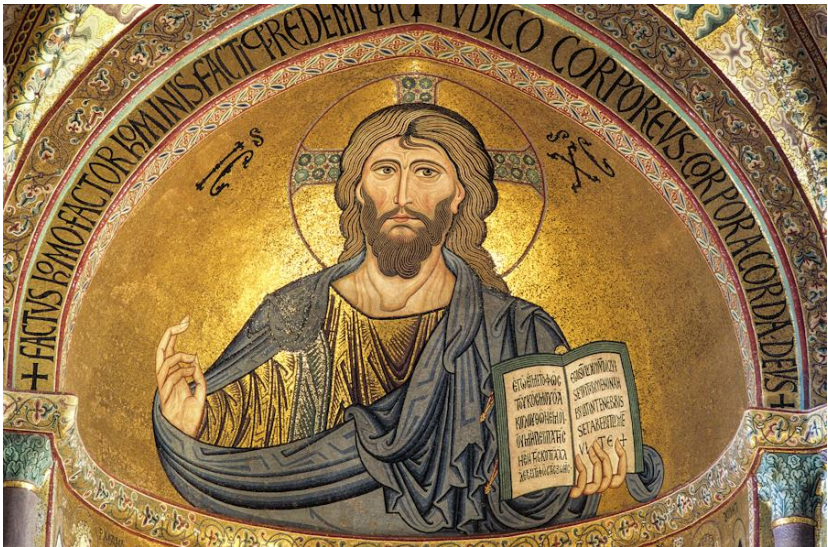


May/June 2018
The Bridge No. 27

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



Icon of Christ Pantocrator in Cefalu Cathedral Sicily

MINISTER`S LETTER

Dear friends,

I write this at the end of my first week of sabbatical, having come back from a trip away, taking a pilgrimage of friends from Cambridge to Sicily. With 21 others, we explored the delights of ancient Greek and Roman sites, castles and Cathedrals from Arab and

Norman times and others places around Siracusa and Palermo. We enjoyed the solemn silence of the Greek temple at Segeste, amid verdent meadows of spring flowers and the magnificent mosaics of Monreale Cathedral on the side of a mountain overlooking Palermo.



One site, the first, was quite devoid of any sense of a divine presence, only a dead pile of columns and stones, the other full of glittering pictures of the story of Salvation, from the creation of the world to the last judgement, with the judging but loving presence of the Christ Pantocrator (ruler over all the

world) towering over us at Cefalu and Monreale, two creations of the Norman Kings of Sicily who ruled in the early Middle Ages. One of the set of panels of the salvific story in Monreale told of the incident in the creation narrative from Genesis. And this picture had

God the Father resting reposefully on the world he had created. It was the seventh day “and God rested”.

A sabbatical takes its name from the Sabbath day or period of rest in a week or a year. It is a time taking stock of work that has been done and gathering strength for what lies ahead. The Methodist Church gives its ministers a sabbatical of 12 weeks every 7 years in order for them to recharge batteries and equip themselves through rest, reading and writing (the three Rs!).

As well as laying aside normal preaching duties and meetings in this period, I shall be taking the opportunity in May of seeing family and friends, and of reading around the topic of ecumenism in preparation for a paper to be presented in August at The Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies.

But we all need a sabbatical rest, a quiet period of each day to be with God, at least a day week free from work and the normal routine, for prayer and bible study. We hope that church members will make a point of creating space for this together at the Eremo at Casaletto on 26th May.

Elsewhere I write some reflections on our time with Methodists and Waldensians in Sicily and we hear from Fiona Kendall on her work with Mediterranean Hope. It is good to remember that we are connected to others in the work of evangelisation and mission. May we all take the opportunity to have



a Sabbath rest as co-workers with God in his creation. We all deserve a day off and a rest period!

Every blessing,
Pastor Tim

INTERN NEWS

April has been a busy month, especially with all of the Easter celebrations. I particularly enjoyed our All Age Palm Sunday service and the Maundy Thursday Communion Service. During Holy Week my minister, Revd Andrew Farrington, from home who is on his sabbatical visited Rome for a few days. It was lovely to catch up with him and also show him where I worked. After the very busy Holy Week and Easter week with a lot of administrative work and looking ahead for the many visitors to the centre and church, I had a few days off and went to Pisa. It was great to explore more of Italy and it was nice to have a break.



Easter Day

During the end of April my brother Joe visited again and we headed to Sorrento for a few days and whilst there went to Pompeii and walked up Mount Vesuvius, which was lovely. I am enjoying exploring more of Italy, especially now the weather is so good! Before the business of May starts two of my friends from the One Intern Programme are coming to Rome at the very beginning of May, which I'm excited for. May will be a busy time as I will be helping to organise the final arrangements for the arrival of the Photography and Spirituality Course participants on 24th May and the Queen's students on 4th June.

