



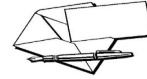
he is risen...

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

April 2019 Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

What are you doing on your Sabbatical?" It's a question that a few people have asked me, so maybe it's time to talk a bit about what a Sabbatical is for, and what I intend to do with May, June and July.

The Methodist Church decrees that every seventh year, a Minister should have a Sabbatical - the first one coming in what has historically been your tenth year (as it is for me), although that's now changing a little. It's not a three month holiday, but it is about what you might call "R&R" - an opportunity to be released from your everyday ministry to do something different for a spell, to be away from the regular work that you do, and hopefully to do something that will resource and refresh you. Hopefully, the returning Minister will re-enter regular work with new energy and new ideas.

This means I will be taking a break from preaching, pastoral work, chairing meetings, and all the other things that make up my typical week. It's recommended that you worship elsewhere, and as a family we are likely to do just that; I won't be leading funerals (Rev. Jenny Arthurs has agreed to be the first point of contact for that) and cover for urgent pastoral issues is being arranged in the Circuit - more details will hopefully be coming soon. That doesn't mean you have to ignore me if you see me out and about - but it does mean I'm supposed to avoid "talking shop" with you!

Instead, I will be spending some time on retreat - a week near the beginning, and a week near the end; and doing a project relating to Cinema and Theology - watching films, reflecting on what they say to us in the Church and what the Church may say to them, and looking at some of the academic work that already exists in this area - Gladstone's Library, up in Harwarden, has a good collection, and I will be expected to produce a short paper for the District. And then, maybe in the Autumn, we might look at doing something like "Movies with a Message" - a Film Club at St. Johns! There are other things I plan to do as well: learning to play my Ukulele is something I've been threatening to do for a long time for example - but hopefully, when I do return, there will be new ideas, new energy, and new reflections on God's Grace for me to share with you.

God Bless,

Rob

Steward's Letter



Dear Friends,

As you read this Newsletter, you will by now have a clearer view of how the final ACCESS to our church will look. In fact it is hoped that by the middle of April you will have been able to walk or wheel along the new access into our church. Something that has been talked about for over 20 years. Thank you for all those over the years who have contributed to this scheme in many ways. Jim Walwyn has been the man who has pushed this through.

As a church family we can now be proud that a level ACCESS is available to all young and not so young, able or disabled.

The Sunday after the contractors are due to hand the building back to the church, we Celebrate Easter, Sunday 21st April 2019. Jesus' death on the cross (Good Friday) saw the veil of the temple torn in two. This has given all of us ACCESS to God, no veil in between, you can speak to God the Father, the Father can speak to you, the veil has gone.

So let April be a month of Celebration, gaining the new ACCESS to our building and reminding ourselves of the ACCESS each one of us has to God. Please use it.

God Bless

Brian Faulkner.

Fundraising, Outreach or Both?

Like many people, I feel awkward when talking about fundraising for our church buildings. With so much suffering around the world, are we justified raising money for our church in Whitchurch? Are we prioritising money over mission?

At the recent Circuit Meeting on 13th March, it was clear that the Circuit Team view fundraising for church refurbishment projects as an essential part of resourcing mission, enabling us to reach out to local communities and encourage them to come and share our space. The point was made that if we don't have the energy and enthusiasm to raise money for our vision of improved facilities, how will we find the energy and enthusiasm to respond to the opportunities for outreach that arise?

The Circuit believes in our church vision to make St John's accessible to all and have identified us as a growing church. They have demonstrated their support by giving us a grant and lending us money to cover the final cost of the project. Now the first phase of building work is nearing completion and we need to repay the loan while taking the next steps to fulfil our mission to share God's love with more people in Whitchurch.

We are putting together a programme of events over the next 12 months to raise funds to pay off the circuit loan and to encourage the local community to come into our church. These include the **concert on 18th May, a jumble/ nearly new sale in June** (please start collecting items!) and an **Art Show in August**. Ideally, we will hold at least one event each month so if you would like to organise a fundraising event eg **quiz, plant sale or open garden** please let me know and we can include it in the plan.

Many thanks in advance for your support. This is an exciting time for St John's. Please pray that, with God's help, we will make the most of this opportunity.

Briony Myles-Hook

2019 Lent Course: Growing Bridgebuilders

The Lenten course continues & you are invited to come along on to the last on Thursday 4th April in Bargates Hall at 7.30pm to learn about improving the ways in which we approach and resolve tensions and conflict. Four or five sessions either after Easter — probably Thursday evenings in June — are expected but yet to be confirmed)

Each session has a particular focus but, even if you have not been to the first three, you will I'm sure benefit from the last one!

