

HOW TO CHECK YOUR HEATING

Before we get into the depths of winter, now is a good time to check for any issues in your heating system:

- 1 switch your heating on;
- 2 leave it on for a couple of hours;
- 3 listen out for any noises, but these usually settle after the heating has been on a while;

- 4 check radiators for any cold spots and leaky joints;
- 5 make a note of any serious concerns;
- 6 let MMHS know of any problems if they emerge.

If you have to bleed radiators frequently, that could be a sign of a deeper issue – so let MMHS know. For central heating concerns, phone **020 3848 6020**; for gas, press option 1, for property matters, choose option 2.



Photo: Shutterstock

roof roots

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Folk heroes



Photo: Clive Price

HALL OF HEROES: Les and Di (centre) with Yare Folk, the group who regularly pack out a remote village hall for their music sessions

METHODISM'S DYNAMIC DUO OF TRAD – LES AND DI – CELEBRATE THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING IN OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR. THEY'RE FORGING COMMUNITY WITH FOLK MUSIC

Music brought MMHS residents Les and Di Wallace together in their youth. Now they use music to bring together people of all ages.

Les and Di met during the heady days of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs in the 60s and 70s. Tens of thousands would attend MAYC rallies.

The couple became not only a popular folk music duo at such events – but also husband and wife. Now they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary during MMHS's 75th year.

Les, now 69, grew up in the same Surrey town as composer Paul Field – who wrote the song *Christ Is The Cornerstone* to celebrate MMHS's anniversary. They played at informal sessions together.

Les met lifelong partner Di at a 'dreadful dance' at a Methodist youth club. They formed bands and became a duo. They performed *Streets Of London* at local halls and prestigious venues – when it was a little-known tune.

Among those venues was Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. They shared the bill with psychedelic folk-rockers Parchment – who enjoyed chart success with *Light Up The Fire*. Folk was a powerful wave, and Les and Di were riding it, even though not full-time musicians.

That musical relationship became a romantic one when Les and Di married in 1973. 'Everyone said we were too young, it'll never last,' laughed Di, 71. They now have two children and four grandchildren.

Les worked in printing until entering Methodist ministry in 1994. Di supported

Catch our anniversary news at mmhs.org.uk/75th

A message from Mairi



What does music mean to you?

On my walk home from the tube station, I usually have my earbuds in, to enjoy a good dose of my favourite songs.

In this edition, we have two articles with a musical theme. It felt appropriate for me to add another angle. In my role as MMHS's CEO, I have a particular interest in the benefits of music for those living with dementia.

I've spoken about this before, but its benefits impact further – on mood, cognitive function, non-demented Parkinson's disease and memory.

Music is one of God's gifts – as Tchaikovsky observed, 'a candle in the darkness, it calms, enlightens and stills our souls'. Music can make us happier – it would seem our brains release dopamine when we listen to music – and there's scientific evidence it can boost our immune systems.

Please share any stories you have about the benefits of music – we'd love to hear from you. Also, enjoy the MMHS song – it's a very relaxing tune!

Mairi

'This is your song,' says MMHS composer

MAKE THE SONG YOUR OWN. THAT'S THE MESSAGE FROM SINGER-SONGWRITER PAUL FIELD, WHO COMPOSED THE MMHS 75TH ANNIVERSARY HYMN, CHRIST IS THE CORNERSTONE.

In a special interview for MMHS – which can be seen in video on our website – Paul shared the story behind our anniversary song and how he wrote it for our celebration year.

'It began with an email from MMHS,' he said. 'I do this thing called "bespoke songs". It sounds very grand, but essentially, it's writing songs to commission – usually for individuals, life events and whatever. But MMHS wanted a song to mark their 75th anniversary.'

