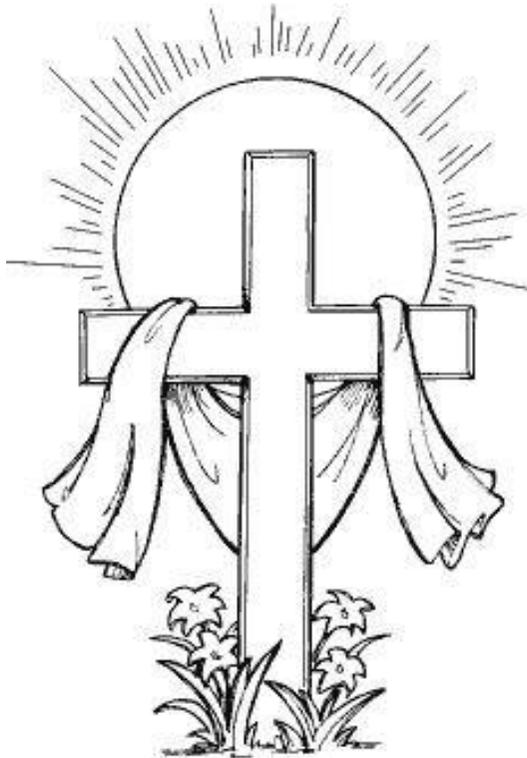


April 2018
The Bridge No. 26

Newsletter of
Ponte Sant'Angelo
Methodist Church Rome



MINISTER`S LETTER

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate Easter with Christians the world over, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. Of course the story doesn't finally unfold without all that has preceded it. It's the consequence of journeys made at cost and with a commitment to listen and be open to new possibilities (see my article on Listening later). Jesus' journey to the Cross took him on many encounters around Jerusalem. To Bethany and the raising of Lazarus as a sign of what was to come. To the Garden of Gethsemane with its foreshadowing of Jesus' final torments. Life and death experiences exist side by side. And the disciples didn't see the significance of it all until Jesus appeared to them in the city, on the road to Emmaus and by the lakeside, a ripple effect of the realization of his risen presence, which brought peace and power to those who encountered the Risen Lord. This was particularly so when he broke bread at Emmaus and shared fish on the lakeside as their companions on the way ahead: "Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him".

Pilgrimages to places of Christian heritage are opportunities to have our eyes opened, to experience the presence of the risen Christ in worship and fellowship with other people of faith. Next year we shall host a visit of Methodist Women in Britain with the present Vice President of the British Methodist Conference, Jill Baker, at the beginning of Lent. We have a group of friends from Cambridge coming to join us after Easter this year and we are going together to Sicily to visit sites of religious significance. Many thousands of pilgrims are here in Rome over this Easter week. Visiting the sites and stories of special Christian significance help us to unfold the gospel story of "what wonders God hath wrought" (John Wesley).

Not just as part of Christian history but as tools for contemporary mission and evangelism, to tell the good news to others.

But we can all go on pilgrimages, on journeys of the soul as we journey with Christ in our daily lives, reading the scriptures, reflecting on our world, and exploring our own communities for signs of God at work among us. That risen presence comes in many and varied ways, in worship, in our care for creation, in our growth and nurture. May we be open to the promptings of God's Spirit as we journey on.

Forth in thy name, o Lord, I go, My daily labour to pursue,
Thee, only thee, resolved to know in all I think, or speak, or do. (HP 381)

Have a very happy Easter as you share in the resurrection joy. May the peace and presence of Christ be with you and family and friends.

