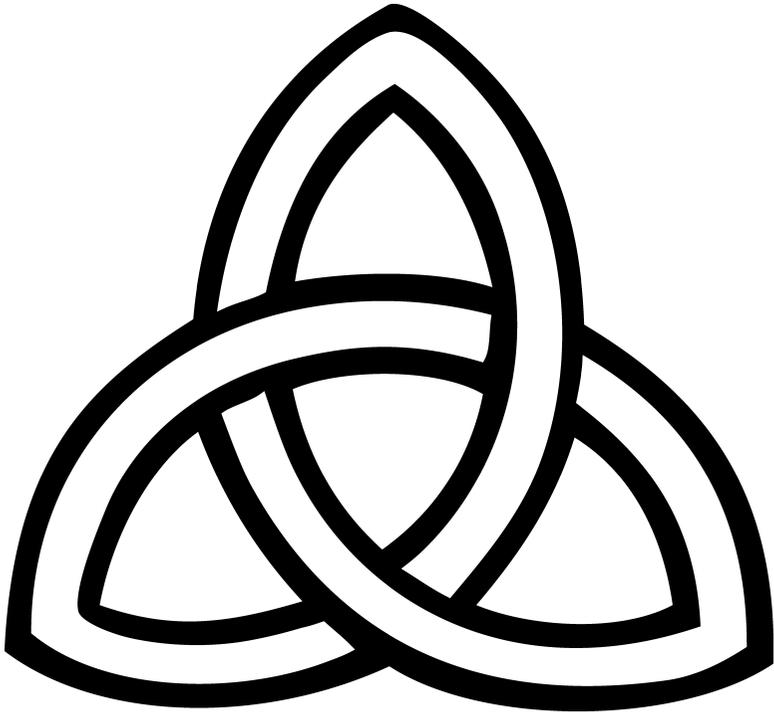


# THE LINK

The Magazine of Portsmouth  
Methodist Church



May 2022

Minister : Rev. Ray Goddess

[www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk)

Reg. Charity No. 1178715

## ***Message from the Manse***

I am writing this message in the middle of the Holy Week, a time that I always find to be challenging but also a blessing. Challenging to think of all that Jesus gave up for us and a blessing to know that He is my Saviour, and I can turn to Him for help and advice.

But the Lenten journey is a time of reflection and as I reflect on my life, I always come back to a question that is very hard to answer: Am I living a life that Jesus wants me to live?

I am reminded of the life that Jesus illustrates to us in His parables found in Matthew 25. The one that sticks out for me this year is the parable of the wise and foolish maidens or women (depends on your translation).

There was a delay in the wedding as they waited for the bridegroom. There are so many delays that we experience in our lives. Some delays are because of the life that we are leading but some delays are put into place by God because the time is not right. In the waiting period we can do a number of things. We can look for the answer in another place or we can wait and do nothing and expect everything to fall into place at the right time. Or we can do our best to prepare for the time when God decides the time is right.

Living for God needs us to be pro-active in our lives and make sure that we are on the path that God has planned for us and to make sure that we prepare to do what is necessary to be successful in carrying out God's call on our lives.

This should bring a tremendous sense of hope into our lives, knowing that we do not have to figure it out ourselves, that we can rather listen for God's prompting and act on this rather than making any rash decisions ourselves. It is God's plan for us and so we need to trust God to guide us on that journey.

As we move past Easter and celebrate the RISEN LORD, I ask myself and so ask you, are you prepared to do what God calls you to do? The more we get this right the more we feel blessed and the more we want to do for God.

Let us join together and unite as the body of Christ and spread the Good News to all through our deeds as well as our words.

Blessings and Christ love,

Ray

## ***PMC Moving Forward***

While the process of change is always painful it is also exciting to be part of a new phase in the life of what is changing, and in this case, it is the change we as Portsmouth Methodist Church are moving through.

Over four years ago the people of Copnor, Eastney and Trinity voted to become one united church as Portsmouth Methodist Church. A lot has happened since then with the introduction of one magazine - The Link, having a joint service with all centres open and then only having one joint service with everyone worshipping together. And then came the shocker of the notification from the insurers of Copnor and the process of what to do was put into place.

