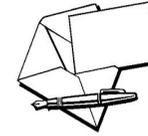


Newsletter



St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch
July/August 2023

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

One more step along the world I go, one more step along the world I go. From the old things to the new keep me travelling along with you. Words from a much loved hymn that always comes into its own at this time of year. It is a favorite school hymn and is nearly always used at School leavers services and often at baptism services too. It is very much a prayer because in many ways it is our prayer for the children who are leaving their primary school and moving onto the big exciting adventure of secondary school, and for the child at baptism that they will always know God's presence and love wherever they go. These times are significant and mark a new phase beginning in their lives. Things are going to change.

This time of year often marks a change for other people as well, as summer comes many people will be getting married and setting off to travel into a new phase of their lives together. For others this time of year can mean a change in jobs, particularly for teachers, but for others as well. In our circuit life, Jeremy is moving on to minister to the people of Warrington, Jill starts a new appointment in Crewe, Carolyn comes to join us and Sarah will be an ordained minister. Change can be a scary thing but it is necessary in order for us to grow. I have a favourite little plaque that says. *'If nothing ever changed there would be no butterflies'*.

Even going away on holiday is a change, it's hopefully a change that will bring us rest and refreshment. It can widen our horizons as perhaps we visit new places, bring us into contact with new people, and maybe help us to try out new things. But even if we are not going away there

Cont.,

Cont.,

often feels as if there is a change to the pace of life as the days are longer and perhaps we don't have to rush around quite as much.

Life is always changing, and there are times in our lives when things aren't as they used to be and things have to move on. The hardest part is often letting go and embracing the new.

Our gospels remind us that change is an evitable part of life, things will and do change. Jesus came to turn the world upside down, to change the way things are done and to offer us Salvation through the transformation from death to life. And this change continues today. Today in our churches we are still challenged to think again, to change, to transform and to get back onto the path that Jesus wants us to walk on.

So, whether or not there are changes ahead for us this summer, let us all echo the chorus of the hymn;

And it's from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you.

With my love and prayers

Donna

A prayer for this time...

God of broken people and broken places

We confess to you our love of comfort,
of the known and predictable, of the safe and secure.

We recognise that you call us into liminal space

To leave what we know and venture with you into desert and wilderness,

Into blindness and discomfort

We want to follow you, but it's hard to leave what we know.

Cont.,

Help us to trust you, and to set out.

On the journey of faith,

Far I have come, far I must go.

God of broken people and broken places,

We thank you for all that this place has been to us and many others,

We thank you for the space to listen, to grow, to create, to be challenged,

We recognise that you are calling us on

To leave what we know and venture with you into new things,

Into engagement and participation,

Into creativity and risk

Into new structures and opportunities.

We want to follow you, but it's hard to leave what we know and we're not sure where we are going.

Help us to trust you, and to set out.

On the journey of faith,

Far I have come and far I must go.

God of rebuilt people and rebuilt places,

You have plans for desert and wilderness:

'Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

The burning sand will become a pool.

The thirsty ground bubbling springs.

In the haunts where jackals once lay,

Grass and papyrus will grow.

And a highway will be there; it will be called The Way of Holiness.'

God of transformation, we look forward to what you will do with our lives.

Cont.,
On the journey of faith,
Far we have come, far we must go.

We hang our lives upon your mercy
Measured out in miles
Your boundaries and pathways
Co-ordinates and charts
That guide our steps
Along roads you travelled before us.
We will make time for you and your word
We will practice your ways until they are part of us
We will rest and play in you
We are your people.

We are not complete without one another
We cannot run the race alone
We will support one another
Encourage one another
Wait for the weak,
Pick up the fallen
Through your strength and love.

Cont.,

When we are together, we will remember what it is like to travel alone

When we are alone, we will remember what it is like to travel together

Wherever we are, we will remember God who always goes with us.

Go with us now, Lord, and always.

Amen.

Preachers for July & August

July 2nd: Deacon Jill Henderson

July 9th : L.A.

July 16th : Rev. Edna Perry

July 23rd: Rev. Brian Acty

July 30th: Mr. Ivan Perry

August 6th: Dr. Geoff Dickenson

August 13th: Mr. Graham Dimelow

August 20th: Rev. Brian Acty

August 27th: Rev. Jenny Arthurs (H.C)

Stewards Letter

My brother-in-law has suffered from a deteriorating liver for many years. A few months back he was told that the only way he would survive was to have a liver transplant.

His condition was such that he had to remain in hospital until one became available, and there were no guarantees. However one did become available from someone on the south coast as it happened, and was quickly shipped to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham to be fully assessed for suitability.

Interestingly the liver was eventually divided into two to provide two separate individuals the opportunity for life-saving surgery (each half reaching full size and functionality after six months).

Mike was given this gift of life, although continued to suffer from many complications the root of which was not clear. After several blood transfusions and many more procedures he was finally able to go home for the first time in many weeks.

