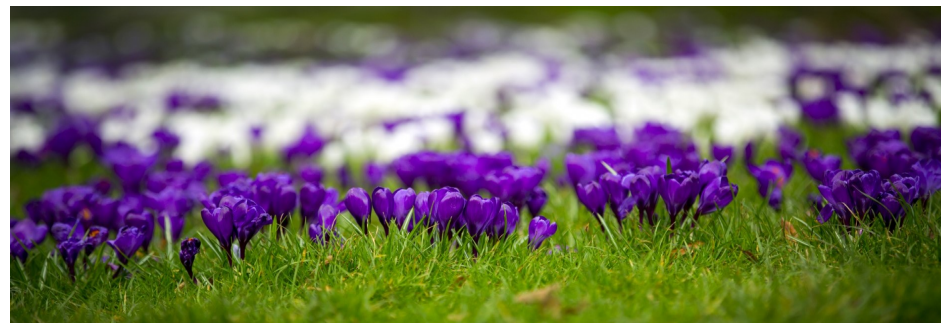




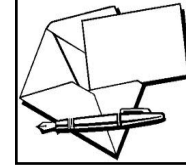
***St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch***

***Newsletter
March 2024***



Message from the Manse

March 2024



The month of March this year is jammed packed with so many marked events in our Christian calendar. We are in the season of Lent and so we continue for most of March on a Lenten journey; we have Mothering Sunday on the 10th, and the last week is Holy Week with all its events, and before we think March is over and we can't fit anymore in, Easter Day lands on the 31st.

My diary often feels like this; like it can't fit anymore into it. And trying to ensure I get a balance of work, family time and rest is something that I often struggle to do and work often takes over.

Whether you are actively going out to work, to a job, or not; all of us, have tasks that need to be done, chores that need to be completed, phone calls to be made and appointments to attend to. I'm frequently in the company of retired people who tell me that they are more busy now than when they went out to work.

Maybe it's part of our DNA, or culture, that means we are all (on some level) workaholics. And let's be honest here, there is something about 'work' that gives us a sense of achievement.

When the work is done and we tick it off our to do list there is a sense of relief and we celebrate that it's over. But we are also proud of what we have achieved and we have a sense of self-worth and value.

And I think this is why many people don't stop 'working'. When we contribute to something that brings joy, meaning and purpose to someone else, we are blessed in return. When we have achieved what we needed to, we get a sense of pride and we feel good.

Of course, this is all dependant on the work and tasks you are to do. There's nothing worse than being in a job or having to do things that bring us little joy and only cause us upset.

The 'work' that Jesus and the disciples were tasked to do, brought both blessings and suffering. There were times I'm sure that they felt a great sense of pride and achievement but there were some tasks that were really costly.

Holy Week for me, reminds me of the joys and difficulties in life and the ups and downs of work. On Palm Sunday, Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem on a donkey and there was a celebration and sense of joy. A good day in the office if you like. But by Thursday, at what should have

been a meal of celebration with friends for the Passover was one with an uneasy atmosphere; there is unrest, challenge and a betrayal. And on the Friday, there is pain, suffering, and loss. By the Sunday morning though there was hope, joy and celebration again.

For those disciples that was certainly a working week that they would not easily forget!

But despite all the work, Jesus did also encourage the disciples to rest and enjoy time away from the active work.

So, as we head through March and approach all the tasks on the to do list; may we remember to all rest and spend time with our family and friends.

With blessings Rev. Donna

“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade”

Charles Dickens: Great Expectations

Steward's Letter

I was never much of a reader in my youth, although I certainly remember my mother regularly trying to persuade me to pick up a book when she thought I was at a loose end. Today, although I do very little, I do enjoy reading.

I've just finished Prison Diaries, vol. 1, by Jeffrey Archer. It's basically a day-by-day account of what life is really like in a Category A prison, from first-hand experience, and for me it turned out to be quite an eye opener. The author, who found himself in Belmarsh for perjury, describes how many people end up behind bars largely because of the environment they were born into.

To give a snapshot of the effect of drugs on society: in 2001, 70% of people entering prison for the first-time test positive for drugs, 20% of whom are on heroin. I wonder what the stats tell us twenty years later.

