remains to a shrine within the building. Despite dire warnings of storms and tempests, Swithun's remains were moved on 15 July 971 – and forty days of storms ensued.

Never mind the rose, Swithun is remembered for his link to the weather, and his day is anticipated with trepidation. ☺

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

We've lived on our eleven-acre smallholding for twelve years. When we came here, Wales was a new country for us, though we'd got connections, and a new language. "How can we belong?" was my first thought – I can learn how to keep sheep and pigs, how to grow fruit and veg, and I already kept poultry, but how can we sink deep into this new place and begin to belong?

As a priest it was easier for me than for my non-churchgoing husband. I met people immediately and became known by them. I joined a choir and my local Welsh-speaking chapel, I learned some Welsh, we shopped very locally. We employed local craftspeople to fix things. We began to belong more deeply. This weekend my husband went on his first charity tractor run and discovered he belonged.

It's part of the God-giveness of being accepted and it's not all hard work. ☺

“Teach me, O God... to breathe deeply in faith.”

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Danish philosopher, theologian and poet

Blandford Methodist Church: Sunday 13th July

Good morning and welcome to our Morning Worship which is being led Mr Barrie Knight. The stewards today are Philippa Daffern and Margaret Cornish. Thank you to Angela for playing for us. After the service, please join us in the hall for refreshments.

Dates for your diary:

Friday 18 th July	12.00 noon	Lunch Club get together
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
Sunday 3 rd August	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Peter McNeill
Sunday 10 th August	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant
Friday 15 th August	12.00 noon	Lunch Club get together
Sunday 17 th August	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Miss Liz Ward
Sunday 24 th August	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Reverend Peter McNeill
Sunday 31 st August	10.45 am	Ecumenical Service at BMC hosted by Reverend Dr Mark Kimber

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: 6th – 12th July: Job 32 – Psalms 6 and Acts 14 - 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.

PLEASE NOTE: Mark will not be around for a couple of weeks including Friday 25th July and Friday 1st August.

Lunch Club Summertime Get Togethers: Looking for a chance to stay connected over the summer whilst Lunch Club is on a summer break? Reverend Mark – along with a few friendly helpers – will be hosting relaxed lunchtime gatherings filled with good conversation, fun, and maybe even a quiz or activity! **Bring your own picnic lunch** We'll provide drinks, biscuits, and (if you're lucky) some cake! **Fridays 12:00 noon – 1:30 pm**

- 18 July
- 15 August

Come along for a friendly catch-up and a bit of summer cheer. Everyone welcome!

Reverend Dr Mark Kimber

NEWS: BMC Kurling Club: We are very pleased to announce that from the 1st September 2025, the Kurling Club will be supported by our Church along similar lines to the Lunch Club. This matter was discussed briefly at our recent General Church Meeting on the 29th June and will be ratified at our next Church Council in October.

In summary, David and John, with several members of the Kurling Club, met on Wednesday 9th July. The Kurling Club confirmed that for various reasons the Blandford Group Practice will no longer run the Kurling Club. We offered a very warm welcome to the Kurling Club and said we are pleased to help with its management in a similar way the Church manages the Lunch Club.

Actions are now in hand to arrange a membership list, training for the volunteers, DBS checking, etc. The Kurlers will continue to meet on Wednesday mornings as our guests, with their membership starting on 1st September, which is the start of our Connexional Year. We agreed that the primary contacts will be John Cornish for the Church and Judith Briggs for the Kurlers.

Please talk to either David or I if you would like to know more or are willing to assist. Thank you.

John Cornish

Woodlands Methodist: “Worship for You”, 13th July, led by Mr Martyn Cubitt. Details on the poster in the hall.

Christian Aid: Thank you so much for your incredible support, prayers and generosity this Christian Aid Week. Blandford Methodist Church has raised £185 to help families around the world transform their own lives.

Your generous gift will help women like Aurelia in Guatemala. When Aurelia discovered the work of our partner, Congcoop, she put herself forward to attend the specialist agricultural training on offer, along with 22 members of nearby communities.

By working with Congcoop, Aurelia’s gained the skills and knowledge to cultivate native seeds that are better suited to the changing climate. She’s producing her own organic fertiliser, creating nurseries, constructing rainwater collection systems and making nutritious food and medicine for her chickens. Congcoop also provided Aurelia with seeds and tools. Together, we can be more like Aurelia, and put the unstoppable power of hope into action, because a brighter, fairer future is possible.

Christian Aid Team

Methodist Women in Britain: Deacon Glenda Sidding addressed the recent Circuit Meeting regarding Methodist Women in Britain. Glenda had been trying to encourage involvement across Circuit. Unfortunately, support has continued to be limited, and the Easter Offering service had to be moved due to the original planned church being unable to support it, with circuit churches not very well represented at the event.

Glenda is aware congregations are getting older, there may be less scope and ability than there once was. It is therefore proposed that the MWiB forum is disbanded. Glenda will continue promoting distributing material. If churches wish to hold Easter Offering services,

they can do it. Material is readily available online and would fit a 'local arrangement' service. Partnerships will continue, District partnership information will continue to be sent out. The essence of what was done can continue. The Forum doesn't think we've got any other options, hence this recommendation. Glenda is sad this has become necessary, as this has been the one element of mission that we do together.

The Circuit meeting unanimously agreed with Glenda's proposal. Reverend Andrew Pottage thanked Glenda for her support, work and prayer over the last 20 years and encouraged folk to continue to support the Easter Offering.

These were notes were recorded at the Circuit meeting held on 12th June 2025.

Blandford Foodbank is urgently in need of (updated 8.7.25) – Baked beans, Cereal, Deodorant, Jam/ marmalade, Shampoo, Tea bags 40, Tinned meat balls, Tinned tomatoes, UHT milk, Washing up liquid. 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.

Can we particularly remember those of our congregation who are helping family members through illness, and those who are awaiting operations.

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