

Newsletter

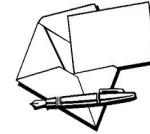


**St. John's Methodist
Church Whitchurch**

February 2022

Message from Rev. Donna Broadbent-Kelly February

Hello Friends,



There is a story told in the Bible about the Good Samaritan; it's told by Jesus in answer to the question 'Who is my neighbour?' after a rich young man has been reminded that his religious law asks him to

...

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' And to 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12:30-31

The moral of story responds that your neighbour is the one who is seemingly least deserving of your love and help that you can find; whenever and wherever they are – and everyone else too – including yourself.

There is an interpretation of this reading that goes like this:

Love your neighbour: your homeless neighbour, your Muslim neighbour, your black neighbour, your gay neighbour, your white neighbour, your Christian neighbour, your atheist neighbour, your racist neighbour, your addicted neighbour and so on.

Because if you love all of your neighbours and they love you, then we will also want the very best for each other and then maybe we can heal the divisions in our world that are every bit as deep as those between the Jews and the Samaritans of the original story.

The reality is though, that loving others is hard, especially when the person we are called to love is so difficult, or we find it hard to see past the difference of opinion or they have caused us harm. Loving the enemy is no easy task.

But what about those we find easy to love – surely there's no issues there?

Love it or loath it, February 14th is a day when we are to declare to our spouses that we love them! While I do like to receive a little something, I am always left asking myself why is it only on Valentine's Day that it is okay for us to declare our love for someone? Telling someone you love them is often met with comments that you are being too soft or gushy. It can also be a cause for embarrassment! Telling your teenage son, you love him and I hope he has a great day at the school gates is a complete no no!

Cont.,

And why when we do declare our love does it have to be so expensive? The joke is that men everywhere are at risk of being put in the dog house if they don't shower their beloved with gifts on special occasions, but can't show gestures of love the rest of the year for risk of suspicion – the raised eyebrow for example when he walks in with a bunch of flowers and it's not your birthday, anniversary or any other special day. And the simple acts of love such as making a cuppa or drawing a heart on the shower screen are just not enough or looked over. Is loving someone meant to have so many rules attached to it on when and how it can be expressed?

So what is real love like? Well I think we have to turn to one who loved us first and taught us what love is. We turn to God.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

“Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. And these three remain, faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love”

Love in 1 Corinthians 13 is astonishingly practical, and other-person-centered. This is God's way of love. Love is more than a feeling, it's a way of living. Love shows kindness. Love shows patience. Love seeks the good of others. But love is also practical – it's not the kind of cotton wool love but one that encourages, the one that rubs your knee when you fall off a bike and tells you to get back on it, be more careful and runs alongside you. Love that encourages us to take risks and challenges us – a love that wants the best for us, and wants us to reach our goals. God's love for us is never ending, it heals, encourages, offers hope and forgiveness.

Cont.,

This is the love that we are called to offer. At times it can be really easy and a joy; but at other times its challenging and extremely difficult.

Hospitality, welcome and fellowship are ways the church responds to its neighbours. Sunday mornings are the central focus with worship and a time of fellowship afterwards, but our church is also the place where we welcome the families and young children to BBT on a Monday morning, and we gather as friends in the afternoon for games, conversation, and friends at More. Our zoom services offer an opportunity for those not able to join us, and for them to still feel part of our church life. Our church is also a place where we welcome people from the community for funerals, weddings and baptisms; we offer them a place of love and prayer as we journey alongside them in their moments of grief but also celebration.

We actually never know who is going to walk through our doors. I was reminded of this twice this Christmas. During the Christmas tree festival, I met a lady who had lost her children and seeing the trees and just being present in the church had helped. On Christmas Day a man sat in a pew and wept throughout the service, afterwards he said, I dread Christmas but I knew here I can be myself, I'm not going to be judged and I'm not alone.

I hope this month you are reminded of the love God has for you and as a church and Christian family, may we continue to work together to demonstrate God's perfect love to all.

