

‘Seeing things differently’



A few months ago, I had a bizarre accident whilst playing golf. I hit a ball extremely hard, intending it to land perfectly on the green right next to the flag. Instead, the ball hit a tree about 3 metres away from me, ricocheted and struck me in the left eye, nearly knocking me off my feet. Norman Wisdom couldn't have performed a better stunt. The kindness of friends enabled me to be driven to the Woking Community Hospital, then as an emergency to the Royal Surrey, where – after scans and treatment performed by efficient and equally kind medics – I was dropped off at home, blind in one eye. (NB. *The picture opposite is of my son Paul – he's a better-looking golfer than me*)

I had mild concussion for a week, but the gradual recovery of sight and the enforced immobility (I tried to do as I was told, but it's difficult to stay in bed and keep movement to a minimum when you have to do for yourself) – this made me think again of ‘seeing and seeing’, as it were.

Our Gospel writers may not have been experts in ophthalmology, but they certainly understood about the different levels of ‘seeing’. They had an advantage over us, I suppose, because English, though rich, is a somewhat sloppy language compared with Latin and Greek, and we tend to use the word ‘see’ to include a number of different processes. In the New Testament, however, there are a number of words which express the various ways in which you and I can ‘see’ – and please forgive what may appear to be a Greek lesson. My New Testament Greek is very, very rusty!

Some of the words found in the New Testament that all can mean ‘to see’, can be found as follows:-

- **‘blepo’** [βλεπω] – which means to *have the faculty of sight* i.e. that which comes to our brains through our optic nerves;
- **‘emblepo’** [εμβλεπω] – which develops this to mean to *look attentively* (for example, at an object);
- **‘theoreo’** [θεωρεω] – from which we get our word ‘theorem’. This suggests something deeper than simply looking at an object or person, but rather to *contemplate mentally*, or to *consider* – a problem, perhaps;
- **‘horao’** [οραω] – which (for Christians) has the deepest significance of all. It can mean more than just ‘seeing’, but *beholding*, and sometimes to *have a vision of (God)*.

I realise my learned colleagues may smile at my basic interpretations, but blame Dr Harold Moulton, not me! However, I hope you can see why the four words above came into my mind as my sight slowly returned. Those of you who (like me) have had operations for cataracts, will understand the sensations I was experiencing. The first three or four days made me think of the blind man at Bethsaida, as described by Mark in his Gospel (Ch. 8 vs. 22-25):

Jesus Cures a Blind Man at Bethsaida

²² They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. ²³ He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, 'Can you see anything?' ²⁴ And the man looked up and said, 'I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.' ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

After a week I was able to identify how many fingers a person was holding up before my face (no, don't even think of it!), and then, gradually, more and more as the eye-drops and the process of healing took effect. But it seemed that much more was happening, apart from the physical side of things. I'm not saying that I had a sudden epiphany, but rather, a gradual appreciation of the different **levels**, as it were, of the ways in which we see things – and people.

It reminded me of a short Easter sermon that I'd preached some time ago about the two disciples coming to the empty tomb, as told by John (Ch. 20 vs. 6-8)

Peter and John come to the empty tomb

⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

You will notice that the English translation (though good), simply uses the word 'see' twice, without any apparent difference in their meaning. However, the author uses two quite different words from the list above. Peter, when he entered the tomb, **saw** ('**theoreo**') in the sense that he understood that the body of Jesus was no longer there. The other disciple (John) went in but **saw** ('**horao**') and believed. I am sure that a deeper perception came to Peter quite quickly afterwards, however!

I hope you can realise why this silly golf accident made such an impression on me. It reinforced a belief that I've always had that we don't need a special 'spiritual lens' to see God in all his beauty and wisdom and love. Despite our imperfect knowledge and understanding, each of us possesses the insight to have a vision of God that will give meaning and purpose to our lives. And though, as Paul, pointed out in his letter to the Corinthians, 'now we see in a mirror dimly' there will come a time when each of us shall see God 'face to face'.

