

## Letter from Rev Deborah Kirk, Superintendent Minister

### *In the beginning....*

Over the past four weeks we have had the opportunity to attend a short course – either in Taunton or in Bridgwater – on the book of Genesis. Genesis is the book that the Methodist Church is suggesting that we study and preach on for 'Bible Month' this year. So, during June, we began to prepare through conversation together, and during the Sundays of July, all the preachers have agreed we shall depart from the lectionary to preach on four themes from Genesis.

**ALL THE  
FAMILIES**  
OF THE EARTH  
SHALL BE  
*blessed*

You will know that Genesis has 50 chapters, so I guess the first challenge was working out how those 50 chapters could be condensed into four themes in a way which would make sense. The four themes are 'The Sovereign God who creates' (ch 1-11); 'The God who calls and blesses' (ch 12-25); 'The God who comes to people in their struggles' (ch 25-36); and 'The God who confirms and safeguards divine promises' (ch 37-50).

As the '*Genesis*' or 'Beginning' of things, the book sets the scene for the rest of the scriptures. And fascinating as the studies have been in refreshing our memories about those ancient and foundational stories, the big question is always 'so what...?' How does this text interact with our own lives? What enduring truth speaks to us and our situations? What do we learn about this God who creates, calls and blesses, is present in our struggles, and fulfils his promises in our present day?

In Genesis, we are introduced to the matriarchs (a few!) and patriarchs of the Jewish and Christian faiths, and as we follow their very human challenges and triumphs, we recognise ourselves. We notice how the people God calls are often the unlikely ones, how they often 'mess up'

but God continues to patiently work out his promises through them. Through their stories, we remind ourselves what it means to be human, our connectedness with God's good creation, our call to relationship with God through the Sabbath, and how God in his gracious compassion works through us – even us.

Perhaps to prepare for the services throughout July, we will read this exciting, puzzling, challenging, foundational book again. Notice its connections with the rest of Scripture and the echoes we find in the New Testament as God continues to work out his salvation.

If you want to use a daily reading guide or the journalling suggestions, you could have a look on the Methodist Church website where resources are offered to read or download:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/faith/the-bible/bible-month/>

or you could pick up a copy of the daily reading guide which will be available in our churches.

Through our seasons of joy or of struggle God has promised we are never alone. May we tread carefully through the coming days and continue to notice God's presence by our side.

Peace for the journey

*Deborah*



FEAR NOT,  
FOR I HAVE REDEEMED YOU;  
I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME,  
YOU ARE MINE.



Isaiah 43:1