If you have any queries or want to book a place contact Rev. Judy Hunt. There is an introductory video. Search for 'Growing Bridgebuilders video' or use this link:

<https://www.cpas.org.uk/church-resources/growing-bridgebuilders/#.XHZtWsD7SvE>

Easter

Easter means—hope prevails over despair. Jesus reigns as lord of Lords and King of Kings— Easter says to us that despite everything to the contrary, his will for us will prevail, love will prevail over hate, justice over injustice and oppression, peace over exploitation and bitterness

Desmond Tutu

Songs of Praise at Bradley!

Bradley Chapel are having a Songs of Praise Service on Sunday 7th April at 2.30pm conducted by Queen's Chaplain Rev. Ian Davenport.

The service will include a medley of Congregational 'Sankey' Hymns played by our own Gwen Reeves.

There is a warm invitation to enjoy after-service refreshments

Spick and Spanners for April 2019

April 4th Elizabeth Shingler, Briony Myles-Hook & Linda Jenkins

18th Mike Nimmo, Vic Trigg & Dorothy Faulkner



TEA & COFFEE ROTA

April	7th	Nancy Millington & Chris Crowther
	14th	Brenda Aumeer & Helen Trigg
	21st	Eileen Grunner & Lynn Fowler
	28th	Linda Jenkins & Sarah Lunt

Church Stewards

April 7 th	Rob Hewson.
April 14 th	Peter Shingler.
April 21 st	Brian Faulkner.
April 28 th	Avril Bradfield

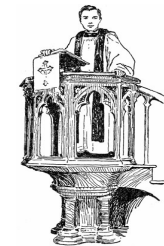
Book Stewards for April

7th May Arthan
14th Sheila Walwyn
21st Mary Scott
28th Beryl Posniak



APRIL SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

7th Brian Faulkner
14th Fiona Weir
19th Rob Weir (Good Friday)
21st Rob Weir 8.30 & 10.30
28th Local Arrangement

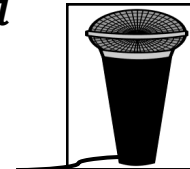


Other Services

Maundy Thursday 18th April 7.30pm at Dodington Lodge Hotel
(Beacon Church)
Good Friday Walk Of Witness begins at 11.30 outside Tesco

Sound System Operators for April

7th Mike Nimmo
14th David Whiteley
21st Jim Walwyn
28th Andrew Fawcett



EASTER BREAKFAST

The Family Committee will be serving breakfast between the two services on Easter Sunday morning, at approximately 9.00am.

Please add your name to the list at the back of the church, if you would like to share in this.

THANK YOU

A big thank you to everyone who supported the Hotpot & Apple Pie Lunch in aid of Cancer Research UK in memory of our dear friend Jane.

£530 was raised, which was excellent and so we were thrilled with that.

A massive thank you to all who came to the lunch, those who couldn't come but gave a donation and everyone that helped in any way. Thank you also to Alan Purcell butchers, who gave us 20 per cent off the cost of the meat.

So thank you all once again.

Flowers Rota for March 2019

April	7th.	May Arthan
	14th.	Audrey Holland
	21st	EASTER
	28th.	Jean Craddock



ACCESS NEWS

We are now well over half way through our Access Project and beginning to look towards the end. As I write this on 26th March we are only thirteen building days away from completion date (12th April). It's going to be a very tight squeeze! The Contractor will be very keen to finish by this date!

The gardens are really beginning to take shape. Things look very different with the paths awaiting the tarmac and the lawns beginning to take shape. Once the special slabs are in place on the steps, the tarmac will go down to put the finishing touches to the front of the church. The lawns now have an interesting ebb and flow to them as they have been shaped to accommodate the different levels. The lawns will be seeded – just the right time of year, but the gardener will find them interesting to cut!

The lighting bollards are in place and they will be operated on a time switch. Our church will look very different from the outside, especially at night. The approach to the Long Room will change. Two retaining brick walls are taking shape as the different levels to the car park are dealt with. The door into the Long Room will be adjusted so we won't be able to use that entrance for a while.

The work inside the church is progressing well although there is still a lot to do. The new door linking the two parts of the building has been formed with the mason has used the original stone to finish the job off. Once the plasterer and the joiner have done their work it will look as though the door has always been there!