There are four categories of prisoner: A, B, C, D. A- cat are violent and dangerous prisoners, with the possible resources to escape; B- cat are violent and dangerous, but not always murderers: they might be in for GBH, manslaughter or rape; in C- cat the vast majority are repeat offenders or convicted of a serious, non-violent crime (i.e. drug-dealing); D- cats are usually for first offenders with no history of violence, who are likely to conform to the system.

Because our prisons have been overcrowded for so many years, prisoners are often temporarily placed in categories that don't befit the crime. For example, an in-

individual charged with say VAT fraud could be placed with murderers and rapists sometimes for months until such time as a place becomes available in a more appropriate prison. Here prisoners are bullied, intimidated, and often driven to drugs, because the prison service simply has nowhere else to put them.

I think this is shameful of our justice system and illustrates how easily lives can be damaged simply by a spell behind bars at the wrong time. Maybe we need to reconsider our immediate condemnation of all ex-prisoners, and regard each as an individual with their own set of circumstances.

Andrew Fawcett

***Quotes taken from the "Wit & Wisdom"
column in the Week Magazine:***

"Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and oftentimes we call a man cold when he is only sad."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it".

Edith Wharton

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life".

Picasso

The Drawing Room Group

We meet every Thursday morning—
10.30am to 12.30pm
at St. John's Methodist Church, Whitchurch.

If you already enjoy drawing and want to practise more, or if you want to learn (beginners welcome), please come and join us — materials provided to get you going if you are a beginner.

We cover all aspects of drawing, pen, pencil and more; all sorts of subjects both classical and modern.



We have a couple of spaces at the moment so come and try it. It is good for the soul (the best couple of hours of the week according to Mark).

Contact Bob Charlesworth for more information



St. John's Methodist Church

present

Whitchurch Brass Band



**On Saturday,
13th April at 6.00pm**

Tickets £10.00.
(including refreshments)
**Available from 'Barlows' on
the High Street,
Dot or Sue at church
or you can pay on the door.**



Daddies!!

No, I do not mean the sauce for those of us who still remember it!!

I mean have you ever thought about our fathers who raised us? They worked for us, they fed us, they guided us and always had an eye out for our safety as we were growing up.

As I think we look up to the first male in our lives – the first man to form an impression on us and as a consequence we are always looking throughout our lives for that same kind of love and care a father can give to us.

I have many memories of my dad, but one especially comes to mind. It was a wintry night with a real 'pea souper' of a fog, the kind we used to have regularly in the Potteries in the 60's - maybe it was all the smoke in the atmosphere!

I was returning home from the Methodist youth club with my friends. They all lived in opposite directions, so I was on my own in this wilderness!

I have never felt so scared in all my life as I stepped outside. The pavements seemed to have vanished, and I could not see where the roads began or finished - it was truly horrific! Also the intense silence gave a feeling of a horror film! I seemed to be going around and around in circles and getting nowhere as I had no idea of my surroundings!

Panic was setting in swiftly!

All at once I heard a familiar voice calling my name. It was my dear dad who had braved the weather to come and find me. I fell into his arms of course with such relief! Needless to say, a maze now terrifies me as the 'lost feeling' has stayed with me!

He died over twenty years ago but I feel that no one else cared for me in that way with unconditional love. He was my best friend and confidant and I miss him still.....

My mother too of course was a lovely lady, peace loving and kind and so very funny!

I was truly blessed with my parents. I realise of course that not everyone feels this way and it is so sad when this happens.

So let us thank God for our past and our parents and all that formed us and the happy memories we can call upon in our darker days.

I think we are looked after too by a force in nature that guides us here on earth.

Maybe guardian angels are with us to help us? Like our fathers did from birth, guiding us along the right paths.

Sheila Walwyn

SPRING QUIZ

This was created by Rev. Brian for the Afternoon Tea held on February 10th at church. We thought it was quite difficult but then realised that some of the answers are commonsense! Answers next time.

