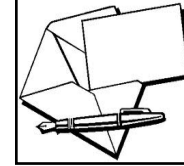




***St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch***

***Newsletter
March 2022***

Message from the Manse



Hello friends,

I have never really been a clean freak but I do like things to be tidy; although I am a little obsessed with Zoflora if I'm honest. Since moving in, things have been upside down with a new kitchen being fitted and then flooding downstairs; so getting things organised and tidy has been challenging. I think I inherited this from my mum, who we tease and call "The Bleach Queen". Over the last few years I think there has been a bit of an excitement around cleaning amongst mums, first there was Mrs Hinch; then a host of every day women took to social media with cleaning tips and then Marie Kondo did a television series on Netflix. For those of you who have yet to come across her, Marie Kondo is a Japanese tidying and decluttering expert who has made millions by encouraging us to find joy and peace in cleaning and organising our homes. Amongst her tips is her advice on storing clothes upright (life changing by the way) and instructing her followers to take all items of one category and pile them in a heap before holding each and determining whether it sparks joy. But it was her advice to thank each piece you choose not to keep that got me thinking.

I'm yet to convince my family of the wisdom of thanking an outgrown jumper for what it's given them before folding it carefully into the charity bag, but I have started to apply the logic to things in my life beyond my jumpers and much loved dressing gown. When I see myself as good at one thing and bad at another, am I hanging on to a version of myself that has served its time and now needs to be laid gently aside with thanks for all it has achieved? When I hold on to particular methods or routines or tasks, am I doing so because they are life giving and necessary or because they're simply what I have always done? What might emerge if I let myself say

goodbye to some things and create a space and time for something new?

All those questions are quite seasonal, especially during Lent. At its best, Lent is a chance to simplify life for a time, to remove the distractions that stop us seeing what really matters. The aim is not just self-restraint for its own sake, but rather in order to help us see what we usually miss and give us the time and space to draw closer to God.

Lent is also a time for change. Change is never easy. Sometimes having a new routine can seem exhilarating at first and we feel good, but it can be hard to keep to that new routine after a while and before we know it we begin to slip into old ways. Sometimes even accepting change is really difficult. Changing the way things are, what things look like and even the change of having new people with new and different ideas can really feel like an uphill struggle at times. For new things to emerge though we have to change. We have to lay things aside, giving thanks for the times we had and move on.

Change in church life is, I think, one of the most challenging. There is something about our history, heritage and tradition that means that things take a very long time to change. I smiled to myself just last week when I gave my hymns to an organist and she remarked, oh yes! I do love a modern hymn. The hymn was Shine Jesus Shine, which was released in 1987. I was 7 when that hymn came out. It certainly isn't very modern. But often in the life of the church, even things from the 1960s are fairly modern!

So what does this tell us? Well, I think it tells us that we really need to have a bit of a spring clean! Especially if we are going to relate the community and people outside out of our church. This doesn't mean that things that we hold dear we have to fully let go of and that our traditions and heritage

don't have a place; because they do. But we need to recognize that we need to adapt what we do and that might mean letting go of a few things to embrace the new and to celebrate the joys we have.

I'm not sure exactly what I'll be giving up or taking on this Lent but I know that it will involve a bit of internal Marie Kondo-ing, a time to think about what is joy giving and make sure that isn't squeezed out and a time to think about what is just clutter, pulling me from what I really want to be. Perhaps even if the house is still a work in progress, I'll be a bit more ready to celebrate Easter because of it.

With blessings

Donna

Steward's Letter



I am writing this on what is predicted to be one of the stormiest days of the winter. A winter, as I see it, which has been yet again milder than in previous years. I've had a number of conversations with people about the snow of 1963; the cold of 1982/83, -16 at night and floods that our county town have experienced over many years. Flood barriers at least save some of the town.

Yet spring will have arrived by the time most of you read this. Blossom is already appearing, the crocuses are out and the daffodils are way up (not seen any out yet).

