



St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch
April 2021

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

As I get ready for Holy Week, I'm aware that it is in a way the last time I'll be sharing this, the most important of Christian Festivals, with you. Almost incredibly, four months after Easter Sunday, we will be on the move up to Great Ayton in North Yorkshire and a new adventure in a new place.

It's an odd situation to be in as a Minister. Already, the temptation is to look forward; to start thinking about what I can offer in my new appointment, and to try and leave things in some sort of order for Donna when she arrives. And yet there are still several months of work here that I also need to give my best to.

Sometimes this is what gets referred to as a "Liminal Space" - a time of transition and change, with uncertainties to ponder. And in some ways the period after Easter reminds us that God's world - and God's Word - addresses this too. Following the Resurrection, there was a period of weeks before the Ascension, and then Pentecost - just as we mark now; in that time, the risen Christ appeared to the disciples in different times and places, and promised them that changes were to come - the changes that transformed them from Disciples to Apostles, conferred in full measure by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

God is with us in the moments of change and transition, and God remains with us as we move forward. As we all prepare for change - me to leave Whitchurch, Donna and her family to arrive, you to bid us farewell and then to welcome them - please keep us all in your prayers and ask that God will prepare us for what lies ahead in this time of change.

God Bless

Rob

Steward's Letter



Dear Friends.

As I write my stewards letter the virus is coming under control with positive signs. We can look forward to June 21st when we can return to normal routine, as church life returns to "business as usual." In the meantime we must continue to observe the covid-19 rules.

Sheila and I have had our 1st vaccination as I assume most of you have also and are looking forward to the 2nd dose.

There have been so many things that we have been unable to do in the last 12 months as we used too. We even have not been able to share our coughs and colds with each other. There have not been any influenza cases reported last flu season, so we can look out next winter as our immune system will be poor/low.

The evening of 11th March I zoomed in on the circuit meeting.

There was much discussion regarding finance.

It seems to me that the authorities are encouraging churches from around the circuit to close their doors. They expect people to travel greater distances to attend church. In practice this will not happen, only a small number of dedicated people will travel to other churches, this will reduce the income the circuit receives and will expect the few surviving churches to make up the different.

The Methodist Church as a whole must make every effort to halt the downward spiral of members as the circuit expenses spiral upwards. Support from the circuit is essential in our efforts to pay our monthly assessments.

Our new minister will arrive in August/September 2021 to take her new post in Whitchurch. Brian F. pointed out to the superintendent that is too much to expect the Rev. Donna as she wishes to be addressed to take responsibility for 8(eight) churches. This will mean she will

only be able to take services once every two months at St. John's.
Can I propose we have a late afternoon service once a month
with Rev. Donna when we can take communion and this will give our
new minister opportunity and time to get to know us all. This is a decision that the church council will have to make nearer the time.
On a more cheerful note the birds are singing beautifully even we are not allowed to sing. Spring has arrived so we look toward to much better year.

God be with you all.

Stay safe,

Maurice Latham.



Art Exhibition

Children from Whitchurch Academy Junior and Infant Schools have created pictures to raise awareness of the Climate Crisis. Helen, Briony and Dot from St George's introduced the competition in a short film which pupils could view on the school website. Due to social distancing, the planned exhibition in the Civic Centre could not take place but a selection of entries can be viewed in an exhibition at St Alkmunds from 26th March.

Please go along if you are able and support our local children as they encourage us to look after our world and their future.

EASTER OFFERING

Envelopes will be placed in the pews from the 28th March till the 11th April for you to offer a gift to the Methodist World Mission Fund via MWiB. If you are not attending church at the present time and you would like to give. please contact a Church Steward and this will be arranged.

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY.

The Church would under normal circumstances, be celebrating the opening of this church (21st April 1879) on Sunday 18th April with an invited preacher followed by lunch.

However, this year we are only able to acknowledge this date. For those attending you will be able to tell others how this happened. Watch and listen!

ADVANCE NOTICE

On Wednesday 12th May 2021 at 7pm via Zoom, there will be our **General Church Meeting**. All who are part of St. John's are welcome to be part of this by listening and contributing.

It is hoped that the Annual Reports will be available towards the middle of April.

If not on Zoom, you can still contribute to this meeting.

EASTER

Maundy Thursday:

7pm. Zoom Service led by Rev. Rob on behalf of Churches Together.



