

From humble beginnings



We think Francis Asbury was born on 20 or 21 August, 1745 in Hamstead, on the borders of the Black Country with Birmingham, to parents Joseph and Eliza.

Asbury's mother was a devout Christian and major influence on the boy. Francis was a good scholar and able to read the Bible by the age of six. But by the age of thirteen he left school to become an apprentice chape-maker and blacksmith in the Sandwell Valley.

The Asburys attended the parish church of All Saints at West Bromwich, where the vicar was a man of great Methodist enthusiasm and friend of John Wesley. In his early teens Francis attended a Methodist service at nearby Hilltop. He was greatly moved by this service and at the age of 18 was converted and soon became a local preacher.

The next two years were spent leading the Wesleyan Society class at West Bromwich. Two years later he extended his preaching rounds to other Wesleyan societies in Wednesbury, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Bilbrook.

It was in July 1771 that Francis Asbury went to John Wesley's Chapel (the New Room) in Bristol to attend the annual conference of Wesley's preachers. There, Wesley asked his assembled preachers: "Our brethren in America call aloud for help. Who are willing to go over to help them?" Francis Asbury took up the challenge, went back to say farewell to his parents and set sail on the River Avon to the New World.

Connexional News is compiled by Rev Andy Fyall

Any suggestions for items should be sent to Andy by 10th of April 2016

News from The Methodist Church



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SOCIAL JUSTICE

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Isaiah 58.6

We see injustice where the rules and norms of society discriminate against the weakest and give the advantages to the most powerful. Our work concentrates on some of the UK's biggest current challenges, the looming housing crisis, rising poverty and inequality, and the economy.

Housing

To have somewhere we call home is a fundamental part of our human dignity. To be deprived of such a basic necessity is to feel less than human. Yet the UK's housing crisis is leaving more people without a safe and secure home.

Poverty and Inequality

Poverty and inequality are predicted to increase over the next years. The poorest tenth's standard of living will fall for at least two more years, the richest tenth will not have experienced a year of declining standard of living since 1948. As inequality rises, we work to help all contribute to and benefit from the wealth of society.

Economics

The way an economy is run has a profound effect on culture, societies, the environment. For that reason it is vital that Christians are able to speak on the most pressing economic issues of the day.

Prayers on the move



The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) has launched a new app, website and booklet, promoting daily prayers for busy people.

The Prayers on the Move app and website offer 31 one-minute audio prayers, which are easy enough for the even least experienced in prayer to try out. These beautiful, super-short meditations could also provide refreshment for seasoned pray-ers who are feeling a bit jaded.

To promote this nationwide initiative adverts on the London Underground, like the one pictured, feature short, accessible prayers to encourage all kinds of people to give prayer a go.

You can discover more at www.prayersonthemove.com, including ordering the booklet, which is also available as an e-book and PDF.

You can also follow Prayers on the Move through social media - Twitter (@PrayersOTM #prayersonthemove), Facebook and Instagram.

A Word in Time Bible Study

Did you know that the Methodist Church website or app gives you access to daily Bible study resources?

Click on to

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/a-word-in-time>

and see if you find it helpful.

Running on empty by Malcolm Ramsay (Mission Partner in Nepal)

in Nepal, the border blockade with India continues to be enforced – with devastating effects. The blockade arose out of a conflict over the new Constitution that was promulgated last September.

The leaders of the ethnic Madhesi people living on the Terai (the flat southern strip of Nepal next to the border with India) argued that they have been disadvantaged by it. They then announced the blockade to force a change to the Constitution.

The blockade has now lasted more than 130 days, and Nepal is being throttled of supplies of fuel, cooking and heating gas, and medicines. The only thing that is flourishing is the black market. A recent international news item on the situation here had the very acute headline: Running on Empty.

The Madhesis themselves (whose leaders are supposedly acting in their interests) are suffering terribly as well.

Innumerable businesses have collapsed. Schools and colleges have been closed for months, and students will have lost at least a year of academic progress. Relief work for post earthquake survivors has inevitably slowed to a trickle. In Nepal, as in every country, there s much to give thanks for, but also much to fight against.

Please pray for the people for Nepal and the work of the churches and voluntary agencies there.