

Dear Friends

In the news recently was a story of a new collider that is going to be built in Switzerland, which is capable of smashing particles together more effectively than the current largest Hadron collider. The new machine will be 3 times the size of Hadron, will cost somewhere in the region of £13 billion, and the hope is it will unveil the mysteries of the universe.



I couldn't help, but think what an utter waste of money this is; money that could be spent much more usefully in a world that is struggling so much at the moment. But no, unlike our forebears, before the age of reason, we are not comfortable simply to **be** with the mysteries of the universe.

The arrogance of the lower human nature needs to push, force, prod, smash, dissect, drill, and frack nature until it submits to our will. It seems to me that in the process, we have completely failed to understand the dark side of this violent activity. True, we may have accumulated a huge amount of knowledge, but we have seemingly lost all sight of the wisdom that was and is inherent in nature from the beginning of time. This wisdom existed within the indigenous peoples of the world across the globe, though largely they were violently oppressed as their ways were perceived to stand in the way of so called 'progress'.

The age of reason - the enlightenment as it is called - brought with it the early stages of our modern scientific models. Such models rendered those who lived in harmony with the mystery of the universe, who understood wisdom and who had deep rapport with the land, simple minded and ignorant.

The profound arrogance of the age ironically ushered in the time when humanity became the most unreasonable and unenlightened it has ever been! We are undoubtedly the most dangerous animal on the planet.

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'St Boneventure once said Wisdom is confusing to the proud and evident to the lowly.' How very insightful.

This is not in any way to dispute the wonderful advances that have been made through science, and of course such progress is essential. I am definitely not anti science, but I am anti scientific materialism.

Knowledge without wisdom is a very dangerous thing and those who lead us down such a path in the name of progress continue to bring us ever closer to the brink of our own destruction. Do we really need a new £13 billion collider to smash particles in order to discover the mysteries of the universe? Or is this yet just another form of brutalising creation for the sake of showing it who is boss. The clue is in the description 'a collider designed 'to **smash** particles together'

If we really want to unveil the mysteries of the universe then approach the indigenous tribes of this world (but take your shoes off first as this is holy ground). Or then again discover what the mystics of all ages have to say about the immanent divinity within (and beyond) all things, including the particles we intend to smash to smithereens.

The ancient texts, which we are so ready to dismiss as irrelevant these days, contain the blueprint for inherent wisdom in creation and we ignore this at our peril. Ponder on the direct musings of Wisdom herself in Proverbs chapter 8, often related by some theologians to the prologue of John Chapter 1 so that Word and Wisdom were both present at the beginning and continue to be in and through all things.

Contemplate the great mystery with reverence, awe and humility and I guarantee you will learn and experience more through direct revelation than ever you will by smashing particles together for eye watering amounts of money that would be better spent putting right the abuses we have inflicted, which have left the most vulnerable of this world in even greater peril of the consequential destructive changes.

Just saying -  
Jayne

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March 2024

Dear Friends

Welcome to this Spring edition of Crosspoint and what a beautiful time of year this is! Daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops are making our gardens and hedgerows glow with colour. Our weather has been very variable so far this year with more devastating flooding early in January followed by unseasonably mild weather (up to 18 degrees!) and lots more rain. Have we avoided freezing temperatures, snow and fog? We shall see – I can certainly remember having snow on Easter Sunday some years back!

We have a packed issue this time with lots of contributions from all our section churches – it's great to have a variety of items making, I hope, an enjoyable read for all. I've started a new feature in this edition, which is "A Chat with..." and we are starting with Roy Edlin. Further interviews to follow. Do let me now if there is something (or someone!) in particular you would like to see featured.

Easter is rapidly approaching and if all goes to plan this edition should be distributed in Church on Palm Sunday.

The message of Palm Sunday is one of promise and absolute faith. It shows the importance of believing God, prior to seeing final results.

Palm Sunday carries Christ toward the ultimate sacrifice of his life on the cross, where by *his* sacrifice *we* are healed. Its central message is that God sees us and loves what he sees. The only requirement from us is that we welcome him and his peace, and exercise faith in his ultimate healing — on earth or in heaven.

All blessings and happiness to you this Eastertide.