Good Friday:

10.30am. Zoom service for the Mission Area.

Easter Sunday:

10.30am. A shortened Easter celebration with Holy Communion, taken in a different format.

The Cross:

A Cross will be outside the church from Good Friday onwards. We hope that at some point you will visit the Cross and place one or more flowers on it. This will then remain in place during the following week for the people of Whitchurch to be reminded about Easter.

Comments I have heard about another town was that they thought the churches were all closed because they have not seen anything taking place. Let them see that we at St. John's are alive!

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)

A Prayer for Easter



‘I know that my Redeemer lives’

Wow!

I worship you, Lord Jesus Christ, for this amazing fact that you came back to life and are alive right now.

That really is awesome!

Amidst all the questions I still have about life one certainty rings out to every point in the universe: Christ is risen!

The immortal One has died for all sin and for all sinners in every time and in every place.

Christ has been brought back to eternal life: surely this is the most thrilling victory of all time!

Lord Jesus Christ, you really are the Son of God.

I worship you in praise and adoration.

I give myself afresh to you right now on this day of all days.

Equip me with the power that raised Christ from the dead, to serve you today and all the days ahead.

In Christ’s name, I pray.

Amen.

(From Martin Manser’s Book of Prayers)

An Evening Prayer



Keep watch , dear Lord,
With those who work, or watch, or weep this night;
And give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, give rest to the weary.
Sustain the dying, calm the suffering,
And pity the distressed;
All for your love's sake, O Christ our Redeemer.
Amen

St Augustine of Hippo)

Loveliest of Trees from *A Shropshir Lad* (*A E Houseman*)

(With thanks to Gwen)

Loveliest of the trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white at Eastertide.
Now, of my threescore years and ten
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.
And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung in snow.

SYNOD



The Spring Synod of Ministers and Circuit Representatives of the Chester & Stoke on Trent District met via Zoom on Saturday 13th March with over a 100 members present.

The meeting was reminded that this District now has a new web site. Have a look at it.

The speaker was Deacon Eunice Attwood who is Church at the Margins Officer, which is part of the Connexional Evangelism and Growth Team and former Vice President of Conference.

Eunice started off with a reference to the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic, saying that this brought about changes in health that the world now benefits from.

Covid 2020 has highlighted the inequalities in society, unemployment, the poor, the black community, domestic abuse and mental health. It has also highlighted positive work undertaken by Foodbanks and neighbours offering help and work in local communities. We have seen this with the group who have done a wonderful work, in widening footpaths and clearing up many parts of the town. You can't help but notice where they have been.

Covid has also impacted our churches, in that it appears to have speeded up the decline in numbers that were already taking place. This is also obvious in the High Streets of many towns, where people have been buying from the Internet and may not all return to our towns. Churches are likely to become smaller, from which it needs to grow.

Every church needs to become a Growing Church.

Two quotes I made a note of:

Justice is what love looks like in public.

Everyone wants to change the world; no one wants to change themselves!

How is St. John's responding?
You will read elsewhere in this Newsletter about Mission.

Don't be left out, join in the next meeting on 26th April via Zoom or let one of us have some of your thoughts.

Eunice asked how we respond and offered three suggestions:

Centred in God.

Everyone an Evangelist.

Transformational Leadership.

What she sees happening, is Church in a new place, with new people.
A digital Church.

Brian Faulkner.
Circuit Rep to Synod.

Situations Vacant.— Still!

No.1 Taxi Drivers---- For when return to normal Sunday service.

No. 2 Projectionist.

No. 3 Newsletter Editor.- To join the other monthly editors

If you are able to volunteer for any of these roles please contact me.

Maurice

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the lovely people from St. John's who made beautiful cards for Mothering Sunday. The inspirational verse (Gaelic blessing), your thoughtfulness and your kindness all really brightened the day. Thank you too to the St John's "Postmen and Postladies" who delivered the cards. Many thanks to you all!

Beryl Posniak

.



Justice & Peace:

Praying for the Climate Emergency



The 26th annual UN climate conference of parties COP 26 takes place in 7 months. Governments and negotiators from across the world will travel to Glasgow to discuss how to keep temperature rises below dangerous levels and prevent the climate crisis from causing even worse catastrophes for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. The president designate of COP26, Alok Sharma, MP, wrote in The Guardian on 19th March that *the climate crisis represents a clear and present danger to people and our planet and it's real-world consequences are all too visible.*

His aims for the conference are to

- put the world on a path to achieve net zero (carbon neutral) emissions by 2050 by urging all countries to set 2030 emission targets that will achieve this by phasing out the use of petrol, diesel and coal power and investing in green technology.

