

## MWiB Newsletter Easter 2024

### Happy Easter to you all

There are many reasons why people look forward to Easter, such as school holidays and Easter eggs. Jesus was falsely accused, tried and sentenced to death, where He took upon Himself the sins of the world this? The only words He spoke in response are known as the seven words of the Cross.

#### The seven words of the Cross

1. Jesus FORGAVE saying "Father, forgive them. They do not know what they do". (Luke 23:34). In all His pain Jesus asked that the people be forgiven because they did not understand who Jesus really was..
2. Jesus promised ETERNAL LIFE TO THOSE WHO REPENT of their sins. Luke 23 tells us that one of the criminals crucified with Jesus acknowledged that Jesus had done no wrong, but they were guilty and deserved their punishment. John 3:16 says "Whoever believes in me shall not perish but have eternal life".
- 3, Jesus showed LOVE AND CONSIDERATION for his mother and the disciple he loved John 19:25-27 says "When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby he said to his mother, "Dear woman. Here is your son, and to the disciple, here is your mother". From that time on, this disciple took her into his home".
4. THE FEELING OF ABANDONMENT as He cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Sin separates us from God until we repent and believe that Jesus died to save us. We are then reconciled to our heavenly Father. 1 John 5:12 says "He who has the Son has life"
5. I THIRST When Jesus was thirsty He was given vinegar on a hyssop stalk. Psalm 62:21 says "They gave me vinegar for my thirst". This is another instance of Jesus quoting verses from the Old Testament,
6. IT IS FINISHED John 19:30 says Jesus drank the wine and said "It is finished. Then He bowed his head and gave up His spirit." This was a shout of victory because Jesus had finished the work He had come to earth to do.
7. Jesus YEILDED UP HIS SPIRIT. Luke 23:46 says "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit". This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:10).R Gray

### Retreat at Minsteracres 24-25 February 2024 Immersed in the river of life led by Rev. Fiona Calverey Notes by Lynne Graham

**Session 1:** "Taking stock" Isaiah 41:17-18 and 44:3.1 The Lord will answer the prayers of the thirsty and bring them water and pour out His spirit and blessing on their kin. Fiona told that as a child in South Africa she danced as the rain fell on the parched ground. In small groups we considered times when we were thirsty or hoping for rain, and when we would be thirsty for God's blessing. What happens when the Holy Spirit refreshes us? Does the church now need a Holy Spirit revival? What image comes to mind when we think of the Holy Spirit? If we are caught in an unexpected downpour, do we enjoy it or

loathe it? We became aware of the Holy Spirit in our midst and asked how to continue being aware of His presence.

**Session 2:" Becoming bold"** Job 12:15 and Hebrews 4:16 God has control over droughts and floods. Approach His throne in confidence, and we will there receive mercy and grace to help us. Have a fitting lifestyle and love the Lord with all our hearts. Love our neighbours as we must love ourselves. Be authentic and real, and never slaves to fear, for we have the Holy Spirit within us. Was there a time when maybe we made God smile?

**Session 3: "Getting immersed"** Ezekiel 47: 1:12 Galatians 5:25 Acts 1:8 Joshua 1:9 Fiona told us how, when she was a toddler, she crawled through a hole in a fence to reach a swimming pool. Her pregnant mother was unable to reach her, so she talked to her for 20 minutes until she came back. Let us go into the river, up to ankles, knees, waist and then swimming. Covering our feet symbolises our Christian walk, covering our knees, kneeling in prayer. Up to the waist and we are becoming immersed in the Holy Spirit. Sturgeon says that some Christians sail their boats in shallow water, scraping the keel in gravel, instead of going into deeper water. We will receive power and become witnesses (Acts 1:8) when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. We shall be determined, confident and fearless (Joshua 1:9) for I am always with you. When have we been disappointed or surprised by answers to prayer?

**Session 4: "Plunging in"** Proverbs 27: 19 and Ephesians 4:23 Enveloping your heart and your hidden desires. You see your face reflected in water, and yourself you see in your heart. Is it time to have a change of heart? Renewing hearts and minds. What are the signs of someone finding God? Is our behaviour pure in God's sight?

**Session 5: "Diving for Gold"** - you make me brave Isaiah 35:6-7 and Deuteronomy 33:19 From trickle to torrent, source to sea. The lame will leap, the mute shall shout for joy. Water will flow in the wilderness, streams in the desert. Treasures in the sand along the shore. Help me to encourage others and purify my heart. We made an inventory of Gifts of the Spirit: 1-Service; 2-Gifts; 3-Affirmation; 4-Time; 5-Encouragement.

