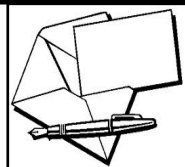




***St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch***

***Newsletter
October 2021***

Message from the Manse



Hello all,

Autumn is my favourite season! There is something comforting about wearing my favourite knitted cardigan and fluffy slippers at the end of the day and snuggling up on the sofa with a good book. For me, the beauty of creation is all around us in Autumn. There is something magical about watching the leaves changing colour turning from green, to red and to a golden yellow before they fall to the ground and we hear them crunch beneath our feet. In a time when the harvest is all safely gathered in; the land has been drilled with seeds for next year; Autumn is the time we pause and thank God for the blessings he has given us over the last year and pray for the year ahead.

In our church life the idea of planting and harvesting is one we can relate to. It is also the theme used in the Circuit's Vision Document; A Faithful and Fruitful Future, which can be found on the circuit website. This document asks us to reflect on the harvest we are gathering in and look for places that perhaps need some pruning and nurturing but also to celebrate what has flourished. This might seem quite difficult, especially after the last 18 months of living through a pandemic but let me share with you what I've seen over just a few short weeks.

There is much to give thanks for. We have been welcomed into a lovely church community and already feeling settled in our new home. Friendship, love, compassion, and fellowship are certainly things that are **flourishing** at St Johns. These qualities make up the **good soil** in which to **plant** God's **seeds**.

The pastoral committee had become somewhat overwhelmed with very long lists and, with people needing to step down from post, they were concerned about how the pastoral care

of the congregation and community who meet at church were going to be met. They had already done a lot of thinking about this before I arrived, so in effect the land had already been **cut back**, but now they needed some stakes to be put into the ground to help them **grow** stronger. So a new pastoral system has been formed. We recognised together that the pastoral care of each other was an integral part of our discipleship and so now as a whole church community we are responsible for watching over each other in love and to inform someone from the pastoral team if anyone is in need of some extra **nurturing**. This should enable us all to **grow** well together.

The launch of Bumps, Babies and Toddlers has seen a lot of **pruning** and **fertilising**. Cupboards are being cleaned out, toys are being sorted and lots of new ideas are being shared. While it's still early days there are signs of **new shoots** that will hopefully lead to a good **crop** this year.

New shoots are also wanting to push through. I have already been asked by three people if we can have a prayer group and a bible study. There is a zoom prayer each Monday for the next few weeks for Climate Justice (see Briony for details). These are all **seeds that** are being sewn for new ways of how we can respond and **supportive branches** of prayer are signs that as a church community we care for others and want a **fruitful harvest** for all.

I hope you too can see the promising signs of hope of a good harvest to come.

Hope is another theme of this season.

The evening of the 31st October might be a night, for some, of ghosts and monsters and all things that make us afraid. There are many things in this world we can be afraid of, but the very next day we have All Saints Day to remind us that good has overcome all evil. Remember we are not alone, God is with us, Christ has broken through all darkness and shines out into our world. The lighted pumpkin reminds us of

this, it contains a candle, the sign of Christ shining out to us.

As a mum of three children I know how hard it is to avoid the pull of the secular world to get involved with Halloween, but there are ways as Christians I think we can still get involved but share a different message. This Halloween we will be lighting up the manse with the light of Christ, and we will be having pumpkins that will shine out because Christ has come into the world, there is no more darkness and there is much to celebrate!

I hope this October you take time to give thanks for the Harvest that has been brought in and that you have hope for the seasons that lie ahead.

Have a blessed October,
Donna

Steward's Letter



Welcome to our new Minister, Rev. Donna, and to readers who have just joined the Bumps, Babies & Tots (B.B.T) group.

This led me to think about CHANGE. One of our well-known older hymns is 'Through all the changing scenes of life' and this is what we have all encountered during the last 18 months. These changes have affected all in various ways. Our shopping habits, contact with family, holidays. Our Sunday Worship has not been excluded. We have been curtailed, Zoom, shorter services, no singing. Church, social events, Fund Raising and many meetings all ceased. Life has changed as no one has ever experienced and you, as members and friends have many years to compare with.

