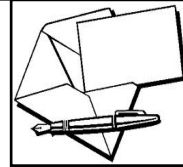




***St. John's Methodist Church  
Whitchurch***

***Newsletter  
May 2021***

## ***Message from the Manse***



Dear Friends,

In one of Fred Kaan's hymns, "We turn to you, O God of every nation", there is a striking final line: "defeat our Babel with your Pentecost!"

Pentecost is approaching towards the end of May, and with it, it brings images for us of that dramatic scene: tongues like fire, the apostles suddenly able to speak the languages of those around them, and every visitor to Jerusalem wondering how it is that they hear the glory of God proclaimed in their own tongue.

It's also though a reminder that God's way is not the way of force. The story of Babel is of humanity challenging God, and their languages then being confused because they have dared to claim that place of power and authority belonging to God; but the reversal, at Pentecost, is very different. God doesn't make all languages as one, although God has the power to do so; instead, each hears the praise of God in their own language, reaching them where they are, and inviting them to share in God's Grace through Jesus Christ.

It's an object lesson for us too. When we talk of wanting people to come to know Jesus, to hear of the Grace of God, we have to speak their language - we have to meet them where they are. And then, we can start showing and demonstrating for them the Grace and Love that God has shown to us, and placed into our hearts.

God Bless,

Rob

## Steward's Letter



A couple of months back my wife sadly lost her father after a relatively short illness.

Dennis who had lived on his own for some eight years, was a likeable chap in so many ways. Although he loved nothing more than coming over for a family get-together, or the family taking him for a drive up to Llangollen, he was very happy in his own company and greatly appreciated his independence.

Having worked as a jeweller for the whole of his working life it became clear that he was particularly creative with his hands. During his retirement however he spent much of his time honing his skills with wood, and soon produced items such as dovecots, and ornamental garden furniture, very often from waste bits that were lying around. In later years he was able to create scale models of motor vehicles of bygone eras which were instantly recognisable, and truly remarkable.

Sadly a day rarely goes by when the media doesn't remind us of how destructive we have become to the world we now live in. Yet deep inside so many people is something so wonderfully creative that when they search hard enough and give themselves a chance to 'bring it to life' they even surprise themselves at what can be achieved. So if you've always fancied trying something creative for the first time, or even reigniting an old skill, then have a go and through patience and perseverance you may well surprise yourself. God created each one of us as unique individuals with equally unique abilities.

*Andrew Fawcett*

### **Church AGM - Wednesday 12th May**

The Annual Church Meeting will be held on zoom this year on Wednesday 12th May at 7pm.

The Annual Reports and Minutes from the last Annual Church Meeting have been sent out by email and paper copies are also available at the back of the church.

As we are unable to hold our Annual Church Meeting in the Church building this year due to lockdown restrictions and not everyone is able to join a meeting on Zoom, a feedback form will be distributed with the reports. By completing this form, you will be able to approve and comment on the Annual Reports and to vote for our Church Stewards and Elected Church Council Representatives.

Please return the form by Sunday 9th May with any comments, even if you plan to attend the meeting and vote in person.

Rob Weir will be circulating the zoom link nearer the time.

Many thanks.

Briony Myles-Hook      Church Council Secretary

A man's wife found some papers in his coat pocket. On one piece of paper it said, "Sweetie Sue." She asked her husband what this was all about.

"Oh," he said, "that was the horse I put a bet on last Saturday."

About a week later, the wife shouted, "Your horse phoned today!"

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

Pray for those known to us personally who are in need of God's comfort, particularly Rob Hewson and family as they grieve for the loss of Margaret.



**People in need** - Now that the pandemic shows good signs of lessening, we pray that people will be sensible as we are allowed more freedom. We also pray for people who are still struggling with the after effects of having Covid or through loss of work and income.

**St John's** - We are thankful that we are meeting up at Church for Sunday services and that we are still able to hold zoom services with the other churches in the afternoon. We pray that more of our members will feel able and safe to return to worship. We pray for Reg Hall that he may settle well at Edgeley House.

**Whitchurch** - Pray for our town as lockdown eases. Help us to support local businesses as they open up again. We pray for the meetings that are being held on zoom, looking at the way forward with our mission in Whitchurch.

**Our nation** - In these challenging times, pray that our leaders can find the right solutions to all the difficult problems we are facing. We continue to pray for the Queen and her family as they come to terms with the loss of their mainstay.

