



*The Methodist Church in the  
Caribbean and the Americas  
Bethel Circuit  
Providence Methodist Church  
Providence, Christ Church,  
Barbados*

*"Gathering, Discipling and Multiplying  
for Christ"*

*A Service for  
Aldersgate:*

*An Adaptation from  
the works of  
Gary Best*

*Historical Consultant,  
The New Room,  
Bristol*

*Sunday, May 21, 2023  
9:00 a.m.*



*Preacher: Rev. Adrian Odle  
Superintendent Minister*

*Congregational Steward: Bro. Hussein Brewster  
Organist: Bro. Irvin Belgrave*

## **ORDER OF SERVICE**

### **Processional (Steward on Duty, Minister)**

#### **Introit**

#### **Introduction**

**Leader: Aldersgate Lord's Day nearest to** May 24, is a significant celebration in the life of the Methodist Church. It commemorates a spiritual experience of John Wesley. This is sometimes wrongly described as 'the conversion experience' of John Wesley.

John was already a believing Christian. It was the nature of his faith (and also that of his brother Charles) which dramatically changed in May 1738. They appreciated for the first time just how much God loved them and how much they just had to rely on his forgiveness rather than trying to earn their salvation.

This transformed both men and led them to preach the message of salvation for all. Their experience still has much to say to us today about how we should approach our faith.

As far as we know Charles did not write hymns before the events of May 1738. After it he began writing virtually a hymn a day for most of the rest of his life.

So let us begin by singing perhaps the most famous and best loved of his hymns: 'Love Divine'. It dates from 1747 and is a wonderful affirmation of the transforming nature of God's love and how we should indeed be 'lost in wonder, love and praise.'

#### **HYMN #254(VIP): Love Divine, All loves Excelling**

#### **Prayer:**

**This opening prayer is based on one written by John Wesley. Let us pray:**

*O Lord God, I thank you for all the blessings and favour so freely bestowed on us. You have been exceedingly good and kind to each one of us beyond all that we could have reason to expect.*

*We thank you that this chapel is open to us and that here we can receive the bread of life and hear the word of salvation*

*preached. Do not let your word be lost on us. Apply it to our hearts and fix it in our memory that it may prove a blessing each and every day.*

*Pardon us for the things we have done wrong and the things we have left undone. Help us to walk more worthily in the footsteps of Jesus. Above all, give each one of us a heart filled with your love, lifted up in praise, and devoted to your honour and glory.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

## **Lord's Prayer: Hymn # 26 (VIP) - To be Sung**

### **Welcome & Celebrations**

**Leader:** To some of us the story of the events of May 24, 1738 will be familiar; to others they may be new.

In our imaginations we need to go back 285 years, to the City of London, where we discover two brothers - John and Charles Wesley, who were both clergymen in the Church of England. They had returned from working as missionaries in the American colony of Georgia. For various reasons this had ended as an embarrassing failure. It had caused John to question his vocation as a minister and indeed whether he was truly a Christian at all.

It had had an equally distressing impact on Charles, who felt himself to be unworthy of God's love. For months Charles in particular had been praying for God to help him overcome his sinfulness. He felt he never said and did the things he should be doing as a Christian:

### **Charles Wesley: (to be sung by The Congregation) (To be sung to the tune of MHB 274)**

Lord, I despair myself to heal:  
I see my sin, but cannot feel;  
I cannot, till thy Spirit blow,  
And bid the obedient waters flow.

'Tis thine a heart of flesh to give,  
Thy gifts I only can receive;  
Here then to thee I all resign;  
To draw, redeem, and seal, is thine.

With simple faith on thee I call,  
My light, my life, my Lord, my all:  
I wait the moving of the pool,  
I wait the word that speaks me whole.

Speak, gracious Lord, my sickness cure,  
Make my infected nature pure;  
Peace, righteousness, and joy impart,  
And pour thyself into my heart.

**Leader:** On May 17 a friend gave Charles, who was sick and in bed, a book to read. It was by the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, and it was about salvation by faith. It proved a turning point.

On May 21 Charles realised he had been wrong in trying to earn a place in heaven. He should instead be relying entirely on Jesus' love. Jesus had so loved us that he was prepared to die on a cross and pay the price necessary for us to be saved. When Jesus said on the cross 'Forgive them' it was a prayer of forgiveness for all people for all time. All a person had to do to be saved was to trust in Jesus' amazing love.