The sight in my left eye has still not completely returned, and perhaps it never will. But it has taught me a number of important lessons about my relationship with God . . . and also about the need to be more careful when I play golf!!



A Prayer:

Loving God, we thank you for those moments when – sometimes to our surprise – we are given insights into your wisdom and love. Help us to see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Every blessing to you all,
Barrie Tabraham

Resources/Good News

UK Emergency Alert – Sunday 7 September, 3.00pm

The government will be running a national test of the Emergency Alerts system on Sunday 7 September 2025.

Emergency Alerts is a UK government system that provides warning and advice in a life-threatening emergency.

Find out more here [About Emergency Alerts - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/about-emergency-alerts)



South East District Welcome Service

The Welcome Service for our new Chair of District, Rev Conrad Hicks will be taking place on Saturday, 6 September 2025 at 3pm, followed by refreshments. This will take place at Redhill Methodist Church, Gloucester Road, Redhill, RH1 1BP.

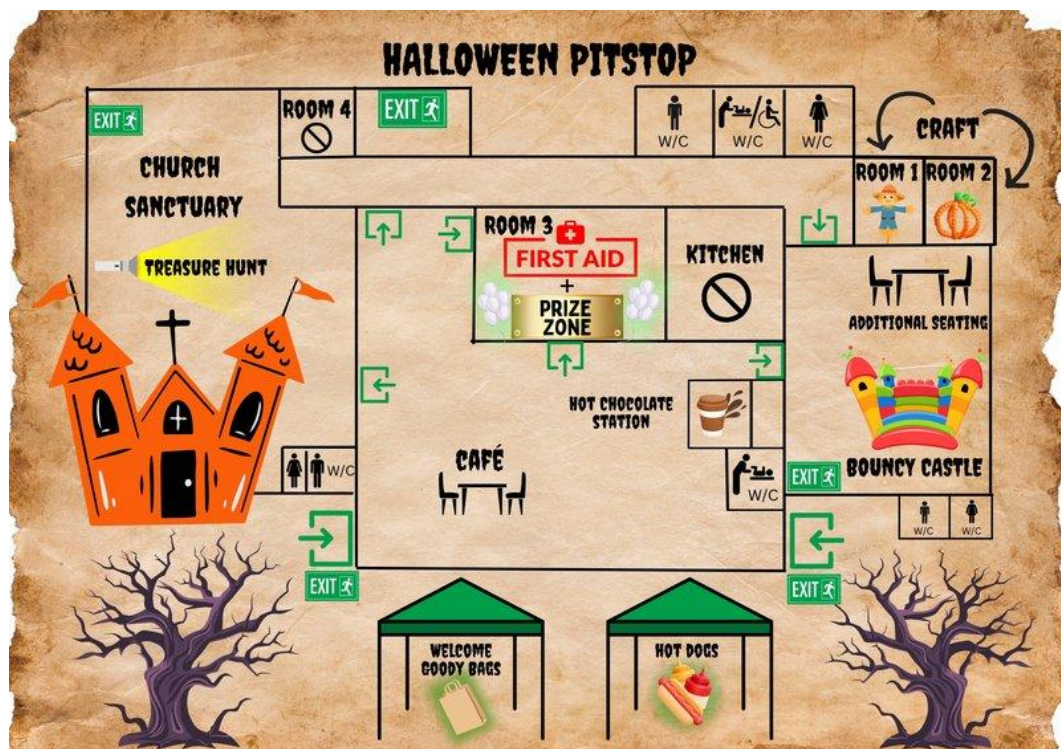
The link to watch the livestream, or watch later online is:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/jp7jGDfeEJO>

Halloween for Mission

On 31 October each year, communities up and down the land are filled with children dressed as witches, superheroes and monsters. For many churches, there is a tension between balancing biblical integrity and mission. But, at St. James Road Methodist Church in Southampton, that challenge was turned into an opportunity. Follow the link below, to read their story.

