



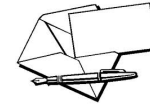
Camellia "Mark Allan"

St. John's Methodist Church

Whitchurch

February 2023 Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Hello friends,

Do you ever wake up in the morning with a song in your head that you then can't get rid of for the rest of the day? I do too, and when that happens, I like to ponder on why *that* song in *that* moment. Perhaps our mood or events going on in our lives influence our 'earworm' songs, but mine mostly seem to be a bizarre random tune from the tv or radio or more annoyingly ones such as baby shark!

Less frequently, but more significantly, I wake up with a bible passage on my mind, one that then stays with me for weeks and then seems to crop up in conversations or whatever books I am reading. I have learnt over the years to pay attention whenever this happens, because unlike the earworm tunes that have no purpose, the Lord is usually speaking to me through these 'earworm' bible verses. This is the passage that the Lord has been whispering in my ear since the start of 2023;

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us' Hebrews 12:1



Each generation that has gone before us has welcomed new life, enjoyed abundance, experienced joy and yet has also known grief, endured hardship and at times felt immense sorrow. Being human invariably means that we will all experience these things (and more) in our lifetime. We enjoy the good times but when more challenging seasons

roll in, we can become despondent and perhaps fail to see the possibilities in a new dawn. Yet, this passage invites us to remember that great cloud of witnesses - ordinary people throughout history that the Lord has worked in and through to do extraordinary things – and not only to dare to dream of a brighter future, filled with possibility and hope, but to be people that the Lord will use today to make those dreams and visions a reality here and now. We just need to shake off all that holds us back from seeing and believing and then step forward at pace into the future that the Lord has prepared for us.

I am certainly not naïve about the challenges that we face this year, both as individuals and as church, and yet these words from the letter to the Hebrews is surely just the encouragement that we need in such a time as this. So, whatever is going on in your life right now, hear the Lord whispering these words to you and with faith, prayer and a good sense of humour let's run together with perseverance the race marked out for us as God's family here in Whitchurch, and look forward to how the Lord will bless us - and others through us - in the months and years to come.

With blessings

Rev. Donna

Ps – I really don't think God is telling me to take up running; I know he has a good sense of humour but that would be taking it a bit too far.

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."

Barbara Winkler

- American author, magazine editor and gardening writer

BBT Rota through to Easter



	Leader	Setting up	General & Craft	Tea	Open up
23rd Jan	Kathryn	Chris	Brenda Elaine	Sarah	Mike
30th Jan	Kathryn	Mike	Sarah Dot	Hazel	Mike
6th Feb	Kathryn	Chris/Briony	Brenda Briony	Sarah	Briony/Chris
13th Feb <i>Shrove Tues-day</i>	Kathryn/Donna	Mike	Dot Elaine	Hazel	Mike
20th Feb	<i>No BBT Half Term</i>				
27th Feb	Kathryn	Briony	Brenda Dot	Chris	Briony
6th March	Kathryn	Mike	Sarah Elaine	Hazel	Mike
13th Mar	Kathryn	Briony	Brenda Dot	Sarah	Briony
20th Mar	Kathryn	Mike	Chris Elaine	Hazel	Mike
27th Mar <i>Easter</i>	Kathryn/Donna	Briony	Dot Sarah	Briony	Briony
3rd April	<i>No BBT Easter Holidays</i>				

"February, when the days of winter seem endless and no amount of wistful recollecting can bring back any air of summer."

Shirley Jackson (1916-65) American writer - largely of horror stories

Christmas Quiz answers
(from last month's newsletter)

1. Infant holy, Infant lowly
2. Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown
3. Unto us a Boy is born
4. Ding dong! Merrily on high
5. Brightest and best of the sons of the morning
6. See amid the winter's snow
7. O little town of Bethlehem
8. Cradled in a manger meanly
9. While shepherds watched their flocks by night
10. As with gladness men of old
11. The first Nowell, the angel did say
12. Good King Wenceslas looked out
13. Little Jesus, sweetly sleep
14. Away in a manger
15. Once in royal David's city
16. From the eastern mountains

Thanks to Chris Crowther! Did anyone get all of them right? (Ed)

Message from Les Fletcher of Rochdale Methodist Church about a chance to join a pilgrimage to the Holy Land:

Churches Together on Pilgrimage in the HOLY LAND

This year, it will be 28 years that I have been organising and taking groups to the Holy Land and the Near East.

I am planning for September 2023 a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We follow in the footsteps of Jesus as we visit places associated with his birth, his lakeside ministry, his death and resurrection. I have also included in the programme visits to some places not often visited.