In the church calendar, we are entering the period of

Lent. Reminding us of the time Jesus spent in the Wilderness, challenged with hunger, away from his family and experiencing temptation. Let us remember those of our congregation now living in residential care, missing the interaction with family social life. Add to these, those who are confined to their home, being less able to go out, due to health. Mobility for them can be a wilderness experience.

As a church family, we too face wilderness experiences that challenge our faith.

I remind you, as I remind myself, that the Holy Spirit, God is with you. The wilderness is for a limited time.

May God bless you wherever you are.

Brian.

From the Circuit website:

Launch of Bourne 250

Sunday April 3rd is the actual 250th Anniversary of the birth of Hugh Bourne, a founder of Primitive Methodism, much associated with our area. A launch service is being held at Engelsea Brook on Sunday 3rd April, led by John Bell, former Vice-president of Conference. A series of events at Engelsea Brook, Mow Cop, and the Alsager Book Emporium as well as Heritage Talks on Zoom have been arranged throughout the year.

For more information look at the Cheshire South Circuit website, and from the Home page follow the link through Our District and then News and Events.

World Day of Prayer



Friday 4th March 2022

2pm

St Johns Church, Whitchurch

Followed by Tea and Cakes

This year's theme is

"I know the plans I have for you."

and has been written by women from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Come and join

us

All are welcome

Finance

Thank you for all who contributed to the Civic Centre Coffee Morning on 11th February. Nearly £400 was raised, which was a marvellous achievement, given that this was the first coffee morning the Civic has hosted since Christmas.

On the 12th March, we are holding our annual Coffee Morning at church (we missed last year) between 10-12noon, when you have the opportunity to make donations that help towards paying our Insurance premium of £2,200 due later in the month. Letters should be landing in your hand or on your doormat telling you more.

If you are unable to attend and still wish to give, please hand your donation to the Treasurer or a Church Steward. It can go in with the collection but needs to be clearly marked.

Saints days in March

There are two obvious saints' days in March—David and Patrick but when I was reading up about them, I came across another—Saint Chad.

Saint David (Dewi) was born in St. Bride's Bay, Pembrokeshire. His mother was St. Non and his father was Sant, a Welsh chieftain. Not a lot is known about him but it is thought he was born in the late 4th century and lived for a hundred years. He was head of the church in South Wales and was responsible for moving the seat of ecclesiastical government from Caerleon to St. David's (Ty-Dewi). He was made a saint in 1120 at the request of Henry 1.
(more on Saints Patrick and Chad later)



BBT@St Johns

Bumps Babies and Toddlers is going from strength to strength. We currently have 33 children on our roll and between 15 and 20 usually attend each week for craft, toys and coffee in the long room and guild room and singing, stories and prayers in the church. If you would like to help or just want to come and say hello, please speak to Briony.



Tea & Posies Friday 25th March 2pm



We will be making posies at Church on Friday 25th March 2pm-3.30pm. Please come along for a cup of tea and a chat and help us make posies to hand out in church on Mothering Sunday. Any offers of flowers and greenery will be greatly appreciated.
Briony & Brenda

At a village cricket match the Squire was given out l.b.w. He stopped on his way to the pavilion and spoke to the man in the white coat. "You need glasses my man giving me out like that".
"So do you, mate," came the reply. "I'm selling ice cream!"

Christian Aid Lent Lunches are back...

on the five Thursdays in March and April

It is good that we can now meet again, please do come and join with friends from all the churches and catch up with the news from the last two years. The soup is usually very tasty too!

The lunches will take place at Bargates or St John's from 12.00 – 2.00 each week during Lent.

10th March: St John's

17th March: Bargates

24th March: St John's

31st March: Bargates

7th April: St John's

Soup, rolls, fruit, and a cup of tea or coffee will be served for a suggested donation of £4-£5 with all monies raised going to Christian Aid as usual.

Each church will take it in turns to serve the meal and St John's turn will be on 10th March. If you would be able to help with this, please speak to Helen or Briony.