I am currently planning another Young Adults meeting where we are going to watch the *Cut the Prejudice* film produced by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe . Let me know if you would like to come.

Abigail

A recent visitor to PSA, Rev Andrew Farrington, writes:

Dear Abigail and members of Ponte Sant' Angelo Methodist Church, I thank you for your generous hospitality over Holy Week and Easter. Like Rev Tim, I am enjoying a Sabbatical and my principal purpose was to experience and join in a period of pilgrimage away from my usual pattern of worship. I chose to 'go to Rome' – a city I had never previously visited and of whom I have read many a history and much literature. It also had the added bonus of visiting my youngest member (of Cheadle Methodist Church), Abigail Ratcliffe.

The visit had many highlights: Chrism Mass at St Peter's Basilica on Maundy Thursday, Passion Mass at Sant'Ignazio (Jesuit), Stations of the Cross at the Colosseum, Vigil in the Pantheon, and Easter Mass

in St Peter's Square. The atmosphere at all of these was so spiritual with plain song responses and deep prayer that I truly felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and seemed have the past burdened of ministry lifted and my calling renewed. For all of this, I missed singing 'proper' hymns. What is Easter worship without 'Christ the Lord is risen today' or 'Thine be the glory'? These I imagine who sang with gusto.

It was fabulous to share in your Maundy Thursday worship and supper. The theme of the sermon was 'Radical Hospitality'. This is forming the bedrock of our renewed mission in Cheadle giving fresh insights into means of encouraging people to start to explore their faith. It feels to me that you the church building are locality in a key gathering place. You could not get more 'church catholic' in sharing Chilli and Rice, with English speaking Christians gathered from around the world in eternal city. I was often reminded of St Peter's speech at Pentecost in which he names so many regions and countries. All are one in Christ, alleluia.

Thank you too for letting me join the celebration lunch on Easter Sunday. Most unexpected, wonderful food, and felt so welcomed. On a pastoral note: it was simply a joy to see Abigail so content in her role. I am sure she has been a blessing to you as she has been a loss to Cheadle. She is a young lady who was grown in the stature of Christ by taking steps of faith and through whom God is working his purpose.

So, I am left with a life changing experience of a beautiful city of living history to whom I will be drawn again. May God Bless you in your mission and ministry.

Rev Andrew Farrington.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Pastor Ken (former minister) writes:

Before Christmas I developed an infection around my pacemaker. I had two courses of oral antibiotics (the second across the Christmas holiday and into the new year) which seemed to contain it but not get rid of it. I was awaiting a referral for a second opinion about what to do next when the skin broke over the pacemaker, precipitating action. I had a week of intravenous antibiotics delivered in a single infusion once every 24 hours by a nurse coming to the Manse (!). Then I went into hospital in Solihull and a few days later was shipped over to the University Hospital at Walsgrave, Coventry, for day surgery extracting my pacemaker. I then had nearly two week back in Solihull Hospital without a pacemaker and my heart beating regularly but slowly at about 30 to 35 beats a minute (I was on a mobile monitor constantly). I was also on 6 hourly intravenous antibiotics which meant I got bad phlebitis! Eventually when they thought the infection was well and truly gone, they implanted a new pacemaker on the other side of my chest – which took twice as long as they expected because of difficulty threading the wires through (I must be the wrong shape|!). A few days later they discharged me and I recovered slowly at home: I was left exhausted and pretty debilitated by it all. I then took another three weeks gradually phasing back into work. I had a check up last week and all is fine. I am now worrying about catching all the spinning plates before too many crash to the floor! I was given the good advice of only doing the things that energised me and avoiding the ones that drained me.

We wish him and Marion well and with prayers for continued recovery.

OTHER CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

At the time of writing, we are sorry to hear that Mario Suratos is still very unwell and likely to be readmitted to hospital. We continue to hold him and his family in our prayers.

We were saddened by the death of one of our long standing members, Carol Nei on the Wednesday of Holy Week. The service of thanksgiving for her life was held here at PSA on Good Friday. Amongst the tributes was one given by Pastor Tim.