This has given us opportunity to stop and think, where do we

as God's people place our energies. This has been taking place under the auspice of the Mission Group. If you have not yet joined these conversations (it is not a formal group), can I at least encourage you to do so, or at least to think and pray and talk to your Church Stewards as we try establishing the way forward.

Change is part of our Christian heritage. We pray that together Jesus will keep changing each of us into the people Jesus wants us to be, as we share our journey while we are on this earth.

I close with a part of an old chorus:

Yesterday, today, forever
Jesus is the same
All may change but Jesus never
Glory to his name.

In all our changes, Jesus remains the same, our friend and companion on the road we are walking.

Brian.

Message from Rev. Donna ...

Whilst I am still settling in and getting to know people, my days off are changing to allow time to be present and visit different groups that are happening over the missional area. I thought it would help to share these.

Friday 1st October

Friday 8th October

Friday 15th October

Holiday: Monday 18th—Sunday 24th October

Monday 25th October

Ride & Stride Report

Once again, the pandemic restricted this event. However, we did open the Church from 10am to 6pm with support from several of the congregation who were 'on duty' in case anyone came in. We did have a couple of visitors, although neither were anything to do with 'Ride & Stride'!

Sara Lunt and I set forth from St. John's around 10.20am, having walked round to St. Alkmund's to log in there. Our next port of call was Bettisfield Methodist—a delightful little chapel, but not open. We continued on along the A495 to Welshampton, (*St. Michael & All Angels*) where we met a couple seeking 'the kitchen in a cupboard' at Cobmere. We felt that this was a misprint and directed them to Colemere.

We continued into Ellesmere (*St. Mary's*) where we encountered a gentleman on the same mission as we were. I thought he looked familiar and it turned out to be the person who came to St. John's to present us with a certificate from SHCT a few weeks back.

We then doubled back and headed for Lyneal with Colemere (*St. John the Evangelist*) and there found the couple we'd met at Welshampton and saw the 'kitchen in a cupboard' which was very impressive and would look good and be useful at the back of our church! We had some very tasty cake and a welcome cup of coffee here. From here we followed some winding, narrow lanes to Cockshutt (*St. Simon & St. Jude*).

Myddle (*St. Peter's*), where we found some volunteers tidying up the large churchyard, was next on the list and we thought it was a very attractive village. We then headed for Clive (*All Saints*) and managed to park at the bottom of the path leading up to the church. Very conveniently

there was a seat by the lychgate so we sat and ate our picnic lunches. On to Grinshill (*All Saints*)—the lane is still as bumpy as it was last year.

Lastly we called at Moreton Corbet (*St. Bartholomew's*) as Sarah was keen to see if a plaque dedicating the organ with her father's name on it was still there—it was so photos were duly taken. By this time we needed to be heading back to Whitchurch after a most enjoyable time exploring the highways and byways of our beautiful county.

Thank you to everyone who sponsored us. We raised £300. Added to this is another £50 which Tom Kelly donated as, at the last minute, he thought he would take part. He drove round some local churches and then went into Shrewsbury and walked round some there. Thank you, Tom. Also, thank you to Sarah for accompanying me. This money will be sent to SHCT and, in due course, we will receive half of it back for our Heritage fund.
Chris Crowther



"Kitchen in a Cupboard" at St. John the Evangelist Church at Lyneal with Colemere

Pastoral Committee Report

On 7th September members of the Pastoral Committee met with Rev Donna in order to discuss pastoral care within our church community.

Currently here in Whitchurch, we have operated the traditional Methodist system of pastoral visitors each with a group of people with whom to keep in touch and visit. This group of pastoral visitors has shrunk over the years as people have moved away or became unable to visit due to advancing years and, more recently because of COVID19. The number of people each "Pastoral Visitor" was supposed to visit or keep in contact with grew and there was recognition that we were not fulfilling the role as we might.

On reading various pieces on the Methodist website, I became aware that other churches were experiencing similar issues and had started to think of alternative ways of caring for members of their church community.

What comes across is that in many churches a more informal "pastoral link system" supported by a small pastoral team has been introduced. In responding to the Gospel of God's love in Christ, we are **all** called in Christian Fellowship to look after each other and many of you will already be doing this with other individuals or groups within the church. This might be face-to-face over a coffee; a chatty phone call, by email or send an uplifting message or card.