Jean (Davies)

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## **Church Family News from Tewkesbury**



We remember and send our love to all the members of our church family and particularly those who live in Residential Homes: Joan Bottrell, Nora Booth, Joyce Sanders and Pat Taylor.

We remember all those who suffer with ill health and mobility issues and hold them in our prayers.

It is sad to hear that Anna's mother in South Africa has died and we send our love and prayers to Anna and Sam and all the family at this sad time.

I, together with Mike King, have been to visit Roy Edlin, who though housebound, remains cheerful and busy! I recorded our chat with Roy and this edition includes that interview.

We have also visited Jeff Fletcher, who is sad not to be able to get to church due to his limited mobility but sends greetings to all old friends here.

Several of us here regularly have contact with Hilary Jebson and it is good to hear she is settling into her new flat and making friends. We all continue to send her love and blessings in her new surroundings.



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*Thank you to Andrew Maxwell for the following piece – Andrew is the Lay Community Outreach Worker at Bishops Cleeve and here he shares what led him to this vocation!*

## **The diary of a Geriatric Lay Worker**

### **Chapter 1**

Some of my friends think I am mad and there is plenty of evidence to support their views. At the age of 67, after working in the (now) very stressful world of Legal Services, I decided the Legal profession would have to find a way of coping without me. I woke one morning early in September 2020 and promised myself that if I felt as stressed at the end of that month, as I did at that moment, I would hand in my resignation. I did and I did.

Six months Notice became nine months Notice and eventually twelve months, but almost a year to the day I had made that initial decision, I walked out of a Solicitors office for the last time as "an Officer of the Supreme Court of Judicature" as I sometimes enjoyed describing my role. I have rejoiced at resigning as a Solicitor and having my name removed from the records.

Some people mistakenly thought that wearing slippers and spending days relaxing at home, would be a fitting conclusion to the 44 years spent working long hours. I was not one of them. I promised my wife I would spend 2 months unwinding before embarking on the next chapter of my life. She persuaded me that I needed at least 3 months to recover from my previous exertions. I wrestled with the idea of becoming a Celebrant, taking funeral services, as I had done on many occasions for friends, clients and family.

After 3 months, I started putting plans in place to do this, when I saw an advert for a job as a Lay Community Outreach Worker in Bishop's Cleeve. "I am too old to apply for this job" I told my relieved wife, "but if I was 10 years younger, I would love to apply for it". My wife encouraged me to believe I

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was too old and should leave the job for someone younger, more energetic and able.

If that had been the ultimate conclusion, I would have missed out on the two most exciting and enjoyable years of my life! The thought of doing the job wouldn't leave me alone. I kept coming back to the advert with a real longing. I had to find out more. Encouraged by Rachel Leather, I spoke with Louise in the Circuit Office, to whom I am eternally grateful. Not only did she not laugh at my enquiry, but she helped me with my application for the job. It was due in at 12 noon on the day of our call took place, around 2 hours before the noon deadline.

In my application form it asked a question "Why have applied for this role" or something similar. I replied "Because it excites me" or something similar. 2 years and 2 months later, it still excites me and every day I wake up grateful for the privilege of serving this church, in this community, with the support of this congregation. In the coming editions of Crosspoint, I will share with you some of the reasons that I personally consider this job to be the best job in the world and why I feel so richly blessed in doing it.

## PASTORAL CARE - Tewkesbury

We struggle with our pastoral care, as we have lost a number of visitors and those that are left have very long lists to manage. Please be understanding if you are not receiving the visits or contact that you would wish but **do get in touch** with either Jayne or myself if you would like to chat to someone or have a need that we can help with. I would reiterate what I said in the last edition in that there is sometimes a delay in hearing of our members' illnesses or difficulties so again please let me know if you have not heard from anyone or know someone who might need some support – we do care for all our members and adherents but it is not always possible to contact everyone on a regular basis. Rest assured we always support all our members and friends through prayer. Jean Davies

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## A poem for Easter

I've slipped and fallen yet again  
Into the depths of deep despair  
I know not how or reason why  
Each day I sit and weep and cry.

But I'll be helped to live once more  
By someone who was here before  
So long ago, yet not so long  
He was so brave, so calm, so strong.

His face is kind, His love is good  
I'll lift my eyes and on Him look  
My faith is strong; it's me that's weak  
But with His help, life's not so bleak.