[Halloween for mission - The Methodist Church](#)



South East District Welcome Service



Join us as we welcome our new Chair of District, Rev Conrad Hicks



Saturday 6th September

3pm, followed by refreshments



Redhill Methodist Church, RH1 1BP



And streamed online

visit www.methodistsoutheast.org in early September for streaming instructions



The **Methodist Church**
South East District



Inspire

Enable

Encourage

STOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

(On the corner of Stoughton Road and Grange Road)

COFFEE CORNER

Tuesdays from 10 am – 12 noon



5th August

12th August

19th August

26th August

2nd September

9th September

16th September

23rd September

30th September



Enjoy Coffee & a Chat, Coffee & a Game, or Coffee & a Book

The choice is yours!

Everyone welcome – bring a friend!

You are invited to a Cream Tea

**At Godalming United Church, Bridge Road,
Godalming GU7 3DU**

Saturday 6th September 2025

2.30pm to 4.30pm

**In the GUC Church Gardens or River Room
(depending on the weather!)**

**Donations in aid of the Gambian Ophthalmic Project
which provides funds for cataract operations and
follow-up care.**



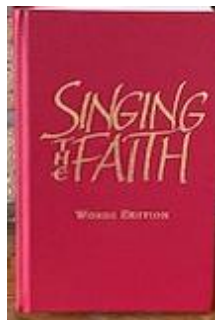


70 years at
MERROW METHODIST CHURCH

Join us for a

**SONGS OF PRAISE
SERVICE**

**On
SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER at 6.30PM**





**St Mary's Church Quarry St
Guildford GU1 3UP**

Heritage Open Days
12 – 14 September

Friday & Sunday 12.00 – 16.00

Saturday 10.00 – 16.00

**also open 16 & 18 September 11.00 – 15.00*

including

‘OUR TIME 2’

***exhibition of art
from prisoners at HMP Send***

Refreshments available

Saturday 20 September 2025 2.00-4.00pm

Knaphill Methodist Church, The Broadway, Knaphill GU21 2DR

(between Boots & the old Lloyds Bank)

Clothes4U

a clothes bank supporting the local community

To claim your FREE clothes, collect a voucher from 30+ places in Surrey.

Email us to find out where they are: clothes@knaphillmethodist.co.uk

Due to huge generosity lately from the residents of Knaphill and beyond,
clothes donations are not being accept at all for the time being.





*We'll be joined by the **President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Richard Andrew and Matthew Forsyth.***

*The service will be taking place in Notting Hill Methodist Church, London, W11 4AH on **Monday 8 September 2025** and all are welcome!*

If you're coming, please help us keep track of numbers by filling out the short form on our website: [Harvest Celebration Service – All We Can](#)

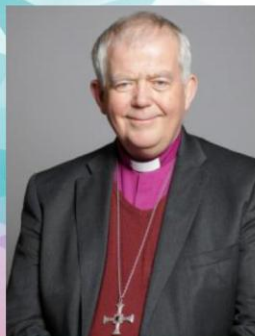
*Additionally, we have set up a **live stream** so that those who cannot join us in London but would like to take part can do so. Here is the livestream link: https://www.youtube.com/live/XZZqSHjt3_o?si=SO4_QI-P0H4uheiC*



Study Day: Speaking of Justice in Worship and Preaching



Rachel Lampard
Director of Social
Justice & Social Action
for The Methodist
Church
She is talking on
Politics in the Pulpit?



Right Reverend Nick Holtam
Bishop of Salisbury from 2011
until his retirement in 2021.
He is talking on *Study this
age, sense its need, preach
to its condition – preaching in
such a time as this.*

Saturday 11th October 2025 from 10.00am to 2pm

At Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton, BN2 1RL dgmc.org.uk

Refreshments: Tea, coffee will be available from 9.30am.

Please bring a packed lunch, hot drinks & soup will be available.

