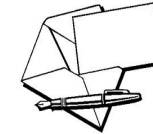




**St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch**

November 2018 Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

I was recently confronted with a remarkable statistic about church attendance. No, not how much it may have declined - though there are no shortage of them. It was about how people started coming to church.

Sunday School? Contact due to a Wedding, Funeral, or Baptism? The Minister inviting people? All of them have a role - but they are relatively small, believe it or not. In fact, according to Michael Harvey, who was one of the people behind Back to Church Sunday, the leading reason why people start coming to church is because someone other than the Minister invites them. And that is the reason for no less than 77% of people who start coming to church.

Think about that. For just over three quarters of people who start coming to church, it's because someone like you - not me - asks them.

In some ways that's why it's important that we're confident enough in our faith to be able to talk about what we believe. If someone were to ask you "Why do you go to church", would you be able to answer? It sometimes feels that we, the Church, have lost confidence in our voice, our ability to talk about our faith - and yet, in so many ways, that is such an important factor in helping others to find their own faith in Jesus Christ.

My role then is much less about bringing people into the church, and much more about helping you to find your voice - to be confident in what you have to say about your faith, and willing to speak about it when there is an opportunity. I'm going to try again with the "Talking of God" course in November - dates TBC, but I'll make sure it's well advertised - but what else would help you? A course in Bible Basics? Some Bible-based Meditation? Let me know, and let's find our voice together.

God Bless—Rob

STEWARDS LETTER

Dear Friends,

Once again we have celebrated Harvest Festival with a beautifully decorated Church, a coffee morning, a wonderful concert and a Harvest Supper with food and fellowship enjoyed by all. Thanks to the many people who put in a good many hours behind the scenes so that the rest of us could enjoy the result as we worshipped or came together socially.

After the thanksgiving and the time of plenty it feels as though we have turned a corner. The nights are drawing in, the heating comes on and we prepare to 'burrow' in our homes until Spring. Wondering idly what I might do with my time, other than television, radio or old favourites on my bookshelves I thought back over past years only to find that the important changes in my life have usually sprung from the most random decisions, rarely the ones that I have worked out would be 'a good thing'.

I went to a WEA course on Religion in Literature, not because I was particularly interested in it but because I hadn't been in the village very long, it was in the morning when the children were at school and it was only a few minutes down the road so I would be sure to get there. It was much later that I realised it was there that I began to get some hint of the mystery of God. Poets are often much better at capturing the essence of something than attempts to define it in prose. I remember one phrase only from a long poem by Henry Vaughan: 'There is in God a deep but dazzling darkness'. Something in me still says 'yes' to that although I certainly could not analyse it.

A poem I love but the course leader did not think much of is 'Prayer' by George Herbert. It's like being caught in a veritable hailstorm of phrases describing prayer. It begins,
'Prayer, the Church's banquet, Angels' age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth.'

And continues through 'soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage' via 'heaven in ordinary, man well drest' until we reach:

‘Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the souls blood,
The land of spices, something understood.’

Maybe an interesting byway will show up this winter and lead to
somewhere quite unforeseen.

God bless,

Avril

Christian Aid Christmas Cards coffee morning

Please come along for your morning coffee or tea, plus delicious homemade cakes , to Bargates hall on **Saturday November 3rd** between 10am and 12 noon. There will be Christian Aid Christmas cards and Traidcraft food and gifts on sale.

You will be able to see all of the 2018 cards - including many depicting traditional Christmas story scenes. Most can be bought on the day, though orders can be taken then or before. Please let me know if you want to put in an order before the 3rd.

Helen Trigg

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who came along to the Afternoon Tea at Briony's home on the 11th October. The grand total of £167.60 was raised for Christian Aid! There will be more Christian Aid home afternoon teas and coffee mornings at different venues throughout 2019.

Helen Trigg

Book Review – Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth

I have now read Part 3 (of 3) of Richard Foster's book called Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. The third part of the book focuses on the corporate Disciplines of confession, worship, guidance and celebration.

