

Friends

In the 1960's, two Methodist people collected works of art in order to open up faith conversations and then gave their collection the British Methodist Church. Instead of selling them, we decided to continue to use them for their original purpose and to continue to acquire art so that the ideas and concerns of today's artists are represented in the Collection, which currently comprises over fifty works, including paintings by such well-known artists as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink and William Roberts.

Twenty-five of these paintings are coming to Guildford from the 9th of March to Easter Day. Appropriately for its timing, the exhibition will focus on Christ's journey to the Cross, Resurrection and Pentecost. The venue is St. Mary's mediaeval church in Guildford, a joint Methodist and Anglican place of worship. There will also be poetry, musical performances and Lent reflections and details for this can be found online through the website for the Methodist Modern Art Collection or that of St Mary's, Guildford.

I find it inspirational that not only did those two Methodists have the original vision, but that we as a church have carried it on, not just as an investment policy, but to stimulate theological conversation and I hope that some people from our Circuit will be moved to join me in Guildford.

In ancient Israel and Judah, art was a troublesome subject. It was forbidden to make an image of God, but humanity was made in God's image, so weren't artists who made pictures or sculptures of people breaking the rules? What about animals? The ancient Jewish people felt that this too was risky, and we know that at the time of Jesus, one of the big questions was around whether or not it might be okay to draw or paint plants. We are so surrounded by visual imagery that it is difficult to imagine how theologically important these conversations were. When Jesus calls for a coin to be brought to him in Matthew 22:15-22, he makes an important point. The coin bore Caesar's image and should be given to Caesar, but the people bore the very image of God and should be given to God. Come and see what our modern artists have made of it.

God bless, Vicci