Rachel Lampard, Director of Social Justice & Social Action for The Methodist Church

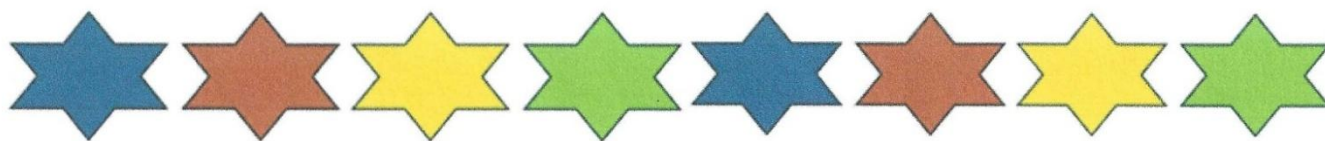
Rachel Lampard has worked for many years to help churches to engage with issues of social justice, particularly through the Methodist Church and the ecumenical Joint Public Issues Team. She is currently the Director for Social Justice and Social Action for the Methodist Church and served as the elected Vice-President of the Methodist Conference in Britain between 2016-17.

Rachel has also spent over a decade working for the Gambling Commission, seeking to regulate the industry to prevent gambling harm, and received an MBE for services to gambling regulation. She is a trustee of the youth work charity, Worth Unlimited, and Chair of Governors at an east London secondary school. She lives in Walthamstow, east London, where she spends much of her time trying, and failing, to keep up with the rest of her cycling-mad family.

Right Reverend Nick Holtam. He served as Bishop of Salisbury from 2011 until his retirement in 2021.

Nicholas Holtam was ordained deacon in the Church of England in 1979 to a curacy at St Dunstan's Stepney and retired from stipendiary ministry in 2021 as Bishop of Salisbury and the Church of England's lead bishop on the environment. In between he taught Ethics and Mission at Lincoln Theological College and was the vicar of two parishes – the Isle of Dogs in East London and St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, where he was a regular broadcaster of worship, mostly on BBC Radio 4 and the World Service. He has therefore preached in a wide variety of contexts and will talk about the purpose and context of preaching, drawing on a variety of examples and issues from his experience.

Please contact Steve Preston steve.preston@brightonhovemethodistcircuit.org.uk to register attendance and if you have any questions.



**Saturday morning events at the
Addlestone Methodist Church Café on
Station Road**



***Come along between 10am and
12 to enjoy tea/coffee and cake
and join in with activities***

EVERY MONTH

1st Saturday – Fun Bingo

*Donations to Sam Beare Hospice or
Open Doors Charity*



**2nd Saturday – A time to sing – favourite
hymns & songs**

3rd Saturday – give popular games a go



**4th Saturday – Hymns, songs
and time for prayer**

Check notice board for any changes



SHARP: Surrey Healthy Ageing Research Partnership

Are you interested in why some people are more prone to illness with older age, or how we may extend healthy-life span and independent living

Then join us at the University of Surrey for tea and coffee and a chance to learn about our research on healthy ageing.

On Tuesday 9th September 2025, from 2pm-4pm, in the Rik Medlik Building, University of Surrey, we will open our doors to older adults within the local community.

You will have the chance to hear about our research, see posters, can ask questions, and find out what it means to take part in research, and we will provide refreshments!

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by email: SHARP@surrey.ac.uk



SHARP: Surrey Healthy Ageing Research Partnership

Tuesday 9th September from 2-4:30pm, in the Rik Medlik Building, University of Surrey

Open Afternoon Schedule

| | |
|--------|---|
| 1:50pm | Arrival with tea, coffee and refreshments |
| 2:00pm | Welcome by Dr Natalie Riddell |
| 2:10pm | Talk 1. Dr Frances Sanders: <i>The AiH project: co-developing hospitable and age-inclusive communities</i> |
| 2:25pm | Talk 2. Dr Kiran Ravindra: <i>Sleep monitoring technologies for improving health and sleep in older adults</i> |
| 2:40pm | Questions and answer session |
| 3:20pm | Meet the researchers and a poster and demonstration exhibition |
| 4:25pm | Close |

Please note that access to the Rik Medlik building will not be possible before 1:50pm