

St. John's Methodist Church Whitchurch

June 2021 Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

Over the last few months, a group of people from the church have been meeting up regularly to try and answer the question: "What does Mission look like at St. Johns?" These meetings are open to anyone who is interested, and while we don't have a clear picture yet, a process has been started - and will continue after I move on - to develop a Mission Plan for the church.

It's a question that churches everywhere are asking, or if not probably should be. As we emerge from the Pandemic, in some ways we might feel that "The Church" has never been more important - bringing comfort to those who have lost loved ones, offering a sense of community and companionship to those who are isolated, not just settling for things as they have been but pointing the way to something better to be found in the Grace of God shown through Christ Jesus. So, how do we let people know this? And where might God already be at work in our town?

As part of that, we are going to be asking people inside the church their opinions. What events have we missed during lockdown? What opportunities for new groups are there? How can we try and put ourselves at the heart of our community, and encourage those of all generations to join us? We are making an appeal to you all: share your wisdom, tell us your views, tell us as well how you might be able to help us in practical ways. Working together, St Johns can be a place of mission - will you help us to do God's will and be God's people, and share God's love with those around us?

God Bless

Rob

A big thanks to my fellow stewards for supporting me through my illness and the prayers from you all while my wife Margaret was poorly and eventually passed to our Lord.

It is so comforting to know we have such strong fellowship in our church, as we all find losing a loved one is heartbreaking, but it's heartwarming to know they have a place with our Lord

God bless

Rob (Hewson)

Christian Aid Week 2021



Thank you to everyone who donat-

ed to Christian Aid Week this year and to those who took part in the quiz - and to Rob Weir who hosted it. We collected £151 through envelopes in Church and others from St John's donated online either to Christian Aid directly or via the link to our online envelope. With the pew collections in St Alkmunds, Beacon and St George's and the money collected outside the Civic Centre we will be able to send more than £900 to the Christian Aid Week appeal. You can still make a donation by clicking on the link:

https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/whitchurch-christian-aid-group? channel=copy

Helen and Briony

STEWARD'S LETTER



Hi Folks

I write this in anticipation of the day Covid restrictions will be lifted and we can once again meet in song and fellowship.

I found this last lockdown more difficult and just as we were allowed to meet in small groups outside the weather decided to turn against us. Mother Nature these days leaves us puzzling as to when we can do our seed sowing and planting out. I certainly have had a few failures this year. O for some days of warmth and sunshine!

Over the last year our church family has greatly reduced some have passed into God's care, some have moved into care homes, others moved away to start new lives in new surroundings. Keep these people and their families in your prayers.

Very soon we shall say goodbye to Rob & his family as he moves on to Minister to a new congregation; we wish them well for their new life in Yorkshire. He will preach to us for the last time on 18^{th} July.

We have taken this opportunity to upgrade our rather dilapidated notice board in anticipation of the arrival of Rev. Donna. I thank my son who has donated his time to manufacture the new board and to Pat Morters for her time sign writing the board. The two cabinets are in the process of a major rebuild so will reappear soon.

Until we meet again without restrictions—God bless you and look after yourselves.

Pete

Churches Together in Whitchurch and Mission

At the meeting held on 4th May a number of items on the agenda touched on working as a group and challenges and opportunities to reach out into the community.

- Time Together This initiative was set up by Churches Together but running it has all but totally fallen to people from St Alkmund's (with the exception of Avril). So the challenge to the other churches is to widen the support to Time Together. I suggest that if you feel you might wish to get involved, you have a word with Avril to find out more.
- Once again the Chaplaincy Service for Whitchurch Hospital is not supported by two of the churches – one of which is St John's. There are a couple of hurdles to get over to do this very important role. NHS has a training course to get volunteer status and then Chaplaincy training. This is a very rewarding role and if you feel a calling to get involved let me know.
- Churches Together have agreed to have a service of thanksgiving and remembrance to celebrate coming out of the worst of the pandemic and to remember those who passed away. The event is set for the afternoon of Sunday 22nd August and we intend to hold it in the town park. The town will be invited and the suggestion is that people might bring a picnic. The details have yet to be decided including any supplementary aspects. I have agreed to represent St John's in the group headed by the curate, Sam Johnson, but we need to play our part in this community event and I will be asking members to come on board. Please let me know in advance if you are willing to participate.