Charles felt a huge weight had been taken off his shoulders and he was overwhelmed with joy. His newfound reliance on God's saving grace produced what he described as 'a strange palpitation of the heart' and he prayed that his older brother John might have a similar experience. He wrote two hymns, one of them being the famous 'And Can It Be'

**Leader:** At the time of writing this Charles was confined to bed, but a copy of what he had written was sent to a religious society that met in Aldersgate Street in London - it was what we might now term a housegroup.

John Wesley attended a meeting there on May 24 and it is thought that Charles' hymn was either read out or sung.

Before looking at what happened to John, let's sing the hymn in its entirety because 'And Can It Be' is a deeply

personal and powerful account of how we can rely entirely on God's amazing love:

**HYMN #188(VIP): And Can It Be That I Should Gain -  
Offertory**

**Leader:** As was his custom throughout his life, John woke at 5am on the morning of the May 24 and opened his Greek New Testament, where he lighted on a verse from the Second Letter of Peter:

'We have been given exceeding great and precious promises that we can be partakers of the divine nature'. It made him feel how far he was from sharing in God's goodness. Later in the day, he wrote to a friend:

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*I see that God's law is holy, righteous and good. I know that every thought, every movement of my heart should bear God's image. But how deep I have fallen! How far I am from God's glory! I feel that I am sold under sin. I know that I deserve only wrath... God is holy, I am sinful. God is a consuming fire; it must devour me the sinner.*

**Leader:** That afternoon John walked over to evensong at St Paul's Cathedral, where he heard an anthem being sung. It was 'Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee'. In the evening he went very unwillingly to the meeting of the religious society in Aldersgate Street. There he heard someone read an extract from Martin Luther's commentary on St Paul's letter to the Romans:

**Martin Luther: (Read by Bro. Jason Brathwaithe)**

*This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorise it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes... it is in itself a bright light, almost bright enough to illumine the entire Scriptures.*

*It reminds us that sin is present whether or not a person engages in a lot of good works, whether or not a person outwardly appears to live an honourable life... [Only] the Spirit of God makes a person long to do what is right...not through fear or coercion, but from a free heart ... The Holy Spirit alone enables us to live well and, in a manner, pleasing to God... [and] the Spirit is given to us only in, with, and through faith in Jesus Christ...*

*Faith alone saves ... [and] renders the heart glad and free... Faith is a work of God in us, which changes us and brings us to birth anew from God. It kills the old Adam, makes us completely different people in heart, mind, senses, and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. What a living, creative, active powerful thing is faith! It is impossible that faith should ever stop doing good... Through faith, a person will do good to everyone without coercion, willingly and happily; he or she will serve everyone, suffer everything for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace.*

*Ask God to work faith in you; otherwise you will remain eternally without faith, no matter what you try to do.*

**Leader:** The impact on John was immediate.

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*

**Leader:** That day John felt God's presence in a way he had never experienced before. Saving faith was given to him, and the assurance of sins forgiven. John was so excited that he immediately went to tell Charles and the two brothers rejoiced together. They sang together a hymn that Charles had written called 'Where shall my wondering soul begin?' In its verses Charles voiced what both the brothers now felt:

... And in those words you can already see that John and Charles were wanting others to experience what they had experienced.

John was a man of immense spiritual and mental energies, but up to now these had been mostly directed upon himself. He had spent much time brooding upon the state of his soul and trying to improve it. And he'd encouraged Charles to do the same.

Now their energies were released and immediately directed outward to their fellow men and women who stood in need of the same liberation they had received. No longer was *personal* salvation an all-absorbing aim - now the brothers would truly live to serve others in response to the love God had shown them.

### **Prayer- Crystal Best**

Do we have that sense of God in our hearts transforming us and changing us? The Wesleys were strongly influenced by their contact with the Moravians. Let us pray using a prayer based on one written by their leader, Count Zinzendorf:

*Dear Lord, I give you thanks and praise for your willingness to forgive me my mistakes. When my eye confronts my heart, and I realise that you have filled my heart with your love, I am breathless with amazement.*

*Once my heart was so small in its vision, so narrow in its compassion, so weak in its zeal for truth. Then you chose to enter my heart, and now in my heart I can see you. I can love all your people, and I have the courage to proclaim the truth of your gospel to anyone and everyone.*

*Like wax before a fire, my heart has melted under the heat of your love. Continue to help me grow in faith and in service that I may share the news of your love with others. In Jesus' name I ask this. Amen.*

**Leader:** The house in Aldersgate where the religious society met was destroyed during the London Blitz and the site is now occupied by the Museum of London. Outside its main entrance there is a large memorial to John's spiritual experience in the shape of a flame, with the words from Wesley's journal for May 24 1738 inscribed upon it.

