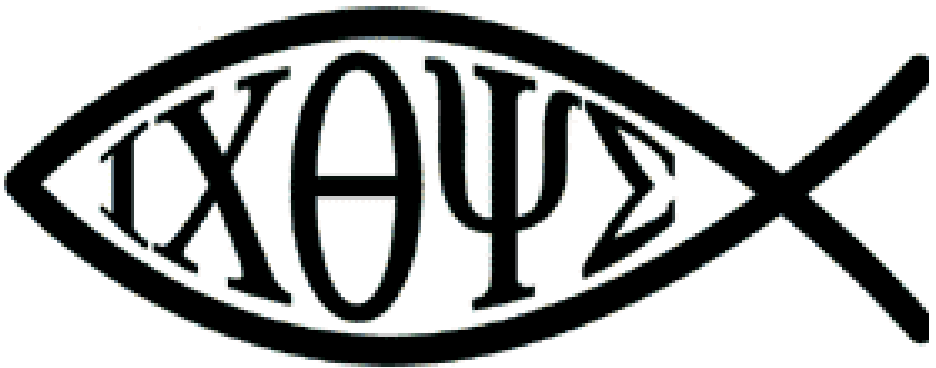


July 2019

The Bridge No. 40

**Newsletter of
Ponte Sant`Angelo
Methodist Church Rome**



The marks we leave

Minister`s Letter

Dear friends,

This edition of The Bridge is the 40th. It was started four years ago, way back in June 2015, when it was quarterly. Then with invaluable help from our interns, Lucy, and Abigail and now Rachel, it became monthly. It has been an interesting exercise as I come to the end of our time here to look back on these, with all the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs, we have shared in these past five years.

40 is a significant number in the Bible. The children of Israel were 40 years in the wilderness, travelling out of slavery in Egypt and into the freedom of the promised land, as part of God`s covenant with his people. Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days in preparation for his ministry of [preaching and teaching and healing. “Tempted and yet undefiled” as the hymn puts in. It was the beginning of the road to Calvary, to the Cross which awaited him, his suffering and death.

And now we are past Ascension and Pentecost and the end of the 40 days/50 days after Easter. That too was a time of preparation, of journeys to the lakeside in Galilee and along the Emmaus Road, in which the disciples encountered the risen Jesus, then awaited the gift of the promised Holy Spirit to be their comforter.

At the Eremo AwayDay (see Rachel`s report), some of us thought about the prayer that is needed to sustain us in our Christian journeys, especially when the way ahead is uncertain, when the waters in which we sail are uncharted. For Angela and myself, the prospect of retirement to Chester is a mixed blessing as we anticipate a time of transition on leaving Rome. It will be a considerable culture shock to leave a busy inner city environment and arrive at a small English village of 2,000 inhabitants, without the rich cultural diversity we have experienced here. We will both be busy with family and church concerns and , of course, the establishment of a home of our own – the first since 1984! Our address will be

7 Willow Hey, Saughall, Chester, CH1 6BW, England

So we pray for our journey ahead. We will continue to pray for Daniel, and Grace and the family as they move from Milan to Rome, and for the continuing life and witness of PSA as it seeks to serve Christ in this strategic location. Do keep in touch!

We`ll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that`s to come.

Thank you for your support and friendship. As Pope Francis likes to say, "please pray for us as we pray for you".

Pastor Tim

SAYING GOODBYE

When you have had as many moves as Tim and I have had over the years there are always goodbyes to be said and it doesn't get any easier. Our 5 years at PSA has been a very special time and I would like to say my own thank you to you all for your friendship, support and generosity during our time with you.