Once settled at home we were told all about the ins and outs of day to day life at the QE from first hand experience. One anecdote concerned the young teenage girl in the adjacent bed who like Mike was very poorly. Over the course of time it became apparent that the girl was in fact deteriorating; suddenly her emotionally charged visitors became more frequent, groups rather than individuals would arrive to see her.

We later learned that Mike's neighbour was one such patient that sadly 21st century cutting edge medical science could not treat, and the many visitors were friends and family saying their final good-byes.

On the face of it life would appear to be a lottery. I just wonder how many of us stop to think how fortunate we are to be able to walk, talk, eat and drink, consider our loved ones, and consider what tomorrow will bring for us, and what tomorrow will bring for others?

Andrew Fawcett

Stewards for July/August

July 2nd Andrew Fawcett
July 9th Dot Charlesworth
July 16th Mike Nimmo
July 23rd Hazel Nimmo
July 30th Avril Bradfield

August 6th Andrew Fawcett
August 13th Dot Charlesworth
August 20th Mike Nimmo
August 27th Hazel Nimmo

Please let me know if you need to swap.
Dot Charlesworth

TEA AND COFFEE ROTA – July 2023

2nd Elizabeth and Pete
9th Hazel and Mike
16th Sarah and Avril
22nd Briony and Dot
29th Linda Weston and Linda Jenkins



If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know.
Thank you for agreeing to go on the Tea and Coffee rota . I appreciate that it comes round much quicker than it did in the past as there are fewer of us. I think we need to try and co-opt a few more people onto the Rota so please do try your skills of persuasion!

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING – Wednesday 5th July 2023

The next Church Council Meeting will be on **Wednesday 5th July at 7pm**. Anyone is welcome to attend as an observer, but only Church Council Members will be able to vote if a decision is required.

Litvinenko.

Have you been watching the Programme on ITV 1 about the Russian KGB man who wanted to cast aside his way of life in Russia under Putin and come to live in U K in freedom with his family forsaking the killing programme he was ordered to do? Litvinenko. It is a known fact that Mr. Putin does not allow such things to happen and although Litvinenko and his family were accepted as UK citizens (bringing with them important information about Russian spies) Putin is known to have said publicly that there is no place in the world that can escape him and his punishment.

We have this true story which is dramatised on TV and Putin's idea of truth being stood on its head. Pilate once said to Jesus "What is truth?" The dictionary says Truth is the opposite of falsehood. When we do not speak truth in our daily dealings nothing can be done that is right. Jesus said "I am the way, The truth and the life". His life, his ways, his words show us the right way to live. Putin in this TV story and in his work today in the destruction of Ukraine has long ago forgotten truth and perhaps no longer knows its meaning.

Ivan Perry

Time Together

Time Together is a very friendly group for those with memory loss and their carers. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays in the month from 2.00-4.00pm for a social afternoon in a relaxed atmosphere. Sometimes we have an entertainer, sometimes we play boc-
cia, other times we like to make our own entertainment or just sit and chat. We always finish with tea and some very nice cakes.

Do come and join us, you will be most welcome.

Contact Pauline Green

Churches Together in Whitchurch

The AGM took place on 8th June and the following people were elected

Chair: Eileen Livesey (St Georges)

Vice-chair: Dora Marlowe (Beacon)

Secretary: Celia Churchill (St Alkmunds)

Treasurer: Gary Churchill (St Alkmunds)

The Speaker was Rev Deb Walton, vicar of Prees, who gave a very interesting talk about her role as Chaplain at SJT and Thomas Adams in Wem.

BBT@St Johns



Monday from 9.30-11.30am in term time
Please join us for coffee chat craft songs & stories

We are coming to the end of another year of Bumps Babies and Toddlers and say many thanks to our lay worker Kathryn and goodbye and good luck to all the children who are moving on to Nursery. The last BBT of the summer term will be **Monday 24th July** and that will be open to older brothers and sisters who have finished school for the summer.

There will be a **puppet show and picnic at Broomhall & Sound on Tuesday 22nd August at 10am.**
 The Rota for July is below.

:

	Leader	Setting up	General & Craft	Tea	Open up
July 3rd	Kathryn	Avril	Briony	Dot	Briony
July 10th	Kathryn	Briony	Dot	Sarah	Briony
July 17th	Kathryn	Mike	Sarah	Hazel	Mike
July 24th	Kathryn	Briony	Brenda/ Dot	Sarah	Briony

Ride & Stride

Ride & Stride is back again on Saturday 9th September. We are hoping to be open from 10am to 6pm for visitors and would welcome offers of help to be at church for an hour or two during the day to welcome people. I am hoping to drive round churches in the area and as usual ask for sponsorship. More details will be in a later Pew News. This is the email I received from David Hardham thanking us for our contributions last year. Chris Crowther

"I had all the 'results' for individual churches a few weeks ago. I was impressed by the amounts that so many people raised even though there was one almighty muddle when the date was postponed. You are up there with a lot of the 'big hitters', having raised a total of £295 (including the Gift Aid that our R+S Treasurer is able to claim from HMRC).