With each tear and cry and moan  
Those cruel nails I'm hammering home  
I think of Him and feel the shame  
What have I done? I am to blame.

Pat Moss (Tewksbury)



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## For Palm Sunday (Gospel of Mark)

This week the cry goes "Hosanna" then "die";  
followers run, and one will just lie;  
voices are silenced and some whisper "why?";  
but most of Jerusalem shout "crucify!"

This week the way goes from welcome to fear;  
turning the tables, the end is now near.  
From widow to soldier the cost becomes clear:  
nothing is simple when Jesus is here.

This week it feels like the hope slips away;  
falling asleep at the end of the day;  
gone into hiding with nothing to say;  
hangs on a cross with no words left to pray.

This week the truth of God's grace will be known;  
as fig trees are cursed and money is thrown.  
(Strange are the ways that God's presence is shown.)  
A seed in the ground dies and new life is grown.

Words: Anne J. Sardeson ©

The Revd Anne Sardeson is a Training Officer for the United Reformed Church Thames North Synod. She is also a musician and hymn writer.

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# CHURCH FLOWERS



A reminder that for a small donation (suggested minimum £10) we will provide flowers for the church in memory of someone or in celebration of an event. There is a clipboard in the vestry for you to sign up for a specific date throughout 2024.

## WAR IN UKRAINE

Thank you to everyone who has donated blankets etc and medication for me to pass on to our contact to send to Ukraine. Our local organiser tells me they would appreciate donations of stationery items including pens, pencils, notebooks etc, also toiletries and medication, particularly paracetamol. Please pass any donations to me and I will see they get passed on.

Jean Davies



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## Whatever are we to make of that!

Matthew, Mark and Luke all include in their Gospels a saying of Jesus that has puzzled, not to say troubled, many people:

*It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God* ( Matthew 19, verse 24, Mark 10, verse 25, Luke 18, verse 25 N.E.B. )

It's impossible for any animal let alone a camel, to pass through the eye of a needle, isn't it? So is Jesus saying that no rich person can ever belong to the kingdom of God, that term that the Gospel-writers use to describe that state where people have faith and where God's will is done? Those who

first heard these words would have been at least as puzzled as we are, for their Scriptures, our Old Testament, seems to teach that wealth was a mark of God's favour. It's not surprising, therefore, that there have been a number of attempts to at least soften them.



For instance, it has been suggested that there was an extremely narrow gate in the walls of Jerusalem that was known as *The Eye of a Needle*, just wide enough for a camel to squeeze through if its load was first taken off - difficult, but not impossible.

The only trouble with this is that there is no evidence whatsoever that there was a gate known as *The Eye of a Needle*! Another suggestion is that the Greek word *camelos*, meaning *camel*, is a mistake for *camilos*, which was a cable, or ship's hawser. It is certainly possible that such a mistake could have been made - but is it really easier to thread a thick cable through the eye of a needle, than it would be for a camel to pass through it!!

Surely this is Jesus using what we call "hyperbole" - making a point through exaggeration, as we do when we are astonished by something and say *You could have knocked me down with a feather*. Have you ever seen a person who could be knocked down by a feather? Or who has really been *over the moon*? Jesus is here making a point more memorable by its very grotesqueness, as he seems to have done on a number of occasions. The point is that the richer a person is, the greater the danger that he or she will trust in that wealth rather than in God, and have no desire to be a part of the kingdom of God. Of course, wealth is not the only thing that can be a substitute for God.

Wealth can be a bane or a blessing, depending upon whether a person has money or money has that person, whether it enables us to be "rich enough to be generous" or dominates our lives. It is not money that is the root of all evil (as the song has it) but the love of money, as the Biblical quotation (so often misquoted!) has it.

I very much doubt that anybody reading this could be called super-rich! So, I could have saved myself the trouble of writing it? No, for we are all stewards of what we possess.

Revd John Beardsley

The next issue of Crosspoint will be produced in June – please send copy for the next edition to Jean Davies (Tel: 01684 772178) by Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June please.

Articles including family news are welcomed. It helps if you are able to send via email. Send to Jean Davies: [jed0606@yahoo.com](mailto:jed0606@yahoo.com)

Please note that articles reflect the views of the writer and not necessarily those of Tewkesbury Methodist Church.



