

**Hello Hilda!
On Sabbatical**



One minister from Ilkley has been using his sabbatical in a unique and interesting way: by building a shepherd's hut named Hilda!

The Revd Rob Hilton, minister of Christchurch, Ilkley, undertook this task as part of his sabbatical exploration on what it means to be a 'shepherd'.

"As a minister ordained 22 years ago," Rob said, "I found myself reflecting on what shepherding means. Jesus was described as The Good Shepherd and ministers are shepherds of a flock."

From there, Rob used his previous experience building sheds to undertake the challenge of building his own portable shepherd's hut for prayer.

"Researching how to build my own shepherd's hut was an insight into the tradition. Apart from the chassis and roof, everything is salvaged material – a valuable lesson in the teaching that God's love can make the best out of anything or anyone. I have appreciated having so many materials given to me. I feel cocooned in the goodwill, encouragement and support of those who gave me bits and pieces."

As well as building the hut, Rob has spent time working alongside shepherds and farmers to better understand their motivations and ways of life.

[Rev Rob Hilton is son-in-law to one of our Local Preachers, Joyce Hearn]

Connexional News is compiled by Rev Andy Fyall

News from **The Methodist Church**

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US Presidential Election

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have released the following statement in response to this week's Presidential election.

The United States has chosen Donald Trump as its new President. Viewed from the United Kingdom, the campaign appeared more hard fought, bitter and divisive than ever before. The result will undoubtedly cause both great pain and great celebration throughout the United States and the wider world.

Many of the statements made by President-Elect Trump during the campaign will prompt grave concern. Much of what was said was profoundly at odds with the beliefs and values of our Church.

Our understanding of God's purpose is that all people are valued and should be treated with dignity and respect. This value is incompatible with the "off the cuff" comments made about women or in support of torture and mistreatment of prisoners; nor can it be reconciled with the more considered rhetoric directed at immigrants and people of different faiths.

The Churches view climate change as one of the greatest challenges facing humankind. Our brothers and sisters in Pacific Islands are already experiencing its consequences. We know that, even with the plans agreed at the Paris COP21 last year, many more people and species will be threatened. It is of profound concern that Mr Trump has indicated that he wishes to ignore the world's scientists and leaders, dismiss the threat of climate change and refuse to implement the Paris targets.

In a democratic society, votes bestow a right, and a responsibility, to govern. We respect and honour this, and recognise that we are all facing a new political landscape. The Methodist Church must always stand with our sisters and brothers in partner Churches as they seek to promote truth and justice, holding the new administration to account when necessary.

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President-Elect Trump says that he will seek the common ground. We will pray for him and all who have the responsibility of leadership. We hope and desire that the United States will travel a peaceful, generous, faithful and just path.

We offer this prayer:

God of truth and justice,
We give you thanks for the peoples of the United States Of America;
and pray for Donald Trump, the Senate and Congress at a time of change and transition.
Grant to its leaders,
vision, wisdom and compassion.
To its people,
listening ears, generous hearts and a spirit of unity,
to the world,
a compelling vision of your kingdom that excites our imagination,
deepens our love,
and inspires us to build in every place communities of welcome that cast out division.
In Christ's name,
Amen

Revd Roger Walton and Rachel Lampard
President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

***Only by living mercifully, humbly and faithfully
Can we dare to believe that we might become like Jesus.***



Faith in Foodbanks?

Across the United Kingdom, in towns, cities and rural communities, there has emerged a rapidly growing network of foodbanks. Some are relatively small "community larders" while others operate on an almost industrial scale. Local churches and congregations have often played a key role in their establishment.

Why is it that we are one of the wealthiest nations in the world, yet an increasing number of our population are reliant on foodbanks to sustain their families? How is it that some of our key producers of food struggle to maintain a basic livelihood while some food retailers and distributors announce enormous profits? Is it right that something which began as a way of providing an "occasional stop-gap in an emergency" is becoming more of an ongoing necessity for some? Are foodbanks, and churches, becoming unofficially part of the welfare state?

Faith in Foodbanks?

"The situation is complex, and few of us will feel equipped to fully engage in the debates that emerge. But we have stories to share, and some of those stories are extremely powerful. When presented with honesty and integrity they have the power to challenge all of us, to change hearts and minds. They most definitely have the power to change the policies and attitudes of those who do have the direct power to make a difference."

Revd Ruth Gee, President of the Methodist Conference 2013-14

The Faith in Foodbanks resource (found via the JPIT website) is made up of three interconnecting parts:

- Faith in Foodbanks? – Why do Christians care about food poverty? Why is the number of foodbanks growing? Fact and Fiction about foodbanks. And ten things you can do with your church.
- Signs of the Times? – Six Bible studies to explore the ministry of Foodbanks and what God's Word might teach us about them.
- Worship Ideas – A selection of worship ideas, including a sermon outline, reflections and prayers.

These resources have been put together to help churches explore issues raised by foodbanks, and to make connections between the work of these foodbanks and the life, worship and witness of local churches and fellowships.