The flame reminds us that a warmed heart is the result of the Holy Spirit at work. Just as the apostolic church was give new life and purpose through the coming of the Spirit, at Pentecost so too were John and Charles Wesley given new life and new purpose. And so too are Christians today who put their trust in God and have their hearts strangely warmed.

We are now going to sing a hymn that Charles wrote to mark the first anniversary of those events in May 1738 and, as you might expect, it resounds with joyful thanks and celebration:

### **HYMN # 11(VIP): O For a Thousand Tongues**

**Prayer- Sis. Evelyn McCollin**

**We are going to pray using an 18<sup>th</sup> century prayer that was used by one of the early Methodist lay preachers and later written down by a Methodist called Elizabeth Rhodes:**

*Gracious Lord,*

*Be you light to my eyes, music to my ears, sweetness to my taste, and full contentment to my heart.*

*Be you my sunshine in the day, my food at the table, my repose in the night.*

*Grant me sorrow for my sins, thankfulness for my benefits, fear of your judgments, love of your mercies, and mindfulness of your presence.*

*Make me loving to my friends and charitable to my enemies.*

*Give me modesty in my countenance, gravity in my behaviour, deliberation in my speech, holiness in my thoughts, and righteousness in all my actions.*

*Let your mercy cleanse me from my sins, and your grace bring forth in me the fruits of everlasting life.*

*May I seek to know thy will, and, when I know it, may I perform it faithfully to the honour and glory of your ever-blessed name. Amen.*

**Leader:** The initial main focus for John's new-found zeal soon became Bristol, then the second largest city in the country. He was invited to go there by one of Charles' closest friends, George Whitefield. Whitefield had started to



preach in the open air in order to communicate with the masses of people who never went to church and he wanted John to do the same. Wesley noted in his journal entry for April 2 1739:

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*At four in the afternoon I submitted to being more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in the ground adjoining the city to about 3,000 people.*

*The scripture on which I spoke... was: 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'*

**Leader:** Within a few days John was creating a base for his work - the New Room in Bristol was to become 'the Cradle of Methodism.'

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*There is only one condition required in those who desire admission into this society – a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.*

**Leader:** John urged people to strengthen their faith by adopting a methodical approach: he asked people to get into regular habits - to set aside time each day for prayer and for reading your Bible, to set aside time each week for public worship and for meeting other Christians in fellowship groups. These usually took two forms: 'bands' and 'classes'. 'Bands' were small groups formed by friends and 'classes' were larger groups formed out of people who lived in the same street or neighbourhood.

His opponents tried to pour scorn on all this by nicknaming his followers 'Methodists'. But seeing the way in which lives were changed confirmed in John's mind that getting people into regular religious routines was helpful. He decided that God was calling him not to be the vicar of a parish but the creator of a religious revival:

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*I look upon the whole world as my parish.*

**Leader:** Charles decided to join in the open-air preaching, even though the Church strongly disapproved, and he proved even more successful as a preacher than John. Here is an account by someone who went to hear him in 1739:

**Joseph Williams: (Read by Liam Browne)**

*I got a guide and went to hear him. I found him standing on a table-board, in an erect posture, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven in prayer, surrounded with, I guess, more than a thousand people; some few of them fashionable... but most of the lower rank of mankind...*

*He prayed with uncommon fervency, fluency, and variety of proper expression. He then preached about an hour... in such a manner as I have seldom, if ever, heard any Minister preach... to convince his hearers that... God is willing to be reconciled to all, even the worst of sinners. Although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expressions...*

*He concluded with singing, prayer, and the usual benediction... Never did I see or hear such fervency in the service of God... If there be such a thing as heavenly music upon earth, I heard it there... I do not remember my heart to have been so elevated, either in collegiate, parochial, or private worship, as it was there and then... If, therefore, any inquire 'Can any good come out of Methodism?' I can only answer... 'Come and see'.*

**Leader:** John asked Methodists to set aside time each week when they were actively helping other people: running food banks, visiting the sick, organising schools for the uneducated, comforting those in prison.