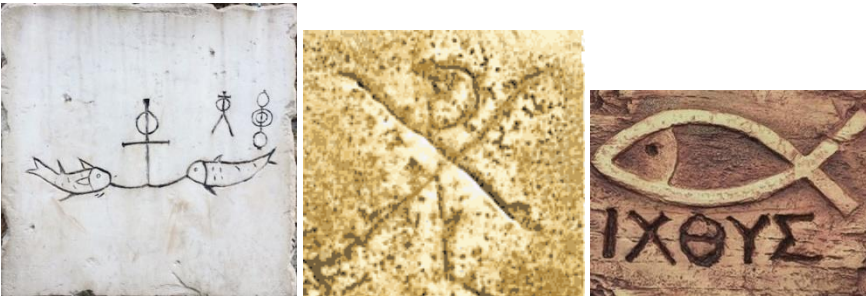
When I was last in the UK with my mother, in May, she had her 96th birthday. As many of you know she has visited us here 6 times and thoroughly enjoyed seeing the sights as well as worshipping at PSA. So she and I would like to thank you for all your kind enquiries after her. Only increasing frailty has prevented her from making another visit. She is still able to get to her church in Chester most Sundays. When we move we shall be just a few miles from her, which will be easier for us and her.

I'm sure we shall be returning to Rome sometime in the future and will look forward to seeing you all again. And we hope some of you might come and see us in Chester if you are visiting the UK. We shall think of you all and pray that PSA will go from strength to strength in the years to come.

Angela Macquiban

THE CATACOMBS – THE MARKS OF BEING CHRISTIAN

As I shared in the Word for all recently, we took our visitors Graham and Alison, who came at the end of May to stay, to the catacombs of San Callisto. The scale of the excavations astounded us. To think that half a million Christians from the early centuries of the church were buried in that one cemetery! And to recognize the number of popes, some of whose names we'd never heard of, who with other members of the church had borne a faithful witness to Christ in those years of persecution. From Pope Antherus to Zephyrinus. Most fascinating were the symbols Christians used to mark their Christian beliefs, with the birds of paradise and the letters denoting devotion to Jesus, the Chi-Rho and the sign of the fish (Ichthus = Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour).



But as notable were the names carved in the rock and the tufa, from the early Christians who risked their lives to visit and worship at the catacombs, to the archaeologists and other visitors from the 16th century onwards. People of faith, people with curiosity, seeking the truth.

Now we are not to be encouraged to carve or scrawl our names on walls (the police would clamp down on us fairly soon!) but how do we make our mark on our environment and on the people we meet? What would we want to be remembered for?

As we come to the end of our time here at PSA there will be particular memories of people and events that we will take with us, and the ways in

which you have made your marks on us. Your generosity in giving, your service to friends and neighbours, your singing and bible studies, and your sense of being part of a world Church. All these mark out a welcoming and worshipful church of which we are proud to have been a part. Thank you.

Pastor Tim

INTERN REPORT: Rachel writes

In June, I had my final residential in the UK at Hothorpe Hall. We were visited by a selection of fantastic speakers from across the connexion, one of which was Revd David Butterworth, a Chaplain at the NEC in Birmingham, spoke to us about 'Reclaiming the DNA of Methodism'. Revd David said that part of his role as a Chaplain, and as a Methodist, is coming alongside ordinary people and supporting them. Chaplaincy is intentional, it involves listening, being brave at times when we are not feeling particularly brave, and representing Jesus who is the warm heart of the church.

As half of my role as intern involves working in the Methodist Ecumenical Office, I was especially looking forward to a session by Revd Ruth Gee, the Connexional Ecumenical Officer. In this session, we discussed the origins of the word 'ecumenism', which comes from the Greek word oikoumene which means 'the whole inhabited world' and refers to the idea that ecumenism embraces all of creation. We discussed the work of the World Council of Churches (WCC) founded in 1948, and with currently 350 member churches. We talked about the goal for the WCC, which is full, visible unity between the churches, as well as dialogue between the Methodist Church in Britain and the Church of England and their covenant relationship.

We also took part in a session led by Dr Mark Prentice on medical ethics, where we discussed the Hippocratic Oath as well as the Declaration of Geneva which was adopted by the World Medical Association in 1948 and builds on the principles of the Hippocratic Oath. Central to medical ethics, Dr Mark explained, are the four ideas of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice, and we used these principles to discuss and debate various medical ethical dilemmas.