Flying direct from either Manchester or London Luton to Tel Aviv.

Our accommodation for six nights is the Golden Walls hotel in Jerusalem. The hotel is ideally situated in Jerusalem overlooking the Old City walls and within walking distance to the Garden Tomb, Damascus and Herod's Gate. For the second part of the tour, we will be spending four nights at the Ron Beach hotel in Tiberias. This hotel is situated by the side of the Galilee.

Would it be possible to advertise the event? I can supply a poster and brochures.

Many thanks
Every Blessing

Les Fletcher (Tour Leader)
Syke Methodist Church and Community Base
Rochdale
Contact Vic Trigg for Les's email or telephone number
Website. www.churchestogetheronpilgrimage.co.uk



PRAYER REQUESTS

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

St John's

Pray for the people who hold responsibility for the running of St. John's, and ask that they will move forward in unity of goals and vision.

Our Town

Give thanks for the work of Churches Together in Whitchurch and pray for the joint work, such as the Foodbank, undertaken in our name.

Our nation

Pray for wisdom for our country's leaders.

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

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

Pray for those hardest hit by the cost of living rises and inflation

Our world

Pray for the people of Ukraine as they try to live amongst the chaos and heartbreak of invasion by Russia.

Pray for all who grieve the loss of loved ones.

Pray for a change of heart for Vladimir Putin

Pray for those killed in recent attacks on Israel's West Bank

Warm Space at St Johns Methodist Church

- Mondays 9.30 to 4pm

We currently run a group for carers and children on Monday mornings from 9.30-11.30 during termtime (known as Bumps, Babies and Toddlers BBT at St Johns) providing companionship and refreshments and activities for families in Whitchurch.

We also run a group for adults seeking companionship, relaxation and exercise on alternate Mondays from 1pm-4pm with board games, table tennis and craft activities (known as MORE on a Monday).

As a result of the cold winter, high energy costs, loneliness and social isolation of those in the community around St Johns, we have extended our opening hours so that we are now open every Monday and as well as our regular MORE activities we are providing soup and toast between 12 and 2pm.

The energy for heating the church hall for these additional sessions costs about £20 each week.

We would be very grateful if Whitchurch Council were able to contribute towards the heating costs for the additional opening hours and the provision of soup, tea and toast. We encourage donations towards the cost of refreshments but not everyone who attends can afford to pay.

We are therefore seeking a grant funding of £260 from Whitchurch Town Council which we will match with £260 from our Church funds.

We are also setting up a clothing hub, coordinating and storing donations of clothing and bedding which can be accessed by people with referrals from the Foodbank during our Monday sessions.

If you would like to come and visit us and see what we are currently doing, we would be delighted to welcome you and talk to you further.

Briony Myles-Hook

Newsflash!

Hi Everyone

I am pleased to tell you that St Johns has been awarded a grant for £260 from Whitchurch Town Council towards the heating costs and refreshments provided at MORE plus and MORE on a Monday to enable us to open as a warm hub for the community every Monday instead of alternate Mondays.

I've attached the description of our activities that I submitted with the proposal so that you are all aware of the commitment we are undertaking and the facilities we are offering to the community.

Please encourage people to come along to the sessions and drop in yourself if you are able.

A Council Representative will be coming to visit at some point and we will need to give a presentation/ provide feedback at the Council AGM to show how the money has been used and also publicise the donation from the Council.

I'll send this to Vic to include in the newsletter if it's not too late. *(It's wasn't! Ed)*

Briony

Sunday Services for February

5th: Rev. Donna Broadbent-Kelly

12th: Rev. Jenny Arthurs

19th: Peter Robertshaw

26th: Sue Tyson



Services in the Guild Room during the winter months to save fuel.

Entrance from the car park

February (from "A Year's Carols")

"Wan February with weeping cheer,
Whose cold hand guides the youngling year
Down misty roads of mire and rime,
Before thy pale and fitful face
The shrill wind shifts the clouds apace
Through skies the morning scarce may climb.
Thine eyes are thick with heavy tears,
But lit with hopes that light the year's."

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837 - 1909) English poet, playwright, and critic

Zoom Service

You are very warmly invited to share in our zoom services. The next is on February 19th at 4pm, followed by (provisionally March 13th and April 2nd. Contact Avril for a link to the service.

The mystical East!

As many of you will know we moved away to the East of England two years ago. It has been a steep learning curve for us both. I miss the bustle of Whitchurch, the many shops and cafes, and the good bus service too. We moved here to be near to family as you will remember, they are a joy to us in all ways as we age.

It is indeed a strange landscape here. Endless flat lands and fields that go on forever as far as the eye can see.