Thanking God for his forgiveness and love was not to be just a matter of words or even of giving money to charities. It had to show itself in direct action. John Wesley

did not see salvation as something that happened after death. Salvation was something to be experienced now:

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*By salvation I mean not... the vulgar notion [of] deliverance from hell or going to heaven but a present deliverance from sin... the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth... Miss no opportunity to do good.*

**Leader:** From the outset Methodists were constantly being told that, if Jesus died for all, then every single person was a child of God and of value in the eyes of God.

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*Do all the good you can,  
by all the means you can,  
in all the ways you can,  
in all the places you can,  
at all the times you can,  
to all the people you can,  
as long as ever you can.*

**Prayer- Sis. Thelma Blackman**

Do we have that same burning desire to serve people? Let us pray using a prayer written by John for a greater commitment in our daily Christian living:

*To you, O God... my creator, redeemer and sanctifier, I give myself up entirely*

*I give you my understanding: may it be my only care to know you*

*I give you my will: may I have no will of my own... delighting to do your will*

*I give you my affections: ... what you love, may I love; what you hate, may I hate*

*I give you my body: may I neither indulge it, nor use too much rigour towards it; but keep it, as far as in me lies, healthy, vigorous, and active, and fit to do you all manner of service*

*I give you all my worldly goods: may I prize them and use them only for you*

*I give you my reputation: may I never value it but only in respect as it may do you service*

*I give you myself and my all. In the name of Jesus, Amen*

**Leader:** The Wesleys' lives were rooted in prayer and our next hymn reflects that as Charles encourages us to rely on the grace of God to empower us.

### **HYMN # 484 (MHB): Soldiers of Christ Arise**

**Leader:** Methodism spread from Bristol to London and then gradually across the country. By the 1770s it had also become an established presence in the colonies in America. When the Americans won their independence in 1783 the Church of England turned its back on the entire continent and so it was Methodist preachers who filled the gap.

\*The Methodist Church thus became the biggest church in the USA. In the succeeding two centuries Methodism spread around the globe and today there are some 80 million Methodists worldwide.

**Here in Barbados, Methodism was brought in 1788 by Dr Thomas Coke, a driving force behind early Methodist missionary activity. Wherever Methodism went between 1788 and 1830 they encountered problems with the plantocracy and the mercantile community, because they preached equality in God's sight for the negro. The planters stated that the negroes had no souls. They were seen as chattel and could be sold at any time by the Masters.**

**Rev. William Shrewsbury and the then Ann Gill with tenacity of purpose championed the cause of justice toward all people. They were persecuted and prosecuted and threatened with death, but through their Christian commitment and service to God and the community, especially the faith community, saw them courageously naming, exposing and confronting the inequities and injustices of their day. The history of Methodism in Barbados reveals that this movement completely changed the status of Christian social witness on the island.**

**In 1816, nine years after the transatlantic slavery was abolished in London, things got worse rather than better.**

**This eventually led to the Bussa Revolution in which hundreds lost their lives. The love of Christ constrains to press on to spread the love of God abroad.**

\*However, the significance of what happened after Aldersgate goes far beyond those churches which have inherited the name of Methodist. The Wesleyan emphasis on God's desire for the salvation of all people arguably shifted the centre of English theology, which up to that point had been largely Calvinist in nature, assuming salvation was only for a chosen few.

It is often forgotten but for a thousand years prior to the Wesleys the Christian Church had mostly opposed hymn singing, arguing that if it was not in the Bible it should not be sung. Charles' hymns were a major factor in persuading Christians of all denominations of the value of hymn-singing - he still holds the record as the man who has the most hymns in print in hymnbooks across the globe.

John's emphasis on social justice inspired many to tackle the injustices in society, most notably slavery but also things like the terrible conditions in prisons and in asylums for the insane. His passionate belief in the importance of education was a major contributor to the rise of the trade union movement. The Wesley brothers are not therefore the property of one denomination. And that's fitting because they never wanted to be. Listen to John's definition of what it means to be a Methodist:

**John Wesley: (Read by Bro Michael Worrell)**

*A Methodist is one who has 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit'... one who loves the Lord his God 'with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength.' God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul.*

**Scripture Reading - Revelation 3:7-13**

**- Sis. Rosalind Connell**

**HYMN # 213 (VIP): Where Shall My Wandering Soul**

**Begin**

**Proclamation of the Word: Rev Adrian Odle**

**Pastoral Prayer**

## **Notices.**

### **Final Prayer**

This is based on a prayer by John Wesley:

*Holy God whose nature and name is Love...*

*through Jesus may we all receive grace upon grace;*

*grace to pardon our sins and subdue our iniquities;*

*grace to bring us your salvation;*

*grace to renew our hearts so we may become more and more like Christ.*

*restrain us from the sins into which we are most prone to fall, and quicken us to do the things that we should be doing to show your love.*

*Grant that we may think and speak and do the things that are becoming of the children of our heavenly Father. Amen.*

**CLOSING HYMN # 232(VIP): O Thou Who Camest From Above**

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### **WELCOME**

**We welcome you** to the Providence Methodist Church and hope you will find our worship inspiring; providing peace, strength, and comfort to you today as we sing, pray and worship God freely. We especially welcome the Preacher for today, Rev. Adrian Odle.