Mike Nimmo

<u>PRAYER REQUESTS</u>



Pray for those known to us who are ill, housebound, in care, lonely, bereaved or in any other kind of need.

<u>St John's</u>

Give thanks for all those serving St John's in these difficult times. Pray for those who have moved away that they will find a new place of worship and happiness.

Our Town

Give thanks for the work of Churches Together in Whitchurch and pray for the joint work undertaken in our name. Pray for the new Town Councillors as they take up office, many

for the first time.

Our nation

Pray for wisdom for our leaders as they make decisions on our behalf.

Give thanks for our NHS, care homes, our essential services and the dedicated staff serving in them against difficult odds.

Pray for all who grieve the loss of loved ones.

Give thanks for the wonderful examples of heroism, kindness and care we see all around us in what often seems a dark world.

Give thanks for everyone involved in the production and the issue of the COVID19 vaccine.

Our world

Pray for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

Pray for climate change, and especially for the example of active -ists, without whom we might not be aware of the threats to our environment.

Pray for understanding and compassion amongst world leaders and people of all nations on issues such as immigration, refugee status, political prisoners, racial inequality, unequal trade rules and other divisive issues. "No price is set on the lavish summer;

June may be had by the poorest comer."

James Russell Lowell (1819-91)

-American Romantic poet, critic, editor, and diplomat

"A cold in the head in June is an immoral thing."

- Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942) Canadian Author

"The castle grounds were gleaming in the sunlight as though freshly painted; the cloudless sky smiled at itself in the smoothly sparkling lake, the satin-green lawns rippled occasionally in a gentle breeze: June had arrived."

- J.K. Rowling. British author, philanthropist, film producer, television producer, and screenwriter.

Justice & Peace:

Praying for the Climate Emergency Christian Aid: Call to Action

Thank you to everyone who has donated to Christian Aid this year and continued to pray for those affected by the Climate Emergency. Now Christian Aid is calling on us to **take action** and **sign a petition** asking the UK Government to use its role as host of the G7 and UN climate Summit, COP26 to:

• Increase financial support to the world's poorest countries and push for their debts to be cancelled so they can better confront the climate crisis and other urgent priorities that they face.

• Invest in a green recovery that leaves no-one behind – either in the UK or in the world's poorest communities.

• Stop the expansion of fossil fuel energy and step-up support to clean energy.

As the UK government responds to the social and economic impacts of coronavirus, it could go back to business as usual, making the climate crisis and inequality worse. Or it could take steps towards a better future, where everyone has enough to live life to the full, free from devastating climate chaos. The crisis has already arrived in the lives of millions of people around the world, hurting those who have done the least to cause it. Time is running out to limit the worst impacts of climate breakdown for millions more. We must make our voices heard.

From now on, every moment matters and every action counts in the fight for climate justice.

To sign the petition, go to the Christian Aid website by clicking on the link below or following the link on our church website or Facebook page:

https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-justice-2021

If you do not have access to a computer but would like to sign the petition then please speak to Helen or Briony and we will add your name on your behalf.

The Long and Short

On Monday 21st June, the longest day of the year, we would like you to participate in reading/listening to the shortest Gospel.

June is Bible Month and the turn of Mark's Gospel. In this month, we are encouraged to read Mark. A different way of doing this, is to read this out loud. Weather permitting, this will take place outside the church, starting at 7pm. Come and join in when you can and leave when convenient. We will be looking for people to read a chapter.