The Lent CTW meetings (see additional article) will be held this year at the same venue (11.00 – 12.00) as the lunch which follows them; but you don't have to come to both!

(See also the notice about Lent Lunches at St. Andrew's, Aston on Fridays)

Eco Church

Recently a group of 8 interested people met together to talk about how to take our church forward in becoming more environmentally friendly.

I mentioned in my last newsletter article that we had seen an obvious gap in our previous efforts and I have put up a graph on the long room notice board, which illustrates this, along with a copy of the A Rocha survey used to generate the graph. There is also a little bit of information about A Rocha.

The gap is regarding the land surrounding the church. The group have decided to tackle the questions about how we are encouraging native wildlife (birds, animals and plants) and also how we are encouraging the local community to use the church land.

We are making plans which aim to make the way we plant and manage the land, do-able with the volunteers and resources we have. So, to begin with we are investigating making raised beds and aiming to plant insect friendly shrubs, bulbs, small trees and an area of wild flowers. We also plan to purchase probably 3 benches.

In order to proceed with any of this we are going to need funding and so we are putting together a grant proposal and will submit this to various grant issuing bodies who are interested in improving the local environment; the first ones being the RHS and our local council. If anyone has knowledge of others, please let me know.

Helen Trigg

Christian Aid Christmas appeal

Thank you to everyone who responded to our Christmas pew collection for Christian Aid. We collected £241 at St Johns and, combined with collections from the other churches in Whitchurch, we were able to send £504 to help mothers on the frontline of the Climate Crisis to set up small businesses to support their families by providing them with clean water, seeds and farming tools.

Briony & Helen

Easter Eggs for Christian Aid

Judy Bellingham (fairtradewhitchurch@gmail.com) is ready now to order Traidcraft, Divine and Real Easter Egg Company eggs – see the magazine or Traidcraft website. When you order, please think of Christian Aid this Easter and donate the cost of an extra egg. £80 was raised last year!

Saint Patrick...

... was born in Wales of wealthy parents. At the age of 16 he was captured by Irish raiders and spent the next six years as a shepherd in County Mayo, where he turned to religion for refuge. He escaped and walked 200 miles to the east coast and back to Britain. He trained as a priest and felt called back to Ireland. Because he was familiar with Irish language and culture, he chose to incorporate Irish traditions into his Christian teaching e.g. using bonfires to celebrate easter and superimposing the sun on the cross to create the Celtic cross (the Irish venerated the sun). He is believed to have died on March 17th around 460 AD. He has actually never been canonized!

Quiz Time!

What is the Hymn? Here are the last lines of the 1st verse...

1. Praise Him in glad adoration.
2. Dwells in the heart of the father above.
3. By a beauteous star.
4. Saying Christian follow me.
5. And soft refreshing rain.
6. And all my simple soul devour.
7. Feed me now and ever more.
8. If thou wilt be my guide.
9. He lives my everlasting head.
10. Know more and more.
11. And every voice a song.
12. And sweetly lose our will in thine.
13. Both waking and sleeping thy presence my light.
14. In all I think or speak or do
15. And where there's doubt, true faith in you.
16. Come ye before him and rejoice.
17. Pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.
18. Worshipping their infant Lord.
19. Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
20. But all their joys are one.

Answers next month

Lent Lunches at St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Aston

If you are unable to attend the Lent Lunches being held in venues in Whitchurch on Thursdays, then you have the opportunity of going to Aston instead— or as well!

These are taking place on Fridays between 12 noon and 1.30pm from 11th March to 8th April.

A simple soup lunch will be served, followed by reflections on Hope and Redemption in The Greatest Showman -"From Now On".

Donations are for All We Can.

Everyone is welcome

Saint Chad...