Pastor Tim

Ascoltiamo

On several occasions recently we have had the most enormous seagull sitting on a windowsill outside the manse looking in at us and making squawking noises from time to time. Over breakfast one morning Angela asked me how these birds heard the sounds from elsewhere. A google search on the computer revealed that seagulls have an inner ear inside their head so that with their 360 degree vision they were able to locate sounds quickly and act to pounce on a fish in the river or an ice cream or other tasty morsel in a bin. Angela, Abigail and I attended the last of the Lenten series at the Lay Centre on the Throw Away Culture. Abbot Primate Gregory Polan came to talk about Benedictine spirituality to counter such contemporary distractions. He concentrated on that very Benedictine quality of **LISTENING**. He urged us not only to listen, to Scripture and to others, with attentive ears but also with

“astonished ears”, that is ears that were prepared to be surprised and changed by something new encountered in reading or hearing another.

Imagine my delight when days later I read the Pastoral Letter written by Gareth Powell, the Secretary of the British Methodist Conference who preached here in December for our Church Anniversary. He writes:

“John Wesley could not have been more clear. As part of his advice on how to preach he tells us, *‘Don’t just say ‘I read only the Bible’ in order to preach, read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly... at least five hours in twenty four... or return to your trade.’* Visitors to the New Room in Bristol see this displayed at the back of the Chapel, enabling them to gain an understanding of both the preachers and the task of preaching. On the face of it we can assume those early preachers to be well read, to be alert to the possibilities of human enquiry which Wesley himself was keen to promote. More practically we wonder how, or if, they managed to read for the allotted time span. Just for a moment we pause, I hope, to reflect on our own pattern of daily reading and study. Such a pattern of reading may be a relatively straight forward discipline in Lent. For Wesley this was a little more rigorous than observing a mere forty days. The Benedictine tradition is equally rigorous in the approach to reading, and Lenten reading in particular. Curiously perhaps Saint Benedict sets out the requirements for daily Lenten reading in Chapter 48 of his Rule which is entitled, “On the Daily Manual Labour.” Reading is not a pious occupation for those moments when time permits. It is a vital part of our labouring in the vineyard. It requires a resolute application of the mind, and the heart is to be focussed on the task for it is intrinsically linked to spiritual growth. While Benedict set out an expectation of reading from the scriptures and other sacred texts (usually the early church monastic tradition) gradually the Benedictine order would expand

the material available so that the broader riches of literature and learning were taken seriously. *For our part we dare not set limits on how we encounter God's creation – do we?*

Benedict could have made the requirement for reading in the chapter of the Rule that deals with Lenten observance, but the Rule makes it clear that there is a constant requirement upon the monks to be engaged in enquiry and learning. There may be a different pattern for certain times of the year, but Lent has a particular focus and it is during Lent that each member of the community is given a book 'to read thoroughly each day in a regular and conscientious way.' *What Lent books might we give to others I wonder?*

The Benedictine tradition makes provision for one or two 'seniors' to ensure that during those times set aside for reading the monks are not distracted by 'idle boredom and wasting time in gossip'. St Benedict and Mr Wesley might have got on rather well. We might benefit from their oversight."

Now while Lent is over for another year, the reading, learning and listening habit centred on Prayer is surely not. And in the nine days between Ascension Day (10th May) and Pentecost (20th May) we are encouraged to follow the **Thy Kingdom Come** initiative in praying and learning together. On 26th May we are encouraged to come together for an afternoon at the Eremo at Casaletto to continue in Christian education and worship together.

INTERN NEWS

At the start of the month I attended the Australian Embassy to the Holy See's International Women's Day event, with Pastor Tim and Angela. The event celebrated the life work of Sister Anne Gardiner, Senior Australian of the Year 2017, with the Tiwi people in the Northern Territory of Australia. Sr Anne spoke about mentoring and

facilitating Tiwi women into positions of leadership and what she learnt from the Tiwi people with whom she worked with. During the event we also heard an excellent presentation by HE Melissa Hitchman hearing about the challenge to work for gender equality. She stated `gender equality is good economic sense` as well as being justice. The event concluded with Ambassador to Italy Greg French emphasising the importance to press for progress and how men can be part of the solution to gender inequality.

