



**St. John's Methodist Church  
Whitchurch  
March 2023  
Newsletter**

### *Message from the Manse*

Hello friends,

Over the last few weeks I have really enjoyed seeing all the birds that have been coming back into the garden. It's been so lovely to watch the blue tits and the robins coming to the bird table to eat some tasty meal worms, and I'm pleased to say that they have been investigating the bird box so hopefully we might have some nesting in it in the next few weeks or so. These little birds always bring a smile.

The garden is also getting ready to go into bloom. I have some little heads of daffodils ready for a sunny day to open up and an array of snow drops and crocuses at St Andrews chapel reminded me on Sunday that spring is just around the corner. The cycle of life and seasons continue despite everything. The creative heartbeat of nature for me is a constant reminder of God's presence with us. There will be a riot of colour around us instead of everything looking dull and miserable. God never gives up on us, his love and constant spirit remains. He knows the potential we each have and will patiently care for us until we are ready to bloom.

As I write this we are just entering a season of Lent, which for the Church is a time of preparation. Traditionally it has been seen as a time of fasting or giving up something and for many people that is the right thing to do but for me Lent is a time when I try to prepare, asking God what he wants to do in my life during this new season. I often take something on rather than giving something up, like reading a Lent book or following the 40 Acts of Generosity program.

This year I am going to take time to just be in the moment. I am very much aware that I spend so much time rushing from one thing to other, always having a to do list and thinking about the next thing/task whilst I'm doing another. The problem is that I often forget to enjoy the moment I am in, to appreciate the conversation I am having or the place and surroundings. If we are always rushing about we can forget and miss the God moments that are happening all around us. We miss things and don't notice them. To see the birds in the trees and on the feeder, we have to stop what we are doing, we have to pause and really look. If we are too busy we miss the shoots of new life growing and if we aren't careful we miss the flowers as they begin to bloom. If we are too busy and too consumed in what we need to, then we run the risk of ignoring God all together, and perhaps we run the risk of staying as green shoots, never going into bud and missing the sunny day when we are to bloom.

Whether or not it is your practice to observe the season of Lent, my prayer for this season is that we will each have the time to stop and reflect, and perhaps think about how our lives may be unfurling and ready to bloom like the buds on the daffodils.

With my love and prayers for this season,

Rev. Donna

## **Stewards Letter**

Dear Friends,

As I write this March is just days away. I love March with the onset of spring and everything ahead, the appearance of many spring flowers and of course daffodils, “tossing their heads in sprightly dance”. I’m still recovering from a very busy weekend, helping to organise a coffee morning at the civic for Whitchurch Singers and then our lovely Valentines Afternoon Tea at St. John’s. Sue and I really enjoyed the preparations and the tea itself and I could really feel the love and fellowship in the Guild Room on Saturday Afternoon. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this a successful event. Sue and I, in our fundraising committee role, have great plans for the year ahead so watch this space!

We also have Sewing Bee this Saturday and we have a small but steady group of new sewers, and experienced sewers, who enjoy both recycled sewing and the friendship and fellowship of the group. I continue to enjoy the challenges of being a steward at St. John’s as I feel myself growing into the role more and more. My thanks to all for your continued support.

They say you’re never too old to start something new and I think I may take that as my mantra this year. I read some advice from the Guardian this weekend from people of all nationalities who have lived to over a hundred years. The common theme was keep working, keep dancing, keep walking. I’ll certainly try!

Whatever you do in March enjoy it as God walks with us all through the months and the seasons ahead.

God Bless

Dot Charlesworth

## **Prayer Meeting**

A prayer meeting will be held at Elizabeth Jennings home each Friday from 10.15 to 11.15 am.

‘What’s God done in your week this week?’

Everyone is very welcome

### **Services & Preachers**

5th March	Rev. Edna Perry
12th March	Peter Robertshaw
19th March	Rev Donna (Mother's Day)
26th March	Mrs Sue Tyson



### **All the dates for March**

Thurs 2nd Lent Lunch run by St Alkmund's – at St John's 12-2pm  
Lent Course Explore the Call to Loving Disagreement Bargates 4pm

Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Big Brew coffee morning at St Alkmund's on 10-12.

Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Bumps, Babes & Tots (BBT) 9.30am – 11.30am  
MORE Plus on a Monday 1pm-4pm Soup from 12 noon  
Clothing hub open

Thurs 9th Lent Lunch run by St John's – at St John's 12-2pm  
Lent Course Explore the Call to Loving Disagreement Bargates 4pm

Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Gift Day Coffee Morning 10am-12

**Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Zoom 4pm**

Mon 13<sup>h</sup> Bumps, Babes & Tots (BBT) 9.30am – 11.30am  
MORE Plus on a Monday 1pm-4pm Soup from 12 noon  
Clothing hub open

Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> Lent Lunch run by Beacon Church – at the Watergate  
Centre 12-2pm  
Lent Course Explore the Call to Loving Disagreement Bargates 4pm

Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Posy making for Mothers' Day 2-3.30pm

Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Bumps, Babes & Tots (BBT) 9.30am – 11.30am  
 MORE Plus on a Monday 1pm-4pm Soup from 12 noon  
 Clothing hub open

Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup> Lent Lunch organized by St George's – at the Watergate  
 Centre 12-2pm  
 Lent Course Explore the Call to Loving Disagreement Bargates 4pm

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> / 28<sup>th</sup> or Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Easter Hope Journey date tbc

Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Recycled Sewing Bee 12-4pm

Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Bumps, Babes & Tots (BBT) 9.30am – 11.30am  
 MORE Plus on a Monday 1pm-4pm Soup from 12 noon  
 Clothing hub open

Thurs 30<sup>th</sup> Lent Lunch organized by Christian Aid Committee – at the  
 Watergate Centre 12-2pm  
 Lent Course Explore the Call to Loving Disagreement Bargates 4pm

Fri 31<sup>st</sup> Quiz & Fish & Chip supper

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You are invited to the Big Brew as  
 part of Fairtrade Fortnight in  
 St Alkmunds Church on Saturday 4th March 10 am - 12 noon.

Coffee/Tea/Cakes and Fairtrade Gifts

**All are welcome**

## **Valentine's Afternoon Tea**



Dot and I planned this afternoon tea to coincide with Valentine's Day and we wanted to organise an event which was about fund raising but equally about fellowship and friendship after a difficult couple of years for the church.

We must say a huge thank you to our 'back room' crew who provided mounds of sandwiches, petit fours, cream cakes, scones and a beautiful chocolate heart cake. It really was a feast for the eyes as well as the tums.

And thank you to the people who donated the 12 raffle prizes and money towards the tea.

It was a lovely afternoon - with nonstop talking and the quiz livened things up and we did not detect any cheating!

We are planning other events through the year which will run alongside other planned events e.g. the Fish and chip supper with Mike's quiz, May concerts.

If you have any ideas or would like to share your feelings about the Valentine Afternoon Tea with Dot and I, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Please join us in any of our events in 2023.

**Sue**

## **New Drawing Class at St. John's**

Come and have fun learning how to draw with Bob every Thursday from 30<sup>th</sup> March.10am to 12.30pm. This will be a class for both drawers and beginners.

Contact Bob Charlesworth to reserve your place.

## Christian Aid Lent Lunches



The lunches will take place at St John's or the Watergate Centre from 12.00 – 2.00 each Thursday during Lent.

2nd March: St John's  
9th March: St John's  
16th March: Watergate Centre  
23rd March: Watergate Centre  
30<sup>th</sup> March: Watergate Centre



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 **9th March**.

If you would be able to help with this, please speak to Brenda or Briony.

## Churches Together in Whitchurch Lent Course

The Lent Course will be held each Thursday in March at Bargates at 4pm.

The theme is "Exploring the Call to Loving Disagreement".

All are welcome.

## Finance

The **Church Accounts** for the year ending August 2022 were approved by the Church Council at the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February. Thank you to Brian Faulkner and Linda Weston for preparing them.



## Warm Hub and Clothing Bank at St Johns (Mondays)



Our Clothing Bank is open from 12-4pm every Monday for those with referrals from the Foodbank. We welcome donations of good quality, practical clothing, bedding and towels and we are particularly short of clothing for men and for children.

We also need clear plastic boxes to store the clothing and bedding. Please leave any donations on the pews by the green carpet in church so that items can be listed.

We hope that people coming to the Clothing Hub will also join us at MORE for soup or a cup of tea. Please encourage people to come along to the sessions and drop in yourself if you are able.