If you are not able to join us that evening, place yourself the challenge of reading the sixteen chapters over the 30 days, four chapters a week. We are also hoping that some of our Preachers will use this Gospel when leading a service in June.

SPICK & SPANNERS ROTA

June 3rd Einwen Kelly, Ruth Dawson & Sheila Latham

June 17th Nancy Millington & Gwen Reeves



MINUTES OF ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING – 12th May 2021

Before the meeting Rev Rob Weir led a time of prayer and reflection to remember

Ruth Mulliner, her family particularly Michael, and her many contributions to the life of St Johns.

In view of this sad news, the meeting was kept very short and discussions were held over to the next Church Council Meeting.

Chair: Rev Rob Weir (RWL) Secretary: Briony Myles-Hook

Present on zoom: Brenda Aumeer, Chris Crowther, Maurice Latham, Brian Acty, Sue Acty, Andrew Fawcett, Brian Faulkner, Dorothy Faulkner, Helen Trigg, Vic Trigg, Hazel Nimmo, Mike Nimmo, Rachel Dimelow, Maurice Latham, Norman Gollins, Elaine Gollins, Chris Crowther, Sarah Lunt **Apologies**: The following people were unable to attend on zoom and submitted votes and comments in advance. Pete Shingler, Elizabeth Shingler, Nancy Millington, Nancy Green, Beryl Posniak, Maurice Posniak, Helen Thompson, Joan Davidson, Audrey Darlington, Dot Charlesworth

Meeting opened at 7.20pm.

Minutes of Church AGM held on 26th May 2019 were agreed unanimously and signed by Rev Rob Weir as an accurate record with no amendments or matters arising.

Election of Stewards:

Andrew Fawcett Brian Faulkner Maurice Latham Peter Shingler Rob Hewson

The above stewards were thanked by RW and re-elected unanimously. Avril Bradfield was thanked for her service as a steward for the period ending 2020 as there was no Annual meeting this last year.

Election of Representatives to Church Council

Audrey Darlingto	on Brenda Au	meer	Dot Charles	sworth
Elaine Gollins	Lynn Fowler	Micha	ael Mulliner	
Norman Gollins	Peter Langley	Sarah	n Lunt	Sue Acty

The above Representatives were thanked by RW and elected unanimously

A full list of Church Council members is shown after these minutes.

Reports for Church AGM 2021 (see booklet distributed before meeting)

RW thanked all contributors for their roles in the life of the church particularly during the pandemic. Additional comments of thanks were received from Church members. All reports were accepted unanimously. Comments received will be discussed at the next Church Council Meeting on 23rd June.

Rev Rob Weir was thanked for all he has done in so many ways during his time at St John's, especially the way he has supported people during the pandemic and engaged with new technology. Briony was also thanked for her work preparing for the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm with everyone sharing the Grace.

St John's Church Council May 2021: Appointments

Chair: Rev Rob Weir.

Church Stewards Elected at Annual Meeting:

Maurice Latham (Senior Steward), Brian Faulkner, Pete Shingler (Property chair), Andrew Fawcett, Rob Hewson

Church Representatives Elected at Annual Meeting:

Audrey Darlington, Michael Mulliner, Lynn Fowler, Brenda Aumeer, Sarah Lunt, Peter Langley, Sue Acty, Dot Charlesworth, Elaine Gollins, Norman Gollins

Representatives Appointed by Church Council:

Church Treasurer Linda Weston Church Council Sec. Briony Myles-Hook Safeguarding Officer. None Pastoral & Safeguarding admin. Hazel Nimmo Family Committee. Dorothy Faulkner Worship. Rachel Dimelow Junior Church. Briony Myles-Hook Christian Aid/ Fairtrade. Helen Trigg Network & Events. Chris Crowther Toddler Group. None Property Steward. Vic Trigg Rep to Churches Together. Mike Nimmo

Representatives at Circuit:

Maurice Latham, Pete Shingler (Representing treasurer), Briony Myles-Hook Brian Faulkner (Representative at Synod)

Comments received for Church Reports May 2021

These will be discussed at the next Church Council Meeting on Wednesday 23rd June. If you have any more comments please let Briony or one of the stewards know before then.