With blessings,
Rev. Donna

Our Snowman

Snow fell silent in the night
Leaving landscape crisp and white
Blizzard blows at window pane
Hedge high drifts in country lane
Children up at crack of dawn
Made a snowman on the lawn
Eyes of coal, carrot nose
Hat and coat were my old clothes
They looked at him, then gave a grin
He's not like you, no hairy chin
This person standing on our lawn
Made of snow he was not born
Peeping out that frosty night
Moon and stars were shining bright
Casting shadows all around
But our snowman made no sound
He just stands on frozen feet
He'll disappear with lots of heat
Powerful sun took him away
There's nothing left I'm sad to say
Now we wonder for a while
Did he really give a smile?

John Albert Griffiths

Stewards Letter Feb 2022

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year & Pray that 2022 may see the end of the pandemic so we may all get back to a normal life? How good it was to be able to spend time with family & friends at Christmas & New Year. It has felt strange not being able to greet people with a handshake or a hug, or seeing the Minister standing by the exit from the Church & shaking hands as we leave. Have we reached a new normal or will these things ever come back. Over two years we have lost many members for various reasons & it's been strange not to be able to say our last goodbyes to members who have passed away. Elizabeth & I have lost 2 family members to Covid during 2021, and not being able to attend funerals or personally meet & hold our relatives has been difficult, which also applies to some of you.

During the last part of the year we have been able to bring back some parts of Church Life, let's pray that this can continue. We learnt a new word ZOOM but for many of you this did not allow you to participate in worship & for some it cannot replace being in fellowship together in St. John's or replace taking communion in front of the Alter. Elizabeth & I had hoped to be part of her brother's funeral by using Zoom but gremlins struck at the church & we were unable to see a large part of the service. I have watched people trying to get onto a zoom service or a meeting & get frustrated when technology fails. It will never beat being physically together in worship & fellowship. What a wonderful sight St John's looked during the Christmas tree festival & over the Christmas period. A big thank you to all who put the time & effort into making things happen, allowing us to raise some money to support the Midlands Air Ambulance & the Church Property fund.

We may not see our New Minister the Reverend Donna as much as we would like due to the demands the Circuit have put on her. Please offer her your support & prayers as she settles into this difficult role.

Continued overleaf,

Cont:

We have introduced two new items to our Mission for St John's (BBT's & MORE on Mondays). Spread the word around your friends & neighbours so as we can show the love of God to our town. If you have any others Ideas for mission please speak to one of the stewards.

God Bless you all.
Pete



Preachers for February

Feb 6th: Local Arrangement.

Feb 13th: Rev. Malcolm Lorimer

Feb 20th: Rev. Donna Marie Broadbent-Kelly

Feb 27th: Rev. Ian Duffy.

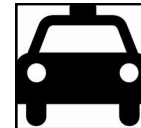
Stewards for February

6th February Andrew Fawcett,

13th February Maurice Latham,

20th February Brian Faulkner,

27th February Peter Shingler,



Spick and Spanners Rota



Feb 3rd— Elizabeth Shingler, Briony Myles-Hook & Linda Weston
Feb 17th—Mike Nimmo, Vic Trigg & Dorothy Faulkner

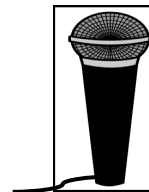
Tea and Coffee Rota

Feb 6th- Sue Davies & Dorothy Faulkner
Feb 13th – Sheila Latham & Dot Charlesworth
Feb 20th— Chris Crowther & Elaine Gollins
Feb 27th— Rachel Dimelow & Linda Weston



Sound for February

6th Feb: Sarah Lunt
13th Feb: Andrew Fawcett
20th Feb: Mike Nimmo
27th Feb Norman Gollins



The Sistine Madonna by Raphael
(The picture in the Guild Room)



I've been doing a bit of research into the picture we have in the Guild Room on the chimney breast. It's a copy of The Sistine Madonna painted by Raphael and the original hangs in Dresden in the Old Masters Picture Gallery. The work measures over 2.5 metres high and almost 2 metres wide so it's a very big painting. It was commissioned by Pope Julius 11 in 1512 for the church of San Sisto, Piacenza and the painting was one of the last Madonna's painted by Raphael. As such it is known as a very important painting. It was relocated in 1754 to Dresden after being purchased by Augustus 111 of Poland and remained there until the second world war.