*Supported by Whitchurch Town Council  
Small Community Grant Programme*



## Tea & Posies

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2pm**

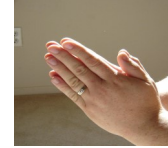
We will be making posies at Church on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2pm-3.30pm.

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.



**Sue & Brenda**

## **Prayers**



We all pray in different ways and at different times. Rather than produce set words which you may not find fits with your thoughts, I am highlighting events and situations across the spectrum from global to local and personal which reflection and prayer.

The war in Ukraine rumbles on with millions affected and thousands dying

The disastrous earthquakes in Turkey and Syria has inflicted a terrible toll both in terms of lives and survivors. Aid is critical to avoid further losses.

Across the world there is so much repression and fighting—some situations we rarely hear about

In our own country many are struggling to make ends meet and there is considerable industrial unrest. Solutions need to be found.

Our community reflects the national picture and its response through the various agencies and charities should be remembered. We know people of Whitchurch prove to be ever generous through the FOOD-BANK

Our church has a mission in Whitchurch and all our activities are centred on being in the community through BBT, More+ on Monday and the hubs.

Lastly ourselves, families and friends - whether joyful or sad we are aware of our needs and those of others. Brining all this to Jesus .

“Keep us O Lord while we tarry on this earth

In a daily serious seeking after you

Not asleep with our light switched off

But waiting and longing f or our Lord

Our glorious Lord for ever and ever.”

(Richard Baxter)

### **Coffee Morning**



On the **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March**, we are holding our annual **Coffee Morning** at church between 10-12noon, when you have the opportunity to make donations that help towards the mission of our church. A letter is on it's way to you by hand or post telling you more.

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

### **Sunday Services**

At the Church Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February we decided to continue holding our Sunday Services in the Guild Room during March to reduce our energy bills. We will be back in the Church on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April for Palm Sunday.

### **Hope Journey for Easter**

Following the success of our Hope Journey in December when children from Year 4 at Whitchurch Junior Academy came to St Johns to learn more about the Christmas story, Kathryn is planning a **Hope Journey about the Easter Story** for the same group of children at the end of March. The date has yet to be confirmed but if you are interested in being involved by becoming a character in the Story, serving refreshments, helping with a craft or welcoming children *and guiding them around our Church*, please speak to someone on the BBT Rota.

## BBT@St Johns

Please join us at Bumps Babies & Toddlers from 9.30-11.30am for craft, toys, singing, stories coffee and chat.

We are keen for more people to join our rota of helpers so if you would like to help or just want to come and say hello, please speak to someone on the rota.

### BBT Rota for March.

	Leader	Set-ting up	General & Craft	Tea	Open up
6 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Kathryn	Mike	Sarah	Hazel	Mike
13 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Kathryn	Briony	Dot	Brenda	Briony
20 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Donna <i>tbc</i>	Mike	Brenda Sarah	Hazel	Mike
27 <sup>th</sup> Mar <i>Easter</i>	Kathryn	Briony	<i>tbc</i>	Sarah	Briony
3 <sup>rd</sup> April	<b>No BBT Easter Holidays</b>				

### Stewards

5th March	Andrew Fawcett
12th March	Dot Charlesworth
19th March	Hazel Nimmo
26th March	Avril Bradfield



## **Taxi**

The following drivers are willing to provide a lift to church. Please telephone before 9.30am on that day.



Please note also that trying to predict in advance is not easy, so some changes may be necessary.

5th March	Hazel Nimmo
12th March	Pete Shingler
19th March	Hazel Nimmo
26th March	Pete Shingler

## **TEA & COFFEE ROTA**

### **March**

5 <sup>TH</sup>	Marion and Tony Griffin
12 <sup>th</sup>	Hazel and Mike Nimmo
19 <sup>th</sup>	Elizabeth and Pete Shingler
26 <sup>th</sup>	Avril Bradfield and Hazel Nimmo



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](mailto:hazel@heritagewalk.co.uk)) or by telephone (01948 667857)**

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**April 2023 Newsletter**

Please let Dot Charlesworth have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by Sunday 19th March

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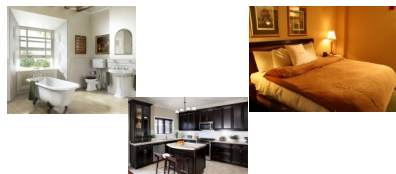
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## **WALKERS**