Address for Carol Nei`s funeral

Carol was, for us as members of the Ponte Sant`Angelo Methodist Church which she attended for over 30 years, a very special person. She was a welcomer, as Elena testifies when she first joined the church, welcoming people she cared for with a smile and practical help at all times, especially for the circle of ladies who sat by the window in the schoolroom. She always stopped to have a word on her visits here to Selena`s home. Always switched on with the latest news. Always asking after others. Always willing to help, with the loan of a wheelchair, or fixing some device she knew how to operate, or taking someone to the cemetery for a visit. She rose to every challenge with a positive and cheerful outlook. She was of course a faithful worshipper and a firm believer in prayer which sustained her in her illness this past few months. "Keep the prayers going" she said to us, which we did as we surrounded her with concern and love. She was an example of one who was a doer of the Word and not a hearer only. We shall miss her in our worship together here. But we will be united with the work and witness and continuing presence of the saints in light.

On this Good Friday we remember the life and death of Jesus Christ who prepared his disciples for the time when he would be with

them no more. He said: that “unless a grain of wheat fell into the ground and died, it would not have new life”. His death was not the end. His resurrection on the third day was God`s answer to those who thought that sin and death had had the final victory. Easter proved that wrong. And now he lives with the Father and has promised eternal life to all who believe in him. Carol had a lively faith and hope for the future. She faced her declining health with courage and hope. We now commit her into the hands of the God who now takes her to his own. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Amen .

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Thy kingdom come

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement. The Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting people around the world to join the movement and the World Methodist Council is encouraging Methodists across the world to take part. The aim of the movement is that Christians pray that people might know Jesus Christ during a focused time between Ascension and Pentecost, 10th – 20th May. The hope is that people will be transformed through prayer by the Holy Spirit, finding new confidence to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

You can sign up and “pledge to pray” on the Thy Kingdom Come website: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

Thy Kingdom Come booklets are also available today for those wishing to engage with the initiative.

An afternoon together on the first Saturday after Pentecost

This year like last year we thought it would be nice to have a common meeting of Bible study groups of our community. It also will be opened to all members of the congregation and to other people as outreach. The place is the same as last year: the *eremo*. It is in Monteverde area and it is a cosy chapel behind a convent, surrounded by a lovely garden looking on the Valle dei Casali Park. We are sure that this evocative place will convey to all of us a feeling of communion with God, with one another and with nature. If you are interested in experiencing a time together to sing, pray and study the Word of God, join us! We will have an afternoon of worship and reflection led by our Pastor Tim.

Please save the date: Saturday 26th May at 4.30 pm in Via del Casaleto, 128, Suore Oblate di Gesù, “eremo”.

The convent is easily reachable by public transportation (tram 8, buses 791, 792, H, 31, 33, 44, 870). From Termini take bus H. The nearest stop is “Casaleto-Circonvallazione Gianicolense” at the terminus of tram 8. After getting off the tram/bus take Via del Casaleto and walk straight on for 100 metres and you will get to the convent.

If you come by car, you can park inside the convent yard. The “eremo” is behind the convent: please follow the sign in the yard.

All are welcome to join!

Please speak to us for more details, call or text 3381675680.

Alessia and Federico

British & Foreign Bible Society/ Italian Bible Society

Valdo Bertalot, Secretary General of the Italian Bible Society has recently informed us that from April 2018 the British & Foreign Bible Society will terminate its work and presence in Italy for publication and distribution of Bible texts. The BFBS has endeavoured to confront economic difficulties in Italy, particularly in the field of liturgical publications. The Italian Bible Society has been their agent, and, together with the BFBS, has been Italian representative of the Universal Bible Alliance. It is the Universal Bible Alliance who have decided to close their activity and presence in Italy after over 200 years of service. The BFBS with its work in distribution of Sacred Scriptures has contributed to the growth of the Italian nation since the time of the Risorgimento; it continued during the Great War, Fascism, the Second World War, and through to the present day. Even though the BFBS is withdrawing from Italy, the Italian Bible Society hopes to continue its promotional work in the production and distribution of the Bible.

Valdo's letter was followed up at the beginning of April with a letter from Eric Noffke, who is President of the Italian Bible Society. He underlines the great work that has been done, and the importance of continuing their mission. Their financial situation is however limited, and it may be necessary for them to find new accommodation, so they would be grateful for our prayers and support."

Pastor Tim`s report on the visit to Sicily

3rd to 10th April was spent in **SICILY** on the PAX Travel tour with Giorgio Morganti from Rome as our guide. We stayed in Siracusa and Palermo and travelled across the island for one day. There were 23 travellers, mostly known to us from Cambridge days. Half the group had been with us on previous pilgrimages to Germany in 2011 and here in Italy in 2015. They and we are all 7 years older and

slowing up so a more leisurely programme was devised to accommodate our needs. The tour including visits to classical sites in **Siracusa** (the excellent archaeological park with its Greek Theatre and Roman amphitheatre) and the Doric Temple at **Segeste**, to early Christian basilicas, sometimes remodelled later (the Cathedral on **Ortygia** being a wonderful example of Christianization of earlier pagan buildings), and the Catacombs of St. John in Siracusa with memories of St. Lucy and the early Christian martyrs under Diocletian and other Roman emperors.