## **BREAKFAST CLUB - WILD GREEN CHURCH!**

Our Breakfast Club meeting began some years back, before the days of Covid, as an inclusive time of very informal praise, story, craft and breakfast.

During our time together we have increasingly focused our attention on creation and its struggles in these difficult times. We talk about how God loves all creation and how Jesus so often spends time being close to God in the stillness of nature where he often goes alone to pray.

This year we decide that caring for nature should be one of our key aims along with sharing the good news of Christ and caring for those less fortunate than ourselves. We have changed our name to Wild Green church and this year we will be offering some additional activities which all are welcome to join us for. Watch the notices for more information.

Revd Jayne Webb

### **CROSSPOINT MAGAZINE COSTS**

We would appreciate your continued financial support for the production of Crosspoint, which costs about 80p a copy to prepare. There is a box in the church porch for donations. The suggested donation is 80p per copy or £3.20 for the year. Thank you for your support.

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# Tewkesbury Methodist Players

present



## Let's Dance



**An Evening of Songs (Dance Themed) and Sketches**

At

**Tewkesbury Methodist Church**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.00pm**

**Light Refreshments**

**All proceeds to Charity**

Tickets £3 available on the door



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## **Statement on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia**

**A statement from the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton and Deacon Kerry Scarlett**

We are deeply saddened and concerned about the increase in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the United Kingdom. Such incidents, attacks and attitudes are fundamentally opposed to Jesus' command to love our neighbour. The tangible fear and tension for British Jewish and Muslim communities as a result of these incidents have no place in our society and are a real threat to community cohesion.

The 2023 Methodist Conference reiterated our commitment to oppose anti-Semitism and to stand by all who are discriminated against or persecuted on the grounds of their religion or ethnicity. We recognise that as a Church we need to be vigilant about our own language, voice and actions, and continue to repent and learn from past wrongs. We are committed to being an inclusive Church that challenges anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination.

We call on our elected leaders to lead by example and not only call out any discrimination on ethnic or religious grounds but to ensure that in their language they do not incite anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

We also believe that we are called as Christians to challenge all policies and practices which perpetuate injustice, oppression, violence and suffering. This includes instances where states, political parties, politicians or groups try to silence legitimate criticism of policies and actions by claiming they are anti-Semitic or Islamophobic.

As a justice-seeking Church we believe in building communities of inclusion and challenging discriminatory speech and behaviour, recognising that we are all created in God's image and have value and worth. We continue this work of seeking justice, peace and flourishing through our interfaith relationships and with all who share a vision of a society where no-one is discriminated against and all are free to fulfil their God-given potential.

## “A CHAT WITH” - ROY EDLIN

Mike (King) and I had the pleasure of visiting Roy at his home recently to hear about his life for this edition of Crosspoint. Roy unfortunately has limited mobility these days but despite this makes the most of every day.

Roy was born in Barnet in 1929. His father worked as Deputy Director for the Ministry of Shipping. Roy attended the private Aldenham School in Hertfordshire where he excelled at sports particularly in “Eton 5’s” – a handball game played in a 3-sided court. However he had to miss a year of sports due to contracting TB from infected milk.

It was whilst at school Roy developed a love of playing the drums, and later played in a band The Rumbelows and with a Jazz band called the Riviera Jazzman. He also enjoyed singing and was a choir boy, and in later life joined an Operatic Society. He was also a good shot, and did cadet training whilst at school.

National Service followed education and Roy was posted to Singapore in 1948 where he joined the Royal Engineers. Due to his aptitude for maths he had a desk job as a Clerk Corporal in Work Services. However whilst there he also undertook some jungle training. And he continued his love of singing by joining the Male Voice Choir in Singapore.

Following National Service, Roy followed in his mother’s footsteps (she was a Red Cross nurse) and trained as an SRN for 3 years and became an operating theatre charge nurse at the Lister Hospital Liden, Swindon. This is where Roy met his future wife, Sue. Sue had a particularly unsympathetic matron and once Sue and Roy were married matron wouldn’t allow her weekends off to spend with her husband so Sue gave up nursing and became a dental nurse. She worked for the English Electric Company at Stevenage as their dental nurse.