When he is commissioned to write a bespoke piece, Paul starts with whatever ideas the individual or organisation has in mind in terms of lyric, content and style. He said he received 'a very helpful brief' from MMHS – around a scripture passage



YOUR TURN: Download the MMHS song and sheet music and use it in your church

from Ephesians 2:19-22. 'Obviously it very much relates to the work of MMHS,' said Paul, 'you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you're all fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. That's wonderfully

inclusive to start with. It's great!' That inspired Paul to write the line, 'There are no strangers here, no barricades, no walls'. Then he looked for a 'lift' in the chorus. 'Quite often the chorus suggests itself,' he explained.

Now the song is released, Paul said he wants people in church music groups to play it. 'As it's out there with the music, obviously people will always make the song their own. They'll play it at different speeds, different tempos – that's all fine with me.'

Many people at this year's Methodist Conference heard the song and took copies of the CD home with them. 'I'm very happy to have done it,' Paul said of the composition.

You can see the video and download the track and sheet music at www.mmhs.org.uk/75th. You can also hear the song on Paul Field's Bandcamp page <https://paulfield.bandcamp.com/track/christ-is-the-cornerstone>.

Christ Is The Cornerstone is also on streaming services such as Amazon Music, Apple Music and Spotify – and on CD by writing to – Clive Price, MMHS, 109 Baker Street, London W1U 6RP. 📧



SPEED UP YOUR HOME REPAIRS

Repairs can be rapid to your MMHS home. Just give us the right information to get the job done.

If emergency repairs cost under £100, you can authorise the contractor to carry out the work immediately, pay the contractor directly and send a receipted invoice for reimbursement to MMHS's offices.

For work costing over £100, we usually require a written quotation to be sent to the office, either by post or email to property@mmhs.org.uk. When presenting a contractor's quote for repairs, make sure the following are covered:

- 1 The quote should be addressed to the MMHS office at 109 Baker Street, London W1U 6RP.
- 2 Include your address in any quote relating to work on your home.
- 3 Add a copy of the contractor's liability insurance certificate.
- 4 Insert the contractor's email address.
- 5 Phone the MMHS Property Team about any bigger work that needs to be done.

While making sure full information is supplied, steer clear of any 'cold callers' and leaflet drops from other companies that may try to pressurise you to get repairs done with them.

Consult the *Residents' Handbook* for further information about repairs. Always phone MMHS if in any doubt about anything to do with repairs. 📞



HOME REPAIRS: Make the job quicker by sharing all the right information on your contractor's quote

Folk heroes

him in his work, while pursuing her own career in psychotherapy.

They were based at various churches – from Billericay in the London basin to Alston, high up in the Pennines. It was Les's job to promote fresh expressions of faith.

When Les retired in 2019, he and Di wanted to live in Norfolk. An MMHS supporter left a house in their will. It was just what the Wallace's needed.

'We've been very happy here,' said Les, 'MMHS have been absolutely fantastic.' Di added, 'It's a wonderful place to be.' She's taken up the fiddle and leads walks for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Les and Di have chosen to pursue varied ministries in community and charity work. They launched a folk session for budding musicians.

'We started off with four or five people,' Di remembered. Now a remote village hall is regularly packed with folkies across the age ranges – from a young expectant



CROONING COUPLE: Les and Di in MAYC's halcyon days, as the youth movement swept across the UK

mum to grandparents. Fiddles and flutes, keyboards and concertinas produce a big, joyous sound. Players find meaning and purpose.

This trad 'orchestra' is called Yare Folk, after the local river. Les and Di don't see themselves as leaders but fellow members. Bookings, such as a celebration for King Charles' coronation, are seen as a bonus.

'We set it up as once a month,' Di said of the regular session, 'but people wanted to meet once a week. It's taken on a life of its own.' 📍

How to defeat damp

It's tempting for us all to turn off the heating to save money. But properties suffer when moist air settles on cooler surfaces, causing condensation.

