

gibraltar
methodist
church

Discovering and sharing life and hope in Jesus Christ together

What we believe

We believe in one God, revealed as Father in creation,

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)

as Son in redemption

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

and as Spirit in regeneration

“So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.” (Romans 8:6)

We believe in the fallen nature of man leading to death and hell

“For the wages of sin is death,

and in God’s redeeming work on the cross of Calvary

but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

We believe in the Bible as being the inspired word of God, given for our instruction

“For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.” (Hebrews 4:12)

and in the church, the body of Christ left on earth to fulfil God’s mission

“For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Saviour of his body, the church.” (Ephesians 5:23)

We believe that God manifests Himself, producing fruit in the life of the believer

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,” (Galatians 5:22)

and gives the believers gifts for the building up of His body the Church

“It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.” (1Corinthians 12:11)

What is a Methodist?

A Methodist is an evangelical and an evangelist.

By evangelical we understand one who believes in the 'gospel' good news' from the Greek root *eu-* "good" and *angelion* "message" of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, and in the need for a personal conversion, and in the supreme authority of the Bible as the word of God.

By evangelist we understand one impelled to spread this 'gospel' not only in obedience to the words of Jesus but as an expression of the work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.

Where does Methodism come from?

When John Wesley started what became known as the 'holy club' he propounded four points which even today are relevant to all. These are, "All need to be saved. All may be saved. All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost".

The first of these points, "All need to be saved", is embodied in Paul's well known injunction in Romans 3:23 "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." and Paul's subsequent reminder of the effect of that sin in the first part of Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death".

The second point, "All may be saved" embodies the second part of Romans 6:23, "but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" and that other well known verse John 3:16, "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that **everyone** who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life".

The third point, "All may know themselves saved" talks about the assurance experienced by everyone who commits their life to Jesus and is filled with God's Holy Spirit.

The final point "All may be saved to the uttermost" speaks of John Wesley's belief in the ability of the Holy Spirit to enable the believer to attain, if only for a moment at confession, that absolute state of grace which comes from knowing the complete forgiveness of sin.

What about Methodism today?

Society has changed dramatically since the death of John Wesley. No one can deny that, like all institutions, the church which was founded by the followers of John Wesley after his death has changed with it. Nor can anyone deny that there have been many 'mistakes' or departures from the 'original' vision. Yet the vision is still alive.

Today the Methodist Church remains a 'grass roots' movement which relies heavily on 'lay' leadership and involvement and indeed encourages everyone to use their God given gifts and talents in the work of the Kingdom of God. Methodists have always been people of song. During the early years of the movement in the 1700s, Charles Wesley, John's brother, wrote over 5,500 hymns, which the early Methodists sang as they met in 'classes' the equivalent of today's house groups, where the reading and study of the Bible played a prominent role. Many of these songs have been a blessing to Christians down the years and are still in use today. Methodists believe that the covenant that God has made with man is not a one sided affair but one which man needs to embrace and make his own. This places certain responsibilities on man, which the Methodist Church has tried to prioritise in its work in the world today.

What does the Methodist church stand for?

Methodists traditionally use a fourfold approach, known as the 'quadrilateral' to learn about our Christian faith and apply it to contemporary issues and to our Christian practice:

- **'Scripture'**: As we seek to discover the word of God through reading the Bible.
- **'Tradition'**: This includes the focus which John Wesley had on 'saving the lost' and 'caring for the living' as well as the wisdom and creativity of Christians over time and across the world.
- **'Reason'**: Thereby grounding the belief that we are called to love God with our minds as well as with our hearts.
- **'Experience'**: This stresses the importance of our one's own personal experience and the testimony of God's grace working in our lives.

And because Methodists traditionally do things in fours, maybe based on John Wesley's original four points, the Methodist Church has in recent year identified its calling under four headings.

- **Worship**: The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love
- **Learning and Caring**: The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care
- **Service**: The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice
- **Evangelism**: The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ

Which in turn have developed into the Priorities for the Methodist Church as follows:-

In partnership with others wherever possible, the Methodist Church will concentrate its prayers, resources, imagination and commitments on this priority:

To proclaim and affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world; and renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the Church

As ways towards realising this priority, the Methodist Church will give particular attention to the following:

- *Underpinning everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer*
- *Supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor - in Britain and worldwide*
- *Developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved*
- *Encouraging fresh ways of being Church*
- *Nurturing a culture in the Church which is people-centred and flexible*

What do Methodists agree to?

Unlike some other denominations and church groupings, Methodism does not require its members to assent to a list of 'fundamental truths'. The church was not founded on specific doctrines, which anyone needs to agree to, but on the desire to promote holy living, and reach others for Christ.

The only requirement is an acknowledgment and ownership of the promises which are normally made at baptism, as follows:

- *Do you turn away from evil and all that denies God?*
- *Do you turn to God, trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and in the Holy Spirit as Helper and Guide?*

And the extra promises, which re-affirm the foregoing:

- *Will you commit yourself to the Christian life of worship and service, and be open to the renewing power of God?*
- *Will you seek the strength of God's Spirit as you accept the cost of following Jesus Christ in you daily life?*
- *Will you witness, by word and deed, to the good news of God in Christ, and so bring glory to God?*

What are the obligations of a Methodist?

Worship within the local church, including regular sharing in Holy Communion, and through personal prayer.

Learning and caring, through Bible study and meeting for fellowship, so that we may grow in faith and support others in their discipleship.

Service, by being a good neighbour in the community, challenging injustice and using our resources to support the Church in its mission in the world.

Evangelism, through working out our faith in daily life and sharing Christ with others.

A Methodist is a follower of Jesus Christ, trying to live out that conviction in a difficult and challenging environment, while being true to the calling of the one who called us and constantly enables us, and whose love is greater than we can ever contain or imagine.

How does this work out in the Gibraltar Methodist Church?

The Gibraltar Methodist Church, in keeping with its heritage and calling, is fully committed to **Mission** and **Evangelism**, undergirded by a life of **Prayer**. We will at all times be open to the leading the Holy Spirit and to working with others in the extension of God's Kingdom

In pursuit of this we seek to be flexible, contemporary and imaginative in our forms of **Worship**. We will endeavour to be relevant to the needs of our time by using, where appropriate, modern technology and means of communication, as well as any other means of expression which are deemed suitable. We continue to learn from others and seek to introduce fresh ways of doing things which honour God.

We will seek to develop and foster life long **Discipleship and Training** that will enable all to grow in the knowledge of God. We will seek to recognise the gifts and callings which God places in people and, where necessary and appropriate, train, encourage and mentor people to develop their skills and giftings to serve in Christ's Mission.

We believe that the church exists to show the **Love of God** in the world. To this end we will always seek to use the resources at our disposal to help the needy and outcast in our community. We will, where possible, endeavour to establish links with the community in which God has placed us and offer the love of God to all who need it.

As **Stewards** of all that God has given us we will encourage responsible giving, which is honouring to God, and seek to make full use of all the resources at our disposal. We will in turn seek to be generous in our giving to the work of God in the world.