

Thursday 25th June – ‘Signs of Growth’



We asked our World Church Partners and Methodist Women in Britain:
“What does Kingdom Growth look like where you are?”

Our prayer is that as you read these stories of what God is doing, even through the challenges, you will be inspired in prayer and faith to step out in mission, be that across the street or across the world.

ENERGETIC INTERCONNECTEDNESS!

From Judith Howell in Panama, partner representative from the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and America’s (MCCA)

I am Judith Howell, member of one of the eight districts of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA). Our challenge is to share the message of God’s love in a region that covers multiple languages, countries, ethnicities, and diverse socio-economic circumstances.

We see kingdom growth in the coming forward of persons to serve full time in the Church. We see it in our Youth and Young Adults as they assume responsibility for the development of work, both among their own and in the broader Church, e.g. Youth Encuentro 2019 gathered over 200 Youth and Young Adults from across the Connexion in Belize-Honduras for worship, education, and empowerment for mission. We see it as our Women’s organizations continue to pursue missional and financial development opportunities for the support of our faith communities.

COVID-19 compelled us to embrace technology for Worship Services, Class Meetings, Bible Studies, Local Preachers Training, Daily Devotionals, and many other activities throughout the Connexion. As a result, we are experiencing increased participation, more energetic interconnectedness across the region, and greater outreach to others beyond our shores. We continue seeking God’s wisdom, grace, and power for the unfinished task.

GETTING MESSY – From the Channel Islands

‘We should do more outreach,’ they said.

‘We should do more with young people,’ they said.

‘We should do something to put more bums on our seats,’ they said.

‘We don’t see how that can work,’ they said.

Our deacon and I got together and brainstormed a few ideas, and decided that she would plan and lead worship while I would coordinate food and plan activities. I spoke with a few people who I felt would be willing to become involved, and Messy Church at Forest was born. We began on Remembrance Sunday 2018, because we knew that a group of cubs and air scouts, not regular attendees at our church, would be present. We warned them that we would be including the messy activities in with the Parade service, and invited them to stay for the meal - pizza followed by Magnums, afterwards. They did, and greatly enjoyed it, and several of the families asked to be put on a list to be contacted about future events.

We now have a core of eight families who come regularly, none of whom ever attended church in the past, and others who attend some of the time, and we are growing, and we rejoice greatly at that. But doing Messy Church has achieved so much more. It has pulled together church members who are happy to oversee an activity or help with the catering, and created a great team spirit. It has enabled some of our young people to become involved as junior helpers, and we have watched them grow in confidence. It has inspired the parents of some of the children who attend to offer to help. By Remembrance Sunday 2019 we had 80 people present, and the scout company provided the puddings.

Messy Church, sharing our Lord and God's love for all with those who had not known of either is to me, just about as 'proper' as church can be. We hope and pray that we won't have lost too much momentum when we can finally start to be Messy again.

GOING GREEN – from Romsey

In 2013 Romsey Methodist Church had a congregation of 45. A 'Renewal' project started: renewal of building, welcome and mission. By mid 2015 the church was welcoming and flexible – but what to do with it?!

A Rocha UK started Eco Church in 2016 offering one answer. We had Gold standard Worship and Teaching. Having creation care embedded enabled wider transformation. Soon we attained a Bronze award. Our approach changed. Utilities became carbon footprints to shrink; our electricity supply was green, and we offset gas via Climate Stewards. Lifestyles were challenged by weekly Eco Tips; Community Engagement was enhanced by Wellbeing and Green Fairs and Curious Cafés. In 2017 we reached Silver. A Gold Award seemed distant, but like 1 Corinthians 12, a body has complementary parts. This May we attained Gold.

Congregations are now about 80 and activities span the week. Last year we had 20,000 visits. Eco Church helped us leave the nest and grow our flight wings.