

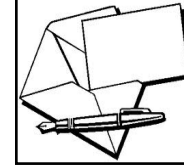


***St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch***

December 2019/January 2020

Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends

Methodist Conference is coming to Telford in 2020, and it's fair to say that it will be an occasion that is keenly anticipated.

One of the big topics that came out of Conference 2019 was a report called "God in Love Unites Us", and the subsequent discussion and recommendations about it- which were in general supported strongly at Conference. While the report covers a number of areas in the field of human relationships – such as divorce, and co-habitation (i.e. living together without being married), the issue that captured most attention was to do with same-sex marriage. Essentially, what the report tries to do is find a way for those who believe very different things about these areas to still be in fellowship together.

This includes promises that no Church and no Minister will be forced to conduct same sex marriages – it will be opt-in, not opt-out; and before any of this can be implemented, the Conference of 2020 will have to confirm the decision after discussions at the District Synods in Spring 2020.

Our District is running a number of events (*see the full-page article further on in this Newsletter for details*) where people can come and express their views and find out more. There are plenty of resources available expressing a range of different views – from Methodist Evangelicals Together, who strongly oppose the recommendations, to Dignity and Worth, who strongly support them. The Report itself is available from the Methodist Church Website, and I can provide copies to anyone who wants them. They are particularly asking people to look at the report itself – if there is interest, I am prepared to offer some Study Sessions based on the pack they have provided to every Minister.

If anyone wishes to offer lifts to any of these events, or would like a lift to any of them, please contact me; this is your opportunity to express your views to the District ahead of

Synod, and I know that there will be plenty of voices that will want – and need – to be heard.

God Bless

Rob

Steward's Letter

Dear Friends

As I write this, I suddenly realised we are not just coming to the end of another year but the end of a Decade, a time for reflection.



A lot has occurred in the past ten years some of which was planned but far more which certainly wasn't. This has made me think of an Am Dram comedy production I saw at Tilstock Village Hall, last year I think it was. It was about what happens next in our life. A person dies and arrives at the Pearly Gates, is met by a clerk with a big book who asks, whilst looking in the book, "Why are you here, your time has not come yet? Go back." I am convinced that God does have a plan for us & nothing we do will change when our time is to come. We may not like it but that is the way of things.

Life these past 2 years have been hard for my family (as I know it has for a few of you) but with the love and friendship shown to us by people of St John's we have been able to work through it. Thank you all. I would never have dreamed that I would be privileged to serve as a Steward in God's Church, thoughts like that has never ever crossed my mind. Yes, there are frustrations, but the reward can far outweigh those. Certainly, as Property Secretary times can be difficult, but it is hoped with God's help, and yours, these ob-

stacles can be overcome. Looking back through old Minute Books I realise that we have at last fulfilled the dreams of many and made the Church accessible to everyone. I know there are some who think the project has been a big waste of money but, having said that, how much better one feels to be able to enter the Church by the proper entrance and to see the joy on the face of a wheelchair bound person who was, for the first time, able to enter and enjoy our concert in October was worth all the struggle. We have created a Legacy for the Methodists in Whitchurch and maybe you might like to think could you provide a Legacy when the time comes for departing this world and joining the next.

We have welcomed new people into the Life of St John's this year. Let this be a start of good things to come, let us go out there and be The Lord's Disciples in Whitchurch.

Have a Happy Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all again in 2020.

God Bless you all

Pete

Action For Children – Advance Notice

For those who have Action for Children collection boxes, please note that I shall start collecting them from January 2020 onwards if you would bring them to church.

Please also note that we will be holding a coffee morning at St John's church in aid of "Action for Children", on

Saturday, 22nd February 2020 from 10am to 12 noon.

Please come and support this worthy cause - Everyone is welcome and thank you all for supporting this Methodist Charity.

Yours in faith
David Whiteley

Preachers for December / January

Dec:	1st	Dr. G. Dickinson
	8th	Ms E. Jennings
	15th	Rev Rob Weir (HC)
	22nd	Rev G. Windon (10.30am) Rev Rob Weir (6.30pm Carols)
	25th	Rev Rob Weir (9.30am)
Jan:	5th	Mr. N. Cutts
	12th	Rev Rob Weir (CS)
	19th	Ms. G. Asamoah
	26th	Mrs J. Smith
Feb	2nd	Mr. B. Faulkner

Stewards Rota for December / January

Dec:	1st	M Latham
	8th	A Bradfield
	15th	B Faulkner
	22nd	P Shingler
	25th	tba
	29th	M Latham
Jan:	5th	M Latham
	12th	B Faulkner
	19th	A Bradfield
	26th	P Shingler
Feb:	2nd	A Bradfield



This photo has been sent to me by Gwen Reeves, who I'm sure you all recognise. It was taken outside the chapel at Hollinwood, Whixall, on August 21st, 1983. Some of you may recognise the preacher that day - I think I would have struggled if I didn't have the information on the back of the photo - Michael Mulliner. On November 24th this year they were back together again at St. John's!