Under the guidance of Denise Thomas, a vote was taken, and it was decided that the repair costs could not be met, and the best way forward was to close the building. The last service held in the Copnor Church Building was held on Christmas Day 2021 with the final celebration service being held on Saturday 15 January 2022 with the message being brought by Rev Bill Stillwell.

The good news is that Portsmouth Methodist Church has now got its own bank account (Portsmouth Methodist Church, CAF Bank Limited Account, Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00034416).

We moved forward from there with a question being raised: "What does the "new" Portsmouth Methodist Church look like?" At the PMC ACM held on the 3 April 2022 the congregation was asked to show their preference to move forward with one, two or three buildings. The preference papers were counted (one building 19, two buildings 19, three buildings 4 and abstentions 1) and results given to the Church Council who then voted to give us a way forward. The vote results were one building 11, two buildings 6. A second Church Council meeting was arranged to decide where this one church would be situated.

At the Church Council meeting held on Wednesday 13 April 2022 the following was unanimously voted as the way forward:

- 1) PMC would continue to fund the rental of the premises used by the Brigades as part of its Outreach into the community.
- 2) That PMC will initially move to the Trinity site, closing Eastney as a centre for Sunday services from the 1 June and handing over the Copnor site to circuit from 1 June 2022 and will then develop a proposal for the forward movement of Portsmouth Methodist Church's single building at a different site (to be investigated and determined). Eastney

would remain as a Church Hall for the use of PMC and aim to maximise revenue.

It should be noted that this proposal needs to be accepted by the Circuit Leadership Team at their next meeting.

A lot has happened, and a lot still needs to happen, but thanks to all involved for their help and time. I am excited and feel that we are on the right path that God is wanting us to move along.

As always, be assured that I will keep you informed with updates as and when decisions are made about the future of our church, Portsmouth Methodist Church.

Blessings

Ray

## ***Fundraising***

At the recent Portsmouth Methodist Church Annual Church Meeting we discussed the need to fundraise and the possibility of having a dedicated group to drive this forward. If you would like to be part of this team, please contact Alan Haynes.

\*\* Even before Alan sent in the above notice, Denise Cornish had expressed her desire to get involved! She wrote:

'I was so excited to hear that we can embark on the fund-raising wagon to swell the coffers of our beloved church. I know we have so many with good ideas and look forward to getting together with like-minded people. As soon as this gains momentum I would love to be involved.'

So please join in!

## ***Concert***

Our first fundraising event will be at 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon 22nd May 2022 at Trinity. The Southsea Community Choir have kindly offered to put on a concert for us. Further details of the concert will be available shortly and tickets priced at £8.00 will be on sale from Sunday 24th April. There will be refreshments during the interval.

There will also be a tabletop sale, so if you have anything suitable for this, please bring them along during the next few weeks.

## **Calendars**

Ralph Snelling writes:-

“For the last few years, I have produced a calendar on behalf of PMC. The theme is usually ‘The Natural World’. Sales so far have been modest but last year raised £60 for PMC funds. The calendars normally sell for around £7 but may be slightly higher this year, and are A4 (opening to A3) in full colour on high quality paper with a mailing envelope. I’ve reproduced below one of the pictures from this year’s calendar.



*Hey! That's my cake!*

I’m sorry that not everyone will be able to see this in colour, but if anyone would like to see a sample calendar, please let me know and I can show you one. If nature isn’t your ‘thing’, I also generally produce a transport-based calendar, predominantly railways, but ships, planes and other modes of transport do sometimes slip in. Again, I can show you a sample if you are interested.

Last year I left ordering till late and there was nearly a disaster when a machine broke down at the printing company I use. This year I’ll be looking for orders by the end of September!”

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Eastney</i></b>	<b><i>Trinity</i></b>
1st May	10:30 a.m. Joint Service led by Rev. Bill Stillwell at Eastney Holy Communion	
8th May	Rev. Dr. Beryl Wright	Rev. David Muskett
15th May	Rev. Ray Goddess	Rev. Canon Richard Atkins
22nd May	Mrs Wendy Corney	Rev. Ray Goddess
29th May	Mrs Shirley Haynes	Rev. Dr. Beryl Wright

## ***Community***

### ***Phoenix Players Production***

The Phoenix Players who have their theatre at Portsmouth Methodist Church (Trinity) are putting on 'Agatha Crusty and the Health Spa Murders', a comedy by Derek Webb, from Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June until Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June. Evening performances on each day will be at 7.30 p.m. and there is a Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets are £12 with concessions available. Tickets can be purchased from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/bookit](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/bookit) or by telephoning 08454 676462.