### **THANK YOU**

**The Members of Class 2** of the Vauxhall Methodist Church extend thanks to all who attended or supported their recently held Mothers' Day Luncheon.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

**May 25, 2023** - Bro. Zachary Pilgrim

Sis. Tracey Maloney -Mapp

### **ANNIVERSARY**

#### **PRAYERS**

**Prayers are requested** for our nation and people, those mourning the loss of loved ones as well as the sick and homebound: Sisters: Sylvia Daniel, Verona Trotman, Cynthia Layne and Patricia Felix.

Brothers: Wilbert Small and Edward Hughes.

**We give God thanks and praise for their lives, work and witness in our church and community.**

## **NOTICES**

### **Activities to be held via the ZOOM Platform:**

- **Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.** - Bethel Circuit Bible Study, to led by Rev. Adrian Odle
- **Thursday, May 25, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.** - Bethel Circuit Prayer Meeting

**Thursday May 25, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon - Sunlight Bible Study** at the Providence Methodist Church, facilitated Rev. Pearson Blackman.

**The Vauxhall and Providence Methodist Churches** will participate in a Flea Market on Saturday, May 27, 2023, at the Barbados Community College ***Members desirous of donating items can contact Sis. Maureen Pollard or 832-1292 or Sis. Thelma Blackman at 428-5905.***

**On Sunday May 28, 2023,** join us for worship as we celebrate the Festival of The Gift of The Holy Spirit/ Pentecost in the chapel or via YOUTUBE at 9:00 a.m. when Bro. Ryan Brewster will be the Preacher The readings are: Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30, Psalm 104: 24-35b, 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13, John 7:37-39

**Sunday, May 28, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. - National Children's Prayer Service** at the James Street Methodist Church

**Monday, May 29 at 9:00 a.m. - The Methodist National Women's League Rally** will be held at the Providence Methodist Church.

**The Circuit Sports Day that was scheduled for Monday, May 29, 2023 (Whitsuntide Bank Holiday) has been postponed until further notice due to unforeseen circumstances.**

**The Providence Methodist Church** is inviting members to join their Music Ministry program (Choir, Worship team, instrumentalists). All interested persons can contact any Congregational Steward as soon as possible

**The South Caribbean District of the MCCA Department of Mission, Evangelism and Church Growth** will be hosting a **District Chaplaincy Workshop on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, beginning at 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** This free Workshop is targeting individuals who engage in chaplaincy at schools, hospitals and other institutions. Members desirous of attending are asked to register with Dr. Natalie Phillips by Friday, June 2, 2023, via email at [natsuze28@gmail.com](mailto:natsuze28@gmail.com).

**Save the Date:**

- **Sunday, June 18, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. Father's Day Luncheon at the Church hosted by Class 3 of Vauxhall Methodist Church**
- **Saturday, June 24, 2023, from 10:00 p.m. to Noon - A Forum for Young Adults.** The venue will be announced at a later date.
- **Monday, June 26, 2023. - Forum for Ministers**
- **Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 7:15 p.m., The Sarah Ann Gill Memorial Lecture** at the Bethel Methodist Church
- **Sunday, July 09, 2023. - The Belmont Methodist Church's Takeaway Luncheon.** Tickets will be available soon.
- **Sunday, July 30, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. - The Bethel Circuit Mission Rally** at the Vauxhall Methodist Church.

**Additional information is posted on the notice board or available on our website at [www.provmethchurchbb.com](http://www.provmethchurchbb.com)**



**Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas  
Bethel Circuit**

**Providence Methodist Church  
Providence, Christ Church Barbados  
P.O. Box 8006, Oistins Post Office,  
Christ Church**

**SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER: Rev'd Adrian Odle**

**MINISTER: Rev'd Adrian Odle**

**SEXTON: Bro. Kennel Rice**

**I.T. Team : Bros. Ryan Eastmond and Clarkson Prescott**

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