...was one of four brothers all active in the Anglo-Saxon church. Most of our information about him comes from the Venerable Bede and we learn that Chad and his older brother, Cedd, were students of Aidan at Lindisfarne. So, it is reasonable to assume that they came from Northumbrian nobility. Both Cedd and Chad were abbots at Lastingham (Ryedale). Chad then moved about all over the north country, even spending time in Ireland, before settling in Lichfield as the first Bishop there. He is credited with introducing Christianity to the Mercian Kingdom and 33 churches and several wells were dedicated to St. Chad. I'm sure you can name a few -one being just up the A41. He died on March 2nd -his saint's day- in AD672 and was first interred at Lichfield Abbey before being moved to St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham.

PRAYER REQUESTS



St. John's

- Pray for all our stewards as they deal with the day to day problems of running the building.
- Pray for any of our members who may be in poor health and particularly for those in Care Homes or hospital.
- Pray for our congregation as we prayerfully consider the issues raised by the God in Love Unites Us document.

Our Town

- Give thanks for the work of Churches Together and pray for the Lent Lunches being held by the different churches in Whitchurch.

Our Nation

- Pray for our leaders in Government as they face some difficult decisions. Help them to work together with the other parties to resolve problems.
- Pray for those suffering from repeated flooding.

Our World

- Pray for the millions in Afghanistan on the verge of starvation, and the upcoming virtual summit hosted by the UK to pledge aid to prevent famine.
- Pray for the people of the Ukraine and for a rapid resolution of the situation.
- Continue to pray for peace between Israel and Palestine
- Pray about Climate Change and ask forgiveness for the damage we are doing to God's world.

Dates for your diary for March

Regular dates

BBT— every Monday, 9.30-11.30am

M.O.R.E.—1st & 3rd Mondays 1-4pm

Thurs. 3rd 10.30am: Eco meeting

Fri. 4th 2pm— World day of Prayer at St. John's

Thurs. 9th 10.30am: Ladies' Coffee—Jones's

Sat. 12th 10am –12 noon Coffee morning (*Donations*)

Sun 20th 4pm - Zoom service (*to join see Avril*)

Fri. 25th 2pm: Tea and posy making

Thursdays 12noon –2pm. Lent Lunches (*see article*)

Fridays 12 noon –1.30pm. St. Andrew's Lent Lunches
(*see article for details*)

Join us on a Monday....

For M.O.R.E.



Come along to St Johns on the 1st and
3rd Mondays in the month from 1pm
-4pm

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



All are welcome

Taxi!

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

Bumps, Babies & Tots for March

Date Setting up Craft Tea Open up

7 th Mar	Briony (No Kathryn) Donna?	Mike Hazel	Sarah	Pete
14 th Mar	Mike	Sarah Hazel	Chris	Pete
21 st Mar (Mothering Sunday 27 th Mar)	Briony	Mike Sarah	Hazel	Pete
28 th Mar	Briony	Dot	Chris	Pete

SPICK & SPANNERS for March

3rd Sue & Ken Davies

17th Chris Crowther, Dot Charlesworth
& Lynn Fowler



Preachers for March

6th March Brian Faulkner
13th March Rev. Jennie Henshall, *Holy Communion*
20th March Peter Williams
27th March Jenny Smith, *Mothering Sunday*.

Stewards for March

March 6th Andrew Fawcett
March 13th Peter Shingler
March 20th Maurice Latham/Rob Hewson
March 27th Brian Faulkner

Sound for March

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

Tea & Coffee Rota for March

6th Hazel & Mike Nimmo
13th Brenda Aumeer & Nancy Millington
20th Lynn Fowler & Helen Thompson
27th Sue Davies & Dorothy



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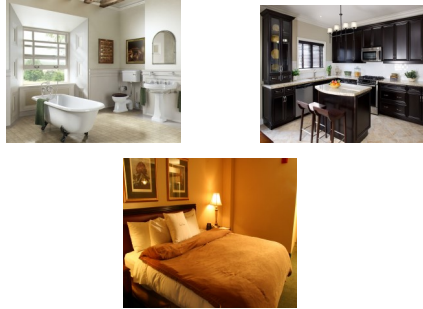
November Newsletter

Please let **Vic Trigg** have all your submissions for the April 2022 Newsletter by 23rd March

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