All those who responded thanked Rob Weir for his hard work and support during the pandemic, with particular thanks for the way he has embraced new technology and enabled people to meet virtually when physical meetings were not possible. He will be much missed.

The stewards were also thanked and so were all the people who contributed reports and have "kept things going in these difficult times".

The following comments were also made and will be discussed at the next Church Council meeting.

Finance Report

- The possibility of a fabric fund / friends of St John's fund being a separate fund is an excellent idea as it would appeal to people whose focus is on Conservation of Historic Churches and allow much greater focus on Mission and Ministry, surely our most important role as a Church.
- The 'Friends of St. John's' sounds like a wonderful idea to me. I don't know about you, but I sometimes encounter people who seem to care about the building but do not want to be seen to be supporting a church. Having a 'Friends of St. John's' (or even better perhaps: a 'Friends of St. John's Building') could make them feel able to give which could perhaps boost church funds.

Like the idea of a fabric fund and / or Friends of St John's.

Property & Finance

- It is interesting that the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust awarded a grant to St John's and thanked its members for looking after the historic listed building.
- Thank you for all you guys do. I know just how much time and effort you put in and we are so grateful. I think that St. John's is wonderfully friendly which is part of the appeal to this young (will sort of young!) person. In terms of the Methodist church in general, I think there are two things that stop many younger people from being attracted to the Methodist family:
- they have a sense of the church as that place that will judge you for being bad. I guess what helps conquer this is our constantly showing that the church is / should be a place of love for all.
- 2) they are put off by the fact that so much about the church is so foreign to their everyday life. The more the church is like everyday life (e.g. modern language, fewer rituals) the better.

Well done for all the work you have done during lockdown.

Pastoral Committee

Grateful thanks to the Pastoral Visitors for "Keeping in Touch" with members – much appreciated.

Thank you so much to all pastoral visitors for the wonderful job they do. During

the pandemic, they will have been a wonderful help to so many. Thank you so much also to all who are not pastoral visitors but who play the role of pastoral visitors to friends both in the church and outside the church. During the last 14 months I have been keeping in touch with several people when delivering the Newsletter, although I'm not a Pastoral Visitor.

Worship Committee Report

- Grateful thanks for all the projects: knitted angels, mothering Sunday cards etc. All well received!
- Thank you everyone. The keeping in touch has been wonderful from the giving of angels, to the regular Zoom services, to everything else. It is so appreciated and will have made such a difference to so many.
- The worship Committee would welcome comments on the format of the Communion Service at Easter at which Communion was carefully served to those attending in their seats to reduce incidences of contact. Any feedback would be welcome so that we know how to plan for Communion in the future.
- What have we learnt from Lockdown in relation to the church? The one thing that I am much more aware of, is that when members are unable to attend church (as prior to lockdown), we as a church seemed to just accept this. I believe that as a church or as a Circuit, we should be offering something, Zoom, some written resource or a CD. We will raise this for discussion at the next Church Council meeting and would like feedback from individuals and families affected by this.

Junior Church

Sad that we don't have any children worshipping regularly. Great that the JC noticeboard is updated with eye-catching seasonal themes which worshippers pass when leaving the Church.

Family Committee Report

We look forward to the social events again

Network Report

Hopefully Network will start up again soon but could do with more people to help running it.

Mission Report

This is all so wonderful to see! Surely this is exactly what the church is about: trying to make a difference in the community and bringing help, hope and (where possible) joy to as many as possible. Thank you to all for all you are doing

Christian Aid/Fairtrade

It is absolutely wonderful to see St. John's so involved with Christian Aid and Fairtrade. I know we have major challenges sometimes in this country, but – on the whole – we are so very blessed compared to so many in the world.