**Our world** - Pray for countries such as India and Brazil as they fight the constantly spreading infection and their lack of supplies to deal with it. Pray that our government will do what it can to help. Pray for the people of St. Vincent, the island which has recently been devastated by La Soufriere volcano. We must not forget other world problems and need to pray for the Climate Emergency, Racial Injustice, Debt Relief, Food Poverty and Homelessness. We give thanks that research has led to the discovery of a possible treatment for malaria.

### **MILUU Mission in Love Unites Us**

Two new zoom dates have been announced for the Mission in Love Unites Us webinar which aims to help Churches in the Cheshire South Circuit to find their way forward after the pandemic.

Thursday 6th May 7pm

Saturday 15th May 9.30am

If you would like to attend, please contact Daniel, the circuit administrator at [1108info.cheshiresouth@gmail.com](mailto:1108info.cheshiresouth@gmail.com) or telephone 07598 580541.

### **A Quiz to sharpen the brain!**

All the answers are towns or cities in the UK

What we breathe.....	Fresh selling place.....
McGuigan in Wales.....	Emu's friend.....
Add fuel to the fire.....	Possess insect.....
Replacement for Noah.....	Inter .....
Sick crossing.....	DJ Tony.....
Rowan .....	Fruit skin .....
Snowy refuge.....	Carry on Barbara.....
Disallow the funeral .....	Sausage .....
Tub of water .....	Toilet .....
First US president .....	Wise associate .....
Span compass point .....	One of the 3 R's .....
Sauce .....	Moss racer .....
Sister consumed .....	Fortress crossing .....
Prime number of trees .....	Fawlty professor .....
Cook pasture .....	Talking meat .....
Theatre land .....	Reverend Ian .....
Yorkshire fair .....	Parent in good health .....

A farmer had his credit card stolen. He did not report it to the police or the bank because the thief was spending less than his wife!

## **West to East – our life changing experience!**

Well, where do I begin? We have been in the East now for three months and the time has just flown by! From that day in January when we said goodbye to all our friends and neighbours in Whitchurch.

We set off with a loaded van and car plus our little dog and ventured into the unknown!

Every day since our arrival has been taken up with unpacking boxes, moving furniture, painting fences and changing address for official documents and medical care etc. The mind whirls with it all!!

Our bungalow is 'small', with a 'small garden,' in a small village in the fens. We have a lovely river which runs through the centre of the village and at the moment the banks are covered with masses of daffodils and wildflowers. The river Nene it looks wonderful!

The area is very different from Shropshire, with flat land everywhere and fields that seem to go on forever - the brown fields made ready at the moment for the abundance of fruit and vegetables to come later on.

Jim is painting fences at the moment, a job which seems to go on forever!

The bungalow itself is easy to maintain. My cousin used to say to me 'If you live in a bungalow you develop bungalow legs' - well that is as maybe but I do not miss the stairs at all!!

We have three excellent village shops, and a wonderful farm shop and butchers which are also very good. I do

miss my trips into town on the bus to Whitchurch of course, but we are adapting to this life, and can always go into Wisbech which is six miles away when we need the bigger shops.

The bonus here of course is that my sister and her family are here just down the road really, I live one end of the village and she lives at the other end, so it is handy for both of us. We swop, beg, or borrow things all the time now!

My great niece Violet is growing into a fine young lady now – we had to view her new bedroom at the weekend – it was very 'pink' with dolls and make up all around – a real girl's bedroom!

We feel connected to family now and feel 'safe' in our older years.

We miss our friends in Whitchurch of course, and will never forget you all.

Thanks for the fifteen years we spent there, and the love shown to us at St John's - we wish you all well.

Much love to you all.

*Sheila Walwyn. x*

### **Easter Offering**

Thank you to all who gave money in the Easter Offering Envelopes.

The total came to £96.50. This will be forwarded to Mission via MWiB, Methodist Women in Britain.

### **Christian Aid Week Services**

Several churches in Whitchurch will be holding their own Christian Aid Week service during the week and the Christian Aid service from St Alkmund's will be streamed live on May 9th at 10 am on the Facebook page and will continue to be available afterwards and on YouTube under 'Judy Hunt'.

### **Christian Aid Week 10th – 16th May 2021**

In Kenya, extreme dry weather is making it harder and harder to survive. For communities fighting the climate crisis, every last drop of water matters and every last one of us can help them thrive. The coronavirus pandemic has only increased the urgent need for families to access a reliable source of water. The devastating climate crisis robs people of the water and so also the food they need to live.