1. Before 16th century what was the first season of the year known as?
2. In Roman mythology who is known as the goddess of spring?
3. In the USA, what do they call spring onions?
4. What does the term “vernal” mean?
5. In which country do cherry blossom trees signify the beginning of spring?
6. In Greek mythology who is known as the goddess of spring and nature?
7. Which major Jewish festival occurs during spring?
8. Which Hindu holiday, known as the ‘festival of colours’, happens in Spring?
9. What carnival celebration takes place on Shrove Tuesday?
10. Who painted Primavera or ‘The Allegory of Spring’?
11. What date is Saint David’s Day?
12. What date is Saint Patrick’s Day?
13. What is the spring holiday period for college students in the USA known as?
14. How many months are female sheep pregnant for before they give birth to a lamb?
15. The song “The flowers that bloom in spring”

- comes from which Gilbert and Sullivan work?
16. The spoof musical “Springtime for Hitler” features in which 1967 movie?
 17. Which town in central Australia was named after the wife of an ex-Postmaster General of South Australia?
 18. In which years did the so-called “Arab Spring” predominantly take place?
 19. What is the common name of the spring flowering plant “narcissus”?
 20. What is the process by which plants convert sunlight into chemical energy to fuel their growth?

Weather sayings

We’re all familiar with the saying “*Red sky at night ...*” but I hadn’t heard of this one -

“A bright yellow sky at sunset foretells of wind to come; a pale yellow means wet.”

These two are also more familiar:-

“If March roars in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb.”

*“March winds and April showers,
Bring forth May flowers.”*

Whitchurch Community Choir

Whitchurch Community Choir rehearse at St. John's. They are putting on a concert in Tilstock Village hall on Saturday 23rd March 2-4pm.

You are invited to come and join us for our

'Chocolate Box Afternoon'

We will be singing about chocolate and food in general. There will also be a food marketplace.

£5 entry fee to include drink and a cake.



Tickets in advance from Donna Teague

(or from choir members, or on the door).

Well behaved dogs and children welcome (under 16s free)

More from the Week:-

"If it weren't for venetian blinds, it would be curtains for all of us!"

Eric Morecambe



Lent Lunches for Christian Aid

This year the Lent Lunches are being held at the Watergate Centre from 12 to 2pm each Wednesday during Lent.

Churches are taking it in turns to host:-

March 6th	Beacon
March 13th	St. Alkmund's
March 20th	Christian Aid Committee

Homemade soup, a roll, tea/coffee and fruit is available with a suggested donation of "£5 or give what you can".

Please support the Lent Lunches if you are able.

Film Evening—for Lent

Promoted by Whitchurch Churches Together
Admission free with refreshments -voluntary contributions welcomed.

An inspiring feature film -

Undaunted

The early life of Josh McDowell
The true story of a boy growing up in rural Michigan in harsh and difficult circumstances whose life is turned around through faith.

Friday 8th March 7.30pm
Sir John Talbot's School, Whitchurch

Spring

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing-
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!



The palm and may make country
houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay-
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breath sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet-
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring, the sweet Spring!

Thomas Nashe 1567-1601



Posies for Mothers' Day Friday 8th 2.30pm

We usually make posies to be given out on Mothering Sunday. We have set the date for doing this as Friday 8th at 2.30pm. All help and donations of foliage and flowers welcome. We would like to make about 40. Chat and a cuppa also available!

Church Council -Wednesday 6th March 7pm

We hold about 4 of these a year. Members are elected to serve on the Council at the AGM but anyone can attend a meeting and express an opinion or ask a question. Only members are allowed to vote on a motion being put forward. If you would like to know more about what is happening in the church and circuit, then come along.

Gift Day/Jumble Sale 9th March

This was originally planned for Saturday 2nd March but due to unforeseen circumstance, it is being put on a week so is now going to be held on Saturday 9th March at the same time as the Jumble Sale, between 10am and 12 noon. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be available for both events. As well as jumble there will also be bric-a-brac.

If you have anything you would like to donate to either jumble or bric-a-brac please bring it to church on Monday 4th am or pm or Thursday 7th or Friday 8th afternoon 2.30—4pm. Please bag it and label it clearly as Jumble/B-a-B.

APRAYER REQUESTS



Pray for those known to us personally who are in need of God's comfort,

People in need

We remember all those who do not have enough food to eat or money for heating.

St John's

We hold in our prayers all the ventures taking place in our church—MORE, BBT, the Art Group, the Library Book Group, the Social Services, the Sewing Bee, the Whitchurch Choir.

We also pray for those who are ill and those who have suffered loss recently.

Whitchurch

Remember in our prayers the Lent Lunches and the Film show. We bring the problem of our Civic Centre to you and hope that it will continue to be at the forefront of Council discussions—both Town and County level.