It was rescued from destruction during the bombing of Dresden in World War II. The painting was said to be stored, with other works of art, in a tunnel in Saxon Switzerland. Considering the size of the painting and the weight of the frame this must have been quite a feat!

The painting was taken from there to Russia by the Russian Red Army in 1946 and went temporarily on restricted exhibition in the Pushkin, along with some of the other treasures the Soviets had retrieved.

It was then transported in a box on a tented flatcar to Moscow.

But in 1955, after the death of Joseph Stalin, the Soviets decided to return the art to Germany, "for the purpose of strengthening and furthering the progress of friendship between the Soviet and German peoples."

It has been in Dresden ever since.

A prominent element within the painting, the winged angels beneath Mary are famous in their own right. The angels of this nature are known as putti. As early as 1913 Gustav Kobbé declared that "no cherub or group of cherubs is so famous as the two that lean on the altar top indicated at the very bottom of the picture." Heavily marketed, they have been featured in stamps, postcards, T-shirts, socks, and wrapping paper. These putti have inspired legends of their own. According to a 1912 article in *Fra Magazine*, when Raphael was painting the *Madonna* the children of his model would come in to watch. Struck by their posture as they did, the story goes, he added them to the painting exactly as he saw them.

Dot Charlesworth

(I plan to put a version of this on the wall beside the picture for information)

Morning worship Sunday 20th February

The Methodist Conference in June 2021 agreed that Methodist Churches could now register their buildings to hold same-sex marriages. As a church we gathered together to discuss how we felt about this. We decided to have an indicative vote, the results are below.

Yes - 17

No - 5

This vote indicated an overwhelming majority for us as a church to allow same-sex marriages to be conducted on our premises. However, we appreciate that whilst those on the church council have been given authority by the wider church to discern the way forward regarding church life; we felt further discussions with the wider church on how they felt was important.

On Sunday 20th February we will be discussing, thinking, listening and praying about the God In Love Unites us report that has been produced by the Methodist Church on this subject and discerning together where we are at. Please do join us at the usual worship time for these important conversations which will form part of our worship that morning.

If you would like a copy of the report if you haven't seen it yet, copies are available online or speak to Donna who has a copy you can borrow. If you would like to talk further but in confidence do come and speak to me.

with blessings Rev. Donna

More on Mondays

MORE on Mondays will resume in February and the dates are,

Feb 7th & 21st 1 to 4. pm

Please come along. All Welcome.

Coffee Morning

We will be having a Coffee Morning at the Civic Centre on Friday the 11th of February.

We need the following items to make it a success;

Raffle Prizes
Tombola prizes
Bric a Brac
Cakes

All contributions welcome.

We need volunteers to help on the stalls, please speak to Pete if you can help.

Pete Shingler

Chair of District:
The Revd Helen R Kirk
498 Crewe Road Wistaston
Crewe
CW2 6PZ
01270 668262
email: chair@chestokemethodists.com
27 January 2022

Dear Friends,

During the last two years, we have experienced a seismic trauma as a society as we have lived with the Covid pandemic. The resulting lockdowns and restrictions have had a huge impact on our lives, the communities in which we live and our churches. For some of our churches new opportunities for mission and outreach are tentatively emerging whilst others are facing the possibility of closure. It is a time of deep uncertainty, added to which those who lead are feeling exhausted and worn out. During the summer, the District Policy Committee formulated the areas of work that we feel are priorities for our resource and energies. These were approved at our Autumn Synod and are as follows: To Nurture lay leaders To Grow new ways of being church To Cultivate just communities We are very conscious of not adding to the burden of already weary people; instead we have viewed these priorities as a way of enabling churches and circuits to discern their future mission. The DPC also felt very strongly that the foundation of all that we do should be prayer. With all of this in mind, we will be holding a weekly District prayer meeting which will take place for 30 minutes each Thursday from 6:00 to 6:30pm on Zoom. The first meeting will take place on Thursday 3 February and the Zoom link is below. For those online:

[https://zoom.us/j/93724333301?](https://zoom.us/j/93724333301?pwd=cStUYUxsMVFZSU1LNGlORVd5NklpQT09)
pwd=cStUYUxsMVFZSU1LNGlORVd5NklpQT09 Meeting ID: 937
2433 3301 Passcode: 841588 To join by telephone, note that calls are
made to a London number, so please check what you will be charged be-
fore calling: dial 020 3695 0088 Meeting ID: 937 2433 3301 # Participant
ID: # Meeting Passcode: 841588 # This is an opportunity to pray for our
church, our mission and our society. All are welcome. If you are unable to
join us, why not take a few moments to pray wherever you are.

Every Blessing, Helen

**JOIN THE WHITCHURCH COMMUNITY CHOIR
& ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF SINGING:**

REDUCE STRESS
IMPROVE MENTAL WELLBEING
LIFT THE MOOD
FEEL HAPPIER
LET GO OF WOES AND ENJOY SINGING
ENJOY THE COMPANY
BE PART OF SOMETHING GOOD AND UPLIFTING
COMBATING LONELINESS AND ISOLATION
GOOD FOR THE MIND, BODY & SOUL

THE CHOIR MEETS AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH ON A MONDAY NIGHT FROM 7 PM UNTIL 8:30 PM. Come and enjoy singing as well as a hot drink and biscuit with your fellow singers. No audition - all ages and abilities welcome. Singing for enjoyment with option to sing in local performances.

The choir is meeting again for the Spring term on Monday 10th January, 2022 until and including Monday 28th March with the exception of Monday 21st February.

Please just turn up

Come along and try it for a couple of weeks and then if you would like to join, subscriptions can be paid in total or quarterly.

Time Together

Time Together is a group for those with memory loss and their carers. We meet on the first and thirds Wednesdays of the month at Bargates Hall from 2.00-4.00pm for a social afternoon in a relaxed atmosphere. Sometimes there are games, sometimes we have an entertainer, sometimes we just like to chat and laugh with each other.

We always have very nice cakes!

Please contact Rev. Judy Hunt

Action For Children

I am never surprised by the generosity of the members of St John's who have Action For Children collecting boxes. In the period of July to September 2021 I collected and sent £340.82 to London on your behalf.

In normal times I usually collect the boxes at this time of year, but as it's only a few months since the last collection I propose the delay this year's collecting till the summer period as last year

However if there's anyone else in the church congregation who would like a collecting box, remember that £0.50 per week ends up as a donation per year of £26.

Please contact me and I will be delighted to provide a box.

Thank you in anticipation
David Whiteley

Zoom Services

The Zoom services are for you when you, or someone you know, is unable to get to church. It's for you when you would like to 'visit' and perhaps meet up with old friends who you haven't seen for a while. They are held roughly once a month at 4.00pm on a Sunday afternoon.

Contact Avril for details and a link, or to go on our email list so you have the information handy.

March 2022 Newsletter

Please let Chris Crowther have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 20th February.

Dates for your Diary

February 7th : MORE on Monday 1-4pm

Wednesday 9th February: Church Council 7pm.

Thursday 10th February: Ladies Coffee Morning at Jones's Coffee House

February 11th: Civic Centre Coffee Morning

February 21st: MORE on Mondays 1-4 pm

TAXI

February	6th	Sheila
	13th	Hazel
	20th	David
	27th	Brian

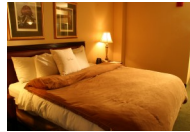


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*“people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

Maya Angelou

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