As my time in Rome draws to a close, I am incredibly grateful for the time I have spent here, the friendships I have formed, and the wonderful opportunities for learning and growth. I look ahead to the coming academic year, where I will be joining the Community of Saint Anselm, a new monastic community founded by the Archbishop of Canterbury in September 2015. I will be living in Lambeth Palace, in London, for one year, with 15 other members, all between the ages of 20 and 35 and from around the world and of various denominations. Archbishop Justin Welby's hope is that the community will reintroduce a lifestyle of contemplative prayer, discernment and spiritual formation to a generation which has never experienced it. We will follow a Rule of Life, based on the Rule of Saint Benedict which has influenced monastic communities for centuries. The Rule provides core values and disciplines to help members grow spiritually; it is an exterior framework for an inner journey and a scaffolding to use to build the spiritual structure of our individual life with God. I have had an interest in new monasticism for a few years, since visiting the Taizé community in 2015, and this step feels like a natural progression from all that I have learnt and experienced so far, and particularly in Rome. I hope the year will be one of service, theological reflection and transformative prayer.



The ONE
Programme interns
at Hothorpe Hall.

EREMO

The annual gathering in Monteverde area at the “Eremo” took place on Saturday 1st June. We met outside a small, peaceful chapel, surrounded by trees, which is part of the convent of the Suore Oblate di Gesù. We shared in a time of worship, led by Pastor Tim and Alessia and Federico Montelli, and including hymns in both Italian and English.

Pastor Tim then led a reflection on prayer, where we met in small groups and discussed questions concerning how we pray, when we pray and times when our prayer has (or hasn't) been answered. Pastor Tim explained that prayer helps us to consistently develop good attitudes and positive results,



particularly providing us with humility, health and hope. The afternoon ended with a symbolic sharing of bread and grape juice, as a sign of ecumenism, since there were various religious denominations represented at the

meeting. The meeting was a great opportunity to reflect on the year so far, to share in fellowship with Christians from different backgrounds and look ahead to new challenges. **Rachel Sheppard**



Those present at the Eremo.

METHODIST PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR - ROME 2019

Take 11 photographers. Add them to Rome. Sprinkle in local knowledge and hospitality. Stir well. What happens next?

The Photography and Spirituality Tour has been running in Rome for a few years now, and this year's participants benefited from the experience of those who have come before. The plan is simple enough: spend four days in Rome taking photos, and the evenings discussion what we've seen and what it means to think about spirituality and photography. Then we go out for an amazing meal.

There's no shortage of highly photogenic sights in Rome: the challenge, even in an era of digital cameras, is what you leave out. Thanks to the knowledge of Revd Philip Richter, our course leader, we mixed well-known locations at quiet time with less visited places when the crowds were bigger elsewhere.



This included the stunning church of St Cecilia, the charming Botanical Gardens and the fascist-era EUR. With a city like Rome, four days is never going to be nearly enough, and yet we came away with a sense of having been both tourists and visitors: we saw the obvious sights, and yet we also saw a bit of the real city as well.

And while the city and the time spent on photography was fabulous, the evening discussions and prayers were a highlight. We looked at what it means to think about photography as a spiritual discipline, about what we present as an image, what truth means in a single

image. And we shared and were inspired by each other's photographs.



We came from a wide range of backgrounds, as people and as photographers. One of the highlights was when we were all asked to pick two photos for a small exhibition on the last night. It was extraordinary that 11 people, who had been in the same places at the same times, produced such a diverse range of images.

This was the key to the tour: photography isn't about the gear. It's about how you see the world. Are you interested in the big picture, or the detail? Are you about

the places, or the people? The natural or the built environment?

This is how photography - like all art - is also a spiritual exercise. Because how we see the world is how we react to it, how it shapes us, how we witness to it. The stories we tell in our images are also stories about ourselves.

Our thanks go to Philip for leading the trip, Rachel for her warm welcome and fine organisation, and to Tim and Angela for their generosity in opening up their home, especially as we were then treated to an aerial display by the Italian Air Force. And thanks to the worshipping community of the Ponte Sant'Angelo. Alla Prossima!

