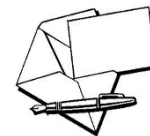




**St. John's Methodist  
Church - Whitchurch  
October 2025  
Newsletter**

## Message from the Manse



Dear friends,

As we step into October, there's a real sense of the seasons changing. The mornings are crisper, the evenings draw in a little sooner, and there's that unmistakable smell of autumn in the air—woodsmoke, fallen leaves, and perhaps the first stew bubbling away on the stove.

One of the things I love about October is how it encourages us to notice the small things: the crunch of leaves underfoot, the low golden light in the afternoon, the comfort of a familiar routine. It's a time for hot drinks, hearty meals, and the simple joy of bumping into someone you know on the high street and grabbing a pumpkin spiced latte together. In many ways, October feels like a gentle pause. The busyness of summer is behind us, but Christmas hasn't quite started creeping in (though the shops might disagree!). It's a time of harvest, of gathering, of giving thanks for what the land and our labours have brought forth. And here in our lovely rural and market town communities, that's something we don't take

for granted. This time of year always reminds me how closely our lives are still connected to the rhythms of the land. Whether it's farmers bringing in the last of the crops, neighbours swapping windfall apples, or the comforting ritual of pulling out the woolly jumpers, there's a deep sense of shared experience.

We have just celebrated our harvest festival—a wonderful reminder of the importance of gratitude and generosity. Thank you to everyone who helped to decorate the church so beautifully and many donations received to pass on to the local foodbank. Here in the church, we're always mindful of the changing seasons—not just in the world around us, but in our lives too. Some of us may be going through seasons of growth, others through times of waiting, loss, or change. This season invites us to check in on one another. Is there someone who might appreciate a phone call, a visit, or even just a smile in the shop queue? It doesn't take much to brighten someone's day, and often those little gestures go further than we realise. Community life is one of the greatest strengths of our area. Whether through a kind word, a neighbourly gesture, or simply looking out for one another, that sense of belonging is something truly worth celebrating. Let's keep it

going—especially as the darker nights draw in.

As always, my door is open. If you ever need a listening ear, a cuppa, or a chat about anything at all, please don't hesitate to reach out. Wishing you a peaceful and cosy October.

With blessings

*Rev'd Donna*

### **Taxi Service**

If you are in of a lift to church on a Sunday morning, phone either Hazel or Pete and if one of them is able to they will give you a lift. Please phone by 9.30am on Sunday morning.

### **Zoom Services**

The next Zoom services will be on Sundays 19th October and 23rd November at 4.00pm. Everyone is welcome for a short service and time of fellowship.

Contact Avril for the link.

### STEWARD'S LETTER



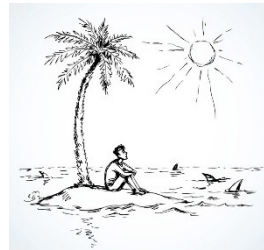
Sitting in our dining room wondering what I'm going to produce, I can't help but notice the photos on the walls. They are a record of some fifty years and start with our second daughter's baptism. In the picture as well as ourselves and Kirstie our elder daughter are our great friends Pat and Peter. Pat was Morag's Godmother and fully carried out the promises made at the service.

We had arrived in Billericay in September 1970 and looking for a church had followed the sign in the High Street to the Methodist Church. What a welcome, "Doc" - Rev David Dunn - Wilson nobbled us at the door as we were leaving, called over the Steward of the day who on hearing where we were living introduced us to Peter and Pat. Thus was formed a lasting friendship despite our moving around the country.

Peter has suffered great personal tragedy losing Pat to cancer and his son Matthew killed climbing in the Alps. His other son Simon, who has huge learning difficulties, has' as an adult, been in sheltered accommodation for a number of years. Peter's faith is amazing and the church has proved to be a real "God Send" in that he met Denise there and after some time they were happily married.

Harking back to the warm welcome we received at the church in Billericay, I think it is good to see that St John's must have a welcoming atmosphere as proved by a few examples recently of new people coming to church. Long may it continue.

*Mike*



The story is told of an only survivor of a shipwreck who was thrown up on an uninhabited island. After a while he managed to build a crude hut in which he placed the "little all" that he had saved from the sinking ship. He prayed to God for deliverance and anxiously scanned the horizon each day to hail any ship that might be chance to be passing that way.

One day, upon returning from a hunt for food, he was horrified to find his hut in flames. All that he had was gone. To the man's limited vision, it was the worst that could happen and he cursed God. Yet the very next day, a ship arrived. "We saw your smoke signal", the captain said!