However, each one of us can do some practical things to defeat the damp. Here are ten steps to a drier dwelling:

- 1 Keep your heating on – turn it down lower and keep it on longer.
- 2 Move damp clothes off radiators – so the water vapour cannot spread round your home.
- 3 Try not to dry clothes indoors – dry them outside on a breezy day.
- 4 When showering, keep bathroom extractor on, and door closed. The fans cost little to run.
- 5 When cooking, use the kitchen extractor and keep the door shut.
- 6 Keep lids on pans while cooking, reducing both energy costs and water vapour.
- 7 Open bedroom windows after getting up, to boost ventilation.
- 8 Use the trickle vents on double-glazed windows to keep air circulating.
- 9 Wipe down any damp surfaces, to help reduce condensation in your home.
- 10 Generally make sure you live in a warm, well-ventilated space. 🏠



Walk the labyrinth of life

REFLECTION BY FAY ROWLAND

You may be new to using labyrinths as part of your spiritual life. Be assured they have been a treasured part of Christian spirituality for centuries.

The famous Celtic knot designs are a type of labyrinth. You can find labyrinths in many cathedrals and modern retreat centres – as well as hospitals and schools – where the benefits of mindfulness are recognised.

A labyrinth is a journey – a long, winding, and often unexpected path. In this, it resembles life with its sudden reversals and inexplicable detours.

We can think we are close to our goal only to be turned away. Diversion heaps upon diversion. Then, when we have almost given up hope, the destination opens up before us. We have arrived!

Our journey was not the way we'd have planned, and certainly not by the most direct route, but perhaps we've learned something along the way. Perhaps that was the point.

While the most ancient designs predate all major world religions, labyrinths have a long tradition in Christianity as a picture of pilgrimage – a meaningful journey.

In the Christian tradition, the path can represent your life journey towards God – not the neat, simple route that we

might plan, but full of changes, reversals and the confusion that is common to all. Nevertheless, the path of a labyrinth always, always leads the right way.

A labyrinth is an exercise in trust. Often, the path seems to lead away from the centre, not towards, or back to where you've just been.

If I walk a labyrinth mown into grass, for example, I might be tempted to step over the 'wall' onto a path that looks more promising.

But that will not work. I will either miss part of the journey, repeat sections I have already walked, or even miss the centre completely and find myself back at the entrance.

Perhaps you like to plan everything meticulously in advance. Perhaps you prefer to wing it. Whichever your preference, the truth is that most of the things that are really important in life are not under our control. Sometimes we have to cope with the unexpected or the unwelcome, but life continues.

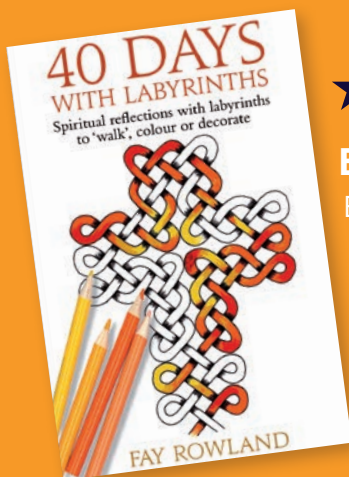
Walking a labyrinth is a way to explore this and to think through some of life's Big Questions. Martin Luther King put it this way – 'Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase'.

Using your finger or a little pebble, 'walk' around



Fay Rowland is a mum and mathematician, theologian, scientist and 'sewing ninja'. She writes Christian books and resources. Her article is adapted, with permission, from her new title *40 Days With Labyrinths*, which offers spiritual reflections with labyrinths to 'walk', colour or decorate, published by Darton, Longman and Todd.

this unusual triple spiral labyrinth. It has three centres that you visit in turn. It can symbolise the Christian concept of God as three-in-one – creating Father, saving Son, indwelling Spirit. Pray to each character of God as you walk through the paths. ■



BOOK OFFER!

Enjoy a 60% publisher's discount on Fay Rowland's *40 Days With Labyrinths* (retails at £12.99). Order the book at dltbooks.com and use the code **labyrinths** at checkout.

Postage and packing is £2.50



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