At that time Roy and Sue were living in a 22’ caravan, which even during the hard winter of 1963, remained nice and cosy! By this time Roy had changed career following an invitation to join a firm of Funeral Directors. He then answered an advert for an Assistant Funeral Director in Jersey in the Channel Islands and as Roy’s parents had already moved to Alderney this

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seemed like a good move for him and Sue. Roy got the job and recalls the bumpy plane ride in a DeHaviland Heron plane over to the island! His French was pretty good, but he did have to learn “Jersey French”!

So Roy and Sue settled in Jersey for nearly 30 years and raised two children Peter and Ann. Roy continued his link with music by playing in a Ceilidh band for 20 years. After some years in Jersey Roy became Superintendent of the Crematorium with two assistants and a gardener and remained in this post until he and Sue considered what they wanted to do in their retirement.

Their decision was to come back to England and they sold up their home in Jersey and commissioned a 54’ narrowboat to be built. They arrived in Tewkesbury in 1994 and fell in love with their flat (where Roy still lives) which overlooks the Severn and the Ham. The narrowboat was built at Upton-on-Severn and for the next 6 years Roy and Sue travelled on the narrowboat from April to October – no doubt having many adventures and making many happy memories.

They eventually decided to retire properly and sold the narrowboat. Roy attended the Anglican church at Ashchurch and sang in the choir there, but then decided to join the Methodist Church as it was so convenient being close to home. Roy continued to sing, and play the drums with our church, and was and remains a great supporter of our church.

Sadly Sue died suddenly in February 2022 and though he misses her dreadfully, Roy is grateful for a quick passing at home without any pain or anxiety. Though Sue was not a church-goer she was a regular visitor to our coffee mornings, was a member of the book club and known to many of us as a good friend.

Roy continues enjoying his hobbies – he is a collector of Lilliput houses and has over 70! And he enjoys model making – and is surrounded by glue, scissors and lots of card! He enjoys listening to music especially jazz and is also an avid reader, so all in all, has little time to be bored! Plus he enjoys the amazing view from his living room – always an inspiration.

Both Mike and I were inspired by Roy, who, at 94 years of age, embraces every moment, never complaining and thankful for the blessings which God gives him every day.

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# NEWS FROM APPERLEY

*From Peter Stych*



We now know from the weather pundits that February this year was the wettest on record. In north Gloucestershire we can also vouch for the fact that January ranks amongst the desperately wet too! On several occasions since Christmas our loyal members from west of the Severn have been unable, due to the floods, to cross Haw Bridge to get to Church. Some drove 'the long way round' via Mythe and Tewkesbury to get here. We were pleased to see them and to enjoy their fellowship for the Sunday mornings.

Services have continued uninterrupted and in late January we were especially pleased to welcome the Circuit Superintendent, Revd. John Hellyer, to lead our worship. This was possibly his last visit to Apperley before his retirement in August. We wish him every joy in his new life in Derbyshire.

Our usual pattern of services - the second and fourth Sundays of each month - will be varied at Easter to enable us to celebrate Holy Communion on Easter Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. To achieve this we shall have no service on Palm Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

We look forward to another wedding in June this year. Another granddaughter of a much loved family with long standing connections with Apperley has plans well in place and just needs a beautiful sunny day for the occasion!



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## WINCHCOMBE METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

*From Geoff Onions  
Senior steward*

Over the years all churches receive gifts of a varied nature!

Fortunately, more recently people have become rather more selective, or maybe sophisticated. How many threadbare tea cloths, totally beyond their 'sell by date' with..... 'A gift from Morecambe' have appeared?



Old hymn books and bibles have been given, in a very graceful manner and yet are so old they are falling apart or many of the hymns have, what is described today, as having 'unacceptable' words or terminology. On the 'up' side Winchcombe has been contacted by the relatives of two highly respected members who have passed away as to what we would like as a gift to remember Rev Janet Roe and also Margaret McKeating an excellent local preacher.

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We have been short of a dedicated lectern, as the previous one was converted to our current pulpit and also a special clock, where, if not suitably impressed by the sermon, the minutes can be watched ticking by until the coffee arrives and we can have a good 'chunter' however the quality of our preachers seems to have improved greatly in recent times!