Obviously the difficulty we would have will be to make sure no-one is forgotten about; whether they be members or adherents who attend church regularly, or those who can only attend occasionally and those who cannot attend at all due to ill-health.

A more formal way of proceeding came from looking at other churches where a number of people became Pastoral Links most of whom are "in touch" with at least 3 other people. The Pastoral Links are supported by a small pastoral team consisting of the minister, pastoral secretary and a couple of other pastoral visitors and any concerns would be taken to

one of those as appropriate.

So how do we proceed – what are the next steps? I would appreciate feedback on how you think we could introduce an appropriate Pastoral care system for our church always keeping at the forefront of our minds that in John 13 v 34 Jesus commands that “We love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples”.

Hazel

A BIG THANK YOU TO SUE DAVIES

After almost 40 years of being on the Family Committee and at one stage being Secretary, Sue has decided it is now time to call it a day and has resigned.

What an amazing amount of time and service Sue has given to this Church in this role. She has been a really reliable, dedicated person, who has been most helpful and obliging and has always been there. Sue and I have worked alongside each other in this role since the 1980s and I, and the Family Committee, will miss her very much. She has been our Treasurer too, having taken over from Jane.

A big **THANK YOU Sue** for everything that you have done. We shall miss you.

Dorothy.

“...Fresh October brings the pheasants
Then to gather nuts is pleasant...”
(From The Seasons by Sara Coleridge)

Bumps Babies & Toddlers (BBT)

BBT is now up and running! Come and join us each Monday from 9.30 - 11.30 for a story, songs, prayers and craft as well as coffee & biscuits and free play. The story this month is The Snail & the Whale - have a look at our display board. If you would like to help please speak to Briony.

Nice to see you - to see you nice!!

We had a very pleasant few days in the Potteries last month. We also came to Whitchurch and caught up with some of our friends from church.

We are sorry we could not manage to see you all, but the time just slipped by! We had relatives and friends to see in Stoke so it was a matter of cramming it all in – it felt like a Royal tour at times!! Anyway, next time we are over there we will make sure we see those we did not manage to see this time

We are fine, still getting used to life in the 'flat lands' which have a certain charm of their own.

We send love to all at St John's and wish you well in the new church year and beyond.

Sheila and Jim x

"Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we gain in fruits"
(Quote by Samuel Butler)

Justice & Peace:

Praying for the Climate Emergency

Weekly Zoom prayer

Our weekly prayer meeting continues on zoom each Monday at 2.30pm. If you would like to join with members from other Churches in Whitchurch to pray for our planet in the run up to COP26 in Glasgow, please email Briony for the link. We will take it in turns to lead each session and share a short film to help us bring to life the issues the world is facing.

A Prayer from Christian Aid

Father of creation,
thank you for all that you have made;

For the stunning diversity of humankind,
for the beauty of every flower head,
the abundance of a healthy harvest.

Help us to tread lightly and live wisely,
remembering our place in the great web of creation.

Challenge us where we need to change our lifestyles,
Convict us when we need to speak out to amplify the voices
of those
who are so often ignored.
Give us the courage to speak truth to power.

Send us out to play our part in your work of restoring your
world,
healing broken relationships,
working for justice and loving all people.

Amen

Afghan family support group

Members from St Alkmunds, St Johns and the Beacon Church have twice met with Afghans linked to Whitchurch at the Watergate Centre to provide friendship support and practical help with their very pressing concerns over some of their close family members still in danger in Afghanistan. Please pray for them all.

Prayer for Afghanistan

You know the plans I have for you, says the Lord; plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to offer you hope and a future.

Gracious and holy God,

We come to you with the situation in Afghanistan heavy on our hearts. It is a situation so complicated, and so fast moving, that it is difficult for us to know what to say or how to think.

We hold before you the people of the country, those who stay and those who flee; those living with terror and afraid for the future; those who, because of this latest turn of events, will never be able to live the fullness of life that is your purpose. We hold all this before you.

We hold open to you the future: the world leaders with a role in shaping what happens next; the many who are becoming refugees and the people who will be called upon to offer them safety and a future; the impact of these local events on our world story. We hold all this open to you.

We hold in your love all those known to us whose lives have been bound up in the recent story of Afghanistan. We think of all those who have served there in our Armed Forces, those who were injured and those who

did not return. We hold in our hearts all those for whom this is a time of special grieving and confusion, and those who minister to them. We hold all these in your love.