## ***And finally***

### ***The Fig Tree***

We are not used to the sight of fig trees in this country but they are used several times by Christ as an illustration and they are usually taken to be representative of the Jewish people in those illustrations. Jesus curses the fig tree in Matthew 21 and Mark 11, in Luke 13 there is the barren fig tree, and it is mentioned in the bible all the way back to the garden of Eden, where it is fig leaves that Adam

and Eve sow together to hide their nakedness. It is also mentioned in Luke 21 as its leaves being a sign of the summer and thus, we should recognise the signs that Christ may be coming and we should be ready. The fig tree is used in different ways in each illustration and so we should understand how the fig tree operates.

The fig tree is not just mentioned in Judaic and Christian scripture, it appears in other ancient cultures: their roots were said to be used by the Maasai people's god to shuttle the first cattle from heaven to Earth; and according to an Indonesian story, two gods carved the first couple from their wood. The presence of fig trees in all these ancient accounts is because they have shaped our world and fed us for millennia. Even now, as the world warms and forests fall, these extraordinary trees could help us to restore life to deforested landscapes.

This is because fig trees cut a curious deal with tiny wasps back in ancient times. Thanks to this, they sustain far more biodiversity than other trees. Today, there are more than 750 species of *Ficus*, each of which relies on its own wasp species to pollinate its flowers. In turn, the wasps can only breed inside the figs of their partner tree. Genetic studies suggest that this remarkable codependency is at least 80 million years old. The wasp, that lives for just 48 hours, makes a one-way journey into the fruit to lay its eggs attracted by the smell, they can tell where the next tree is of the same species even if distant.

When the fruit is ready, the figs swell, blush and are pumped with sugar. Birds, bats, monkeys and other animals will come to feed on them and in turn disperse the tiny fig seeds contained within the fruit. Figs are supposed to feed more bird and mammal species than any other fruit and because of the short-lived wasp dependency, they can produce fruit twice a year and different trees will provide their fruit at different times, so fruit can be on them at any time in the long season. They also grow fast and their thick leaves cast a dense shadow that prevents weedy grasses from taking hold. They also have very strong roots, which can break through stone and thus can stabilise landscapes reducing erosion and landslides. This is why they have to be grown in a basin in a domestic garden in Britain.

So, this wide variety of time when they bear fruit is why Jesus is disappointed in Matthew 21 that it does not have any. Whereas in Luke 13, it is probable that the man tending the vineyard had been removing the potential fruit at the earliest stage. Leviticus 19:23-25, forbids eating fruit from a tree in its first three years, which is still recommended by gardening programmes. So, by removing fruit they remove temptation, and by giving another chance for the tree, it is

allowed to become what it always could be. So, by knowing how they fruit you can better understand these passages.

Mark Barton

## **Sermons Online!**

Did you know that Ray posts his sermons, and a daily devotion on his YouTube channel? You can see, and hear, them either by going into YouTube and searching for Ray Goddess or via the PMC website [www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk)

## **June 2022 Link *When , What and Where***

The deadline for the June issue of The Link will be **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May.**

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Where</b>
<b>Monday</b>		
6:30 p.m.	Girls Brigade	St Joseph's
<b>Tuesday</b>		
10:00 a.m.	Trinity Tots (during term time)	Trinity
2:30 p.m.	Friendship Group	Copnor (Wesley Rooms)
<b>Wednesday</b>		
12:00 noon	Fellowship Lunch including a short act of worship (1st Wednesday of month)	Trinity
12:00 noon	Soup and Pud (3rd Wednesday of month)	Trinity
2:30 p.m.	Wednesday Club	Trinity
<b>Thursday</b>		
2:30 p.m.	Games Afternoon (2nd & 4th Thursday of month)	Eastney
6:00 p.m.	Boys Brigade	St Joseph's
<b>Friday</b>		
9.30 a.m.	Stay and Play Group for Toddlers and Parents	Eastney
<b>Saturday</b>		
10:00 a.m.	Coffee Morning	Trinity
10:00 a.m.	Coffee and Light Refreshments	Copnor (Wesley Rooms)