We explored the Baroque rebuilding of towns devastated in south Sicily, under the shadow of an ever present **Mount Etna** gently smoking in the distance. **Noto** and **Ragusa** were very well laid out with beautiful parks enhancing the Cathedrals and Palaces of the 18th century. **Scicli** was a more sprawling working town where Methodism struck root in the 19th century. We visited the Church with its links to the work of Mediterranean Hope through the school and outreach work amongst refugees and migrants. Its pastor, Francesco Sciotto and his colleagues, talked about their work with great enthusiasm. Earlier in the day we saw crosses and sculptures made from the twisted metal and wood of boats washed up on Lampedusa island where many people from Africa and the Middle East if they survive the Mediterranean passage are welcomed and housed. Some of the location scenes from Inspector Montalbano were recognized.

The highlights of the tour for many of us were the Arabo-Norman sites of the early Middle Ages, witnessing to the fusion of cultures, of Islam and the Byzantine East and South with more Western influences brought by the Normans. The Capella Palatina in Palermo,

the Cathedral in Cefalu and the Cathedral and cloisters in Monreale were wonderful examples of the decorative art and architecture of those splendid times when Sicilian culture flourished under the Norman kings and Frederick II, “Stupor Mundi”, in the 11th to 13th centuries. The figures of Christ Pantocrator, the one ruling the whole world dominating the apses of these splendid buildings, surrounded by apostles and saints and the human figures who made these edifices, adorned with mosaics telling the story of salvation from the creation to the crucifixion and beyond provided images which will remain with those of us who made this pilgrimage. We worshipped on the Sunday at the **Waldensian Church in Palermo**. Its minister, Peter Ciaccio, whose family came from PSA, gave an excellent introduction to the work of Waldensians and Methodists in the city and the challenges facing them in the 21st century.

We were helped in our appreciation of this wonderfully diverse island by the excellent weather which helped us enjoy the landscape as we travelled from east to west, stopping at **Enna** where we explored a medieval castle at the summit of the city with incredible views of the surrounding countryside and distant views of Etna. Spring flowers in the castle grounds here and at the evocative site of the Greek temple at Segeste made for more restful interludes in a busy programme.

POEM: HOW LONG WILL IT BE

How long will it be
Before
Man understands
That
Which makes him separate
But one
With all other men?

How long will it be
Before
We understand
That
God is not glory but Divine?
That man
In not difference divine
But Divine and Different?

How long will it be
Before
We see
That unity
Is not a law
But a state of Being
Where all things flow
Because they are
And that Harmony
Is whole
As Logos IS
But one thing
And all creation?

“La chaim – to Life”

But what is that
But God?

And darkness hung on the human world
And God hid His face in the Deep
For understanding could not prevail
While humans sacrificed to Gods
That are not real.

We use Death
To pay for Life
What madness or
What Logic this?

How long will it be
Before
Man sees
That
He is God
And stands
Free
In the human race and

Minds not
The transcendence
Of difference
Between himself
And another man
How long will it be!

Marianne Winter

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Fiona Kendall, a Mission Partner jointly Appointed by the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church who works with Mediterranean Hope writes:



As some of you will know, Mediterranean Hope (MH) is a project created by the FCEI (Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy) in 2015. MH's staff are currently based in four locations: Lampedusa, Sicily, Lebanon and Rome. These locations reflect different aspects of the project.

The Lampedusa team man the "Osservatorio". They gather data on the migrants arriving there and provide direct support to those who land on the island, be it a welcome when they disembark or ongoing practical and legal information whilst they wait to be moved to another part of Italy. The team also works with the local community to help to manage some of the "hotter" issues which arise between locals and the transient migrant community.

The Sicily team provide longer term support for migrants who are seeking international protection. The Casa dei Mirti in Palermo supports young men who travelled as minors, providing shelter, education, support to find employment and to integrate with the Italian community. The Casa delle Culture in Scicli offers support to particularly vulnerable migrants such as pregnant women, providing ongoing care through its highly-skilled cultural mediators in pleasant and welcoming surroundings.

