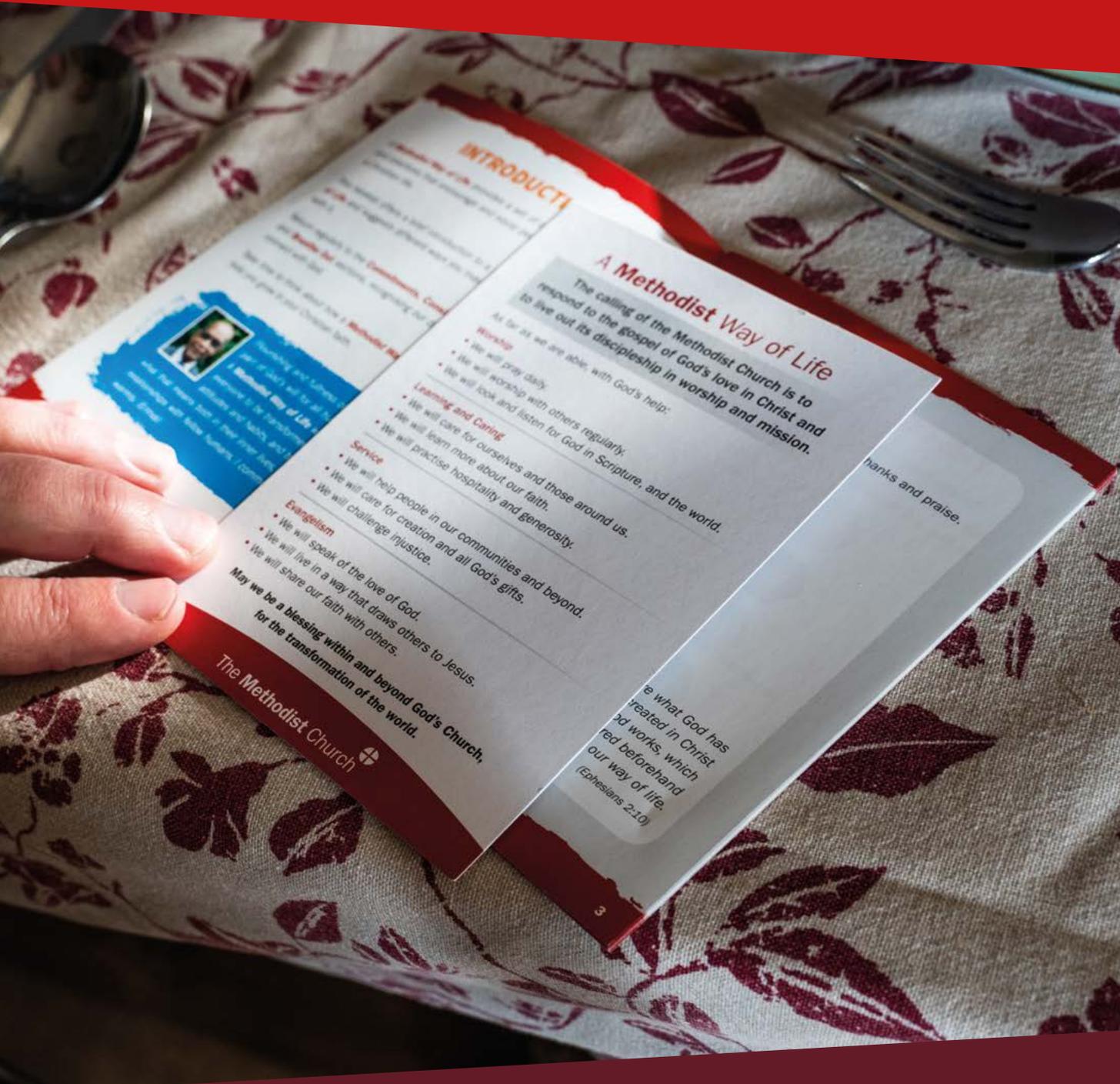


the connexion



INTRODUCT

A Methodist Way of Life

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

- Worship**
 - We will pray daily.
 - We will worship with others regularly.
 - We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.
- Learning and Caring**
 - We will care for ourselves and those around us.
 - We will learn more about our faith.
 - We will practise hospitality and generosity.
- Service**
 - We will help people in our communities and beyond.
 - We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
 - We will challenge injustice.
- Evangelism**
 - We will speak of the love of God.
 - We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
 - We will share our faith with others.