Rose walks for six hours to fetch water for her grandchildren. She tries hard to give them the kind of life she remembers



from when she was a girl: when the rivers flowed with water and the crops bore fruit.

Rose and her grandchildren shouldn't have to suffer hunger. A simple earth dam, built with the help of Christian Aid's partners and your donations, could completely change their lives.

This Christian Aid Week, you can be one of the hundreds of thousands of our supporters who give, act and pray to stop this climate crisis causing people like Rose and her family to be hungry.

From envelope collections to walking 300,000 steps in May, Christian Aid Week brings people together as one community against global poverty and injustice.

All the churches in Whitchurch will be thinking about Rose and the millions who are being affected by climate change, during Christian Aid week.

This year as last, we will be unable to hold the house to house collection; so instead, we are having a pew collection in churches and a zoom quiz during the week.

Envelopes will be out in the pews on 9th May but if you would prefer to give online, a Christian Aid e-Envelope has been placed on all the churches' websites.

The quiz will take place on Tuesday 11th May and if you would like to join please contact Rev Rob Weir - he will send you the link.

Thank you for all your help so far during 2020 and into 2021, in what are very difficult times, for the partners Christian Aid is supporting in the poorest communities in the world.

This Christian Aid Week, please:

**Give** generously to help ensure people like Rose fight this climate crisis.

**Act** as we call on the UK Prime Minister to lead the world with ambitious climate action that will also address inequality (see Briony's sample letter on the St John's website).

**Pray** for a radical change of heart for politicians, and that as a global community, we will care for our common home and for people living in poverty.

**Together we can stop this climate crisis.**

*Helen Trigg*

### **Notes from Third Mission Meeting 26/4/21**

*Present: Rob Weir, Briony Myles-Hook, Brian Faulkner, Dorothy Faulkner, Mike Nimmo, Hazel Nimmo, Chris Crowther, Lyn Fowler, Helen Trigg, Vic Trigg*

*Apologies: Rachel Dimelow Copied in: Pete Shingler, Maurice Latham, Andrew Fawcett, Sarah Lunt*

### **1. Update on Mission Planning Process**

#### **Step 2: Do a Community Audit**

**Mike** will arrange a meeting with Vic and Chris to discuss what he has found out so far. He will approach the Beacon to see which gaps in the community they have identified but are not planning to fill.

**Chris** emphasised the importance of working with other churches not duplicating efforts.

#### **Step 3: Carry out a Review of our Church.**

**Hazel** reported that she had met with **Briony and Dorothy** and a 3-pronged approach to the review is planned:

Send out a questionnaire to members and adherents to find out about their **personal experiences** at St John's.

Review the table of **activities** previously run by the church by speaking to those involved and looking at the mission focus of each activity. Were prayers regularly said, hymns sung or opportunities for personal witness?

Circulate "**What makes a Mission Shaped Church**" the document produced by the Circuit, discussed at the Circuit Meeting in March and included in the Mission in Love Unites Us webinar. Initially this will be sent to members of this group and they will be asked to score our Church on the scale 1 to 10.

Hazel, Briony and Dorothy will meet to draft the questions to circulate before the next meeting.

## **2. Sharing the Mission Planning Process**

Rob will write in the **June Newsletter** about the Mission Planning Process and its importance to the future of St John's so that everyone knows what we are doing and why we need to do it. Hopefully, this will encourage everyone to return their questionnaires and take part in the reviews. The Mission Group will share the process and its intentions with **Church Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> June** so that everyone is behind it.

## **3. Circuit webinar: Mission in Love Unites Us**

So far this has been attended by Brian & Dorothy, Helen & Vic, Mike & Hazel, Chris, Briony and Rob. Feedback was positive as it gives an insight into where the Circuit is coming from and the examples given open up new possibilities for the future of our church. Rob emphasised the need for churches to be clear about their mission when requesting funding in future.

Everyone agreed that we should encourage more people from St John's to attend and the next two dates on zoom will be included in the May newsletter.

7pm Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May

9.30am Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May

If you would like to attend, please email Daniel, the Circuit administrator, at [1108info.cheshiresouth@gmail.com](mailto:1108info.cheshiresouth@gmail.com) or telephone 07598 580541.

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

## **4. Eco Church**

**Helen** reported that she has registered St John's for the Eco Church Scheme and will write an article about it in the June Newsletter. She shared the questionnaire on her screen and will circulate the link to members of this group and on the Church website.

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm** on zoom and **All are Welcome**.