Confession

Confession is a difficult discipline for us because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners. We feel that everyone else has advanced so far into holiness that we are isolated and alone in our sin. We cannot bear to reveal our failures and shortcomings to others. But if we know that the people of God are first a fellowship of sinners, we are freed to hear the unconditional call of God's love and confess our needs openly to our brothers and sisters. The book states that for a good confession three things are necessary: an examination of conscience, sorrow and a determination to avoid sin.

For me, the prayers of confession are a really important way to start our Sunday morning services. We can all arrive at church in a bad state of mind sometimes and without the prayers of confession I can struggle to enter into true worship because I can feel separated from God (see Isaiah 59:2). The book describes how God's greatest delight is to forgive. In the Discipline of confession we ask God to give us a yearning for holy living.

Worship

The words of the chorus, 'Set my spirit free, that I may worship Thee,' reveal the basis of worship. Until God touches and frees our spirit we cannot enter this realm. Singing, praying, praising all may lead to worship, but worship is more than any of them. Our spirit must be ignited by the divine fire. The first commandment is to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mark 12:20).

Genuine worship has only one leader, Jesus Christ, who is alive and present among his people. We also need to be led into worship and God anoints leaders to bring people through this progression into worship – how fortunate we are to have gifted worship leaders at St. John's.

Worship is something we do – we learn to worship by worshipping. The book includes a few simple steps that are intended to help in the experience of worship. First is to practice the presence of God daily – really try to follow Paul's words 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess 5:17). Second, have many different experiences of worship – many things can happen in small groups that just wouldn't on a Sunday morning due to sheer size. Other steps include really preparing for the gathered experience of worship and cultivate holy dependency so that we are utterly and completely dependent on God.

Guidance

The book states that most teaching on divine guidance in our century has been noticeably deficient on the corporate aspects. We have received excellent instruction on how God leads us through Scripture, reason, circumstances and the promptings of the Spirit on the individual heart. But we have heard little about how God leads through his people, the body of Christ. Perhaps the preoccupation with private guidance in Western cultures is the product of their emphasis upon individualism. The people of God have not always been so.

The book looks at what the Bible has to say about corporate guidance. 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them' (Matt 18:20). In those words Jesus gave his disciples both assurance and authority. There was the assurance that when a people genuinely gathered in his name his will could be discerned. The super-intending Spirit would utilise the checks and balances of the different believers to ensure that when their hearts were in unity they were in rhythm with the heartbeat of the Father.

It is possible for business decisions to be made under a sense of the corporate leading of the Holy Spirit. Available facts can be presented and discussed, all with a view to listening to the voice of Christ. Facts are only one aspect of the decision making process and in themselves are not conclusive. The Spirit can lead contrary to or in accord with the available facts. God will implant a spirit of unity when the right path has been chosen and trouble us with restlessness when we have not heard correctly.

Guidance is the most radical of the Disciplines because it goes to the heart of this matter of walking with God. Guidance means the glorious life of hearing God's voice and obeying His word. The will of God is discovered as we become acquainted with God, learn His ways, and become His friend. As the friendship grows, as the conformity grows, we will know instinctively what actions would please Him, what decision would be in accord with His way. Our understanding of God's ways is shaped and tempered by His self-revelation to us in the Bible.

Celebration

Celebration brings joy into life, and joy makes us strong. Celebration is central to all the Spiritual Disciplines. Without a joyful spirit the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees. In the spiritual life only one thing produces genuine joy, and that is obedience – of all the sentences in the book, this one has hit me the most, because I know it to be true!

The old hymn tells us that there is no other way to be happy in the Jesus but to 'trust and obey'. In 1870 Hannah Whitall Smith wrote what has become a classic on joyous Christianity. What is the Christians secret of a happy life? It is best summed up by her chapter 'The Joy of Obedience'. Joy comes through obedience to Christ, and joy results from obedience to Christ. Without obedience joy is hollow and artificial.