The flowers are blooming right now and the nights are drawing out – thank God for his continual goodness to us all.

And from Sandra Adams at Bishops Cleeve - It is wonderful to know that Winchcombe's move from the high street to the new venue, in the Langley building in Back Lane, is a great success.

It is over a year now since the move. This is excellent news and our good wishes, support, and prayers, go to them.

Perhaps readers would like to share their thoughts, memories or experiences of this church.

Congratulations - Winchcombe!

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## **BISHOPS CLEEVE METHODIST CHURCH**



We have been blessed with our Sunday Morning

Worship Services over the past few weeks with the varied gifts and talents of Local Preachers, Supernumeraries and our own Minister Jayne. Where would be without them!

Our Carol Service was a Local Arrangement style of Worship, which can be a challenge or an opportunity can't it? At Bishops Cleeve we seem to quite enjoy the challenge of preparing and taking part in our Local Arrangement Services! The next one for us is coming up in May!

Over the past few weeks we have been privileged to have hosted a few Thanks Giving Services for people who have formerly been connected with Winchcombe Methodist Church and it has been good to be able to offer the use of our Church premises for these and to be able to offer support and comfort to those who are grieving for their loved ones.

Our Coffee Mornings are always very popular. The latest one held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February raised over £400 for the Smile Train Charity. A splendid effort!

We send you many blessings for the Easter Season from your friends at Bishops Cleeve Methodist Church.

Ruth Whiting

*The following poem by Sally from Bishops Cleeve was written as part of a poetry writing activity suggested by her support worker from Headway, the charity for people who have suffered brain damage.*

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# PARFITT THE LEOPARD



I'M PARFITT AN ENDANGERED LEOPARD,  
GRRR TO A MIGHTY ROAR I'M TO IMPRESS THE  
NATIONAL PARK GUARD,  
I'M PROUD TO BE ALIVE WHERE I RUN AND  
TAKE A LEAP,  
MY FOOD I'VE CAUGHT IT'S PUT BY IN MY HEAP,  
GRRR I'M HAVING A RESTFUL SNOOZE,  
A YAWN I'M AWAKE TO SEE WHAT I CAN  
PERUSE,  
THE NATIONAL PARK IS VERY ALIVE A LOVELY  
PEACEFUL DAY,  
BIRDS ARE TWITTERING A RUSSELL NEARBY,  
GOD'S HEAVENLY PLACE AT MIDDAY,  
GRRR MY DAY HAS BEEN DONE A REAL  
BLESSING,  
NOW I'M IN MY FOOD HEAP QUIETLY NOW  
THIS IS SO PRESSING,  
MY DAY IN THE NATIONAL PARK HAS BEEN  
SUCCESSFUL,  
GRRR NOTHING BEAT'S ME SO I'M NOT  
STRESSFUL!

WRITTEN BY SALLY BARRETT- FEBRUARY 2024.

Sally

# **Judas Iscariot**

## **- Misunderstood or a Faithful turned Traitor?**

The very name 'Judas' has long been a byword for treachery and betrayal while this particular member of Jesus' Twelve Disciples has sometimes been personified as the Jewish race generally in order to justify anti-Semitism. Yet has Judas Iscariot's role in Jesus' arrest which led to his crucifixion, been misunderstood? Or was Judas simply a once faithful disciple who eventually turned into a traitor?

Over the centuries, the Church's teachings have censured the key role that Judas Iscariot played in events which led to Jesus' death. Yet some have suggested that history has been too quick and too harsh in condemning Judas for the betrayal of his Master. It is argued for example, that if God's plan for humanity's salvation was to take place, then someone had to turn Jesus in to the authorities in order to begin that process. Support for the idea that Judas was simply carrying out God's assigned role for him, has come from a variety of sources. The 16th Century theologian John Calvin believed that Judas had long been chosen [by God] to be the betrayer ... while a papyrus 4th Century document called 'The Gospel of Judas' suggests that Jesus asked Judas to betray him. Yet fundamental to mainstream Christian teaching is the belief that all human beings have freewill and that Jesus would never ask anybody to do something that was sinful.