Worship leaders for December / January

Rachel:

Lucy:

Dec: 1st
15th
29th
Jan: 12th

Dec: 8th
22nd
Jan: 5th
19th

Junior Church Rota

Date	Leader	Assistant
Dec: 1st	Brenda Aumeer	Dot Charlesworth
8th	Briony Myles-Hook	
15th	Janet Lees	Brenda Aumeer
22nd	Helen Trigg	Dot Charlesworth
Jan: 5th	Brenda Aumeer	Katie Johnson

God In Love Unites Us

The Marriage and Relationships Task Group presented a report to the 2019 Methodist Conference with recommendations about various issues to do with relationships in general and marriage in particular. Those recommendations are being submitted to the wider Church for consultation, with a final decision being made at the July 2020 Conference.

Four opportunities to engage in the conversation across the District:

Monday 27 January 2020 at 7:30pm at North Street, Crewe, CW1 4NJ

Thursday 30 January 2020 at 7:30pm at West End, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 5AW

Saturday 8 February 2020 at 10:00am at Frodsham, WA6 6BA

Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 7:30pm at Trinity Congleton, CW12 4BA

Additionally, we are pleased that Revds Paul Smith and Sam McBratney, nationally renowned speakers, are to lead a specifically Bible Focused event on **Wednesday 29 January 2020 at 7:00pm** at Swan Bank, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 2AA

There is no need to book in advance for these events.

These conversations will help provide a wider background to inform the debate at the Spring Synod.

Further information can be obtained from the District Administrator, Rob Glassonbury; email ches-ter.stoke@btconnect.com or ring 01270 627774.

Connexional materials can be found at www.methodist.org.uk/MandR1

Answers to Last Month's Teasers

Books of the Bible

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1 | One, two and five are examples | Numbers |
| 2. | What bills in parliament become | Acts |
| 3. | It's in oldest heritage | Esther |
| 4. | Air of Airs | Song of Songs |
| 5. | They decide the winner | Judges |
| 6. | Are you hurt about for this one | Ruth |
| 7. | Could be shrews turn into it | Hebrews |
| 8. | The first Stewart king of England | James |
| 9. | Woe!, Awful!, I don't believe it !, Boo-Hoo! | Lamentations |
| 10. | A stitch in - - - , A dog is a - - - - , and so on! | Proverbs |

Christmas Words

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Airy Flights (2) | Fairy Lights |
| 2. | Listen | Tinsel |
| 3. | Ration Codes | Decorations |
| 4. | Tote Miles | Mistletoe |
| 5. | A Class Aunt (2) | Santa Claus |
| 6. | Strop Us | Sprouts |
| 7. | Light Tennis (2) | Silent Night |
| 8. | German | Manger |
| 9. | Serpents | Presents |
| 10. | Vented Scandal (2) | Advent Candles |

Twelfth Night—the Feast of Epiphany (6th January) when the three Wise Men are said to have visited Jesus. A cake used to be made with a bean in it. The person who found it became King of the Bean or Lord of Misrule. If a pea was found that person became Queen of the Pea!

What Happened to 2019? A personal view.

I'm sure, that, like me, many of us, start to reflect on the year just gone at this time of the year. How was 2019 for you? Was it happy? Was it successful? Was it productive?

On reflecting on 2019, my life broke down into two distinct parts. The two parts were the Access for All Project at church, and secondly, my personal health. I apologise if this all sounds very boring. If so, fast forward to the next article!

For me, the Access project started on 7th January 2019. My task was to liaise with the builders, the architect and our Church Council here at St John's. I really enjoyed getting to know the architect, the Site Manager and all the individual workers. They were a grand bunch of people. It was most interesting watching the work develop. It was difficult watching our lawns become swallowed up in mud as new drains were put in – I could not visualise how anything good could come out of it at all – I couldn't even understand the plans! However, the workmen eventually moved inside. The organ was enveloped in protective plastic, the floors were extended and the fireplace from the Guild Room was laid to rest under the floorboards of the new floor. For me, the most exciting (and complicated) part was the building of the new door joining the Guild Room to the church. I watched in awe as the stone mason chipped away at the new door, brick by brick, stone by stone. I was privileged to be present when the final breakthrough was made as I shook hands with Matt from the other side. Gradually the work was finished

off. I remember being shocked when I saw the colour of the new doors for the first time along with the lovely new interior doors!