Jenny Marston

They shall not grow old

At the request of the Imperial War Museum, Peter Jackson, the director of 'The Lord of the Rings' film trilogy, has created 'They shall not grow old' to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1, using original WW1 footage and recorded interviews with soldiers who served in the 1914-8 conflict.



What is remarkable about this film is that the application of technology, which has never been so extensively applied to old film stock, has allowed the moving pictures to not only appear in colour, but to be seen blemish-free and with realistic movement and sound.

Helen and I saw the premier showing of this film on 16th October, and can thoroughly recommend it. To give an idea of the painstaking work undertaken to produce 'They shall not grow old', in some parts lip-readers were employed to work out what people were saying as they were filmed, and synchronised voicing was then added in the correct accent for the area of the country from which the regiment being filmed originated!

Although there are many humorous moments, it can be a harrowing watch at times, but this film makes WW1 (the first armed conflict to be filmed) immediate and challenging for us today in a way not possible before, and I do commend it to you.

Vic Trigg

(The November BBC TV schedule is not yet published, but I believe 'They shall not grow old' is pencilled in for broadcast on November 11th or 12th. A link to a trailer is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHYRfukHToc>)

Disabled – done. What next?

Yes, the excitement is over! The battles have been fought and we have won! We have the money, we have the will, we have the way and the work will begin on 7th January 2019. Just think, by 1st April 2019, the work will be finished! The entrance into church will be different, the entrance into the Long Room will be different and we will be able to walk from the main church building to our back rooms without walking through the Vestry. No longer will the Vestry be a corridor. It will be a quiet contemplative room where ministers and local preachers can prepare for services in a quiet dignified way.

Tell me. What do you think of the proposed changes? What is your honest opinion? I ask because very few people express an opinion about the changes we are making. I can't remember the last time someone came up to me and said that they thought the changes would be good for the church. I felt embarrassed when I had to physically haul a lady out of her wheelchair up the front steps so that she could come and attend our last brass band concert. I feel sad when church members cannot attend church because they cannot get up the steps. That cannot be right, can it?

So, after 1st April, what next?

St John's is a beautiful Victorian building. Look up at the roof from inside the building. Isn't it fantastic? All that lovely woodwork, shaped like an upturned boat. The skill that went into that roof! BUT the building is NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE as they say nowadays. When I tell people

that we don't have proper toilets, proper kitchens or adequate heating they are amazed. When I tell them that we don't even have an office, a telephone line or even a letter box they are astounded! The only comfortable space in the building is the Guild Room which we decorated ourselves!

Oh, and what about the pews? Elaine Price, who was dying from cancer wrote to me shortly before she died. She apologised for not coming to church - but she said she just could not sit in the pews because they were so uncomfortable. What a testimony! There are probably many others who find it virtually impossible to sit through a service on our pews. I am beginning to get a bit like that myself! I'm not advocating getting rid of ALL the pews, but there has to be a way of pews and comfortable chairs existing together.

When we are away on holiday, I make a point of visiting churches when I can. It is wonderful when I see a church which has been modernised! Go and have look at Frodsham Methodist Church. Go and look at Nantwich Methodist Church. Go and look at Wolstanton Methodist Church. Whenever I visit these buildings I feel so sad. So Envious. Why can't my church, St John's Methodist Church in Whitchurch be the same?

Jim Walwyn

The Heating System

October began with a leak on one of the joints on the chapel heating pipes installed by our ancestors many years ago. The new plumber was summoned by Peter on the Monday. He duly arrived at 8.00 am the next day and was with us until Friday. Peter and I spent most of the week in the chapel assisting the plumbers in what became a very expensive week costing approx £1500.00 + VAT.

The next week, after the harvest Festival, Coppercroft – the plumbers who fitted our two new boilers just over two years ago – came to redesign the pipe work between the long room cupboard and the cellar. It took three days to remove their original pipe work and install new 2” copper pipes.