- adapt to protect our communities and natural habitats by sharing solutions and devising plans to protect them from the destructive impact of climate change such as extreme weather

- encourage governments and individuals to commit sufficient funds to develop technologies that reduce emissions, and protect habitats to enable all countries to achieve the reductions they pledged to achieve in Paris at COP21.

Work together to tackle the climate crisis.

We encourage you to pray that these aims are achieved and that as Governments around the world plan how to rebuild from the pandemic, they base their plans around the need for a global green and just transition. Pope Francis has warned that it would be "a scandal" if the money governments are spending to rebuild economies and save businesses "were to focus on rescuing those industries that do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good or the care of creation".

*Psalm 24 v1: The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;*

Lord, help us to look after the world you created and all living creatures that dwell here. *Amen*

Surprise! Surprise!



Sam Levenson (an American humorist) told how his parents were immigrants to America from Western Europe. They had fallen under the spell of the dream that the streets of the USA were paved with gold. "But" said Sam "when my father got there, he found out three things - the streets were not paved with gold; the streets were not even paved and he was supposed to do the paving

Notes from Second Mission Meeting 17/3/21

Present: Rob Weir, Briony Myles-Hook, Brian Faulkner, Dorothy Faulkner, Mike Nimmo, Hazel Nimmo, Chris Crowther, Lyn Fowler, Pete Shingler, Maurice Latham, Helen Trigg, Vic Trigg Apologies: Rachel Dimelow, Andrew Fawcett, Sarah Lunt

At the meeting we agreed the following:

Step 1: Decide on a Process

We will use the **Mission Planning workbook** “*An 8 step guide to mission planning for churches and circuits*” on the Methodist Church website as a framework for this process. It can be downloaded via this link: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/18460/mission-planning-workbook.pdf>

The short films which introduce this document that we watched at the first meeting on 24/2/21 can be viewed via the following link:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoWWaJT3-P4Y38mEOCSVElx6UQNrsk_Y

Step 2: Do a Community Audit

Brian and Dorothy have attended the **Circuit webinar Mission in Love Unites Us** which Briony is helping to facilitate. This is a Powerpoint presentation, led by our superintendent Rob Hilton, entitled “Implementing a Faithful and Fruitful Future” It aims to:

Establish where people and churches feel they are as we look to coming out of lockdown.

Share some case studies of churches that have become mission shaped

Introduce the process and offer resources and help

Mike, Vic and Chris will look into how we approach this. Following the first meeting, Mike has begun looking at information available from the 2016 census. The group will

Speak to existing groups to find out what is being done and what is needed so that we are not in competition or treading on toes but filling in gaps

(Beacon, Churches Together, Beechtree, U3A, Community Connectors, Schools, Community Health Trust)

Report back at the next meeting and let others in Church know how they can help with this audit.

Step 3: Carry out a Review of our Church

Briony, Hazel and Dorothy will look into how we can make a start with this via zoom and telephone before we are all able to meet up in face to face meetings and report back at the next meeting.

Everyone agreed that we want **as many people as possible** to be involved in this process as it is key to the future of our church as we come out of the pandemic.

Everyone who is a Methodist in the Cheshire South Circuit is invited to attend and it gives a useful insight into where the Circuit is coming from as well as examples how different churches have created new opportunities for mission which may give us ideas for our future.

The presentation lasts for 90 minutes & the next sessions on zoom are:
2pm Thursday 25th March,
10am Saturday 27th March, or
7pm Wednesday 21st April.

If you would like to attend please email Daniel, the Circuit administrator, at 1108info.cheshiresouth@gmail.com or telephone 07598 580541. Several people from St John's plan to attend on Thursday 25th March.

The presentation will be repeated at face to face meetings over the summer when restrictions have been lifted.

The Circuit is impressed that we have already begun the process of mission planning by forming this group and using the 8 step guide on the Methodist website.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 26th April at 7.30pm on zoom and **All are Welcome**. We will keep everyone up to date by publishing progress reports in the monthly newsletter and on our website. If anyone would like to know more, please speak to one of the people who attended the meeting.