It is hard to believe that Jesus would have chosen Judas Iscariot to be one of 'The Twelve' unless He had seen this man's potential as a trusted and loyal follower whose gifts and skills could have been a huge asset during Jesus' years of public ministry and for the early Christian communities thereafter. There is no doubt however, that the New Testament Gospel writers portray Judas in a very negative way. Three of them put the name of Judas last in their lists of 'The Twelve' with Luke noting in his list that Judas 'became a traitor' (Lk. 6:16). This wording is significant because it suggests that Judas only became disillusioned with Jesus part way through His itinerant ministry. From what the Gospel writers record, Judas looked after the finances on behalf of Jesus and his fellow disciples (Jn. 13:29). Judas certainly seems to have had strong views on how money should be used (Jn.12:5) and regularly helped himself from the 'money-pot' (Jn. 12:6)! Judas' greed seems very evident in the way that he speaks to the chief priests (Mt. 26:14-15) while his

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deviousness comes to the fore when seeking the best time and place to betray Jesus (Lk. 22:6). Given the intimacy of the Passover supper gathering, Judas' deceptive and brazen response to Jesus' discussion about his own forthcoming betrayal, is quite astonishing (Mt. 26:20-25)! For Judas to use a sign of love [a kiss] as his chosen sign of betrayal (Lk. 22: 47-48) arguably reflects the audacious and depraved mindset of Judas at this point. So might greed have been the driving force behind Judas' betrayal of Jesus ... or could other factors have also played their part in his journey from being an apostle to an apostate?

Could it be that Judas had become increasingly disillusioned with the type of kingdom that Jesus was wanting to establish - one that involved servanthood and suffering. By contrast, Judas may have been more interested in the replacement of the much hated Roman rule. Perhaps the bitter disappointment with Jesus' apparent lack of patriotism coupled with His talk of heavenly kingdom values drove Judas to become so embittered that he would try anything to get Jesus to re-think his priorities. One Gospel writer suggests that Judas had become so utterly despondent that the disciple allowed evil thoughts to completely overwhelm him (John 13:27). If as some scholars suggest, Judas' second name [Iscariot] shows a link to the town that he originated from [Kerioth in Judea, some 60 miles south of Jerusalem] ... then maybe Judas, probably being the only non-Galilean among 'The Twelve', might have felt increasingly like an outsider within the group. Perhaps he also felt jealous of the special relationship which Jesus seemed to have with His 'inner circle', composed of Peter, James and John. Would Judas have conceivably calculated that his betrayal of Jesus would be helpful because, if later caught by the authorities, he would probably receive a lesser punishment than the other eleven disciples who he felt seemed oblivious to the dangers of walking into a potential death-trap in Jerusalem. Some or perhaps each of the above suggestions could have played a part in Judas' decision to betray Jesus.

From what Matthew's Gospel indicates, soon after betraying his Master, Judas felt guilty about his actions. We read that Judas was 'seized with remorse' and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests saying, 'I have sinned for I have betrayed innocent blood' (Mt. 27:3-4). Judas clearly regretted his actions though sadly seems never to go as far as repenting and seeking God's forgiveness. Apparently overwhelmed by guilt, self-loathing

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and grief, Judas tragically chooses to end his own life (Mt. 27:5-10). Yet if Judas had asked for God's forgiveness, I have absolutely no doubt that he would have been forgiven. Psalm 103 provides exactly such assurance ... which is echoed in many New Testament passages, like 1 John 1:9 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'

In the recent popular reality TV series, 'The Traitors', deception, collusion and betrayal are widespread as 'Faithful' contestants try to identify the 'Traitors' in their midst ... with each group hoping to claim the sizeable prize fund. Yet participants and TV viewers alike know that it is only a game-show. How desperately tragic that as one who had witnessed so many amazing miracles, had heard so much of Jesus' inspirational teaching and had seen so many transformed lives, Judas Iscariot in reality turns from being a 'Faithful' and chooses to become a 'Traitor'! May we learn from the mistakes that Judas made; act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8) ... as we keep near to our Lord and daily pray 'Not my will but yours be done' (Lk. 22:42).