Our nation

We pray for King Charles as he battles with cancer and also remember Catherine, Princess of Wales, as she recovers from her operation and Fergie, also a cancer sufferer.

We pray that you will guide us as we progress towards the next general election.

Our world

Pray that the nations of the world will forget the petty differences they have and instead work together.

Pray that the climate emergency will not be forgotten and that leaders will make a plan of action before it is too late.

We place into your hands, O Lord, the troubled areas of the world, particularly the Gaza strip and the Ukraine.

Can you remember....

...in the 50s,60s,70s,80s and 90s what /who used to occupy the premises that these businesses are in currently?

On the High Street:-

Costa

Severn Hospice

Lorna's

Gallery Flowers

St. Mary's Arcade

Joli café

Barlows

Barbers Esatate Agents

Splish Splash

Other streets:-Scrivens

Jones' Coffee shop

Wagstaff's

Beacon Centre

Scrivens opticians.....

Tea & Coffee Rota for March

3rd	Chris & Elaine
10th	Hazel & Mike
17th	Avril & Nancy
24th	Elizabeth & Pete
31st	Linda Jenkins & Dot

BBT@St. John's

Please join us for craft, toys, singing, stories, coffee and chat from 9.30—11.30am. A children's clothing hub is also available so come and find some new outfits for your growing children. We are keen for more people to join our rota of helpers so if you would like to help or just want to say hello, please speak to someone on the rota,

BBT Rota for March

Date	Leader	Open Up	General & Craft	Tea
4th	Kathryn	Briony	Dot	Sarah
11th	Kathryn	Chris	Brenda	Elaine
18th	Kathryn	Briony	Dot	Sarah
25th	<i>NO BBT Easter Holidays</i>			

Taxi!

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

3rd March	Hazel Nimmo
10th March	Hazel Nimmo
17th March	Hazel Nimmo
24th March	Peter Shingler
31st March	Peter Shingler

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

Dates for your diary for March

BBT 9.30-11.30	Every Monday in termtime
MORE	Mondays 12 noon to 4pm
	Thursdays 1 -4pm
Art Group	Thursdays 10—12.30
Library	Book Group 3rd Saturday 11am
Lent lunches	12- 2pm Weds 6th,13th,20th at the Beacon
Sewing Bee	Last Saturday of month (usually)
Weds. 6th	7pm Church Council
Friday 8th	2.30-4pm Posy making for Mothers' Day
Friday 8th	7.30pm Film "Undaunted" SJT (<i>see advert</i>)
Sat. 9th	10- 12noon Jumble Sale/Gift Day
Friday 15th	Hope Journey for Easter
Sun 17th	2.30pm Bradley service
Sun. 24th	4pm Zoom service
Thurs. 28th	Maundy Service St. Alkmund's 7pm St George's 8pm
Friday 29th	10.30am Walk of Witness organised by Beacon church. Starting at Tesco.

Preachers for March

3rd	Rev Donna (HC)
10th	Local arrangement
17th	Rev Donna (baptism)
24th	Mrs Sue Tyson—Palm Sunday
31st	Rev Jenny Arthurs (HC) Easter Sunday
April 7th	Ivan Perry

Stewards for March

3rd	Andrew
10th	Mike
17th	Hazel
24th	Dot
31st	Andrew

The BIG Stuff—

- a Lent course facilitated by Simon Sutcliffe. Each session is on Zoom, 7—8.30pm on Thursdays. Details are in the March to May plan out now.

Audlem Methodist Church

A warm welcome is offered to you! Join us for our annual production. This year we are performing "Sister Act" on March 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th. Tickets available from 01270 811761

**BENJAMIN'S CAFÉ &
DELI**



Delicious Breakfasts, Lunches & Brunches at good prices.

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April Newsletter

Please let **Dot Charlesworth** have all your submissions for the April Newsletter by 23rd March

**The Most Famous
Bread & Cake Makers
in Whitchurch!**

WALKERS



BARLOWS

**Your local electrical
store**



**High Street
Whitchurch**

Call in and talk to one of
the team.

SPLISH SPLASH “Olde Worlde Charm!”

A Family run
Bathrooms Bedrooms &
Kitchens Business based at 46a
High Street Whitchurch

Speak to Vincent about your
new project! Or re-vamp your
existing kitchen, bathroom or
bedroom