It is amazing that by changing a few pipes it has made such a difference to the efficiency of the whole system. What a shame it was not installed correctly in the first place. It would have saved so much in terms of discomfort, time and the expense of another £1500.00 + VAT.

LED Lighting Fund Appeal

The fund currently stands at £392.00. We are about halfway to our total so we must keep collecting.

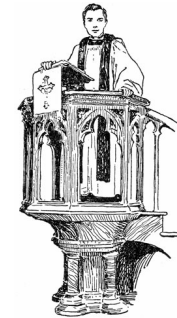
Remembrance ‘100’

On November 11th we will be thinking about the fallen of the Two World Wars. On Saturday November 10th I am organising a display of war related items. If any of you can help with the display or have any knowledge of the whereabouts of interesting items, please phone 880218 or email me at mauricesheilalatham042@gmail.com. Time is getting short so as soon as possible! We will also serve tea and coffee.

Maurice Latham

NOVEMBER SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

10.30am	4th	Mr David Wrench
10.30am	11th	Rev Jenny Arthurs
6.30pm		Rev Rob Weir
10.30am	18th	Rev Rob Weir (hc)
6.30pm		Rev Rob Weir
	25th	Mr Mike Valentine

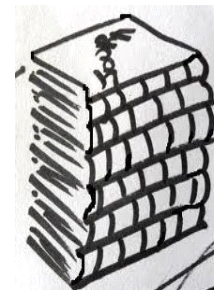


The evening service on 11th November is a Remembering Service. All are welcome to come and remember in prayer and thanksgiving those we have lost.

The evening service on 18th November is the joint Churches Together celebration of Bible Sunday

Book Stewards for November 2018

4th	Beryl Pozniac
11th	Gwen Reeves
18th	Nancy Millington
25th	Sue Davies



(2nd December - May Arthan)

Anxious or Afraid?

The following is a type of declaration prayer for anyone feeling anxious or afraid. Please do go and look up the bible references that are given throughout this prayer and start declaring these biblical truths over your life, or the life of someone else. There is power in God's Word. We need to be bold enough to speak and declare it!

Isaiah 55 v 11

*My word that goes out from My mouth:
It will not return to Me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

Anxiety is not of God and you do not have to embrace it as a normal part of who you are. The enemy came to steal, kill and destroy, but God came so that you may have life and have it in all its fullness (John 10 v 10). God wants you to experience the life He has given to you in full. He does not want you to waste another day living as a victim of your past, or worrying about the tomorrows of this life (Matthew 6 v 24). Cast all your anxiety onto Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5 v 7). Allow God to heal the wounds of hurt and fear caused from the traumas of your past. He wants to break the cycle of anxious thoughts and bring you His peace, which passes all understanding (Philippians 4 v 6-7). Let not your heart be troubled. Give every concern over to God and He will give you rest (Matthew 11 v 28-30). God is your helper, do not be afraid. He will never leave or forsake you (Hebrews 13 v 5-6). Draw near to God and He will draw near to you (James 4 v 8). God has not given you the spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1 v 17). God has made you a victor in this world, not a victim. He gives strength to the weary and increases power to the weak (Isaiah 40 v 29). Remember, you are more than a conqueror through Christ (Romans 8 v 37).

He longs to show you His perfect love which casts out all fear (1 John 4 v 18). Trust God to show you more of Himself. May God give you a hunger and desire for more of Him and the things He has for you, as you seek to deepen a stronger relationship with Him. The more of God you have, the less fearful you will be. Let God help you. Let God be the one to do the work in and through you. He wants you free from all worry and fear, because fear tolerated is faith contaminated and God wants your faith to be strong in order to help others. Do not allow your thoughts to control you but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12 v 12). Trust in God and He will show you the way to go. He will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3 v 5-6). God has a wonderful plan and purpose for your life, but only you can take hold of it (Jeremiah 29 v 11).