Taken from the "Grace" Magazine

## Ride & Stride Report

Ride & Stride was a successful event again this year. Our church was open for the day and 4 of us—Elaine, Sarah, myself and a cousin who was staying at Elaine's—drove round some of the churches in North Shropshire. We visited St. Michael & All Angels in Welshampton, St. Mary's in Ellesmere, St. Simon & St. Jude in Cockshutt, St. Raphael & St. Isadore in Petton, Holy Trinity in Weston Lullingfields, All Saints in Baschurch, St Michael & All Angels in Loppington, St. Peter & St. Paul in Wem as well as St. John's and St. Alkmund's. Not all the churches had anyone to welcome you but all provided tea and coffee and cakes. At Weston Lullingfields we were entertained by a couple of musicians who played instruments dating back to medieval times. Elaine took their details with a view to asking them to play for one of our Midday Concerts in May!

All in all we had a most enjoyable time. We would like to thank everyone who helped out on the day or sponsored us for our visits. Below and on the next page are photos of some of the churches we visited.

This is St. Michael & All Angels, Welshampton—a beautiful Lych gate







Left: Interior of St. Michael & All Angels



Right: Holy Trinity, Weston Lullingfields

Below: Exterior + interior of St. Raphael & St. Isadore, Petton. Sadly no longer used for worship but as a village social area! - barrels on the altar!





“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant”

*Robert Louis Stevenson 1850-94 novelist & travel writer*

"There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October."

- Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64) American novelist and short short writer

*Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it,  
and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth  
seeking the successive autumns."*

- George Eliot – English Novelist (Mary Ann Evans 1819-80)

With every deed you are sowing a seed  
Though the harvest you may not see

*Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1815-99) American author and poet*

"Listen! the wind is rising,  
and the air is wild with leaves,  
We have had our summer evenings,  
now for October eves!"

- Humbert Wolfe (1885-1940) Italian-born British poet, man of letters, civil servant and Jewish convert to Christianity

## Our Harvest Poem

I will put in the box  
The rain that falls gently on the spring fields  
The silver sickle that cuts the corn  
The rays of the sun gleaming down to earth  
The wind blowing the rain clouds to cover the golden wheat

I will put in the box  
The toil of the farmer ploughing the rich field  
The strength of the fisherman trawling the glimmering seas  
The labours of the pickers plucking juicy ripened fruit  
Ordinary people harvesting gardens laden with tempting vegetables

I will put in the box  
The sight of withering corn under the burning sun  
The sight of blighted fruit on dying trees  
The pain of a mother when she can't feed her child  
The despair of a father when the crops fail

I will put in the box  
The sound of fresh water filling the wells  
The joy of a people when the crops grow and flourish  
The security of a harvest safely gathered in

By Years 5 & 6 of St. Matthew's Primary School: Cambridge

*"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion." (The Dalai Lama)*

"Across the land a faint blue veil of mist  
Seems hung; the woods wear yet arrayment sober  
Till frost shall make them flame; silent and whist  
The drooping cherry orchards of October  
Like mournful pennons hang their shriveling leaves  
Russet and orange: all things now decay;  
Long since ye garnered in your autumn sheaves,  
And sad the robins pipe at set of day."

- *Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) poet and soldier 'October'*

### **Hurrahing in harvest**

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise  
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour  
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier  
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?  
I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,  
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;  
And, éyes, héart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a  
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?  
And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder  
Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!—  
These things, these things were here and but the beholder  
Wanting; which two when they once meet,  
The heart rears wings bold and bolder  
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

*Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89) Jesuit Priest and poet*

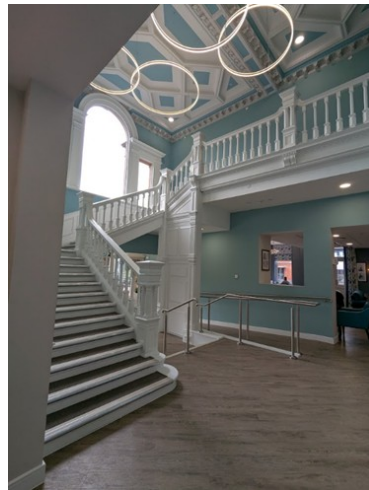
## Clayton Health Centre



Left: balloons round the entrance during the grand opening



I recently visited the Clayton Health Centre and was very impressed with the buildings, particularly the café!



Left is a photo of the grand staircase and landing in the old building

Right: a Google street view of the new buildings, and below: an early projection on how the site was planned to look.