## **50 YEARS of PREACHING**

At the Chapel Anniversary (18/4/21), the church acknowledged 142 years of the present building. The Rev. Rob Weir also acknowledged that I had been an Accredited Local Preacher for 50 years, presenting me with a certificate signed by the President and also the Vice President of the Methodist Conference. This was slightly belated, as this was passed to Rob during the first lockdown, so it has been trying to find the right opportunity to do this.

A few members in church said you must have been very young when you started, even referring to short trousers! It was in June 1967 at a Billy Graham relay rally in Stoke, that I went forward to give my life to Christ.

The following year, I was challenged to become a Local Preacher. I commenced 2 years of study and every six months sat a written exam in the study of the then Minister, the Rev. Kenneth Wilkinson, in what is now Westune. The exam topics were the Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Doctrine and Worship & Preaching. During these studies, I would be required to present assignments every couple of weeks to an outside Tutor.

During this training, you are placed On Note and subsequently On Trial. Miss Dora Herbert was the Preacher that I was linked to. I would begin by reading a lesson in her service, then prayers, before eventually taking the whole service.

I can't remember at which Church my first service was. I do remember in May 1968, giving the address at the

Youth Service in Castle Hill, when I spoke on being made in the image of God from the Book of Genesis.

In December 1970, having passed all the exams, the Local Preacher's Meeting recommended to the Circuit Meeting that I become an Accredited Local Preacher. So began what to date is over 50 years of leading worship. In those early days, I would be preaching 10 – 12 services a quarter. The Circuit had more evening services and also afternoons. 24 churches and only 3 Ministers!

The demand on Preachers was great. However, we would only prepare 3 /4 services a quarter. Taking these to the various congregations with some slight adjustment to hymns, to suit the occasion and the congregation.

Gwen remarked after my presentation, that she must have been playing for me for most of the 50 years. Gwen was only in her early teens when she would play for odd hymns under her Auntie's guidance.

At the final Circuit Service of the Whitchurch Circuit in Lightwood Green in July 2010, is when I was presented with a Certificate recognizing 40 years of Preaching.

Thank you for your support and encouraging words over these many years.

*Brian Faulkner*

*From 'A Methodist Way of Life'*

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

### **Where do our big chiefs find their wisdom?**

*(I read this anecdote recently in a newspaper CHC)*

It's late Fall, and the Native Americans on a remote reservation in South Dakota ask their new chief if the coming winter is going to be cold or mild. Sadly the new leader has never been taught the old secrets and when he looks at the sky, he can find no answer.

But he thinks it is wise to be prepared just in case, so he tells his tribe it will in deed be a cold winter and they should start collecting firewood immediately.

A few days later, he decides to check with the National Weather Service and it tells him: "Yup, it looks like it's gonna be a pretty cold winter."

So he goes back to his people and tells them to collect even more firewood.

A week later, he makes another call. This time he is told it's going to be a **very** cold winter. So the chief goes back to his people yet again and orders them to collect every scrap of firewood they can find.

By now, winter is almost upon South Dakota so the chief makes one last call.

"Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?"

"Absolutely," the man replies. "It's looking more and more like it's going to be one of the coldest winters we've ever seen."

"How can you be so sure?" the chief asks.

The weatherman replies, "The Indians are collecting a **load** of firewood." (!)

### **Taxi**

The Taxi service like most parts of the church has been on hold during the last twelve months. With the easing of restrictions, a much lower infection rate and the 2nd dose of the vaccine means that some people may consider returning to church if a lift was available.

This is to aid this process but does not mean that you should feel pressurized to return, if you are not comfortable about it. The respective drivers will request you to wear a face mask and also provide ventilation on the short journey. Please speak with any of the drivers regarding any concerns you have.

Thank you to Peter for providing an informal service during the period church has been open. Peter has also agreed to become part of the team. Thank you to Jim Walwyn for his contribution to the Taxi service over many years and being so flexible about dates.

The system will work as before. Please telephone the driver before 9.30am.

2nd May	Hazel
9th May	Peter
16th May	Sheila
23rd May	Brian
30th May	Hazel

*Brian Faulkner*

### **Lent Fasting and donations to Christian Aid**

A big thank you to everyone who gave a Lent donation to Christian Aid. If you haven't handed your money in yet, you can give it to Judy Bellingham on Friday at the Traidcraft market stall, leave it at church or send it to Briony.