Amen

Do not be deceived into thinking that without God, through Jesus Christ, you can achieve all of this. Your strength alone can only take you so far, but a deeper work of healing needs to take place. God wants you to know Him more personally and wants to give you life in all its fullness, but you can only know Him by developing a personal relationship with Him by, firstly, accepting His One and Only Son, Jesus, into your life (John 14 v 1-14) and, secondly, by reading His Word, praying to Him and having a simple childlike faith (Matthew 18 v 2) to trust and believe that God really can do the impossible (Matthew 19 v 26). The best decision you could ever make is only but a prayer call away. Ask God to help you today!

God bless,

Lucy

From “*Life, Love & Laughter*” by Rev James A Simpson

Once in a church with a rather uninspiring minister I listened to a handful of people sing “Onward Christian Soldiers” with the line, “Onward then ye people, join the happy throng. I found it very depressing for not only was there no throng, they were clearly not happy and they sounded as though they did not really care whether anyone joined them or not. How different was the experience of a British newspaper reporter. The day before she was due to interview Archbishop Tutu, she decided to worship in his cathedral. When she told him at the start of the interview how deeply moved she had been by the worship, the African rhythms, the wonderful singing, the colour and drama, Archbishop Tutu responded with a twinkle in his, “Isn’t worship fun?” Church services ought never to be a big yawn.

(We at St John’s have recently experienced 2 preachers—Rev Jim Needham & Rev Edna Perry- who proved that age had not dimmed their ability to inspire. I think we will all remember Jim’s quote “Where there’s a will there’s a relative”.)

From the same book

Church members were asked to provide catchy slogans for the notice-board. Among the better ones were :-

After 2000 years, still under the same management.

Come and enjoy live music every Sunday

Where God is not a swear word

Visitors welcome , Members expected

So forgiven, we feel guilty.

Traidcraft in trouble!

Traidcraft PLC is in trouble and may cease trading!

Sales have been declining recently and unless someone comes forward with an idea to help the company, or the decline in sales is reversed fairly rapidly there will be no more Traidcraft rice, pasta, nuts, fruit, cards etc on sale, as the supermarkets do not stock most of the goods from small scale producers that Traidcraft sells.

Most importantly though, the producers of these goods will lose their livelihoods.

So how can you help?

Please buy a little more from the church stall and go along to the Christmas cards sale on the 3rd November and order or buy your cards. In Whitchurch this year we have been selling Traidcraft at the Friday Market so please, if you don't want to buy from the church stall each month, do go along on Friday and buy a little more from the market stall. Alternatively please pass on any new ideas which might help save the company!

Purchasing Fairtrade goods from Traidcraft, is a just and respectful way of supporting small groups of our poor neighbours, as well as enabling us to eat delicious high quality food and decorate our homes with beautiful crafts.

Please help to support Traidcraft 's farmers and craftsmen and women.

Helen Trigg

PRAYER REQUESTS



St John's

- Give thanks for all those serving St John's on the various committees/Church Council and pray that they will seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit
- Ask God's blessing on the next Pray, Think, Act meeting on Thursday 29th November – and think about coming along! (7.30pm at the Manse)
- Pray for the Bring and Share lunch (after our Sunday service on 18th November) – that it will be an enjoyable time of friendship and fellowship
- Pray for all those people who will attend the Remembering Service at 6.30pm on Sunday 11th November. Ask that the God of all comfort will bring them comfort during their bereavement. Pray for Rob as he leads this service
- Pray for all those people who are reading Richard Foster's book 'The Celebration of Discipline' - that their studies may enrich their spiritual lives and help them to walk even more closely with God
- Ask God to bless the various groups that meet at St John's – Parents and Toddlers, Network, the Music Group, the Tuesday Fellowship Group, the prayer meeting, Cafe Church, Junior Church
- Pray for a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit to help us become a praying church, a church that seeks God's will and purpose
- Give thanks for all those people who work so hard to keep our building in good working order. Pray that the disabled access will be completed as soon as possible, with no hindrances