## **Extracts from an email from Elizabeth Jennings:**

*She sounds to be keeping busy*

Thanks for all the news. My interest is as you may guess very much in all that is happening at Whitchurch. I remember the ride round all the churches. You took me once and I was amazed how hidden away many of them were, I hope you had a good day for it. What a difference a little sun makes. Today here it's a bit warmer and lots of sunshine, which now comes so well in my room all day as it's so much lower.

I love the Bambrough Castle card you used. I remember visiting it when on holiday in Northumberland. John (*her brother*) is having a very busy time and I'm sure he is thoroughly enjoying it all. My nephew, Ian, and his wife Sue, have come to stay for a while as Ian has had to come back from his job in SE Asia, rather sad for both he and Sue, (his wife) who were really loving the work they were doing back there. They were both finding it so fulfilling...

As well as Ian, David, his nephew, has visited with his wife to be, one or two others have been dropping in. He is very busy but I'm sure is really rather enjoying it all and Lyn who might have been overwhelmed has been very much helped by Sue, Ian's wife and has more time to enjoy everyone. A few days earlier they had been visited by their granddaughter and her husband from Southern Ireland bringing their lovely 6-month baby. a beautiful little girl, very placid and enjoying everybody. She is my great, great niece!!!

So I have been having a very interesting time. They have all been very kind, visiting me, and Ian's been able to help me quite a lot, showing me how to access lots of things, on the computer. All the best,

love from

***Elizabeth***



## BBT@St Johns

Please join us in term time at Bumps Babies & Toddlers from 9.30-11.30am for craft, toys, singing, stories coffee and chat. We have also created a beautiful woven artwork from recycled materials for the Textiles Exhibition at the Blackberry Fair. We will be celebrating Harvest on Monday 6th October and all are welcome to join us for a short service at 10am as well as looking at the lovely harvesty displays in the Church. The Rota for October is below  
This Autumn Bumps Babies and Toddlers are looking at the Creation Story

|                    | Leader                           | Open up | General & Craft | Tea    |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------|-----------------|--------|
| 6th Oct<br>Harvest | BDonna                           | Mike    | Chris           | Hazel  |
| 13th Oct           | Kathryn                          | Briony  | Dot/Brenda      | Elaine |
| 20th Oct           | Kathryn                          | Briony  | Elaine          | Sarah  |
| 27th Oct           | <i>No BBT—Half term Holidays</i> |         |                 |        |
|                    |                                  |         |                 |        |
|                    |                                  |         |                 |        |

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

### Preachers for October

|         |                   |
|---------|-------------------|
| 5th     | Rev Donna         |
| 12th    | LA                |
| 19th    | Rev Jenny Arthurs |
| 26th    | Rev Jon Chesworth |
| 2nd Nov | LA                |

### Stewards for October

|      |                  |
|------|------------------|
| 5th  | Andrew Fawcett   |
| 12th | Mike Nimmo       |
| 19th | Dot Charlesworth |
| 26th | Andrew Fawcett   |



### Tea & Coffee Rota for October

|         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 5th     | Hazel & Mike             |
| 12th    | Briony & Linda W         |
| 19th    | Chris & Elaine           |
| 26th    | Avril & Nancy            |
| 2nd Nov | Elizabeth & Pete & Chris |

# Coffee Morning



Bargates Hall  
Saturday 25th October  
10am - 12noon  
Fair Trade Gifts and  
Christmas Cards  
Admission £1 to include tea/  
coffee/biscuits  
Proceeds for  
Christian Aid



## **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**

Help us to be a loving, caring community and to respect differing viewpoints. Let God guide our thoughts, speech and decisions.

### **Our Town**

Pray for the school children as they continue to become accustomed to their new classes.

### **Our Nation**

Pray for wisdom for our leaders as they make decisions on our behalf in the current world-wide crises. Help them to be respectful of one another even if they disagree with policies.

### **Our World**

Pray for the people of Ukraine and Israel in their current situation. Give them hope of life returning to some kind of normality in the coming months. Pray for the terrible situation in Gaza. Don't forget to pray for other areas of the world where there is suffering from war, drought, flooding and persecution.

### **Dates for your Diary—October**

#### **Regular Activities**

Mon's. 6th, 13th, 20th. (Not 27th) 9.30—11.30am BBT

Mon's. 6th, 13th, 20th + 27th: 12 -4.00pm      MORE

Thurs. 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd + 30th: 1 -4.00pm      MORE

Sat 4th    Blackberry Fair Coffee Morning 10-12

Textile Exhibition 12—4pm

Recycled Fashion Show 3pm

Sun 5th    Harvest Festival 10.30am

Fri. 17th   Penley Concert 7pm

Tues, 21st Churches Together Committee 7.45pm

#### **November 2025Newsletter**

Please let Chris Crowther have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 25th October.



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