Saturday June 29th was a lovely warm sunny day. It was good to welcome our previous minister Revd. Michael Parrott back to St John's to perform the opening ceremony. I was very grateful to everyone who made the event possible – and especially to Reg Hall who did the honours with the scissors. Looking back, in my opinion the Access Project was good for St John's Methodist Church in Whitchurch; it is brighter and much easier to get in and out of (no coincidence that Whitchurch Community Choir have decided to use our premises for their rehearsals in the future.) Our church has become a beacon at night – it really stands out, don't you think?

The second part of my 2019 I mentioned at the start of this article was my health. I regret that I am no longer as involved in church life as I once was. During 2019 I had three operations! Is this a record? I had a thyroid operation in March, my pacemaker fitted in May and lastly, my hip replaced in July. The National Health Service has been wonderful to me – I reckon I have had my money's worth!

And what of the future? Sheila's sister, Sandra, who many of you know, is moving to Norfolk in the new year. Sheila & Sandra are virtually inseparable, so 2020 could be a very big year for us! Who knows where we will be this time next year? We shall see!

Jim Walwyn

Christmas Fayre

We are holding our annual Christmas Fayre at Whitchurch Civic Centre on **Saturday 7th December**– the day of the Makers & Farmers Market– so the town should be buzzing! There will be all the usual stalls as well as a raffle. The Whitchurch Community Singers are performing from 11am. Tea or coffee and mince pies will be on sale. We are hoping to see as many of you as possible. The Fayre runs from 10am to 1.30pm

Jumble in the Community

“It can be a bit daunting to go into a church.”

“You’re all so friendly and welcoming”

“Does this happen every week?”

“When is the next one?”

“What a beautiful church!”

These were some of the comments we received from visitors who came to our Jumble Sales and Thrift Shops over the Summer. Some people were local and some came from further afield but from now on each time they walk past our building they will be able to picture life inside our church. Many thanks to everyone who contributed in any way to this venture which raised £1000 as well as raising awareness about our church.

Briony & Lynn

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING – 9th October 2019

The minutes for the Church Council meeting held on Wednesday 9th October are on the noticeboard in the vestry. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 5th February 2020 at 7pm.

Yule Log - originally a vast wooden log burnt in the hearth, so large it would last all 12 days. At the end of the celebrations, a piece of the log was kept to light the following year's Yule Log. Now we have smaller fireplaces, or none at all, the 'Yule Log' has become a chocolate cake instead!

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

The St. John's Christmas Party is on **Sunday 8th December** after the morning service.

There will be food, games and carols and Father Christmas will hopefully be visiting us!

Come and join in the fun and fellowship.

There is a list on the table at the back of the Church for you to put your name on if you intend coming.

Spick & Spanners

December	5th	Elizabeth Shingler , Briony Myles- Hook & Linda Jenkins
	19th	Mike Nimmo, Vic Trigg & Dorothy Faulkner
January	9th	Joan & Gordon Davidson & Eileen Grunner
	23rd	Ros Rawson & Sue Davies

“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the
Year,
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the
unknown.'
And he replied, ' Go out into the darkness, and put
your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light, and safer
than a known way.'

Extract from 'God Knows' by Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957); read by King George VI in his Christmas broadcast of 1939.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION



As we reflect on the Christmas story in the coming weeks, let us ask God to give us fresh insight and new revelation so that the familiar story excites us again and energises our faith.

As we meditate on Mary's response to God's call on her life, let us pray that we, too, may respond in faith to what God is asking of us at this time. Give thanks for the amazing truth that God longs for us to work with Him to fulfil His purposes in our church, in our town and in our nation.

As the Wise Men travelled together on a journey of discovery, let us give thanks for the people of St John's, with whom we make our faith journey. Give thanks for all that we share together: friendship, fellowship, meals and social occasions, and especially our life together in Jesus Christ. Pray that together we may experience understanding, acceptance and friendship on our journey of discovery to that special Friend who is coming again this year.

Each of the Wise Men brought a different gift to the Christ Child. Ask God to reveal to you your unique gift and pray for the faith and courage to use that gift to His praise and glory. Remember that God made each one of us different. Nobody else in the whole of human history has the same personality and situation that you have. Your call is to use your particular gift in your particular life-setting.

Let us give thanks for those who will be visiting St John's this Christmas time – especially for the Christmas Tree Festival, Carol service and the Toddler Group nativity – and let us pray that they will not only receive a warm welcome, but will sense the presence of God in our midst as we offer Him our praise and thanksgiving.

During the busyness of our Christmas preparations let us pause and consider those for whom Christmas is not a time of joyful anticipation. For some people, maybe people known personally to us, Christmas will be a sad and lonely

time. Ask the God of all comfort to meet with them and give to them according to their individual need. Ask God if He wants us to be part of the answer to our prayer. We continue to pray for our nation - especially for the general election and ask that God, in His mercy, will raise up men and women of integrity and honesty to be our political leaders.

