

## *A Word from the Pastor*

Dear Free Saints

On April 2, 1739, John Wesley preaches in the open air for the first time at Kingswood, England. His sermon was directed toward tin miners who had gathered. Wesley was reluctant to practice “field preaching” as it was called because he, along with those who were members of the established Church of England, regarded such preaching as vile and evil. Because of the Methodist movement, Wesley had to ask permission to preach in churches across England. Despite being an Anglican priest, he found it increasingly difficult to preach the word in a house of God. Wesley had made the decision to preach this first open-air sermon to approximately 3000 miners after responding to an invitation by George Whitefield to do so. Whitefield desired to return to America and wanted Wesley to continue his work of field preaching in the Bristol area.

According to [www.christianpost.com](http://www.christianpost.com), “His text for this, the first of many thousands of field sermons, was prophetic of the great things ahead: ‘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 captive, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ Now, having made himself more vulnerable and preached his first field sermon, Wesley was not only in possession of the central doctrine of his campaign, but he also had discovered the chief vehicle of its expression. And from then on, there was no stopping him.”

Indeed, John Wesley began a journey of preaching wherever he could across England, logging thousands of miles on horseback up into his 80’s. He preached the message of God’s grace in fields, houses, meeting halls, wherever the Word was needed. His work laid the foundation for all of us who proclaim Methodism as our understanding of God’s Word.

I pray that as you move through the Sundays of Easter during April, that you will remember April 2, 1739, as a sentinel moment in the history of our denomination. It marked the day when the fetters of conventionalism were loosed, and we Methodists became free to spread the Good News across the world as Jesus intended us to do.

Yes, we are free to preach on street corners, in parks, sitting with friends in a coffee bar. As we respond to the urgings of Holy Spirit, we will do great things for the Lord. Not only that, but we will reach those who are looking to regain a foothold on life and once again feel the warmth of God’s blessings pouring down from above.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Dennis