We still have major issues with our heating system; the pipes are very old, many of the joints are corroded, so we will have to make big decisions about what to do. Some of these problems are part of our Phase II refurbishment, but it makes sense to address them now whilst we are dealing with the heating.

I would like to thank all church members for their patience and understanding during this difficult time. We all hate all the disruption the work is causing, but we are nearly there! Soon the plastic will be off and we will have our organ back; the church is dirty and will need a thorough clean when the builders have finished – and, incidentally, many thanks to Michael Mulliner for providing the floor coverings in the church.

Lastly, please can I invite you all to our free Celebration Concert on May 18th? The Farndon Brass Band as well as the Whitchurch Community Choir will be here to entertain us. We will be able to use our new door for the first time! The concert starts at 7.30pm and donations are welcome. The next time I write in the Newsletter, all the work will be finished, and we will have our church back to ourselves again! Hooray!

**Featuring
THE FARNDON BRASS BAND
Supported by the Whitchurch Community Choir
On Saturday 18th May 2019
Starting at 7.30pm in the church**



**Free Refreshments Raffle
FREE ENTRY! Just a donation please!
All proceeds to Access Funds**

PRAYER REQUESTS



St John's

Thank God for the many ways He continues to bless and encourage us at St John's.

Pray for those known to us personally who are in any kind of need: particularly members of St John's who are ill, house-bound, in care, lonely or bereaved.

Ask that the Pray, Think, Act Group will be instrumental in moving us forward spiritually, according to God's will and purpose, and not according to our 'good ideas'

Pray that Easter will be a time of great rejoicing, as we remember all that God has done for us in Jesus, and pray that the Walk of Witness on Good Friday will indeed be a witness to the people of our town.

We have a very busy time in May – ask God's blessing on:

The coffee morning and exhibition on 4th May and our 140th anniversary service and lunch on 5th May

The mid day concerts

Christian Aid week 12th-18th May

Opening ceremony and celebration concert on 18th May

Church AGM 26th May

Our nation

At this time of confusion and turmoil let us bring our nation before God in prayer:

Pray that MPs be given fresh vision and unity that they may work together for the good of our nation rather than from selfish ambition or other motives.

Pray that God will guard our freedom of speech and freedom of belief, and that Christians will be given understanding, perseverance and courage to stand up for, and defend our faith.

Pray that the relevant authorities will find ways to combat violent crime and support those affected by it – and that the Church may have a part to play.

Our World

Thank God for the very many good things happening in our world, things that we often take for granted. Remember that God is Sovereign Lord over all and that His plans and purposes will prevail, even though in the short term it may not seem like it.

Pray for all those affected by recent natural disasters – especially the people of Mozambique – and ask that aid agencies will be able to offer appropriate help both now and in the longer term.

Pray for all those affected by the attack on the mosque in New Zealand. Ask God to comfort the bereaved and injured and that local Christians will play a significant part in bringing healing and reconciliation.

Pray for Christians who are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ, thinking especially of Christians in Nigeria, where 690 Christians, mainly women and children, have been killed by Islamic militants since the beginning of 2019, an event that has gone largely unreported in the Western media. Pray that God's love and comfort will strengthen these Christians and that His Presence will be very close to them.

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 Quenns Rd

2nd Wednesday of the month - 2pm: Bible Study at St. John's

4th Thursday of the month - 7:30pm: Cafe Church

APRIL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 2nd April 7.30pm Worship Committee

Thu. 4th & 11th April 12:30pm Lent Lunches @ Bargates

Thu. 4th April 7:30pm Lent Meeting @ Bargates

Tuesday 16th April Easter Cafe Church 7.30pm at Costa Coffee

Sunday 21st April 9.15am Easter Breakfast

May 2019 Newsletter

Please let Jim Walwyn have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 21st April.

This magazine costs 25p to produce. Contributions towards this expense would be gratefully received. The proceeds from advertising in this magazine will be used solely for 'Access for All' improvements to our church. Inclusion of an advertisement in this magazine does not imply an endorsement of the products or services of the advertiser by St. John's.

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Taxi!

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

April 7th Hazel Nimmo

14th David Whiteley

21st Avril Bradfield

28th Sheila Latham



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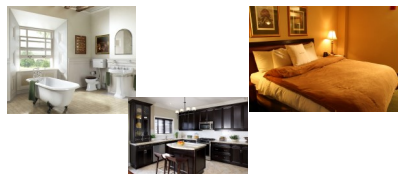
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