**A Justice-seeking Church, says:** *"The flourishing of creation describes a situation in which the present and future of human beings and all living things are secured,"*

**What does flourishing look like to you?** Perhaps it brings to mind the practical examples of flourishing – the bursting through of early spring bulbs or the promise of blossom on the tree. Perhaps it is the increase in biodiversity as a result of planting more bee-friendly plants. Maybe it is the flourishing which comes from our ability to interact with nature: children's delight at getting thoroughly muddy, the mental health benefits of walking or gardening, the pride of sharing home-grown produce. Or perhaps it is the kind of flourishing which comes from controlling emissions or pollutants which reduce childhood asthma. Experiencing flourishing as part of creation is a gift from God. Longing for the flourishing of others, and tackling all that stands in the way of flourishing, is part of our call to be justice-seekers. **Lynne Graham**

**East Durham news.**, Sheila Hall, from our circuit, is now the MWiB Connexional Finance Officer. We are very happy that one of our own has taken on this important role. You can read more about Sheila in the Spring Newsletter from the connexion which is to be found on the website: [www.mwib.org.uk](http://www.mwib.org.uk) In that magazine you'll find lots more news about MWiB. I am sure you all contribute to the food banks in your area, but please may I remind you to include some sanitary products in your donations. Like many of you, some from our circuit attended the World Day of Prayer services. It helped to feel connected to the women of Palestine who wrote it before last autumn. Judy Tasker

**Lay Mission Partner News** At a recent Circuit Meeting, the North West Durham Circuit agreed in principle to fund the remaining three years of Doctor Claire Smithson's ministry at Maua Hospital in Kenya. Claire is a member of Lanchester Church and has a home in the village. The Circuit Meeting agreed that this was a legitimate and legal use of accrued Circuit Funds to support mission work beyond the boundaries of the circuit. A lot of work and discussion between the circuit and the Connexional Office will be necessary regarding Claire's employment status and other legalities but this should not be unsurmountable. We hope and pray that this initiative will come to a satisfactory conclusion Anne Hogg NW Durham Circuit

**Father Mark** Sadly Fr Mark died on 29th February. Fr Mark was much loved by all who attended our retreats at Minsteracres, opening his shop specially for us on our stays, and more recently his bar. Fr Mark was a familiar figure gracing us all with his presence in the lounge and kitchen as well as the dining room, and on occasions even sat in on President's hour. Fr Mark was always cheerful and welcoming, indeed, many of us greeted Fr Mark with a hug. Fr Mark will be hugely missed. Fr Mark brought glory to God throughout his life - and brings glory to God now as we remember him with fondness. Jane Dixon

**'Notes from your Ambassador' What's New? Is MWiB alive and well?** Over the years MWiB, has grown as an important organisation within the Methodist Church, but despite lots of activity it seems to receive less and less mention within the life of the local church and the national church. How can we rectify that and what can we do to ensure that events and different activities are better known? PLEASE let us know what is going on in your neighbourhood, be it small or large. These could be circulated on the MWiB Website or if you prefer let me know and we can advertise/broadcast it in our own newsletter, Annual Review of MWiB: These are now available for distribution. **MWiB Powerpoint:** Our own Trustee, Mrs Debs Coggrave, has produced an excellent Powerpoint Presentation, which would not take long but provides useful information and could be shown at any of the church gatherings **Rooted and Grounded in Love:** The title of the Areas Seminar, taking place in Porto from June 13 th -17 th 2024. There are five of us going from this area and we

eagerly look forward to fellowship and all the Seminar has to offer. If you want to know more, please contact one of us. **Mission:** Many of us were deeply concerned at the news that our Mission Partners would, over the next year be made redundant. This information has not been widely publicised but Barbara Dickinson, former Mission Partner in Maua, spoke of the concern at the October Retreat. The implications of this are tremendous and I fear for the future, because "a church without mission is like a clapped out engine". I know there are many forms of Mission and overseas work is but one but without partners in the field our information is limited. As a former missionary myself I cannot emphasise enough the importance of personal contact in the form of letters, conversation etc. which as well as providing information for churches is a great support to the partners and the area within which they are working. Lets ensure that MWiB makes it's voice heard. Rev Judith Oldroyd Ambassador Newcastle District (MWiB)

**A Prayer** At Emmaus Lord, the eyes of your disciples were opened. Open our eyes, Lord that we may see the wonderful world that you have entrusted to us. Open our arms, that we may embrace the world, with all its opportunities and all its challenges. Open our minds, that we may know what you would have us do. Open our ears, that we may hear the cries of those who need us. Open our hands, that we may be generous in helping. Open our hearts, that all we do may be done with love. AMEN

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#### Dates for the diary

**5-7 April 2024 Minsteracres retreat led by Esther Hume**

**19-21 April 2024 Swanwick weekend**

**13-17 June 2024 Porto, World Federation European Area Conference**

**19 June 2024 NEW Summer Fellowship walk and meal**

**22 June 2024 World Church Day with Sheila Holland who is a local preacher in Tynedale Circuit. Sheila and her husband have been mission partners. We will share a faith lunch afterwards.**

**14 August 2024 District Dinner Prudhoe 7pm (shared meal with entertainment) £2 for Presidents project**

**1-3 October 2024 Minsteracres retreat led by Rosemary Gray**