It is a joy to be part of a community that are so outward looking and try to make a difference beyond just our own country. Thank you so much to all involved with this.

Churches Together in Whitchurch

- It is an excellent idea to have an inter-church Service and picnic for everyone in the town to celebrate coming through the pandemic and to remember those lost in it.
- Great to see the continued effort to work together. We are all one family not just the church in Whitchurch, but all people, everywhere. Thank you! And I look forward to the picnic!

Justice & Peace: Praying for calm in the Israel – Gaza conflict

As this newsletter goes to print, a ceasefire has been agreed between Israel and the militant Palestinian Hamas. Please join with other Christians and pray for lasting peace and an end to provocative actions in Jerusalem.

The following Statement was issued from the World Methodist Council, Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church in Britain, which are partners in the Jerusalem Methodist Liaison Office.

- We stand together to support the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem who have expressed their concern about continuing violence in Jerusalem and who have called on those in the international community to put an end to what they describe as 'provocative actions'.
- We have been horrified by the scenes of violence in east Jerusalem which threaten the fragility of the Holy City, and call on the Israeli Government to permanently halt the threatened evictions of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, where clashes have also taken place.
- We urge calm on all sides and ask the politicians to enable an environment where justice and healing can be experienced by all and we join with the Heads of Churches to continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We continue to stand in solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers who live and work in the Holy Land.

Servíces for June

6th Rev Rob Weir 13th Sue Tyson 20th Rev Rob Weir (Communion) 27th Brian Faulkner



Sound System Operators for June

6 th June	Andrew Fawcett
13 th June	Sarah Lunt
20 th June	Mike Nimmo
27 th June	Brian Acty

Collection Envelopes

For those making use of them, packs of envelopes for the next year starting from June 6^{th} are on the table at the back of the church. More of our members have turned to regular giving by bank transfer and this is much appreciated (and preferred!).

As usual I am happy to issue envelopes to anyone else. The church depends on regular giving to meet its ongoing costs and would welcome your commitment to either method.

Let me know if you are interested and I'll get you started!

Mike Nimmo

Stewards for June

June. 6th. Brian Faulkner.

June 13th. Robert Hewson.

June. 20th. Peter Shingler.

June 27th. Andrew Fawcett.

Last month's Quiz answers

"What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfilment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will ever fade."

From 'On Gardening' by Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) - influential British horticulturist, garden designer, artist and writer. She created over 400 gardens in the UK, Europe and the United States, and wrote over 1,000 articles for magazines such as *Country Life*.

"It is the month of June, The month of leaves and roses, When pleasant sights salute the eyes And pleasant scents the noses."

The Month of June — Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-67) American author, poet, magazine writer and editor.

Taxi

The taxi list is subject to change, as the Preaching Plan and others rotas were not available in time.

Hazel
Pete
Brian
Sheila



Could St John's become an Eco-church ?

As part of looking at the Mission of St John's in a world which is feeling the impact of climate change, the Mission Group, who have met several times now, felt that we need to learn more and have a more planned approach to minimising our effect on the environment.

If we learn more about how people here and throughout the world, are suffering now from flooding and drought as a result of the climate changing, it will spur us on to take more action to reduce our carbon emissions and so help to slow down and hopefully reverse the increase in temperature.

Also, learning more about environmental changes we can make and carrying them out, will enable the plants and animals we live alongside, to thrive again, as well as making our green spaces around the church and in our own gardens, beautiful and full of life.

We have taken some steps in the past; one of which was changing our lights in the church to LED bulbs and more recently changing our energy supplier to Octopus, a company that derives its energy from renewable sources.

To go further we need to have some way of assessing where we are up to now and looking at the next steps.

A Rocha UK (ARUK) is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world and is committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment. They have put together a survey document for churches. St John's has now been registered to use this and you can look at it under Church Groups/Eco church, on the St John's website.