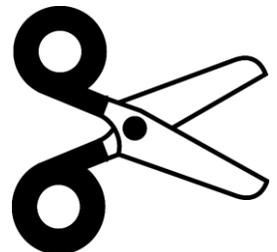
In the afternoon I attended the Voice of Faith conference, which has had much attention and unlike in past years, this year's conference had to be held outside the Vatican's Walls. The conference entitled `Why women matter` focused on the need to use the gifts of women and women standing up for their beliefs. Mary McAleese, the former President of Ireland, was the keynote speaker at the event about women's roles in the Church, emphasising time is now for change. Other prominent speakers included Professor Tina Beattie of the University of Roehampton and Father Luke Hanson a Jesuit, who was the only male speaker at the event.

During the month I had a few days off work when my parents visited. It was great to see them and be able to show them around the beautiful city, as well as where I live and work.

Abigail

STUDENT MINISTER ANGELITA TOMASELLI writes...

From 11th to 17th April 2016, 14 young people from different cultural, religious and geographic backgrounds gathered for the EYCE training course **“Cut the Prejudice! Different religious traditions through the lens of a camera”**, which took place in Berlin, Germany.



The training course aimed at giving a personalised outlook to different religious traditions to prevent conflicts and tensions in the society. A statement against religious prejudices and fundamentalism was made by bringing together young adults from all over Europe to share and discuss their own experiences of being a religious person in society, including the perception of the concept of society and one's own rights and responsibilities.

The essence of the meeting was to explore religion and its role in one's personal identity, as well as how those are linked to one's concept and role in society.

The participants arrived to the final envisioned outcome of the training course – film material discussing why it is important to cut the prejudice which has been officially presented on the 3rd of March in the Waldensian Faculty of Theology in Rome.

The project has been coordinated by myself (EYCE Chairperson) present at the event together with other young representative leaders of religious and interreligious organisations as Religions for Peace (Italian section) and FEMYSO (Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations).

Claudio Paravati, Confronti Magazine director, chaired the meeting and the debate which followed.

The Federation of Protestant Youth in Italy joined the panel discussion represented by the General Secretary Francesca Litigio, who underlined how much it is important and relevant that young people work together on these themes and build strong relationships in order to develop the dialogue.

The presentation in Rome was the first step towards building an interreligious youth network where young people can take initiatives and create a safe and friendly space for promoting the dialogue.

EASTER OFFERING

Seek peace and pursue it : Easter Offering 2018

As in the past three years PSA will be giving to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain through the Easter Offering. The WMF supports the 65 partner churches of the British Methodist Church, including Methodism in Italy. This year's theme, *Seek peace and pursue it* will be the focus for our Easter Offering service, when we here at PSA celebrate being part of the World Church as an international congregation. Our EO service will be held on Sunday 29th April and includes stories from our Mission Partners in Sri Lanka, Japan and Israel/Palestine who are each involved in working for peace and reconciliation. The EO envelopes will be available on Easter Day and each Sunday in April and our gifts will be dedicated in the EO service.

Thursdays in Black

Thursdays in Black: Towards a world without rape and violence. The campaign wear black on Thursdays is about showing that you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence. The campaign is about showing respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. The color black is used as a symbol of resistance and resilience. The campaign emerged from the World Council of Churches (WCC) Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), where stories of rape as a weapon of war, violence and gender injustice became more visible. However, women's resilience and efforts to resist such violations has also become visible.

Join the movement!

Share Thursdays in Black photos on Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag #ThursdaysinBlack

The link is below

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We have been holding those who have been ill recently in our prayers as they continue with hospital visits and treatment.

We are very sad to record the death of Carol Nei after a short illness. The funeral service was held at PSA on Good Friday. An obituary will appear in the next issue. We remember Selena and the family in our prayers.

We were glad to welcome through Baptism Emma Demartini the weekend that Pastor Sam preached. And we are pleased to give thanks for the birth of Imad which we shared at our Easter Day service.

