



Twinned with the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone

Dear friends,

Along with this letter you will have received, Manx Methodists at Service Together (MMAST) sheets for the 8th and 15th of August. These sheets have a dual purpose. If you are connecting with the recorded services on our YouTube channel at www.methodist.org.im they will help you to follow the service. If you are not able to do this, they act as a stand-alone resource to assist you in your devotions. New versions of MMAST are added each Sunday and can be accessed at any time. Many thanks go to those who continue to add this to their weekly work duties.

As I write this pastoral letter the summer heatwave is easing off a little, and a few spots of rain are beginning to drizzle down the windowpanes. Some like it hot, the saying goes, whilst others simply can't stand the heat. I'm somewhere in the middle – not too hot and not too cold for me. We all like pleasant weather but whenever a heatwave strikes, spare a thought for our farmers who look forward to some rain to water the land.

Having said that, though, we pray for good weather for the beach missions that are planned to take place during the summer. This year, all being well, the Peel Beach Mission is scheduled to run between the 2nd and 13th August, and Port St Mary Beach Mission from the 1st to the 7th of August. The children and young people who attend get the opportunity to learn about and meet with God through games, drama, craft, songs and small groups as well as being able to spend time with the Christian team members who share their own experiences of their walk with God. So, we pray that God will richly bless the work of both beach mission teams this year in whatever form they take place.

As I write there is also another heatwave taking place in Tokyo where the Olympics are in full swing. For the athletes competing in Tokyo, the organizers have erected cooling tents, hauled in water-mist fans and started providing ice cream to the army of volunteers helping run the Games. The blistering heat and high humidity have forced some track and field events to early morning hours or dusk to avoid the roasting afternoon sun. To be an Olympic champion requires great endurance even in normal weather conditions. But well before the Games take place athletes need to prepare themselves. This reminds me of a sports metaphor used by the apostle Paul when giving encouragement for the Christian faith and spiritual discipline:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever.

(1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

In the world of sport, as in almost every other sphere of entertainment, what the spectator sees is the result of countless hours spent toiling away behind the scenes, building up fitness, mastering techniques, refining skills and working on temperament. So it is, as Paul says, with faith. The Christian life can be equally demanding sometimes. Faith involves determination and commitment in order to win through. We might start off thinking it's all plain sailing, but suddenly unexpected or unavoidable obstacles appear in our path. At times we can feel exhausted, overwhelmed or defeated by our circumstances. But when we feel like giving up, we have the example of those who have gone before us to inspire us onwards, and the assurance that we don't run the course alone. The author of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us that Christ himself is ever before us:

*"Therefore, let us throw off everything that hinders, and... run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."
(Hebrews 12:1b-2a)*

So, whether the 'race' seems easy or hard for you at this moment in time, be encouraged. Faith calls us to hope and to persevere, always looking forward - to Jesus and the joy set before us. For we can be sure that Jesus is always with us; not simply by our side but leading the way. And the joy we look to through him is something far more wonderful – too wonderful for words.

*May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.*

Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)

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God bless,



Rev Bryan Yardy.



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As the Methodist Church in the Isle of Man
we are called to love and serve in response to God's love in Jesus and help others
to enter into a relationship with him.

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