A small group is now in the process of gathering information to look at what we do or have done, and seeing what our next steps might be. We will report back on progress in the next newsletter.

Helen Trigg

Encounters over 50 Years.

These are a few of the more memorable incidents of leading worship in this area.

<u>Holy Smoke!</u> Arriving at Hampton Heath to take a service, the Steward met me outside and said would I mind taking the service in the schoolroom? The church is full of smoke. The Fire Stove in the centre of the church had been churning out loads of smoke. We didn't have the Health & Safety regulations then but certainly you couldn't lead worship in the church with the (Holy) smoke.

<u>The Service started without me.</u> I arrived at Bulkeley to lead worship but on arrival the service had started! I wasn't the Planned Preacher. The Superintendent had telephoned me a couple of days prior to the service and asked me to stand in for another preacher. What I hadn't been told, was that they had changed the time of the evening service from 6.30pm to 6.00pm! As it was, I always tried to arrive about 20 minutes before the service, in this case 6.10pm. The Steward had waited 5 minutes for the preacher and when no one turned up, decided to sing a hymn. I arrived during this first hymn.

<u>Two Preachers.</u> I was taking the evening service at Bradley. I was sitting on the front pew (no Vestry) and about to move into the pulpit, when the door opened and another preacher arrived! I said "what are you doing here" (I knew the person very well). He thought he was planned there and on looking at the plan, this person found he was at Burwardsley. He made a quick exit, in order to get to the right church.

<u>Difficult Service</u>. I was planned at Aston to take a Mother's Day Service. This was only 4 weeks after the death of my own mother (over 40 years ago). It was suggested that I shouldn't take this service, as it might be too emotional for me. In those early days Preachers took very seriously the responsibility of conducting services as appointed by the Superintendent.

Questioned the choice of Hymns. I was preaching at Shocklach.

In those days, the Organist received the hymns when you arrived. I can't remember my theme for the service but it involved the 'whole day'. Being an evening service, I was starting with New Every Morning. The Organist thought I had given her the wrong Hymn Number!

<u>Morning, Afternoon and Evening.</u> I had been invited to take the Sunday School Anniversary Service at Far End, Whixall. I can still remember my text from over 40 years ago. John Ch 3, verses 14 & 15. The morning was Moses lifting up the Serpent in the Wilderness. Afternoon: Jesus lifted up (on the cross). Evening: All may have Eternal Life. Take a look at these verses.

<u>Grace.</u> I was preaching at Newtown in the Wem Circuit, taking an afternoon and evening service. With others, I was invited for tea at a local home. Round the large table were at least 14 people. The host asked me to say Grace. Most people heard this request, except two, who carried on a conversation sat at right angles to me. The much older person then realized that I was waiting to say Grace. She suddenly bowed her head and closed her eyes (I'll call her Mary). The lady who had been talking to her thought the worst, Mary, Mary, are you all right, Mary. How embarrassing for the lady. We all had a good laugh about it afterwards.

Brian Faulkner.

What if?

What if 'treat others the way you would want to be treated' was our first thought when we walked out the door in the morning?

What if 'love your enemies' was the basis of our criminal justice system?

What if 'love your neighbour as yourself' was the underpinning of our foreign policy?

Simon Cross (author, activist, researcher and chaplain)

"June suns, you cannot store them."

- A.E. Housman (1859-1936)

English classical scholar and poet

There are two seasons in Scotland: June and Winter.

Billy Connolly—Scottish comedian, singer and actor

"This is June, the month of grass and leaves . . . already the aspens are trembling again, and a new summer is offered me."

> - Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) American naturalist, essayist, poet, and philosopher

July/August 2021 Newsletter

Please let Mike Nimmo have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 18th June.



"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

(Maya Angelou - poet, historian, author, actress, playwright & civil-rights activist)

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

The Dalai Lama