The Lebanon and Rome teams are engaged in our pioneering humanitarian corridors programme, which offers people currently living in refugee camps a safe, legal pathway to Italy,

accommodation on arrival and long term practical support. Participants in the programme initially benefit from a “humanitarian visa” but, like everyone else, must make formal requests for international protection on arrival. Like everyone else, they need to find jobs, develop language skills and integrate with the community around them. MH offers support with all of that.

It’s a joy for me to be part of a project which is helping to effect such positive changes in people’s lives and which is staffed by dedicated and inspiring people. In addition to co-ordinating the humanitarian corridors programme, the Rome team is also involved in dialogue with the world at large and this, to some extent, is where I fit in.

NGOs and charities working in this sector understand well the need for “advocacy”, lobbying governments and policy-makers for change, and acting in concert with other actors in the field. Migration policy is an emotive issue not only in Italy but in Europe and the wider world. Strong voices are battling to be heard as policies are settled and decisions made about how to manage migrant flows. My background in law and passion for improving the lot of migrants feeds into my work as European & Legal Affairs Advisor for the project.

The work I’ve undertaken in my first three months has been diverse. On the advocacy side, it’s included a number of presentations to different groups, and trips to Malta and Brussels to participate in conferences organised by EASO (the European Asylum Support Office) and the European Resettlement Network.

Although not really a fan of social media for personal use, I am committed to tweeting regularly in a professional context (@FionaKMedHope) for it’s an excellent way to disseminate interesting reports and news stories to the wider world. It’s not for me to tell people what to think - but I do think it’s important to

provide alternative material for people to consider! After that, it's up to each individual to decide where they stand.

On a day to day basis, I'm involved in translation work for MH, which has been developing printed materials for migrants arriving on Lampedusa and I've started to provide English language lessons to one of our Syrian refugees as she seeks to widen her skill base. As I gradually leave Italian learned twenty-five years ago out of retirement, I am also enjoying building relationships with the many other organisations in Rome and beyond which are working to improve the lot of migrants.

It's been an exciting and interesting start to my four year role. Whilst I have a specific role within MH, it's important to stress that I have been sent here as a mission partner, shared by the Methodist Church in Britain and the Church of Scotland. I have had strong links with both churches during my life and I find it amazing that I should be able to carry out this work, which means so much to me, on behalf of both organisations. Just as I want to tell people about issues connected with migration, so too am I delighted to confirm to people that my inspiration for doing this work comes from my faith...and that this is what has made it possible.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Ecumenical garden at S. Gregorio al Celio next work session is Saturday May 12th 10am to 1pm.
- John Wesley's Birthday event 18th June 6pm till 8pm
- 29th June: Social evening concluding with fireworks on terrace of the manse. See Alessia and Federico for tickets.



FORTHCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 13th May | Eric Noffke |
| 20th May | Mirella Manocchio |
| 27th May | Jonathan Boardman and Birthday Basket |
| 3rd June | Carmel Ieraci |
| 10th June | Susan and Peter Howdle |
| 17th June | Colin Smith |
| 24th June | TBA |
| 1st July | Pastor Tim with Holy Communion followed by Church Council |
| 8th July | Pastor Tim to include annual General Church meeting followed by Pot Luck lunch |

The Revd Canon Jonathan Boardman leaves Rome after 19 years as Chaplain at All Saints` as well as preaching here at PSA on 27th May there will be an opportunity with ecumenical friends to say farewell to Jonathan on Wednesday 6th June at 7pm at Caravita. All are welcome. We are grateful for the times we have been able to collaborate with our Anglican friends and will pray for the congregation at All Saints` as they prepare for the interregnum.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

We continue to be grateful for the financial contributions given to the church by our members and visitors. This includes not only the regular contributions (please see Marcello Marinelli our Church Treasurer if you would like to join the envelope scheme) but also the special contributions we make from time to time for the work of the wider Church.

Rice Bowl

The Rice Bowl Appeal for feeding deprived school children in Sri Lanka through the World Food Programme raised 1410,00 euros.

Easter Offering

The Easter Offering for the work of the Methodist Church overseas through the World Mission Fund raised 564, 10 euros. Thank you to all who participated in our World Church Sunday on 29th April.



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

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| 01 April | P 290, 46 | E 683, 00 | TTL. 973, 46 |
| 08 April | P 27, 45 | E 150, 00 | TTL. 177, 00 |
| 15 April | P 154, 30 | E 603, 00 | TTL. 757, 30 |
| 22 April | P 143, 53 | E 310, 00 | TTL. 453, 53 |
| 29 April | P 75, 80 | E 368, 00 | TTL. 443, 80 |
| TOTAL | P 691, 54 | E 2114, 00 | TTL. 2805, 54 |