Rock of ages, at this difficult time we lean into your timelessness.

Turn us, and all people, to your good purposes for your world. Grant courage and wisdom, hope and a future.

Amen

Barbara Easton, *Vice-President of the Methodist Conference*

Save the Date Saturday 6th November

Although we won't be travelling to Glasgow during COP26 we are planning an activity with other groups in Whitchurch to share how important it is for Global Leaders to make real commitments towards Climate Justice.

More information to follow

Briony & Helen

Message from Circuit MWiB

Thank you to those of you who replied to my previous email re circuit MWiB. After considering your replies and speaking with our superintendent Rob Hilton, the decision has been made that MWiB in our circuit will end. A report has been sent to the Circuit Meeting. Rob Hilton has asked me to pass on, to you all, his thanks for all your work and support over the years. I, too, would like to thank you all and, as I say in my report, I hope and pray that it won't be too long before the reins of MWiB are taken up again by younger, enthusiastic women.

God Bless, Bronwen (Degg)

PRAYER REQUESTS



- As we are near the beginning of the new Methodist year, pray for our minister, Rev. Donna and her family as they settle in.
- Pray for all our church leaders as they deal with the day to day problems of running the building.
- Pray for the newly formed group, **Bumps, Babies and Tots** as it continues to grow.
- Pray that the Mission Group will find new ways for our Church to move forward, providing help where it is needed in our community.
- Pray for any of our members who may be in poor health.
- Use the prayers for Justice & Peace, Climate Emergency and Afghanistan that are elsewhere in this newsletter.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next Church Council Meeting will be arranged soon—watch the website calendar. Items to be discussed include our response to the God in Love Unites Us. You are very welcome to attend as an observer but only Church Council Members will be able to vote on decisions that are required.

Dates for your diary for October

Friday 1st	church decorating
Saturday 2nd	10.00am—12 noon Coffee morning
Sunday 3rd	10.30am Harvest Festival
Monday 4th	6.30pm Harvest Supper
Thursday 7th	10.30am Ladies coffee (<i>see Pew News</i>)
Sunday 17th	4pm Zoom service (<i>speak to Avril if you want to join in</i>)

Regular dates

BBT— every Monday, 9.30-11.30am

Join us on a Monday....



There will be a ***New Group*** meeting on the first Monday of each Month from November.

Come along to St Johns on Monday 1st November
1pm-4pm



Coffee & Company * Tea & Table Tennis *
Biscuits & Board Games



All are welcome

Taxi!

October 3rd	Pete
10th	Brian
17th	Sheila
24th	David
31st	Hazel

Bumps, Babies & Tots for October

<u>General</u>	<u>Tea</u>	<u>Craft</u>	<u>Extra</u>
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October

4th	Briony	Mike & Hazel	Helen	Donna
11th	Briony	Sarah	Dot	Brenda
18th	Briony	Brenda	Dot	Helen

November

1st	Briony	Mike & Hazel	Helen	Chris
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Please arrive at Church for 9.15am

SPICK & SPANNERS for October

October	7th	Nancy Millington & Gwen Reeves
	21st	Elizabeth Shingler, Briony Myles-Hook & Linda Jenkins

Preachers for October

3rd	Church Members (Rev. Donna self-isolating)
10th	Brian Faulkner
17th	Michael Valentine
24th	Heather Staniland
31st	LA

Stewards for October

3rd	Brian Faulkner
10th	Peter Shingler
17th	Maurice Latham
24th	Robert Hewson

Sound for October

3rd	Andrew Fawcett
10th	Brian Acty
17th	Norman Gollins
24th	Mike Nimmo
31st	LA

Tea & Coffee Rota for October

October: 3rd	Sue Davies & Dorothy Faulkner
10th	Rachel Dimelow & Linda Weston
17th	Brenda Aumeer & Nancy Millington
24th	Lynn Fowler & Helen Thompson
31st	Elizabeth & Pete Shingler

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November Newsletter

Please let **Vic Trigg** have all your submissions for the November 2020 Newsletter by 23rd October

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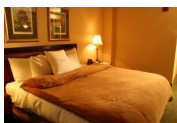
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