We continue to pray for the wider world:
Pray for those parts of our world where there is conflict – pray for wisdom for those seeking to resolve the conflicts peacefully. Ask God, the God of all comfort, to comfort those people, especially children, who are being traumatised by conflict and war.

Ask God to encourage and strengthen Christians who are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. Pray especially for Christians in China who are facing severe restrictions on worship and Bible study.

Pray for refugees – that they may find safe havens to live, with shelter, food, water, education and healthcare for their children.

Pray for those who have lost their homes and livelihoods during the recent natural disasters. Ask that they may receive the help that they need to rebuild their lives.

From 'Christmas' by John Betjeman

And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall ?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me ?

Rotas for December / January

Book Stewards



December

1st	Sue Davies
8th	Nancy Millington
15th	Brenda Aumeer
22nd	Sarah Lunt
29th	Sheila Walwyn

January

5th	Chris Crowther
12th	Sue Davies
19th	Nancy Millington
26th	Sarah Lunt

February

2nd	Sheila Walwyn
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Tea & Coffee Rota



December

1st	Ruth Dawson & Einwen Kelly
8th	Christmas Party - No Coffee
15th	Elizabeth & Pete Shingler
22nd	Nancy Millington & Chris Crowther
29th	Sue Davies & Dorothy Faulkner

January

5th	Sheila Latham & Dot Charlesworth
12th	Eileen Grunner & Lynn Fowler
19th	Hazel & Mike Nimmo
26th	Linda Jenkins & Sarah Lunt

February

2nd	Sue Davies & Dorothy Faulkner
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Sound System Operators



December

1st	Andrew Fawcett
8th	Mike Nimmo
15th	David Whiteley
22nd(10.30am)	Gordon Davidson
22nd(6.30pm)	Andrew Fawcett
29th	Jim Walwyn

January

5th	David Whiteley
12th	Mike Nimmo
19th	Gordon Davidson
25th	Andrew Fawcett

February

2nd	Jim Walwyn
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Flower Rota



December	1st.	Ruth Dawson
	8th.	Joan Davidson
	15th.	Jean Cook
	22nd.	CHRISTMAS
	29th.	..

January	5th.	Sheila Latham
	12th.	Joan Morgan
	19th.	Sue. Davies
	26th.	Jean Fisher

Regular Church Activities

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

1st & 3rd Tues. 7.30pm: Fellowship at 7 Queen's Rd.

1st & 3rd Thurs. 7.30pm: Prayer Group 7 Queen's Rd.

4th Thurs. 7.30pm: Café Church

Music Group Practice—date and venue by arrangement

Dates For Your December/January Diary

December All events at Church unless stated otherwise

Sunday 1st 2 - 5.00pm: Christmas Tree Festival

Monday 2nd 10am- 4pm: Christmas Tree Festival

Saturday 7th 10am - 1.30pm: Christmas Fayre at Civic

Sunday 8th 12 noon: Church Christmas party

Monday 9th 10am: Toddlers Nativity service

Weds. 11th 10.30am: Ladies Coffee at Caru Coffi

Saturday 14th 7.30pm: Faults Singers Concert

Thursday 19th 12 noon Afternoon Christmas Concert

Saturday 21st 10am - 12 noon: Christmas Coffee Morning &
Church open

Sunday 22nd 6.30pm Carol Service

January 2020

Weds. 8th 10.30: Ladies Coffee at Caru Coffi

February

Weds 5th 7pm Church Council

Friday 7th 9.30-12 noon Coffee morning at the Civic

February Newsletter

Please let **Dot Charlesworth** have all your submissions for the February 2020 Newsletter by 22nd January. Send material to: 40 Mill Park, Waymills, Whitchurch SY13 1PB Tel: 01948 662291 email:Dotsh22@gmail.com

This magazine costs 25p to produce. Contributions towards this expense would be gratefully received.

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December	1st	Sheila Latham
	8th	Hazel Nimmo
	15th	David Whiteley
	22nd	Jim Walwyn
	29th	Brian Faulkner
January	5th	David Whiteley
	12th	Sheila Latham
	19th	Hazel Nimmo
	26th	Jim Walwyn

Christmas Tree Festival - last chances today (Sunday)
2 - 5pm, tomorrow from 10am to 4pm. Bring a friend to
see the beautiful display and enjoy the peace and tranquility.

**The Most Famous Bread & Cake
Makers in Whitchurch!**

WALKERS



“Olde Worlde Charm”

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store**



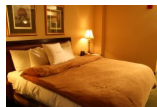
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Call in and talk to one of
the team.

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