*Helen Trigg*

### **“The Dandelion” by Albert Griffiths**

*Another poem written by Albert Griffiths, whose funeral was held at St. John’s in March.*



*As a child this story told  
Of flowering dandelions, yellow or gold.  
To pick these flowers, it was said  
During the night you’ll wet the bed!  
Dandelion flowers look so bright  
Growing in the warm sunlight.  
You close up tight in time of rain  
To open up with sun again.  
Your flowers bloom just everywhere  
Thanks to Nature’s tender care.  
Bright flowers look towards the sky  
Attracting bee and butterfly.  
You are called a pest or common weed  
Though you supply the birds with seed.  
As flower fades upon your stem  
A ball of seed replaces them.  
Delicate seed in perfect sphere  
With gust of wind you’ll disappear  
To float off in a hundred parts  
Each one a seed with flower’s heart.*

### **Justice & Peace: Praying for the Climate Emergency**

Thank you to everyone as we continue to pray that global leaders will face up to the challenges of the Climate Emergency and take the necessary actions to reduce Global temperatures before it is too late.

For those of you who would like to find out more, we recommend the 3 part BBC Documentary **Greta Thunberg: A Year to Change the World**. Climate activist Greta Thunberg takes a year off school to explore the science of global warming and challenge world leaders, calling for action on climate change. She meets a range of experts, including David Attenborough, plus people affected by the implications of Global warming and the science is explained very clearly.

In another BBC series, **Climate Change: Ade on the frontline**, Ade Adepitan travels to the frontline of climate change to discover how life is being affected and looking for potential solutions. Both programmes highlight the interconnectedness of the crisis, demonstrating again and again how great the consequences of even the smallest change can be.

***Christ has no body now on earth but ours,  
No hands but ours, no feet but ours.***

***Ours are the eyes through which looks out Christ's  
compassion to the world;***

***Ours are the feet with which he is to go about doing  
good;***

***Ours are the hands with which he blesses his people  
daily.***

***Amen.***

*Theresa of Avila, adapted*

### **UK Overseas Aid Budget Cuts**

The UK government is planning to break their manifesto pledge and cut the overseas aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of gross national income (GNI).

### **This is a matter of life and death.**

Cutting the UK aid budget has dire consequences. It means we will compromise our country's values and break our foreign aid promises but ultimately, the poorest and most vulnerable people will pay the price.

Fewer children will be able to access a basic education. People will not be able to access vital health care during a global pandemic and more families will go hungry. I have written to the Prime Minister asking him to reconsider.

Will you?

*(You can find a sample letter on St John's website)*

*Briony Myles-Hook*

### **Dates for your Diary for May**

Every Wednesday—Zoom Coffee with Rob Weir—  
details on Audio Reflection email

Sundays 4pm Zoom services

Wednesday 12th 7pm Church Council AGM via Zoom

**It is not death to die**

It is not death to die,  
to leave this weary road  
and 'midst the brotherhood on high,  
to be at home with God.

It is not death to close  
the eye long dimmed by tears,  
and wake in glorious repose  
to spend eternal years.

It is not death to bear  
the wrench that sets us free  
from dungeon-chain, to breathe the air  
of boundless liberty

It is not death to fling  
aside this sinful dust,  
and rise, on strong, exulting wing,  
to live among the just.

Jesu, thou Prince of Life!  
Thy chosen cannot die!  
Like thee, they conquer in the strife,  
to reign with thee on high.

*César Malan, 1832, Translated by George Washington  
Bethune, 1847*

(The above poem/hymn was contributed by Elaine in the hope it might be both a tribute to those who have lost their lives and a comfort to family and friends left behind during the last 18 months.)

### **Preachers for May**

2nd: Rev. Rob Weir  
9th May: Rev. Brian Acty  
16th May: Nick Cutts  
23rd May (*Pentecost*): Rev. Rob Weir  
30th May: Brian Faulkner

### **Stewards for May**

2nd. Brian Faulkner.  
9th. Robert Hewson.  
16th. Maurice Latham.  
23rd. Andrew Fawcett.  
30th. Peter Shingler.

### **Sound System for May**

2nd Andrew Fawcett  
9th Sarah Lunt  
16th Mike Nimmo  
23rd Brian Acty  
30th Norman Gollins

### **Spick and Spanners Rota for May**

6th Chris Crowther, Dot Charlesworth & Lynn Fowler  
20th Helen Trigg, Brenda Aumeer & Rachel Dimelow

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**November Newsletter**

Please let **Vic Trigg** have all your submissions for the June 2021 Newsletter by 23rd May

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

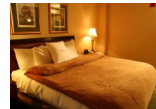
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