That is a lot of fundraising. Congratulations and thank you.

The event as a whole was a great success, raising £29,700, which is our third-best year ever. And more churches were open than before so the 'Open Day' aspect of the day was reasonably successful. It would have been better if they had just stuck to the 10th because so many people had planned for that day, but that was above my pay grade!

*Your support is most encouraging for me. Thanks again."
David Hardham*



Circuit News (1):

Rev Sarah Butcher is part of our Circuit Ministry team, based in Shavington. She will be ordained at Coventry Cathedral on Sunday 25th June. This is her the story of her journey to ministry which she shared at her Testimony Service at St John's Willaston in May. You can also read it on the Methodist website.

When I was growing up, my family didn't go to church, so I didn't either. However, I started going to Girls' Brigade when I was 10, and went to parade services from time to time. I started to want to go to church but this was difficult around family weekend activities. When I went to university, I finally had the freedom to choose to go to church. Here, I became a Christian, grew in faith and involved myself in church life, in an Anglican church. In time, I wanted to give more of my time and energy to serving, so I applied to be a lay-worker in a Methodist Church. I remember people asking me if I planned to become a local preacher or a minister, and how good they thought I would be. At the time, I assumed they were being polite, seeing me as someone young and keen. Being a preacher or a minister just didn't seem like me, and I didn't feel called. That changed dramatically one night in February 2015. I strangely had a vivid dream. In the dream, I awoke in my bed, but it was light outside. Then I heard a voice loudly repeating, "go into ordained ministry".. I was stunned! I checked if my husband had said anything, or heard anything, but he hadn't. I didn't feel it was for me, but I couldn't ignore it. I had a chat with my minister and I knew I had to test the calling. I did this by starting local preacher training, and reflecting on what I felt called to. Again I have felt the calling being confirmed myself and affirmed by others. It has not been easy. I think I had such a vivid and clear calling moment because God knew I would have never otherwise taken that first step, nor would I have kept going.

I have found the last few years really challenging. My journey through this calling, candidating and training has happened alongside a realisation that I am infertile and living with the reality of being unable to have a child. For me, wanting a child I cannot have is a deep and complex pain. As a Christian in this journey, it's got me wrestling with prayer, what God does and doesn't do and how we handle life not going as we would want. This has been really difficult, and it's shaken my faith to its core. What has inspired me in this is that although I feel it has zapped my strength, faith and confidence, God has been at work, making me the minister I need to be. I feel vulnerable, but God works in and with vulnerability and imperfection. I've been hurt, but I understand more of loss and pain, and I can sit alongside others in their difficult times. My faith is one that wrestles and questions very honestly, but my ministry and preaching is informed by the deeper, richer hope I've found in Jesus. I have a voice that can say life may not go as you expect or want, but we can take that to our God, who is good, and can bring unexpected beauty from brokenness.

First, I trained to be a secondary school science teacher. There was much I enjoyed about this (working with young people, explaining and showing concepts), but other things (endless planning, marking, meetings, etc.) wore me down and I was frustrated that I had so little time for church. I worked as a church family worker for a Methodist Church for a while. When my hours in this role were reduced, I took up a part-time science teacher post in a small independent school.

Teaching taught me to manage stress and maintain an appearance of calm confidence in front of crowds. I enjoy trying to explain things clearly, especially if it involves stories of a fun demonstration (particularly ones involving flames, like flash paper). Being a lay-worker taught me more about church life, and especially Methodism. I've learnt to slow down and to really listen to others and God. I also learned to spell "committee" alarmingly fast.

My husband is unendingly loving and supportive, despite the difficulties and changes this time has brought. Most of my family don't go to church, so I think they struggle to understand why I would do this or what it means! However, they have made it clear they are completely behind me and cheering me on. Their love and support means so much to me. Many of my Christian friends have been incredibly supportive and encouraging of me, commenting how right they think this is for me.

**Afternoon Teas at Brown Knowl
Saturday July 8th and
Saturday August 19th
2pm-4pm
Everyone welcome**

All Proceeds will go towards the Redevelopment Fund

Girl from a Train

We stopped by a cornfield

Near Shrewsbury

A girl in a sunhat

Smiled at me.

Then I was seven

Now sixty-two

Wherever you are

I remember you.

Gareth Owen

Summer Fayre & Strawberry Teas



Sue and I would like to thank everyone who helped to make our latest event a resounding success. We had so much going on and everyone seemed to enjoy it. It was lovely to see the church open from the front, and the Morris Dancers and Singers performing outside, to the strawberry teas and children colouring in the Guild room at the back, and of course Sue face painting just outside by the car-park. I had a strawberry painted on one side and a treble clef on the other!

We also made £350 for our lovely church.

Our next event will be the Art Exhibition and recycled Fashion Show on Saturday 7th October, Blackberry Fair Day.

Thanks again

Dot and Sue

September Newsletter

Please let Vic Trigg have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by Friday 25th August.

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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.”*

May Angelou

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