

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR PAIGNTON (PALACE AVENUE) METHODIST CHURCH?

Revd John Haley (Minister) expresses serious concern for the future of Paignton (Palace Avenue) Methodist Church. In a 2013 report to the Church Council the Revd John Haley writes -

“You will have probably realised by now that being a popular minister is not one of my aspirations and it is not my style”. The report continues “..... for at least the last 20 years the congregation [at Palace Avenue] has been in steep decline and now only about 50 mainly older members are active and the congregation is quite literally dying. One policy that we could have is basically to keep going. On the 'keep-going model' I don't think even the medium-term future of the church is secure” so that calls for “..... a 'vision day' between now and the next General Church Meeting”

Revd John Haley goes on to say *“..... I wondered about the concept of developing the chapel at Palace Avenue into a resource centre (maybe café style, multi-media, interactive, flexible) that is used inter-denominationally, without necessarily being used for 10.30 am worship, thereby simply duplicating what is already done at Southfield, Goodrington and churches of other denominations. These are challenging thoughts, perhaps even painful thoughts for our own community, but these are the real issues that need to be addressed”*

--ooOOOoo--

In February 2013 an article written by a member of the congregation of Paignton (Palace Avenue) Methodist Church was published – the article was welcomed by the Church Council and it was agreed the article should be taken forward for further consideration by the Methodist Churches of Paignton as all three Methodist churches in Paignton would be working together under one Minister after September 2013.

Extract from the published article – *“..... Are we hanging on to the status quo for some reason? How are we at Palace Avenue embracing modern trends and priorities? What are the trends? What are the priorities? I would suggest that a modern trend and priority would be to modernise our hymns – why still call them hymns? Why not songs? Why do we need to differentiate what we do outside from what we do inside the church building? Are we not the same people inside and out? Why do we still sing about “ineffable”, “all praise to thee”, “the ill that I this day have done” and so I could go on. Who talks like this anymore? Surely God wants us to be who we are? These verses may have been meaningful in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but that was 300+ years ago. Surely we can move on and worship God in more relevant ways? Surely we can engage with and be more relevant to people we meet in the streets today?”*

--ooOOOoo--

So the question is asked – what next??