Our nation

- Give thanks for the many individuals, small groups and churches who are earnestly praying for our nation and ask God to help them persevere in faith so that their prayers will bear fruit in the life of our nation
- Pray for wisdom for our national leaders as they make decisions on our behalf, especially in regard to Brexit
- Give thanks for the students who have turned their backs on the drunken revelries that are often part and parcel of university life and are seeking different pursuits, such as meditation.
- Ask God to bless the work of Christian Unions and to raise up wise leaders who will be an encouragement to others
- Professor Kris Kandiah has conducted a survey amongst young people (up to the age of 25 years old) and discovered that 78% profess to have no faith at all. Of these 78%, 50% said that they had recently had a positive experience of Christianity. Many have learned about Christians in this country (via the tabloid press and social media) who have lost their jobs or found themselves in court simply for being true to their Christian beliefs. The young people admire those who stand up for their beliefs and are intrigued by Jesus.
- Give thanks for all those Christians who are not afraid to stand up for their faith. Pray that all those young people who are showing an interest in Jesus will be led to the people who can help them to meet Jesus.

Bring & Share Lunch

There will be a Bring & Share Lunch after the morning service on Sunday 18th November. Everyone is very welcome to come along.

If you would like to bring something - sweet or savoury - that would be much appreciated. Don't feel you have to - there is always more than enough for everyone!

Please put the date in your diary and we look forward to seeing you there.

Jenny Marston

Flower Rota for November 2018



4th Joan Morgan

11th REMAMBRANCE SUNDAY

18th Sarah Lunt

25th Jean Cook

(2nd December) Sheila Walwyn

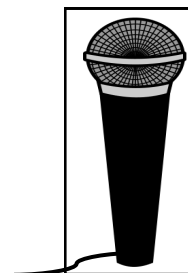
Spick and Spanners for November 2018

8th Einwen Kelly, Ruth Dawson & Sheila Latham

22nd Nancy Millington, Beryl Pozniac & Brenda
Dudley

Sound System Operators for November

4th	Gordon Davidson
11th	Gordon Davidson
18th	Andrew Fawcett
25th	Mike Nimmo



TAXI

The following drivers are available in November to transport you to the services. Please 'phone before 9:30am

4th	Sheila Latham
11th	Hazel Nimmo
18th	Brian Faulkner
25th	Jim Walwyn



NOVEMBER TEA & COFFEE ROTA

4th	Sue Davies & Jane Cliffe
11th	Wendy Proffitt, Beryl Pozniac & Foina Weir
18th	Brenda Aumeer & Helen Trigg



Regular Church Activities

Mondays 9:30-11:30am Parents & Toddlers (Term time)

Thursdays 7pm: Music Group Practice

1st/3rd Tuesdays at 7.30pm: Bible Study at 7 Queen's Road

2nd/4th Thursdays at 7:30pm - Prayer Meeting at 7 Queen's Road

NOVEMBER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 2nd 7pm Quiz & Fish and Chip Supper

Saturday 3rd 10am to 12 noon Christian Aid
Cards Coffee Morning (Bargates Hall)

Saturday 10th 10am to 12 noon
"Remembrance "100" display

Tuesday 13th 7pm Property & Finance
Committee

Sunday 18th 6.30pm United Bible Sunday
Service

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December/January Newsletter

Please let Jim Walwyn have all your submissions
for the next Newsletter by 25th November.

*The proceeds from advertising in this magazine will be used solely for
'Access for All' improvements to our church. Inclusion of an advertise-
ment in this magazine does not imply an endorsement of the products
or services of the advertiser by St. John's.*

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and repair



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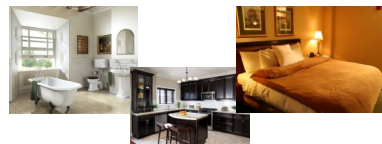
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Whitchurch

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Kitchens Business based at 46a
High Street Whitchurch

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project! Or re-vamp your existing
kitchen, bathroom or bedroom



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WALKERS

