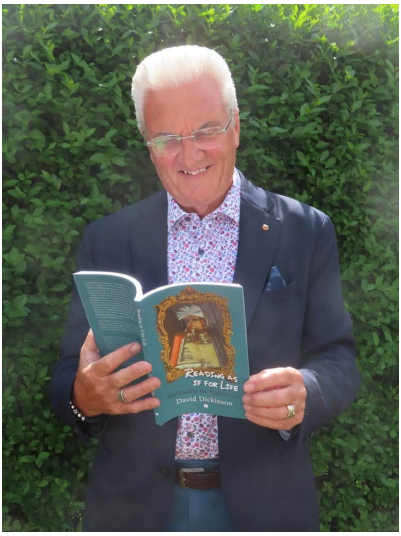
2027 Spectrum Conference
17th- 19th May
at The Hayes

Stories to Feed Our Souls

Introducing next year's Conference and Speaker
The Rev Dr Dave Dickinson



Dave Dickinson taught secondary school English before candidating for the ministry in 1985. His Masters dissertation examined how literary theory, notably intertextuality, interpretive communities and ideation, makes preaching effective. His doctoral thesis examined the form and function of sermons in British fiction from 1979-2004.

He was appointed in 2005 in response to the Anglican-Methodist Covenant to the staff of St Albans Cathedral as Director of the St Albans Centre for Christian Studies, a post he held until 2013. Having worked ecumenically for the last 18 years of his active ministry, he worships at St James's Church in Weybridge.

You will find a list of his book titles at the end of this note.

Dave introduces us to his Conference theme by re-asking a question posed by the first century theologian Tertullian "*What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"* What has secular literature to do with sacred texts? How might they be related?

He continues: ever since people sat around campfires, stories have been told. Stories helped cave dwellers to make sense of what had happened to them while out hunting; stories help us nowadays to make sense of birth, life and death; stories encapsulate faith. Our faith began with a story…

In **Stories to Feed our Souls**, I plan to help us to think how fiction relates to our practice and beliefs as Christians

- In novels retelling biblical narratives (with particular reference to the Fall and Sodom and Gomorrah)
- In the spirituality of reading (beginning with Augustine's theory of reading)
- By asking why contemporary novels obstinately continue to explore religion and theology despite the prevalence of secularity
- In considering how we might do theology through literature

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The Novel as Church: Preaching to Readers in Contemporary Fiction (Baylor University Press: 2013) [one of The Making of the Christian Imagination series]

Yet Alive? Methodists in British Fiction since 1890 (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2016)

Make-Believe: God in 21st-Century Novels (Lutterworth Press: 2020)

Reading as if for Life: Spirituality for Booklovers (Lutterworth Press: 2025).