Toby Scott

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Over the summer, services will be led by Rev Dr Rodney Aist and Rev Peter Bates. Here is some information about them:

Rodney Aist

I am a United Methodist pastor with significant multicultural experience, including international congregations in Italy: Milan (Methodist), Novara (Methodist) and Rome (Church of Scotland). I am married to Janet Manio, a Filipina, living and working in Milan, Italy and currently on a personal/professional 'sabbatical', working on Christian writings, spending time in Milan with Janet and serving in short-term pastoral capacities. I am also spending time in the UK, where I am attached to a Church of Scotland parish in Orkney.

Peter Bates

My name is Peter Bates, and I am looking forward to leading worship here in Rome on August 18th. I will be here with my wife Sue, with whom I have been married for 46 years. We have two children, Richard and Linda. Home is Wolverhampton, a link I still maintain by being a season ticket holder at Wolverhampton Wanderers football club! By being in Rome I shall be missing the first home match of the season against Manchester United!! I entered the Methodist ministry in 1983, serving in Harpenden, Solihull, Bromsgrove, Shirley (Soihull) and Hall Green, Birmingham. In two appointments I served as Superintendent minister, and was one of three co-superintendents of the then newly formed Birmingham Circuit. Retiring in 2016, I have remained active, preaching most Sundays and helping out within the Circuit when there have been occasions for this to be necessary. Sue and I have had the pleasure of knowing Daniel and Grace Pratt Morris Chapman for some years, my daughter being godmother to Kwame, and Sue godmother to John, and we commend the family to you as they begin ministry amongst you.

STEVE TWOMLOW'S MEMORIAL

Attended by Jean and Ian Wales, regular visitors to Rome and to our church, who were able to join Lindsay and the family at this sad time.

Jean writes: The memorial was held at Adlington Memorial Park. It was raining heavily so there were lots of umbrellas and wellington boots! The tree planting, a hawthorn, to flower on Steve's birthday, was postponed.

The service followed the "passport" programme designed by daughter Anna (in honour of Steve's many travels) – with eulogies from Steve's Best Man, his neighbours and Anna and Luke, as well as prayers and readings and hymns.

We learned what a varied, important and productive life Steve had had, and how many countries he had worked in, to improve the lives, the land and the farming methods in all of them. We were given miniature bottles of whisky labelled "Steve's wee dram" and all of us toasted him.

Back at the house there was a barbecue, salads and cake with lots of tea (as well as beer and wine). We sat in the garden in a large tent, erected by the local scouts. There were more than a hundred of us. Lindsay was wonderful, organizing everything, even a microphone so friends could share memories of Steve and tell anecdotes.

It was a very memorable occasion. Steve would have loved it.

CHURCH COUNCIL AND AGM

The Church Council met on 23rd June, to review the reports which have now been submitted to the General Church Meeting. Extra copies are still available on the table at the back of the church.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

7 th July	Pastor Tim and Holy Communion
14 th July	Pastor Tim
21 st July	Pastor Tim and Pastora Mirella Manocchio followed by pot luck lunch. This will be the last service Pastor Tim leads.
28 th July	Rev. Dr. Rodney Aist
4 th August	Rev. Dr. Rodney Aist and Holy Communion
11 th August	Rev. Dr. Rodney Aist
18 th August	Rev. Peter Bates
25 th August	Sandra Mi, Alessia Montelli and Federico Milani
1 st September	Pastor Daniel and Holy Communion

Advance notice: The service of welcome for Pastor Daniel has been fixed for Sunday 20th October when Pastora Mirella, Rev Ruth Gee and Gillian Kingston will be present with other invited visitors.

Weekly Offerings [P =cash; E =Envelopes; BB = Birthday Basket.]

2 nd June	P 103.60	E 571.00	TTL 674.60
9 th June	P 216.89	E 628.00	TTL 844.89
16 th June	P 150.61	E 229.00	TTL 379.61
23 rd June	P 69.01	E 418.00	TTL 487.01



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