"Looking forward to Summer" by Albert Griffiths.

The following poem was written by Albert Griffiths, and read at his funeral which happened at St. Johns in March. We are grateful to Carole, his wife, for permission to share this with you.

Goodbye winter, farewell spring
Welcome summer with sights you bring
Of flower filled meadows, skylark high
Hare or rabbit dashing by.

Wild flowers bloom along country lane
Cuckoo calls its song again
Ladybirds, bees and butterfly
Buttercups, daisies and blue bullseye

Woodpecker pecks for food in tree
All natures gifts given free
Tall spikes of purple foxglove bloom
Honeysuckle and dogrose, fragrant perfume

Large dragonfly rests open wings
Chaffinch and chiffchaff willingly sings
Thunder clouds all gather around
Flash of lightning strikes the ground

Storm arrives, then passes by
Watering crops which were too dry
When sun sinks down, out of sight
The little owl shouts to say it's night.

Greetings from Norfolk!



Just when you thought it was safe! Just when you thought you wouldn't hear anything anymore from those pesky Walwyns!

Well, here we are popping up again like bad pennies! The last few weeks have been a blur! To be honest, we haven't had a minute, as we strive to get our new home to our liking. To be honest, we are getting on a bit for moving house, but we have done it!

(These are the opening two paragraphs from a long letter from Jim. He recognised it was too long and gave me permission to slim it down as necessary. So I'm about to learn whether the précis exercises at school are still remembered.)

Jim goes on to talk about the move by Denmans & the impact of downsizing. He says half of Whitchurch is in his loft. Settling in appears driven by daily Amazon deliveries but admits a fatal error of giving Sheila the password!

Clearly Jim is missing Whitchurch and having to adapt to the quieter village life—although this is off-set by being able to see their family locally.

Lily, their dog is still plodding on despite having diabetes—they say that she will not be replaced.

They live between Outwell and Upwell (*Well, Well!*) and Methodist churches as *well* as a Parish Church are in both. So they are *well* served.

Jim finishes with :- Once again, many thanks to everyone at St John's for their words of encouragement and their cards and lovely messages. It's going to be a great Summer as we explore our new surroundings. Happy End of Lockdown Getting Back to Normal again!
Sheila & Jim Walwyn

(If anyone wants to read the full letter let me know and I'll email it)

Services & Preachers

4th - Easter Day - Rev. Rob Weir (Communion)

11th - Brian Faulkner

18th - Rev Rob Weir - Anniversary

25th - Nick Cutts



Stewards

April 3rd. Brain Faulkner.

April 10 th Maurice Latham.

April 18th. Peter Shingler.

April. 25th. Anders Fawcett.



Sound

April 3rd Andrew Fawcett

April 10th Norman Gollins

April 17th Brian Acty

April 24th Sarah lunt



SPICK & SPANNERS

April 8th Mike Nimmo, Vic Trigg & Dorothy Faulkner

April 22nd Sue & Ken Davies



**BENJAMIN'S CAFÉ &
DELI**



Delicious Breakfasts, Lunches & Brunches at good prices.

We offer freshly prepared food from our deli, to eat in our café or to take out.

3 High Street, Whitchurch, SY13 1AW

Tel: 01948 664726



WHITCHURCH
PHOTOGRAPHY

**FOR ALL YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHIC NEEDS!**

01948 664 664

**Weddings, Passports,
Studio Photoshoots,
Printing, Framing and
Canvases**

whitchurchphoto@gmail.com

May 2021 Newsletter

Please let Chris Crowther have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by Sunday 25th April.

BARLOWS

**Your local electrical
store**



**High Street
Whitchurch**

Call in and talk to one of
the team.

Galaxy Computer Services

**Your local computer
experts**

Computer sales, support
and repair



Call Will or Matt 01948 665855

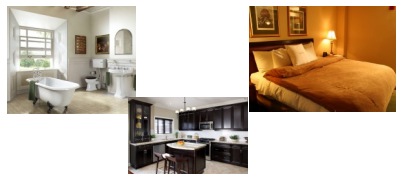
Top of the High Street
Whitchurch

SPLISH SPLASH

“Olde Worlde Charm”

A Family run
Bathrooms Bedrooms &
Kitchens Business based at 46a
High Street Whitchurch

Speak to Vincent about your new
project! Or re-vamp your existing
kitchen, bathroom or bedroom



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

WALKERS