May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.

The Methodist Church 

...e what God has created in Christ and worked beforehand our way of life. (Ephesians 2:10)

...hanks and praise.



Taking action to stop climate change

Bramhall Church describes a year of responding to the climate emergency and caring for God's planet.

2021 was 'climate year' at Bramhall Church in Stockport. With the UN climate meeting COP26 held in Glasgow in November, our church council commissioned a year of activities to inform our members about the climate and ecological emergencies and inspire them to respond.

The year kicked off with Climate Sunday services followed by a series of small group discussions over Lent entitled 'Why and how the Church should respond to the climate emergency?' Three *why* sessions looked at 'truth', 'beauty' and 'justice', and three *how* sessions considered 'lament', 'action' and 'hope'. The main question arising was "What can we do?" The response was 'Greening Easter' in which we published ideas for individual actions in the church newsletter throughout Eastertide.

teaching; buildings; land; community and global engagement; and lifestyle. We qualified for bronze level reasonably easily but had to work harder to achieve silver by November.

The other initiative was 'Make COP26 Count', a coalition of over 30 churches assembled through two charities, USPG and Hope for the Future. Each church committed to hold a Climate Sunday service, engage in a practical project (we used our engagement with Eco Church) and plan a political activity (we invited our local MP to talk with us). At monthly sessions people from the global south spoke about how they are affected by climate change. These were both devastating and inspiring. We often think of climate change as something that will affect us in the future, but in many parts of the world it is a current reality.

Praying for our planet

In early summer, we held 'Praying for our Planet', a series of seven talks delivered over Zoom. At each, a climate or environmental scientist who is also a Christian outlined their work and reflected on how this affects the

Eco initiatives

We joined two wider initiatives. One was Eco Church, which was fantastic in providing a questionnaire to evaluate our green credentials across the areas of worship and

LIVING IT OUT

How can your church turn hope into action to help the climate crisis?



We held 'Praying for our Planet', a series of seven talks.



Our year's highlight was an eco-festival 'Touching the Earth Lightly'.



way they pray about the climate emergency. We were interested in whether it changed what they thought it was appropriate to pray for or how they expressed their prayers. All were excellent, but the talk by Dr Tim Gordon, a marine biologist from Exeter University, 'Lamenting our loss: finding hope in a world of wounds', was particularly challenging. The nationally advertised sessions had an average attendance of 100 and Andrew Pratt, our Hymn Writer in Residence, wrote a wonderful new hymn in response to each talk.

During Creationtide (September), Greater Manchester Churches Together picked up on our ideas and held a 'Week of Prayer for the Planet'. Churches from a range of denominations across Greater Manchester streamed evening services, each based on a different 'Praying for our Planet' talk.

Eco-festival and model butterfly

Our year's highlight was an eco-festival 'Touching the Earth Lightly', held in October, building on our rich tradition of flower festivals. There were lots of flowers (sourced as locally as possible) but also a rainbow windmill, butterfly mobile, bamboo labyrinth and an artwork 'Bridge to Extinction' (all made largely of recycled materials). Sections themed on phrases from Shirley Murray's hymn were: 'The world in our care', 'Gift of great wonder', 'We who endanger', 'Let there be greening', 'Water that blesses', and 'Use the earth gently'.

In our final event, our lay pastor and his wife took a model butterfly with a four-metre wingspan, which had featured in our eco-festival, up to Glasgow for the public march on 6 November. The large blue butterfly became extinct in the UK in 1979 but, after conservation charities had followed scientific advice on how to respond, it has now been reintroduced in 33 sites. Apart from the obvious message of hope, the butterfly has been regarded as a symbol of resurrection for many Christians through history. Let us hope that by joining with others in demanding justice through appropriate environmental stewardship we can offer hope to a seriously threatened world.

Although the year is over, our concern for the climate will not end. Our resources committee has been challenged to ensure year-on-year improvements in our Eco Church questionnaire rating and to report back to the congregation on our performance at an annual Climate Sunday service. Let us pray that we and many other churches may continue to play our part in addressing the climate and environmental emergency.

To find out more, visit www.bramhallmethodists.org.uk/climate-year Here you can access group discussion material and view recordings of the 'Praying for our Planet' lectures and Andrew Pratt's new hymns.