Skies that seem to touch the horizon which change as the seasons alter. In Springtime the banks of the rivers are full of daffodils and spring flowers, an amazing sight here in our village!

In the Spring the fields that had been hiding their bounty all winter now springing to life, the green shoots holding their precious offerings.

Summer here is so golden! The sun kissed corn growing right beside the roads as the fields blend together.

Orchards everywhere holding their ripe fruits which burst with fullness so heavy on the branches awaiting their harvest. The climate here is much warmer than in the West and not a lot of rain, but the winters are very cold as the wind whips across the Fens.

Autumn the fields become awash with bright yellow pumpkins everywhere, looking like something from the moon surface, their golden orbs casting a strange ominous feeling to the land. Awaiting to be harvested for Halloween and thanksgiving.

It is in winter that I write this though, the mists and fog hanging over the dykes and rivers looking like a scene from some strange haunted time.
The fields so ripe and full of wonderful vegetables now damp, dark and cold.

Windmills dotted around their sails still and silent as if awaiting some happening.

The trees all along the riverbank bowing their bare heads now into the dark and eerie waters beneath.

Everything so stark, though the stars are wonderful in this Anglian sky, it was a revelation to me when I saw this when we first arrived here.

The wild swans flying overhead. What a magnificent sight as they make their way to the wetlands nearby.

The coast line is wonderful here too, beaches go on for miles and the sand being whipped up by the savage East wind.

So maybe this is a picture for you of our life here in the Fens a mystical strange land yet with a beauty all of its own....

As I look into the garden, I see buds appearing already and the first snow drops showing their heads, so maybe Spring is not too far away.

We hope your Christmas has been good and that family love has surrounded all of you.

A happy and peaceful new year to all our friends in Whitchurch and many many happy memories.

Sheila and Jim Walwyn

(Great to hear from you both! Ed)

“Surely everyone is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a wintry fireside; candles at four o'clock, warm hearthrugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies to the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without.”

Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859) English writer, essayist, and literary critic

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.”

— *Edith Sitwell (1887-1964)* poet and critic

"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."

John Boswell (1947-94) American historian and writer on those on the margins of society

"I like these cold, gray winter days. Days like these let you savour a bad mood."

Bill Watterson (1958-) American cartoonist

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

- Ann Bradstreet (1612-72) Puritan poet and settler in Massachusetts Bay from Northampton

"The English winter - ending in July - _To recommence in August."

Lord Byron (1788-1824) English poet

"One kind word can warm three winter months."

Chinese proverb

"Spring passes and one remembers one's innocence. Summer passes and one remembers one's exuberance. Autumn passes and one remembers one's reverence. Winter passes and one remembers one's perseverance."

Yoko Ono (1933-) Japanese artist, songwriter and peace activist

"People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy."

Anton Chekov (1860-1904) Russian playwright and author

Tea and Coffee Rota for February



5th	Brenda Aumeer and Nancy Millington
12th	Sarah Lunt and Linda Jenkins
19th	Briony Miles-Hook and Dot Charlesworth
26th	Helen Thompson and Linda Weston

Please could you provide milk and biscuits, taking the biscuits home if they are not needed.

Tea and coffee are provided.

Please also take the tea towels and towel home, wash and return.

If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know either by email (hazel@heritagewalk.co.uk) or by telephone (01948 667857)

Thank you to those who have agreed to go on the Tea and Coffee rota.

Never are voices so beautiful as on a winter's evening, when dusk almost hides the body, and they seem to issue from nothingness with a note of intimacy seldom heard by day.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) English novelist, essayist and publisher

The Darkling Thrush

*I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.*

*The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunk hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.*

*At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.*

*So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.*

*Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)
English novelist and poet*

February Dates for your Diary:

BBT every Monday 9:30-11am
(except Half-term break 20th)

MORE+ every Monday 1-4pm

Including toast and soup 12-1.30pm as
part of St. John's "Warm Space".

March Newsletter

Please let Mike Nimmo have all your submissions for
the next Newsletter by 15th February

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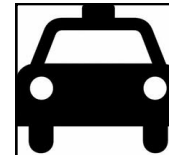
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Taxi for February



The following drivers are available to transport you to
the services. Please 'phone before 9:30am.

February 5th Hazel Nimmo

February 12th Pete Shingler

February 19th Hazel

February 26th Pete

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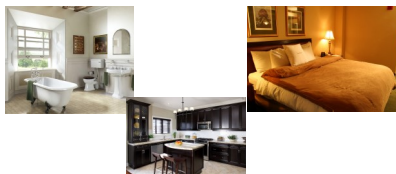
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