Martyn P. Smith {Rev.}

[Martyn is a retired Methodist Church Minister, living in Winchcombe]

### *Counting our Blessings*

*If you own a Bible, you are abundantly blessed - about 1/3 of the world does not have access to one.*

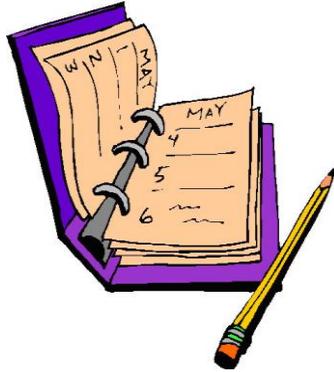
*If you can freely attend a church meeting without fear, then you are more blessed than over 1/3 of the world.*

*If you attend a church with a church family that offers you one word of encouragement, you are blessed with some form of fellowship.*

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please check the weekly notices or our website for any alterations to dates/times and more detailed information about events



### **MARCH**

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Camerata Concert

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday -10.30am Service

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> – 11 am Maundy Thursday service

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday 10am Reflection

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> – Easter Day **10am** service

- 6.30pm Joint service at St Joseph's RC Church

### **APRIL**

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2.30pm Wives and Friends

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> – 9.15am Wild Green Church and breakfast

- 10.30am Service with Holy Communion

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Service

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> – 10.30am Service

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Service

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## MAY

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> – 9.15am Wild Green Church with breakfast  
10.30am – Service with Holy Communion

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> – 2.30pm – Wives and Friends

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May – Thy Kingdom Come – see notices

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Service

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

- 7pm Tewkesbury Methodist Players concert

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Service

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Coffee morning

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> – 10.30am Service

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> – 7.30pm Property and Finance meeting

## JUNE

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9.15am Wild Green Church Breakfast!

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Church Annual Meeting at 12.00

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> – 2.30pm – Wives and Friends

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> – Armed Forces Day

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> – Camerata Concert

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> – Churches Together Joint Evening service at Priors Par Chapel.

**13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July** – Tewkesbury MedFest

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> – Church Summer Fete



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## CHURCH SERVICES –

Any alteration to dates and or times will be shown in the weekly notices (also available on our website). The church is generally also open to visitors on Saturday mornings (coffee morning).

*A service is held every Sunday at Tewkesbury at 10.30am service (with occasional changes to times as per the notices).*

*10.30am service **with** Holy Communion is the first Sunday of each month.*

*Wild Green Church with breakfast takes place on the first Sunday of the month at 9.15am.*

*We do not have a Junior Church as such, but all families and children are welcome to any of our services though there will be particular emphasis on involving children in our 9.15am Wild Green Church Breakfast Club.*

## CHURCH GROUPS AND MEETINGS

Please see weekly notices for dates of meetings as they are arranged

**Church Council**

**Worship Forum**

**Welcome Space and Finance meeting**

**Finance/Property**

**Stewards**

**Tewkesbury Churches Together**

**Pastoral**

**Publicity**

**Green Group**

**Wives and Friends**

**Book Club**

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# THE METHODIST CHURCH

## Priorities for the Methodist Church

To proclaim and affirm our conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world; and renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the church.

### Main contacts for Apperley and Tewkesbury Methodist Churches

Minister: The Revd Jayne Webb

Tel: 01684 298650

*Who also has pastoral responsibility for Winchcombe Methodist Church and Bishop's Cleeve Methodist Church*

Apperley Senior Steward – Peter Stych Tel: 01452 780508

Tewkesbury Senior Steward - Linda Sallis Tel: 01684 294169

Registered Charity No: 1136205

***We are in the Methodist Circuit of Gloucestershire, part of the Bristol Methodist District***

***Web site for Apperley and Tewkesbury Methodist Churches with links to our sister churches, Winchcombe and Bishop's Cleeve***  
[www.tewkesburymethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.tewkesburymethodistchurch.org.uk)

**Tewkesbury Church phone:** 01684 291101 This is situated in the vestry with an extension to the vestibule kitchen and is intended primarily for use by church officials and for emergency use.



### **IMPORTANT Booking rooms and events**

If you are arranging any event on the church premises of Tewkesbury Methodist Church, the room and time must be arranged with the bookings secretary, Andrew May 01684 291457 or email [ajrm34@btinternet.com](mailto:ajrm34@btinternet.com) (or contact Jean Davies 01684 772178 [jed0606@yahoo.com](mailto:jed0606@yahoo.com))



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