CHURCH COUNCIL

We continue our discussions as to how to become as plastic free a church as we can. The next Church Council on 29th April will consider options for providing more permanent crockery which is not needing to be recycled but needs to be stored. We will look into this. Any ideas please to go to Lindsay.

PASTOR`S SABBATICAL

Visiting Preachers during Pastor Tim`s sabbatical:

Malcolm Hickox : a retired British Methodist minister, formally minister of Salisbury Methodist Church. Coming with his wife, Christine.

Rosemary Fletcher : serving minister in the St Albans Circuit, formally a mission partner in Sri Lanka, coming with her husband James.

Fiona Kendall : local preacher from Scotland, currently serving as a mission partner with Mediterranean Hope.

Audrey Simpson : currently, serving as a Methodist minister in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

Eric Noffke: teaching at the Waldensian Faculty in New Testament Studies. Formerly minister at Via Firenze.

Mirella Manocchio : serving as president of OPCEMI.

Carmel Ieraci : now serving as a minister in Andover, England. Formally a member of PSA.

Peter and Susan Howdle : both of whom are local preacher and having served as Vice President of the British Methodist Conference. Peter was a consultant in a Leeds hospital and Susan was a lawyer. Both have served on connexional committees, in Ecumenism and Education, Strategy and Resources and Law and Policy.

Colin Smith : he is a friend of the Macquibans, who took over from Pastor Tim as Superintendent Minister of the Cambridge Circuit.

Prayer for Easter

When everything was dark and
it seemed that the sun would
never shine again,
your love broke through.
Your love was too strong, too
wide, too deep for death to
hold.

The sparks cast by your love dance and spread and burst forth with resurrection light.

Gracious God, we praise you for the light of new life made possible through Jesus. We praise you for the light of new life that shone on the first witness of resurrection.



We praise you for the light of new life that continues to shine in our hearts today.

We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy, will live in us each day; and that we will be bearers of that light into the lives of others. Amen (*This prayer has been written by the Revd Michaela Youngson*)

Sirenian Singers

3rd April to 8th April

ROMA È BELLA - a mini concert tour performing sacred music in selected churches in Rome. Venues and details below

- 4th April at 7pm at Oratory of Caravita church (Via del Caravita,7, 00186 Roma)
- 5th April Concert for the UK Ambassador to Italy at 7.30pm (British Embassy, Villa Wolkonsky, Via Ludivico di Savoia, 11 00185 Roma)
- 6th April Concert for the UK Ambassador to the Holy See.
- 7th April 5 pm Mass at St Peter`s Basilica Vatican City
- 7th April at 7.30pm Concert with Coro Salvo D'Aquisto, the Military Police Choir (Casermo Salvo D'acquisto, viale di Tor di Quinto)

DATES FOR THE DIARY

In the nine days between Ascension Day (10th May) and Pentecost (20th May) we are encouraged to follow the **Thy Kingdom Come** initiative - leaflets will be available at the beginning of May.



Advance notice there will be a social evening on 29th June. Details to be announced.

FORTHCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

8th April	Malcolm Hickox
15th April	Rosemary Fletcher
22nd April	Fiona Kendall and the visit of 50 Dutch students
29th April	Easter Offering service followed by Church Council
6th May	Audrey Simpson with communion
13th May	Eric Noffke
20th May	Mirella Manocchio
27th May	Jonathan Boardman and Birthday Basket
3rd June	Carmel Ieraci
10th June	The Howdles
17th June	Colin Smith

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

04 March	P 89, 33	E 513, 00	TTL. 602, 33	
11 March	P 79, 27	E 610, 00	TTL. 689, 27	
18 March	P 118,39	E 227, 00	TTL. 345, 39	
25 March	P 81, 15	E 447, 00	BB 116, 50	TTL. 664, 65
TOTAL	P 368, 04	E 1797, 00	TTL. 2281, 64	

Rice Bowl contribution to date :

825 euros plus the bake sale contributions of 400 euros

Wishing you a blessed and happy Easter!